
**BLOCK 2 IDEAS ON MARGINALISED
SECTION**

Unit 5 Who Were Shudras?

Unit 6 Who Were Untouchables?

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Unit 8 Adivasi/Indigenous Indians

UNIT 5 WHO WERE SHUDRAS?

Structure

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Aspects that Influenced Ambedkar to Write on Shudras
- 5.4 Assumptions Related to the Shudras
- 5.5 Ambedkar's View on the Shudras
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Questions to Check Your Progress

Suggested Readings

5.1 OBJECTIVES

This unit would enable you to understand:

- Aspects that prompted Ambedkar to write on Shudras;
- Assumptions associated with Shudras in ancient texts; and
- Ambedkar's analysis of Shudras.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss the assumptions associated with Shudra in ancient texts and Ambedkar views and analysis on Shudra. *Who were the Shudras* is one of the seminal texts Ambedkar produced in 1946. It was a period of great turmoil for Ambedkar, who had already emerged on the Indian political and intellectual scene and had made a mark for himself. His social and political activism included fight for civil rights, temple entry, eradication of untouchability and starting of a newspaper. Before this work, Ambedkar had already written *Caste in India*, *The Problem of the Rupee* and *Evolution of Provincial Finances in British India*, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, *Federation versus Freedom*, *Annihilation of Caste* and *Thoughts on Pakistan or Partition of India*.

Ambedkar's earlier writings were concerned mainly with economics, sociology, politics and philosophy. With *Who were the Shudras*, for the first time, Ambedkar had delved deep into history and contributed so enormously to its knowledge.

5.3 ASPECTS THAT INFLUENCED AMBEDKAR TO WRITE ON SHUDRAS

By the time Ambedkar ventured to write *Who were the Shudras*, the discipline of history writing had taken shape through systematic documentation and exploration of Sanskrit, Pali and other textual sources. Study of ancient texts became the main source of studying the ancient society, although archaeology was another source. By the time Ambedkar started writing on history, three dominant modes of writing history had already emerged.

- 1) History writings by westerners followed the idea of supremacy of the white race and the idea of a common Indo-European heritage, i.e. Aryan culture.
- 2) The Brahmanical mode of writing history viewed Indian society as a homogeneous cultural group, whose golden age lay in the distant past. As opposed to the materialist western civilization, it saw the essence of India in spirituality. It viewed the Indian religious textual and ritualistic traditions as sacred and divine. Thus even the structure of society was seen as having a divine origin.
- 3) The Marxian mode of interpretation viewed history from the base-super structure point of view where material conditions were seen as an acting force for change; thus the historical past was narrowed down to the forces of production. The concept of dialectical materialism was diligently followed in understanding India's past. The development of Indian society, its strategic four-fold division and its further expansion into *jatis*, was addressed within the concept of class and means of production. Such a framework denies the role of consciousness as well as the role of innovations by the human mind.

The British, while making periodization of the Indian history, divided history on the basis of religion and used periods such as the Buddhist period, the Hindu period, and the Muslim period. Many Indian historians followed the same idea of periodization of Indian history. Many studies on history were confined to the chronology of political dynasties, and exploring and translating texts.

Ambedkar wanted to locate the non-Brahmanic society in the historical realm. Non-Brahmanic interpretation of Indian history had begun from Mahatma Phule onwards. Two books of his are very important, in which Phule observes various religious conditions that were responsible for the exploitation of the Indian society:

- 1) *Gulamgiri* is based on reading of mythical tradition
- 2) *Shetkaryacha Aasud* points out the plight of the farmers and how religion forces illogical practices.

Swami Dharma Teertha was another important author who impressed Ambedkar. Swami Dharma Teertha did not romanticize the past but viewed Indian history as a religious conflict. Ambedkar acknowledged his contentions and remarked on the back cover of the book that 'the book was different and he himself was working on the same problems' (*History of Hindu Imperialism*, Dalit Educational Literature Centre, Madras, 1992 (reprint), earlier published as *The Menace of Imperialism* in 1941).

5.4 ASSUMPTIONS RELATED TO THE SHUDRAS

Many Indian historians viewed the *Chaturvarna* as an ideal social system in ancient India. Completely dis-agreeing with this view, Ambedkar believed that the *varna* system was responsible for the caste system.

Who were the Shudras is a historical work by Ambedkar. Dedicating the book to Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Ambedkar describes him as "The greatest Shudra of Modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule."

In the preface of the book, Ambedkar makes his position very clear and writes of himself as “a non-Brahman scholar who is engaged in search of a natural explanation of a human problem.” Ambedkar was aware of his position as a political leader and therefore he anticipated that his writing on history might get misread. Keeping that in mind he wrote: “I have not made this book as a preface to the non-Brahmin politics.” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 18) Ambedkar went into the study of Brahmanical religious textual tradition. He observed, “Sacred books contain fabrications which are political in their motive, partisan in their composition and fraudulent in their purpose.” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 14)

The writing of history on Chaturvarna at that time was predominantly either from the racial perspective of Aryan invasion or from the perspective of it having a divine origin. Ambedkar considered these two parameters as unacceptable and illogical. Ambedkar questioned a corpus of textual data to understand the process of creation of the *Shudravarna* itself. He attempted to understand the narrative accounts in the religious texts and their meaning related with the actual social practices.

Ambedkar was aware that unless he proved the Aryan invasion theory as untenable, and the idea of divine origin as propounded by the Brahmanical history writers indefensible, his own writing will not be accepted or will have no purpose. Therefore Ambedkar critically examined the Aryan invasion theory with the help of textual sources alone and did not go into its archaeological analysis. He interpreted the term Aryan not as a racial term but more as a prevalent social and cultural term, in his quantitative analysis of the Rig Veda. While rejecting the Aryan invasion theory, he cited many examples in which the word ‘Aryan’ had no racial meaning but “can best be understood by the prevalence of different religions among the different social groups” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.105-106).

William Jones in 1786 in the Annual Asiatic Society lecture had propounded the idea of a common root between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. This idea became very strong and gained place in reconstructing the ancient past of India. Being a dominant idea, many, including Bopp, followed the same thinking. Ambedkar observed that

the theory of Aryan race was based on philological preposition put forth by Dr. Bopp in his epoch-making book called *Comparative Grammar* in 1835, and accordingly people had common habitat permitting close communion. The contention is based on the assumption that the Indo-Germanic are the purest of the modern representatives of the original Aryan race, and how could Aryan speech have come to India, this question can be answered only by the supposition that the Aryans must have come to India from outside hence the necessity for inventing the theory of invasion. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.132-138).

Interestingly the then native Brahmanical history writers believed in this theory because of its affinity with the Sanskrit language.

In order to prove the divine origin of the Shudra, Rig Veda’s *Purushsukta* in the tenth *mandala* (chapter) is always cited as evidence where it is mentioned that the four *varnas* have emerged out of the body of the divine being, i.e. Brahmin from head, Kshatriyas from arms and Vaishyas from the belly and the Shudras from the feet. This reference is always cited to show that the *varna* had divine origin and is as old as Vedas itself.

5.5 AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON THE SHUDRAS

Ambedkar went into the question of existence of number of *varnas*. Citing two Brahmana texts Satapatha and Taitreya Brahmanas, he says there were only three *varnas*. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, p.133). In order to elaborate his observation, he writes:

If the Purusha Sukta was not incorporated in the Taittiriya, Kathaka and Maitrayani Samhitas of the Black Yajur Veda, it follows, that the Purusha Sukta was added to the Rig Veda after the Taittiriya Samhita, the Kathaka Samhita, the Maitrayani Samhita of the Black Yajur Veda

and

That the freedom which the authors of the different Samhitas took in adding, omitting and recording the verses shows that they did not regard it as an ancient hymn, which they were bound to reproduce in its exact original form. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 137).

Indologist Max Muller considered that “the order of the literature is first the *Vedas* and then the *Brahmanas* and *Sutras*” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.137-38) which would indicate that the *Purushsukta* of the *Rigveda* is as old as the *Vedas* itself. However, Ambedkar observed, “The *Shatapatha Brahmana* mentions only the three *varnas* and *shudras* do not form a separate *varna*. Therefore, the *Purushsukta* is a later incorporation in the *Rigveda*,” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.111-112). It shows Ambedkar’s understanding of textual tradition and understanding of the tradition of compilation of the text.

Further Ambedkar also considered the story of Paijavan in the *Mahabharata*. He says:

It has been heard by us that in the days of old a Shudra of the name of Paijavana gave a Dakshina (in his own sacrifice) consisting of a hundred thousand Purnapatras according to the ordinance called Aindragni. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 114).

Ambedkar made three observations out of this passage.

- 1) Paijavana was a Shudra,
- 2) Paijavana performed sacrifices, and
- 3) the Brahmins performed sacrifices for him and accepted Dakshina from him. Ambedkar identified Paijavan of Mahabharata with Sudas by citing verses mentioned in the Rig Veda. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.124-129). He writes “Sudas was neither Dasa nor Arya. Both the Dasas as well as the Aryas were his enemies. This means that he was a Vedic Aryan.” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 122).

Thus by establishing a link between the Sudas and Paijavan, Ambedkar elaborates on importance of rituals in the Indo-Aryan society. According to Ambedkar the society that holds ritual-based value act as a very decisive means to form laws or order of the society. According to Ambedkar, a society that held ritual-based values, acted in a very decisive manner to form laws and order of the society.

The other notable question he addressed in this book was the question of slavery. He observed that “the Aryans knew slavery and permitted the Aryans to be made slaves” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.112-113). Later on the likes of Sharad Patil who

wrote *Dasa Shudra Slavery*, part I and part II, probed the issue of slavery and emergence of the four *varnain* great detail. The *Shudras*, according to Ambedkar, were the Kshatriyas who were in conflict with Brahmanism. He meticulously explains the power struggle in the ancient society, which resulted in the Shudras being denied the Upanayana and degraded to the fourth *varna* (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.156-175). The sources he referred to in order to arrive at this conclusion ranged from the Vedic literature to the Puranic literature and the *Smritis*. The Upanayana ceremony was an important ceremony.

Only one reference to untouchability exists in *Who were the Shudras*. The distinction is made on the basis of notion of *avarna* and *savarna* (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 36). The *avarna* would logically mean the *ati-Shudras*, the concept is enlarged in the next book, *The Untouchables*, now published as *Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7.

After Ambedkar's book was published, well known Marxist historian R. S. Sharma wrote '*Shudras in Ancient India*'. The Indian educated class is not immune to the prejudices prevalent in the Indian society. R. S. Sharma was no exception to this rule. While acknowledging that Ambedkar's book is only a monograph on the subject, R.S. Sharma writes:

Published by a well-known Indian politician, who confined himself to the question of their origin. The author was entirely dependent for his source material on translations, and what is worst, he seems to have worked with the fixed purpose of proving a high origin for the Shudras –a tendency which has been very much in evidence among the educated section of the lower caste people in recent times. (*Shudras in Ancient India*, 5).

"A single passage of the *Shantiparva*, which states that the Shudra Paijavan performed sacrifice, is sufficient to establish the thesis that Shudras were originally the *Kshatriyas*. The author did not bother himself about the complexity of various circumstances, which led to the formation of the labouring class known as the Shudras" (*Shudras in Ancient India*, 5).

Sharma's remark shows that he did not accept Ambedkar as a serious writer of Indian history, deeply involved in serious research but considered him a politician with fixed ideas.

Sharma refuses to acknowledge the non-Brahmanical understanding of history and seems to be unaware of writing history differently. In fact, Ambedkar himself had mentioned in the preface of the book, that he was a non-Brahmin scholar and a non-Sanskritist, therefore, it was natural to rely on translations. Ambedkar never ignored Sanskrit sources when they were available. He was familiar with Sanskrit as he had attended classes in Germany briefly while studying in England. Ambedkar never violated the canons of historical writings. In spite of all this, Sharma rubbishes the conclusions in Ambedkar's writings that are based on observations and his categorical position as a non-Brahmin scholar.

Ambedkar had analysed the problem of the origin of the *Shudravarna* alone from a non-Brahmin premise, in an effort to seek a logical explanation of a human problem. Sharma agreed to Ambedkar's statement that the Shudras were downgraded because they were denied *upanayana*, and wrote: "...it helped to bring about the social degradation of the *Shudras*."

Ambedkar stated that

- *Dasas* and *Dasyus* were different from Shudras,
- People with multi-colored complexion lived in Rigvedic times,
- Aryans were of two kinds: Vedic and non-Vedic,
- *Shudras* were Aryans (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 77 and pp.107-108, 111).

Sharma also arrived at similar conclusion:

- Shudras belonged to an old tribe,
- Some *Dasyus* were bestowed the Aryan status while others were denied;
- Hostility existed among the Aryans themselves (*Shudras in Ancient India*, 15; 17; pp.21-22).

Ambedkar mentions that the disappearance of *Dasas* and *Dasyus* from the later Vedic literature means that they were absorbed by the Aryans. He also noticed that the early Vedic literature was silent about the Shudras whereas the later one exclusively talks about them (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 106). He arrived at such conclusion by referring to many ancient religious texts.

Sharma, concurring largely with Ambedkar's views, stated the following:

- The Shudras are found with slight changes in the later Vedic literature, the epics, the *Puranas* and the *Dharmashastras*; and
- The earlier opposition between the Aryans and the *Dasas* and *Dasyus* is replaced by one between the Aryans and the *Shudras* (*Shudras in Ancient India*, 32, 35).

Such are the broad generalizations of Ambedkar and R.S. Sharma's understanding. Irrespective of such generalizations, Sharma would not like to accept Ambedkar's explanation and categorized Ambedkar as 'politician with fixed ideas'. R.S. Sharma's remarks reveal that he was not serious at all in reading Ambedkar's book.

While citing the cause of denial of *upanayana* as an instrument to degrade the Shudras, Ambedkar states that the *upanayana* is an important instrument for right to property and right to knowledge; without *upanayana* a person was doomed to social degradation, to ignorance and to poverty (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.171-172). The *Kshatriyas* could afford to be in conflict with the Brahmins because they were equally powerful and some Vedic hymns were composed by *Kshatriyas* (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 189). Ambedkar again emphasized the functioning of the system in the society:

What was done by one individual belonging to the tribe was deemed to be done by the whole tribe. In all ancient societies the unit was the tribe or the community and not the individual, with the result that the guilt of the individual was the guilt of the community and the guilt of the community was the guilt of every individual belonging to it. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.187-189).

Such a statement shows how collective action was imposed upon a particular group of people. The deprivation of any right to knowledge at collective and individual level is bound to result in the denial of general accessibility to knowledge itself. The process may not be a quick one. It is a process, as Ambedkar signifies, a deep-rooted conspiracy.

Ambedkar did not stop there. He argued that the Shudras of Indo-Aryan society were different from the Shudras of the Hindu society. Ambedkar offered the following explanation:

in the Indo-Aryan society, the word ‘*Shudra*’ was proper name of one single people. It was the name of people who belonged to a particular race. The word ‘*Shudra*’ as used in the Hindu society is not a proper name at all. It is an epithet for low and uncultured class people. It is a general cognomen of a miscellaneous and heterogeneous collection of tribes and groups, who have nothing in common except that they happened to be on a lower plane of culture. It is wrong to call them by the name Shudras. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp. 200-201).

Ambedkar further drew his conclusion from the *Dharmasutras*:

The *Dharmasutras* make distinction between the *Sacchudras* and the *Asacchudra* and between the *Nirvasit Shudras* and *Anirvasita Shudras*. *Sacchudras* means a cultured *Shudra* and *Asacchudra* means an uncultured *Shudra*. *Nirvasita shudra* means a *Shudra* living in village community. *Anirvasita Shudra* means *Shudra* living in outside the village community... The *Asacchudra* and *Anirvasit Shudras* are the ones who had begun to form part of the Hindu society. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 201).

This broad generalization also became the basis for his thesis on ‘Untouchables’. However, it may be noted that Ambedkar also mentions *Shudras* as a separate race, a concept, which is in conflict with his own interpretations. Can there be a more glaring example than this, which would suggest that Ambedkar clearly mentions the Shudras as a distinct social group or a separate tribe. According to R. S. Sharma “the statement in the *Mahabharata* can support this contention that the Abhiras and Shudras were settled near the Saraswati river” (*Shudras in Ancient India*, 38).

R.S. Sharma also criticized Ambedkar for relying on a single reference about Paijavan, who is described as a *Shudra* in the *Mahabharata’s Shantiparvan* as no other text records this tradition (*Shudras in Ancient India*, pp.40-41). However, Ambedkar states that “it is a well-known principle of the law of evidence that witness must be weighed and not numbered.” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 205). Further to that, Ambedkar stated that “the *Shudras* were Aryans, ministers and rich people and kings.” (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, pp.111-112).

Sharad Patil also made a significant contribution to understanding the evolution of the *varna* and *jati systems* from ancient times. He acknowledged that “the analysis is based on the Marxist-Phule-Ambedkar methodology which helped to remove the limitation imposed by traditional historical materialism on studying various human societies –past and present –exclusively by class methodology.” (*Dasa Shudra Slavery, Part-II*, 6). Though Sharad Patil accepted the methodology adopted by Ambedkar, he did not agree with Ambedkar’s conclusion. Sharad Patil’s analysis functions mainly at two levels:

- how the moieties of the Indian gynocratic tribal society came to be called *varnas*, and
- the nature of society from the point of view of Aryan and pre-Aryan groups; and *Dasa* slavery as a manifestation of pre-Aryan society whereas *Shudra* slavery was Aryan manifestation of the social system.

According to Sharad Patil, the *varna* system evolved from the clan or tribe itself. But there is one difference between the standpoints of Ambedkar and Sharad Patil: Ambedkar ruled out the Aryan invasion theory whereas Sharad Patil accepted it.

Sharad Patil equated *Dasas* with Shudras, but according to Ambedkar, *Dasas* were a different class of people. Patil traces the origin of Brahmin *varna* not only from the priestly function of the Aryan tribe but also from the non-Aryan tribe. (*Dasa Shudra Slavery*, Part-I, pp.142-143). He observed that the two-*varna* system of the classless matriarchal society was transformed into the three-*varna* system of the matrilineal class society. (*Dasa Shudra Slavery*, Part-I 253).

It may be observed that Sharad Patil has probed the problem of *varna* system from the Aryan and non-Aryan perspectives in which he regarded the Aryan tribes as destroyer of the Indus cities. (*Dasa Shudra Slavery*, Part-I, 143 and also chapter 10 and 12).

On the other hand, Ambedkar did not accept the invasion theory. Ambedkar indeed worked with the idea of existence of three *varnas* in the ancient Indian society, and therefore, focused mainly on the origin of the Shudra *varna*, which Patil regarded Shudras as having an origin within the Aryan society. Sharad Patil preferred to equate the *Dasas* and Shudras as one category of a class/*varna* system. (*Dasa Shudra Slavery*, Part-I, 279). Ambedkar observed that *Dasas* and *Dasyus* were different communities and on the basis of references in the Rig Veda (VI 33.3, VII 83.1, VII 51.9, X 102.3), he concluded that the *Dasas* and Aryans have stood as one united people against a common enemy. (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 75). Ambedkar further adds, "It was a conflict which had arisen on account of differences of religions." (*Writing and Speeches*, vol. 7, 75).

5.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have provided a detailed assumption associated with Shudra and Ambedkar analyzed the origins of Shudras. He summarized his views on the Shudras as follows:

- 1) The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race.
- 2) There was a time when the Aryan society recognized only three *varnas*: Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.
- 3) The Shudras did not form a separate *varna*. They were part of the Kshatriya *varna* in the Indo-Aryan society.
- 4) There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.
- 5) As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras.
- 6) Owing to the denial of Upanayana, the Shudras who were Kshatriyas became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to form the fourth *Varna*.

5.7 QUESTIONS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) What aspects influenced Ambedkar to write on Shudras?
- 2) Interrogate the assumptions associated with Shudra in ancient texts?
- 3) Critically analyse Ambedkar's interpretation of the origins of Shudras?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 6 WHO WERE UNTOUCHABLES?

Structure

- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Identities of Untouchables
- 6.4 Ambedkar's Understanding of Untouchables
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Questions to Check Your Progress

Suggested Readings

6.1 OBJECTIVES

This unit would enable you to understand:

- Identities and nomenclature of Untouchables;
- Ambedkar's understanding of Untouchables;
- Theories on the origin of untouchability; and
- Ambedkar's perspective on the origin of untouchability.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss about identities, nomenclature, theories on the origin of untouchables and Ambedkar's understanding and perspective on the origin of untouchability. The Untouchables are the people with the lowest social status in Indian society, some of who perform menial and despised jobs. Though Untouchables are usually associated with the Indian caste system, primarily in Hinduism, similar groups exist across the globe. Some of such groups are:

- Burakumis in Japan,
- Blacks in South Africa,
- Hutus and Twas in Rwanda,
- Baekjeongs in Korea,
- Romanis in Europe,
- Al-Akhdams in Yeman,
- Ragyabpas in Tibet,
- Tankas in Guangdong,
- Fuzhou Tankas in Fuji,

- Si-mins and miannhu in Jiangsu,
- Osus in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Historically, the Untouchables in India have had several identities and nomenclatures. Similarly there have been many theories on the origin of untouchability. Ambedkar however, gave a different analysis of the origin of untouchables.

6.3 IDENTITIES OF UNTOUCHABLES

In India, the untouchables, un-seeables and un-approachables are called with many names; perhaps no other social group in India has these many identities and names. Broadly five major categories of nomenclatures can be discerned historically.

- 1) Caste identities based on *jati*, such as Jatav, Chamar, Mala, Madiga, Mang, and Mahar, emanate from a lore of their community traditions or mythical lore like caste legends, explaining their origin and status.
- 2) Religious texts, for instance Brahmanical texts, speak about structural exclusion and inferiority of the *Achut* (not to be touched), *Asprishya* (untouchable), *Antyaja* (born at the end), *Chandala* (dirt), *Asuras* (demons), *Dasas* (servants), or *Dasyas* (slaves), and *Raksasas* (demons).
- 3) Cultural and political processes during the colonial period created neologism outside religious texts, such as Pariah, Harijans (children of god) and Panchamas (fifth Varna).
- 4) Administrative and political policies of the state (both colonial and post-colonial) impacted the political and social discourse by using terms, such as Depressed Classes, Exterior Castes and Scheduled Castes.
- 5) Generic identities that evolved from the discourses of the ex-Untouchables in the early decades of the twentieth century till the aftermath of independence.

It would be pertinent to briefly recapitulate the history of the nomenclature 'Scheduled Caste'. Untouchability with its manifold manifestations is rooted in the religious and cultural notion of purity and pollution which is believed to have developed in the later Vedic period when the Brahmanic literature emerged in the form of *Smritis*, *Samhitas* and the *Upanishads*. The advent of the British rule ushered in crucial transformation, although neither the colonial policies towards Dalits initially were guided by a clearly-spelled policy nor were they motivated by a conscious political endeavour. The benefits could be referred to as 'unintended positive effects' of a policy that was not specifically formulated for that purpose.

The first definite and deliberate attempt to ascertain the population of the Untouchables was made by the census commissioner in 1911, who instructed census superintendents of different provinces to draw separate enumeration of castes and tribes classed as Hindus but who did not conform to certain standards and were subject to certain disabilities.

According to these *tests* the census superintendents made separate enumerations of castes and tribes. The criteria for official enumeration of depressed classes were as follows:

- 1) denied the supremacy of Brahmins

- 2) did not receive *mantras* from Brahmins or other recognized Hindu gurus
- 3) denied the authority of the Vedas
- 4) did not worship the great Hindu gods
- 5) were not served by “good” Brahmins
- 6) had no Brahman priests at all
- 7) had no access to the interior of the ordinary Hindu temple
- 8) caused pollution
- 9) buried their dead
- 10) ate beef and did not revere the cow.

The investigation conducted by the census commissioners left no room for guessing. In 1930, the Indian Statutory Commission defined that originally these castes seem to be partly functional groups comprising either of the following:

- who followed occupations described as unclean or degrading, such as scavenging and shoe making
- who were partly tribal, such as aboriginal tribes absorbed into Hindu fold and transformed into an imposed caste.

With regard to the issue of identity or nomenclature, B. R. Ambedkar pointed out that “the existing nomenclature of Depressed Classes is objected by the members of the Depressed Classes who have given thought to it and also by outsiders who take interest in them.” Ambedkar criticized the usage of such nomenclature and argued that “it has degrading and contemptuous” connotation and instead suggested that “they should be called ‘non-caste Hindus,’ ‘protestant Hindus’ or ‘non-conformist Hindus’ or some such designation.”

The term “exterior castes” appeared for the first time in the 1931 Census of India. This term for the Hindu castes hitherto known as Depressed was originally suggested by C. S. Mullan, the Census Superintendent for Assam, and was adopted in the census report of 1931 as the most satisfactory alternative to the label Depressed class.

The early decades of the twentieth century, precisely 1920s, witnessed the emergence of the self-reclamatory Adi (first) identity, centred around the “Adi” ideology, which was based on the idea that the untouchables were the original inhabitants of this land and consequently cast them in opposition to the rest of the populace who were positioned as outsiders or immigrants. The term original inhabitants found expressions across regions such as the following:

- Telugu-speaking regions of Madras presidency (Adi-Andhra)
- Nizam’s dominions and the United Provinces (Adi-Hindu)
- Tamil-speaking regions of the Madras presidency (Adi-Dravida)
- Maharashtra (Bhumi-Putra).

The fundamental question in relation to the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes arises with regard to the basis on which a community is listed so. As far as the official category Scheduled Castes is concerned, this term appeared officially for the first time in the Government of India Act, 1935. In April 1936, the British Government issued the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, specifying certain castes, races and tribes as Scheduled Castes in the-then provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces and Berar, Madras, Orissa, Punjab and United Provinces. Prior to the Government of India Act, 1935, the term used for these communities was Depressed Classes. The criteria employed in the Census Report of 1911 to distinguish 'Depressed Classes' from the rest of the population was mentioned earlier. The Census Report of 1931 mentioned the following terms for classifying certain castes as Depressed Classes and prepared a "schedule" of these communities:

- 1) Whether the caste or class in question can be served by barbers, water carriers, tailors, etc., who serve caste Hindus
- 2) Whether the caste or class in question can be served by a clean Brahmin or not
- 3) Whether the caste in question pollutes a high caste Hindu by contact or by proximity
- 4) Whether the caste or class in question is one from whose hands a caste Hindu can take water
- 5) Whether the caste or class in question is debarred from using public conveniences, such as roads, ferries, wells or schools
- 6) Whether the caste or class in question is debarred from the use of Hindu temples
- 7) Whether in ordinary social intercourse a well educated member of the caste or class in question is regarded as an equal by high caste
- 8) Whether the caste or class in question is merely depressed on account of its own ignorance, illiteracy or poverty and but for that would be subject to no social disability
- 9) Whether it is depressed on the account of the occupation followed and whether but for that occupation it would be subject to no social disability.

The basic criterion for identifying an untouchable was one who was denied access to temples and whose touch or approach was said to cause pollution. The majority of the Committee (. Lothian Committee) accepted this criterion as generally accepted tests of untouchability. The committee reiterated its conviction that the Depressed Class should include only such untouchables and not those Hindus who were economically poor and in other ways backward, but not regarded as "untouchables". All those untouchable groups were listed i.e., in other words "scheduled" in 1936 for the purposes of giving effect to the provisions for special electoral representations in the Government of India Act, 1935. These "scheduled" groups of communities, later were designated as Scheduled Castes, and the designation was adopted by the Indian Constitution, for legal and official purposes.

The generic identity is the concept 'Dalit' that came into vogue in 1972 in Maharashtra with the formation of Dalit Panthers Movement. Dalit literally means trampled, squeezed, crushed or broken or reduced into pieces, and politically is a symbol of change and revolution. A new antinomianism saw the birth of a radical ex-untouchable – a Dalit, who believes in humanism, rejects the existence of God, rebirth, soul, sacred books that

sanction discrimination, and religious ideas of *karma* and *moksha*. The term Dalit, more than any other category, has secular connotations. Originally it signified a class identity rather than caste identity and thus included women as well as lower castes and the extremely marginalized communities. However, currently its usage has tended to be constrained and is used as a synonym for ex-untouchables in debates and discourses within the academia. Yet for administrative purposes, with regard to government records and correspondence, they continue to be referred to as Scheduled Castes.

6.4 AMBEDKAR'S UNDERSTANDING OF UNTOUCHABLES

Untouchability among Non-Hindus

Many people are aware about the existence of untouchability among Hindus and non-Hindus. However, Ambedkar began to explore the practice in primitive and ancient societies, whether they recognized untouchability or not. According to Ambedkar, the Primitive Man believed that defilement was caused by:

- occurrences of certain events;
- contact with certain things; and
- contact with certain persons.

The Primitive Man also believed in the transmission of evil from one person to another. To him the danger of such transmission was peculiarly acute during the performance of natural functions such as eating and drinking. Among events whose occurrence was thought to cause defilement included the following:

- birth
- initiation
- puberty
- marriage
- cohabitation
- death.

Expectant mothers were regarded as impure and a source of defilement to others. The impurity of the mother extended to the child also. The stages of initiation and puberty signify the maturity of the males and the females to full sexual and social life.

Marriage ceremonies show that the Primitive Man regarded marriage as impure. In some cases the bride was required to undergo intercourse by men of the tribe as in Australia or by the chief or the medicine man of the tribe as in America or by the friends of the grooms as among the East African tribes. In some cases the bridegroom taps the bride with his sword. All these marriage observances are intended to neutralize and prepare the individual against the impurity of marriage.

After childbirth, the mother is segregated. At the initiation of puberty, the child is segregated and undergoes seclusion for a period. In marriage, from the time of betrothal until the actual ceremony the bride and bridegroom do not meet. A menstruating woman is segregated.

Segregation is most noticeable in the case of death. Not only is the dead-body isolated,

all the relatives of the dead are isolated from the rest of the community. This segregation is evidenced by the growth of hair and nails and wearing of old clothes by the relatives of the dead which show that they are not served by the rest of the society such as the barber and the washerman. The period of segregation and the range of segregation differ in the case of death but the fact of segregation is beyond dispute.

In the case of defilement of the sacred by the profane or defilement of the kindred or defilement by intercourse with non-kindred, there is also an element of segregation. The profane must keep away from the sacred. So also the kindred must keep away from the non-kindred. It is thus clear that in primitive society pollution was managed through segregation of the polluting agent.

In New Zealand, if anyone touched the head of another, the head being a peculiarly 'sacred' part of the body, he became taboo. He purified himself by rubbing his hands on fern root, which was then eaten by the head of the family in the female line. In Tonga, if a man ate tabooed food he saved himself from evil consequences by having the foot of a chief placed on his stomach. Comparing the Egyptian system of pollution with the primitive system there is no difference except that in Egypt it was practiced on an elaborate scale. Among the Greeks the causes of impurity were:

- bloodshed
- the presence of ghost and contact with death
- sexual intercourse
- childbirth
- the evacuation of the body
- the eating of certain foods such as pea-soup, cheese and garlic
- the intrusion of unauthorised persons into holy places
- foul speech and quarrelling.

The purificatory means, usually called *kaopoia* by Greeks, were lustral water, sulphur, onions, fumigation, fire and others.

On the basis of the above mentioned examples from different primitive or ancient societies we can conclude that the notion of pollution existed.

There are several theories about the origin of untouchability. The fact that there are so many diverse explanations may mean that all such explanations lack some core understanding of pollution taboo. Ambedkar provided a detailed study on the Untouchables in his writings (*Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol. 7*) in which he extensively addresses issues related to Shudras and untouchability among Hindus and non-Hindus.

OLD THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY

1) Racial Difference as the Origin of Untouchability.

The racial theory of Stanely Rice contains two elements, as can be seen in his writings on *Hindu Customs and Their Origins*:

- The Untouchables are non-Aryan, non-Dravidian aboriginals; and
- They were conquered and subjugated by the Dravidians.

This theory raises the whole question of the invasions of India by foreign invaders, the conquests made by them and the social and cultural institutions that resulted. According to Rice, there have been two invasions of ancient India. The first was the invasion by the Dravidians. They conquered the non-Dravidian aborigines, the ancestors of the Untouchables, and made them the untouchables. The second was the invasion by the Aryans. The Aryans conquered the Dravidians and made them Shudras. This theory is too mechanical and simple, and seems to be a mere speculation to explain a complicated set of facts relating to the origin of the Shudras and the Untouchables.

In ancient Indian history we often come across four names, the Aryans, the Dravidians, the Dasas and the Nagas. It is assumed that they are four different races. Stanley Rice, in his writings, seeks to explain the social structure of the Hindu society, particularly its class basis. Before such a theory is accepted, it is necessary to examine its foundations.

Let us know who the Dravidians and the Nagas were. The word Dravidia is the name of a language, not a race. It was the language of the Nagas throughout India. It is important to understand the effect of the contact between the Aryans and the Nagas, particularly on the Nagas and their language. The effect on the Nagas of north India was quite different from the effect on the Nagas of south India. The north Indian Nagas gave up Tamil which was their mother tongue and adopted Sanskrit in its place. The Nagas in south India retained Tamil as their mother tongue and did not adopt Sanskrit, the language of the Aryans. The reason why the name Dravida came to be applied only to the people of south India is that the Nagas of the north ceased to speak the Dravidian languages whereas the Nagas of the south kept speaking the Dravidian languages.

The use of the word Dravida for the people of south India must not, therefore, obscure the fact that the Nagas and Dravidas are one and the same people. They are only two different names for the same people. Nagas was a racial or cultural name and Dravida was their linguistic name. Similarly the Dasas are the same as the Nagas. In other words, there were only two races in ancient India: the Aryans and the Nagas. The implication of this theory is that the Nagas were conquered by the Aryans and were made untouchables.

2) **Occupational Origin of Untouchability.**

According to Rice, the origin of untouchability is to be found in the unclean and filthy occupations of the Untouchables. The theory is a plausible one. But there are certain difficulties in the way of its being accepted as a true explanation of the origin of untouchability. The filthy and unclean occupations that the Untouchables performed are common to all human societies. Every human society had people who performed these occupations, but in other parts of the world, they were not treated as untouchables. Though Aryans were a different race from other people, their notions of purity and impurity did not fundamentally differ from those of other ancient people. According to this theory there are two kinds of occupations, namely, pure work and impure work; impure work is that done by the slaves while pure work is that done by labourers.

It is important here to know who the slaves were. Stanley Rice says that slavery certainly existed among the Aryans. An Aryan could be a slave of another Aryan, irrespective of the varna he belonged to. A Kshatriya, a Vaishya or even a Brahmin could be a slave. When *Chaturvarna* came to be recognized as the law of the land, a change was made in the system of slavery. This change can be seen from the following extract from the Narada Smriti:

In the inverse order of the (four) castes slavery is not ordained, except where a man violated the duties peculiar to his caste. Slavery (in that respect) is analogous to the condition of a wife.

The change was a mere reorganisation of slavery and the basis of the principles of graded inequality which is the soul of Chaturvarna. To put it in a concrete form, the new law declared that a Brahmin could have a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Shudra as his slave. A Kshatriya could have a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Shudra as his slave. A Vaishya could have a Vaishya or a Shudra as his slave. A Shudra could have only a Shudra as his slave. With all this, the law of slavery remained and all Aryans, whether they were Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas or Shudras could be made slaves.

This change in the law of slavery did not make any difference to the duties prescribed for slaves. It still meant that a slave Brahmin, a slave Kshatriya, a slave Vaishya did the work of a scavenger. This meant the following:

- A Brahmin could not do scavenging in the house of a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Shudra, but could do it in the house of a Brahmin.
- A Kshatriya could not do scavenging in the house of a Vaishya or a Shudra, but could do it in the house of a Brahmin and a Kshatriya.
- A Vaishya could not do scavenging in the house of a Shudra but could do it in the house of a Brahmin, a Kshatriya or a Vaishya.

It is therefore obvious that the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas who are admittedly Aryans could do the work of scavengers which is the filthiest of filthy occupations. Therefore, the theory of filthy occupation as an explanation for untouchability is not tenable. If scavenging was not loathsome to an Aryan, how can it be said that engaging in filthy occupations was the basis of untouchability.

Ambedkar rejected both the theories and proposed his new theories which are mentioned below in detail.

NEW THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Ambedkar rejected Rice's racial and occupational theories of origin of untouchability and provided his new theories on untouchables founded on the concepts of:

- Broken Men
- Contempt for Buddhists
- Beef-eating.

According to Ambedkar, the history of the Untouchables goes back to early ages. He says that the primitive society was nomadic, their only wealth was cattle. The Primitive Man went from place to place in search of new pastures for his cattle. As the art of farming and cultivating was discovered, land became the new source of wealth, and the nomads settled down. However, all tribes did not take to settled life at one and the same time, some settled down and some remained nomadic.

The settled tribes became wealthier because now they had both corn and cattle. The nomadic tribes coveted their wealth and organised raids on them with a view to steal their wealth. The settled tribes, being engaged in gainful occupation, could not always defend

themselves as neither could they use their ploughs as swords nor could they pursue the raiders beyond their normal frontiers. The tribal warfare continued for a long time and it often resulted in a tribe being defeated and routed instead of being completely annihilated. In many cases a defeated tribe got broken into smaller groups. These smaller groups of 'Broken Men' felt the necessity of shelter and protection (Ahir 1990). On the other hand, the settled tribes felt the necessity of someone who could undertake to look after their watch and ward work. So both these groups 'Broken' as well as 'Settled' solved their problems by mutual agreement. The former agreed to do watch and ward work and the latter in turn, to give them shelter. In view of different blood of the 'Broken Men' and also from a strategic point of view, they were made to live outside the villages by the settled tribes (Ahir 1990).

Ambedkar believes that similar evolution took place in India and the Indian primitive society had 'settled tribes' and 'Broken Men'. He further explains that these 'Broken Men' later became the Untouchables. His theory is supported by two historical facts.

- In the Hindu Shastras the Untouchables are referred to *Antayaja*, the word *Antya* means the end of the village, so *Antayaja* means 'who live outside the village'. As an example, Ambedkar pointed out that every village in Maharashtra is surrounded by a small wall and the quarters of the Mahars are outside this wall.
- The totems of the Mahars (Broken Men) of a particular village differ from the totems of the Hindus of the village.

After proving that the present day Scheduled Castes were Broken Men, Ambedkar goes on to prove that they became Buddhists.

In Ambedkar's view, in the distant past, all Indians used to eat meat. The advent of Buddhism and Jainism curbed this tendency and the doctrine of Ahimsa became popular. As Buddhism had for the first time raised the slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity, people from all walks of life, especially the lower classes, became its votaries in large numbers.

As Brahmans were relegated to the background, they became resentful. With a view to win their lost prestige as well as favour of the masses, they took measures to regain their lost ground. As part of this strategy, they stopped eating beef and declared the cow to be a sacred animal (Ahir 1990). The broken Men being poor, however, could not give up eating beef, so the Brahmans condemned them as untouchables.

Another reason for the harsh treatment received by the Broken Men was that they professed Buddhism, which was an eyesore to the Brahmans, because of its gospel of equality (Ahir 1990). Thus the Broken Men were made the victims of untouchability in the 4th century A.D. when cow killing was made a capital offence by Gupta kings (Ahir 1990).

Ambedkar's theory about the origin of untouchables and his arguments in support of it seem irrefutable. Whatever he has stated in respect of Maharashtra is also true of other states. For example, in almost every village of Punjab, the houses of the Scheduled Castes are at the end of either the western side or the southern side of the village.

Again the gotras of the Scheduled Castes are different from the gotras of Hindus and Sikhs. That the Scheduled Castes were Buddhists can also be proven on other counts. Almost all their customs and manners are essentially Buddhistic. They do not care much

about Hindu gods and goddesses but adore their gurus such as Ravidass, Chokhamela, and Kabir.

6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we read about the identities of untouchables both across the world and in India. In India, broadly five major categories of nomenclatures can be discerned historically, one of them was based on *jatis (castes)*, such as Jatav, Chamar, Mala, Madiga, Mang and Mahar. Then there was nomenclature based on Brahmanical texts, for instance *Atchut, Asprishya, Antyaja, Chandala, Asuras, Dasas* or *Dasyas* and *Raksasas*. Outside these religious texts were neologisms like Pariah, Harijans and Panchamas that emerged from the cultural and political processes during the colonial period.

Ambedkar rejected the existing racial and occupational theories of the origin of untouchability. He explained that the earliest Untouchables were not of a different race. There was no racial difference between the Hindus and the Untouchables. Neither was there any occupational basis of untouchability. The distinction between the Hindus and the Untouchables, before the advent of untouchability, was the difference between ‘tribesmen’ and ‘broken men’ who later came to be treated as untouchables. Ambedkar believed that untouchability sprang up because of the contempt and hatred of Brahmins for the broken men who had become Buddhist and who continued to eat beef long after it was given up by Brahmins.

6.6 QUESTIONS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Discuss the identities of the Untouchables.
- 2) Discuss the theories of the origin of Untouchability.
- 3) Critically examine Ambedkar’s view on the origin of Untouchability.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Ambedkar, B.R. “Untouchables or the Children of India’s Ghetto and other Essays on Untouchables and Untouchability: Social, Political and Religious”, in Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol 5*. Bombay, 1989.

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UNIT 7 STATUS OF WOMEN

Structure

- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Women in Indian Society
- 7.4 Ambedkar's View on Indian Women
- 7.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.6 Questions to Check Your Progress

Suggested Readings

7.1 OBJECTIVES

This unit would enable you to understand:

- The status of women in India from Vedic period to till today; and
- Ambedkar's view on Indian women.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss the status of women in India from vedic period to till today and Ambedkar views on Indian women. To understand the social and cultural life of Hindus and their views on women, one must first understand Indian society. India is a highly stratified society, divided on the basis of caste, class and gender; and patriarchy acts as ghee to the fire. In Hindu society, religion controls every worldly activity. While living, one must perform ceremonies; after one's death, the descendants are instructed to perform ceremonies in order to secure happiness.

The status of women in early Hindu society was an enviable one. In India, during the Vedic period, women enjoyed equal status with men. Indian civilization produced great women ranging from Brahmavadinis (women who composed hymns in Vedas) to stateswomen, from an ideal wife to a warrior queen. Hindu mythology showed that the status of Hindu women during the Vedic period was honourable and respectable.

During the post-Vedic period, women started losing their status in society. They lost their independence and became a subject needing protection. Manu, the progenitor of the Hindu race, stated that a woman should be kept day and night in subordination by the males of the family – a woman had to be protected by her father in childhood, by her husband in young age and by her sons in old age.

In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent. (V. 148.)

Manu did not treat women at par with men and regarded women as more emotional and less rational than men. Men were responsible for hard work and earning the bread while women were responsible for household duties. The rigid institutions of caste and patriarchy reinforced these notions.

The social reform movement about the status of women started in India in the latter half of the 19th century. The reformist group realized that without uplifting the position of women, it was not possible to attain an all-round development of society. They crusaded against evil practices like sati, *purdah*, child marriage, female infanticide, widowhood, polygamy, and *devadasi* as well as the deplorable conditions of formal education. The inferior status of women is a result of patriarchal code of living. The rigid codes of behaviour as outlined for women in Brahmanical texts were also responsible for the low status of women in India.

7.3 WOMEN IN INDIAN SOCIETY

In ancient India, especially in Rig Vedic period, women enjoyed equal status with men. They had a respectable place in society. Women were not secluded from men and freely participated in public life, studied the Vedas and composed hymns. They also distinguished themselves in science and learning. Ghosha, Apala, Lopamudra, Vishwvara, Surya, Indrani, Yami, Romasha – all these names highlight the position and the esteem which Hindu women enjoyed in the Vedic period. Women were also allowed to observe celibacy (Atharvaveda 12.3.17). There are examples of women who used to teach. They were considered intellectual companions to their husbands, as the friends and loving helpers in the journey of life of their partners, in their religious duties and the centre of their domestic bliss.

In Vedic times, women were not treated as subordinate but equal to men in all matters of life. They were given education and had a voice in the selection of their husband. Women enjoyed complete freedom in household matters. In religion, women enjoyed all rights and regularly participated in ceremonies. In fact, the performance of religious ceremonies was considered invalid without the wife joining her husband as she was regarded as *ardhangini* (better-half). As regards property rights, according to Vedic hymns; both husband and wife were joint owners of the property.

In the post-Vedic period (Upanishads, Puranas and Smriti periods), their status started deteriorating. Brahmanical rules and codes of conduct, rigid restrictions imposed by the caste system and the joint family system were the main reasons for lowering of their status. A daughter began to be regarded as a curse, denied the right of inheritance and ownership of property, pre-puberty marriages came to be practised. For example, a passage in Mahabharata says: “O Narada! There is nothing else that is more sinful than women. Verily, women, are the root of all faults.” (Mahabharata, Book 13 (Anusasana parva), section XXXVIII) This quotation prove show disrespect was shown towards women.

The medieval period witnessed further deterioration in the position of women due to the impact of Muslim culture. Female infanticide, child marriage, *purdah* system, sati and slavery were the main social evils affecting the position of women. The birth of a female child began to be regarded as a curse, a bad luck. Women were almost confined to their home, and their freedom in matters of education, mate selection, public appearances etc. were curtailed.

The revival of sati, the prohibition of remarriage, the spread of *purdah* and the greater prevalence of polygamy made the position of women very low.

In the British period some progress was achieved in eliminating inequalities between men and women in matters of education, employment, social and property rights. Sati, *purdah*,

female infanticide, child marriage, inheritance, slavery, prohibition of widow remarriage and lack of women's rights in different fields were some of the problems which attracted the attention of the British Raj. However, the British rulers initially did not interfere with the traditional social fabric of the Indian people (Hindus) and as such they took no steps to bring any change in the status of women in India. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwarchand Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand, Kandukuri Veeresalingam, Durgabai Deshmukh, Jyotiba Phule and Ramaswamitried to uplift and restore women's glory through their preachings, press and platforms.

These steps paved the way to removing obstacles in the progress of women. Not only this, it helped kick-start the process of elimination of inequalities between men and women and giving proper respect to half of the society. The most significant legislations relating to the problems faced by the Indian (Hindu) women passed during the British period were as follows:

- 1) Abolition of Sati Act, 1813
- 2) Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856
- 3) Civil Marriage Act, 1872
- 4) Married Women's Property Act, 1874
- 5) Child Marriage Restraint Act (Sharda Act), 1929
- 6) Hindu Law of Inheritance Act, 1929
- 7) Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937
- 8) Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1946.

In spite of various reforms and measures, the status of Hindu women remained low as India had been a patriarchal society for centuries, where the Laws of Manu with regard to the role and behaviour of women had been rigidly adhered to. Oppression and exploitation of women remained substantially unexamined. To bring an end to the oppression of Indian women, several reformers tried their best to influence the state. Nevertheless, it was Ambedkar who was successful in getting the state to come to the rescue of the women of our country through constitutional measures and the Hindu Code Bill. For his efforts for women, he was also known as the saviour of Hindu women.

7.4 AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON INDIAN WOMEN

Ambedkar saw women as victims of an oppressive, caste-based and rigid hierarchical social system. He made efforts in understanding the complete reality about the status of women in India through a comprehensive Hindu Code Bill. Ambedkar realized that to uplift women's status in India there was a need to reform the Hindu family and Hindu society.

The Ministry of Law revised the first draft of the Hindu Code Bill in 1948 and made some small alterations to it, before being introduced in the Constituent Assembly. It was referred to a select committee under the chairmanship of Ambedkar. The committee made a number of changes. This edition had eight sections:

- Part one delineated who would be considered a Hindu and did away with the caste system

- Part two of the bill concerned marriage
- Part three adoption
- Part four guardianship
- Part five the policy on joint-family property, and was controversial as it included the non-traditional approach of allocation of property to women.
- Part six concerned policies regarding women's property, and
- Parts seven and eight established policies on succession and maintenance.

Ambedkar's version of the Hindu Code:

- Allowed divorce (this conflicted with traditional Hindu personal law, which did not sanction divorce, although it was practiced).
- Established one joint family system of property ownership for all Hindus by doing away with regional rules.
- Allotted portions of inheritance to daughters, while giving widows complete property rights where they had previously been restricted.

Because of the above efforts and measures for uplifting women's status, he was called the Saviour of Indian women.

He believed that socio-cultural forces artificially construct gender relations, as Simone De Beauvoir observed: "Women are made; they are not born." That is what was done by Manusmriti and Hindu religion. Ambedkar raised the question, "Why Manu degraded her (woman)?" In his books such as *The Riddle of the Woman*, *The Woman and the Counter Revolution*, *The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women*, and *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, Ambedkar attributed the low status of women in India to Manu and his predecessors.

Ambedkar believed that Manu propounded a theory to keep women in perpetual slavery. He aimed to condition them to a stereotype of feminine behaviour, requiring them to be passive and submissive and suited only to a life of domestic and familial responsibilities. In *Women and Counter Revolution* and *The Riddle of Women*, Ambedkar portrays the way in which Manu treated women. He pointed out that the laws of Manu on the status of women were very important in moulding the Hindu attitude and perspective towards women, perpetuated and maintained through Hindu personal laws based on shastras, caste and endogamy, i.e. the base of Indian patriarchy. Manusmriti laid down certain rules and codes of conduct for women according to which women should not be allowed free rein in any respect.

Ambedkar attacked *Manusmriti* as a major source that legitimizes the denial of freedom, self respect, right to education, property and divorce to women by attributing a very lofty ideal to them. According to Manu, women should always be apart and parcel of the property owned by men and were no better than slaves. The killing of a woman is equated with killing of a Shudra, a minor offence. Some of the other principle rules of Manu concerning women are:

It is the nature of women to seduce men in this (world). For that reason the wise are never unguarded in (the company of) females. (II. 213, G Buhler, tr, The Laws of Manu)

For women are able to lead astray in (this) world not only a fool, but even a learned man and (to make) him a slave of desire and anger. (II. 214.)

One should not sit in a lonely place with one's mother, sister or daughter; for the senses are powerful, and master even a learned man.(II. 215.)

Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age; (thinking), '(It is enough that) he is a man,' they give themselves to the handsome and to the ugly. (IX. 14.)

Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this (world). (IX. 15.)

The above quotes show how low was Manu's opinion of women. The laws of Manu reveal his bias against women. Women were not to be free under any circumstances.

Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families), and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control. (IX. 2.)

Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect(her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence. (IX. 3.)

Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families. (IX. 5.)

A woman was not to have a right to divorce. Manu does not prevent a man from giving up his wife. Indeed he not only allows him to abandon his wife but he also permits him to sell her. But he prevents the wife from becoming free.

Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband. (IX. 46.)

Manu instructs women:

Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.(V. 154.)

She must always be cheerful, clever in (the management of her) household affairs, careful in cleaning her utensils, and economical in expenditure. (V. 150.)

A wife was reduced by Manu to the level of a slave in the matter of property. Women under the laws of Manu could be subjected to corporal punishment and Manu allows the husband the right to beat his wife. Further, he forbids women from performing sacrifices, else she would go to hell.

Neither a girl, nor a (married) young woman, ... shall offer an Agnihotra. (XI. 36)

Manu also declared a new rule that killing a woman was only a minor offence (upapataka).

Stealing grain, base metals, or cattle, intercourse with women who drink spirituous liquor, slaying women, Sudras, Vaisyas, or Kshatriyas, and atheism (are all) minor offences, causing loss of caste (*Upapataka*). (XI. 67.).

By prescribing the above, perhaps Manu wanted to establish that the Brahman was superior to all and only the killing of a Brahman was a *Mahapataka*.

Such views on the woman were both an insult and an injury to the woman of India because without any justification she was denied the right to acquire knowledge which is the birthright of every human being. A woman, in Manu's eyes, was a thing of no value. In order to retain women within the fold of Hinduism and to prevent them from moving towards Buddhism and other religions, these were made laws of the state.

The above excerpts show that Manu was responsible for the downfall and degradation of Hindu women. Before Manu, Brahmanism existed only as a matter of social theory but Manu converted that social theory into law of the state. Shudras and women were the two chief sections of Aryan society who were flocking to join Buddhism, thereby threatening to undermine the foundation of Brahmanic religion. Manu deprived women the freedom they could get under Buddhism, thus protecting Hinduism from the invasion of Buddhism.

7.5 LET US SUM UP

B. R. Ambedkar was critical of the lowly position of Hindu women in Manusmriti. He found women's emancipation in Buddhist values, which promotes equality, self-respect and education. He believed that Buddha treated women with respect and love, and never tried to degrade them as Manu did. Ambedkar cites examples of women like Vishakha, Amrapali of Vaishali, Gautami as evidences of Buddha's treatment of women as equals. (Paul 1993:383-84).

Hindu culture and social customs stood most in the way of women's empowerment. It was Manu, not Buddhism, who imposed such disabilities upon women, crippled them permanently and was responsible for the downfall of Hindu women. Ambedkar urged the members of the Constituent Assembly to have a common code that would replace the Hindu law. He advocated the cause of women and exhorted Hindus to change their society to suit the needs of the modern times.

7.6 QUESTIONS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Critically examine the status of women in India from the Vedic period to after Independence.
- 2) Analyse the role of Ambedkar for the upliftment of Indian women.
- 3) Discuss Ambedkar's view on Indian women..

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UNIT 8 ADIVASI / INDIGENOUS INDIANS

Structure

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Defining Adivasi / Indigenous People
- 8.4 Profile of Tribe
- 8.5 Discrimination, Marginalisation and Rights Deprivation
- 8.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.7 Questions to Check Your Progress

Suggested Readings

8.1 OBJECTIVES

This unit would enable you to understand:

- Adivasis (indigenous people of India);
- Contribution of B.R. Ambedkar who relentlessly spoke about the rights of Scheduled Tribes; and
- Discrimination and marginalization of Scheduled Tribes.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss about the identity and profile of Adivasis and Ambedkar's efforts for their rights and marginalization of Scheduled Tribes. In India Scheduled Tribes are generally considered to be adivasis. The term *adivasi* is derived from *adi* (earliest time) and *vasi* (resident of), thus adivasi means indigenous people or original inhabitants. Historically the socio-economic rights of indigenous people have been ignored. They have often been dispossessed of their lands because the areas they live in are invariably rich in natural resources. In many cases, they are in the center of conflict because they struggle to live the way they would like.

Ambedkar was the person who fought for the rights of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and Minorities. Right from his first agitation at Mahad for water till his last breath, he fought not only against the British but also against the Caste Hindus who enslaved the majority of the people under religious slavery (Mahendra Jadhav 2016). B.R. Ambedkar was committed to social causes, and remained committed throughout his life to the deprived sections of society.

8.3 DEFINING ADIVASI / INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

In this section, we present a general profile of adivasis (tribal people) of India. India has the highest concentration of adivasis in the world, after Africa. In India, the term adivasi has many synonyms, such as:

- Scheduled Tribes
- tribes
- *janajati*
- *girijan*
- *vanvasi*
- *vanyajati*
- hill tribes
- aboriginal
- native.

The term *adivasi* has sustained indigenous discourse in India since the 1930s. Taking a couple of decades since then to enter, alongside “tribals” and “Scheduled Tribes”, into the lingua-franca of postcolonial India, it is still underused, especially considering that overtly derogatory terms, notably *vanavasi* or forest dweller are still routinely applied to those groups marginalised by other communities.

The original tribes in India have been divided into a large number of sub tribes, which have been divided further. The meaning of the word tribe from the Oxford dictionary is:

a group of people from same race and with the same customs, religions and languages etc. living in a particular area and often led by a chief. Many anthropologists have defined the term tribe

According to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*:

A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so.

Bailey said that a tribal society is “segmentary” and egalitarian (Bailey 1961). Scholars have defined the term tribe in different ways and there is no universally accepted definition.

Well-established criteria to be followed for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe are:

- Indications of primitive traits
- Distinctive culture
- Geographical isolation
- Shyness of contact with the community at large
- Backwardness.

Thus a tribe is a group which has its own unique and incredible tradition, culture, language, religion, and social organisation.

Before the start of the colonization in India, there was no equivalent original word for the English term tribe. To begin with, food gathering communities and shifting cultivators were

added to the list of tribe. The terminology used to refer to tribes underwent several changes:

- 1) “primitive tribal” was added in 1931,
- 2) “backward tribe” was added in 1935,
- 3) “adivasi” (the original or native inhabitants) was added in 1948,
- 4) Scheduled Tribes was added in 1950.

The term indigenous people is often used interchangeably to mean tribes and other traditional forest dwellers in the Indian context. For practical purposes, at International level the United Nations and multilateral agencies generally consider the Scheduled Tribe (STs) as Indigenous People. In India the term *adivasi* is argued to be more apt to mean indigenous people. The contention behind these terms is to use them to mean a certain category of people. Over the last few decades the term has been a source of a lot of contention and political movements.

The Census of 1901 did not provide the exact figure of the total population of the Untouchables. This was due to two reasons.

- No exact tests were applied to determine who is an Untouchable.
- People who were economically and educationally backward but not Untouchable were mixed up with those who were actually Untouchables.

The separation of the Untouchables from the Hindus was insisted upon by the Muslims in a memorial to the Government dated 27 January 1910 in which they claimed that their representation in the political bodies of the country should be in proportion to the population of Touchable Hindus and not Hindus as a whole because they contended that the Untouchables were not Hindus. Be that as it may, the Census of 1911 marks the beginning of the ascertainment of the population of the Untouchables. Efforts in the same direction were continued in the Census of 1921 and 1931.

The Census of 1911 went a step further and actually laid down ten tests and separated the Hindus into those who were 100 per cent Hindu and those who were not 100 per cent Hindu. It included into the category of untouchables and tribes, those who

- 1) denied the supremacy of the Brahmins
- 2) did not receive the mantra from Brahmana or other recognized Hindu gurus
- 3) denied the authority of the Vedas
- 4) did not worship the great Hindu gods
- 5) were not served by good Brahmanas
- 6) have no Brahmin priests at all
- 7) have no access to the interior of the ordinary Hindu temple
- 8) cause pollution
- 9) bury their dead
- 10) eat beef and do not revere the cow.

Of those ten tests, those numbered 1, 3 4, and 9 differentiate between Hindus animists and tribals. The rest differentiate between Hindus and untouchables.

There has always been difference of opinion regarding a suitable model for the integration of the tribals to the mainstream of Indian life. Ambedkar observed that,

Primitive Tribes and the Criminal Tribes are not afflicted by this system of untouchability. To a Hindu they do not cause pollution. Indeed these Primitive and Criminal Tribes observe untouchability towards the Untouchables. The situation is full of humour when one sees members of these Primitive and Criminal Tribes feeling that they would be polluted if they would touch an Untouchable. They are poor, filthy, superstitious, ignorant, far more than the Untouchables yet they pride themselves as socially superior to the Untouchables. This of course is the result of the contagion which they have from the Hindus. But the point to note is that the Hindu does not treat them as Untouchable. That is an advantage which they have over the Untouchables and which makes their future assured. If the Primitive Tribes have no opportunities for advancement it is because they choose to live in isolation. But once they come out of their forest recesses and take part in civilization, there is nothing that will stand in their way. Similarly the Criminal Tribes have their future assured. Government have established settlements where these Criminal Tribes are kept and taught useful trades. There is no doubt that in a very short time they will be completely weaned from their vicious habits.

The case of the Untouchables stands on quite a different footing altogether. Their disabilities are imposed upon them. Their isolation is really segregation which is enforced upon them. The problem of the Untouchables is different from the problem of the Primitive Tribes because in their case the evils of segregation are aggravated by the fact of untouchability and the result is that while in the case of the Primitive Tribes the problem is due to geographical isolation combined with lack of desire to avail themselves of the opportunities for betterment, in the case of the Untouchables the problem is due to positive denial of opportunities.

The term Scheduled Tribes first appeared in the Constitution of India in 1950. Article 366 (25) defined Scheduled Tribes as:

such tribes or tribal communities or parts of groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution.

This Article says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes.

The government recognizes most adivasis under the Constitutional term Scheduled Tribes derived from a schedule in the Constitution Order of 1950, though the term Scheduled Tribes (STs) is not coterminous with the term adivasis. Scheduled Tribes is an administrative term used for purposes of “administering” certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits for specific sections of peoples considered historically disadvantaged and backward.

B.R. Ambedkar explains the use of the term Scheduled Tribes instead of *adivasis* or other suggested terms by asserting that,

the word Adivasi is really a general term, which has no specific legal de jure connotation, whereas the word 'Scheduled Tribes' has a fixed meaning, because it enumerates the tribes... (Madavi L. K 1998)

His well-intentioned approach is clear from his rights-based negotiation for the tribals. Ambedkar says that,

[T]he Aboriginal Tribes have not as yet developed any political sense to make the best use of their political opportunities and they may easily become mere instruments in the hands either of a majority or a minority and thereby disturb the balance without doing any good to themselves...

To some extent, Ambedkar, thus had a vision of incorporating the tribals in the rest of India. People have had disagreements with his vision as they argued for tribal autonomy, whereby the tribals would be at liberty to develop themselves according to their genius and culture. "Moreover, he has viewed tribals as a potential instrument, thus demeaning the value of their identity as a group or even as a community" (Aditya Nayak 2015).

8.4 PROFILE OF TRIBE

India has a large number of tribes. There are over 705 Scheduled Tribes, including 75 Particular Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories of the country. The synonyms of these tribes also vary many a times and are listed in the schedule. Many tribes are present in more than one state. The largest numbers of scheduled tribes are in the state of Orissa.

The major tribes in India are the following:

- the Gonds
- the Bhils
- the Santhals
- the Oraons
- the Minas
- the Nagas
- the Konda Reddis
- the Kolams
- the Great Andamanese
- the Jarwas

(For a complete list of tribes, please see <http://tribal.nic.in/writereaddata/cms/documents/201306030201065184795statewiselistofscheduledtribe.pdf>).

The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in the urban areas. They live in about 15% of the country's areas. The decadal population growth of the tribals from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population.

The adivasi population of the country broadly inhabits two distinct geographical areas – Central India and North- Eastern India.

More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central India:

- Madhya Pradesh (14.69%)
- Chhattisgarh (7.5%)
- Jharkhand (8.29%)
- Andhra Pradesh (5.7%)
- Maharashtra (10.08%)
- Orissa (9.2%)
- Gujarat (8.55%)
- Rajasthan (8.86%).

The other distinct area is the North-East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh). The state with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes is Mizoram at 94.5% and the Union Territory with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes is Lakshadweep at 94.8% (refer 2011 Census for details. (<http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/Statistics/StatisticalProfileofSTs2013.pdf>))

Tribals in India are divided on the basis of following language families:

- Dravidian
- Tibeto-Burman
- Austro-Asiatic
- Tibeto-Chinese
- Andamanese.

Tribals who belong to different language families live in distinct geographic settings. For example, in South Orissa there are languages that originate from the following families:

- Central Dravidian
- Austro-Asiatic (Munda)
- Indo-Aryan.

In the Jharkhand area, languages are from the following families:

- Indo-Aryan,
- North Dravidian
- Austro-Asiatic.

Bhili and Santali, both tribal languages, each have more than 4 million speakers. Gondi is spoken by nearly 2 million people.

The tribes of India can be classified on the following basis of race:

- Turko-Iranian
- Indo-Aryan
- Scytho-Dravidian
- Mongoloid
- Dravidian.

8.5 DISCRIMINATION, MARGINALISATION AND RIGHTS DEPRIVATION

A number of tribals in India, even today, suffer from many problems such as, geographic isolation, poor socio-economic conditions and poor access to health and education. A majority of them live below the poverty line. Even today most people regard them as primitive and aim to decimate them as human beings or at best integrate them with the mainstream at the lowest rung in the ladder.

Over centuries, adivasis' economy and livelihood practices have been closely associated with the ecology of their habitats. They are an integral part of their territories, which are the essence of their existence. K.L. Bhowmick explains the social status of Indian tribes. He mentions in his writings that in India, tribes have been living in their present locations for many years with the exception of a few migrating and transhumance groups. During the pre-British rule, the tribal areas were far from the reach of the administration. Adivasis were notionally part of the 'unknown frontier' of the respective states where the rule of the reign in fact did not extend, and the adivasis governed themselves outside of the influence of the particular ruler. However, the centralized British administration gradually extended to the tribal areas.

The introduction of the alien concept of private property began with the Permanent Settlement of the British in 1793. The British established the Zamindari system that conferred control over vast territories, including adivasi territories, to designated feudal lords for the purpose of revenue collection. The British colonial policies exposed the tribals to the pressures of the commercial interests. Outsiders such as traders, moneylenders, followed by settlers, successfully acquired large tracts of the aboriginals' land through different clandestine transactions, exploitative practices, land grabbing, etc.

Historically, tribal communities have depended on forests for their livelihood, in terms of cultivation and collecting forest products. Tribals were severely marginalised by reservation of forests during the colonial and postcolonial period. The total forest cover in India is reported to be 765.21 thousand sq. km., of which 71% are adivasi areas. Of these, 416.52 and 223.30 thousand sq. km are categorised as reserved and protected forests respectively. About 23% of these are further declared as Wild Life Sanctuaries and National Parks which alone have displaced some half a million adivasis.

The historical expropriation of adivasis from their forest lands, and their political marginalisation and neglect in development initiatives has been a major cause for the prevalence and persistence of acute poverty in India's forested landscapes. Apart from the forest laws, the process of alienation of the lands of adivasis has been going on for decades, but has accelerated after independence.

The Bhuria Committee in 1995 formulated a three-tier structure to extend the panchayati raj functions to the scheduled areas (PESA).

- 1) The lowest but most important constituent of the structure is the village-level gram sabha, which exercises command over natural resources, resolves disputes and manages institutions such as schools and cooperatives under it.
- 2) Above it is the gram panchayat, an elected body of representatives of each gram sabha, also to function as an appellate authority for unresolved disputes at the lower level.
- 3) At the top is a block or taluk-level body.

According to Ambedkar, deprivation of forest dependent people had taken place due to colonial forest policies on the one hand and the attitude of the upper caste Hindus on the other. This phenomenon can be captured from the following quote:

When the agriculture season is over the Untouchables have no employment and no means of earning a living. In such seasons they subsist by cutting grass and firewood from the jungles and sell it in a nearby town. Even when it is open it depends upon the forest guard. Only if he is bribed he will let them take some grass and firewood from the Government forests. When it brought to the town, they have always to face a buyer's market. The Hindus who are the main body of buyers will always conspire to beat down the wages. Having no power to hold out, the Untouchables have to sell their stuff for whatever is offered to them. Often times they have to walk 10 miles each way from the village to the town and back to sell their stuff (Ambedkar 1989: 24).

The situation was further worsened by the famines in the latter half of the 19th century that forced the tribals into destitution. Verrier Elwin remarks that the chief cause of the decline of tribal communities was the loss of land and forests.

Today, development projects have become a major threat to the tribal people. From the British period to the present, tribals have been the worst sufferers of most development projects. Over 10 million adivasis have been displaced to make way for development projects, such as dams, mines, industries, roads and protected area. Acquisition of land for development projects forces people to leave their traditional abodes and land. Development induced-displacement has the strongest impact on tribal people, perhaps more than on any other, because these communities have no voice and can be easily swept away by the development projects. According to Government of India, nearly 10 million people have been displaced by development projects, and out of those displaced, 55% are tribal people. Displacement of tribal people from their original habitats marginalises them further.

During the colonial and postcolonial periods, tribal movements were born out of deep dissatisfaction and often discontent against the socio-economic policies of the Government, which adversely affected their lives. Encroachment of tribal lands by money-lenders backed by the Government, the acquisition of tribal forests, high taxation or enhancement of rent, each one of these policies created among the tribes and nomadic communities, extreme distrust of the authorities and turned them against the rulers.

The inception of the Indian Constitution on 26 January 1950 was a significant event, not only in the political history of India but also in the history of social justice and human rights. Protective discrimination is one of the important methods through which constitutional

goals like social and economic justice can be secured to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

8.6 LET US SUM UP

India has the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. The tribes in India have many characteristic features. The tribes in India have been divided into a large number of sub tribes, which are divided further. They are mutually exclusive, each having an endogenous and exogamous clan, with their own name and culture, customs, local practices and lifestyle. One of their distinguishing features is that a majority of them live in scattered and small habitations located in remote and inaccessible settlements in hilly and forest areas of the country.

Despite the quest for social justice by many and Ambedkar in particular, and despite constitutional protections slowly translating into action, vast sections of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, backward classes, weaker sections and minorities are still struggling hard for social justice.

8.7 QUESTIONS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Describe the meaning and definition of the term *adivasi*.
- 2) What are the essential characteristics of a Scheduled Tribe?
- 3) Discuss briefly about the marginalisation of tribes in India.

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