

The Evil of Caste:-
**The Caste System as the Largest Systemic
Violation of Human Rights in Today's World**

By
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**(A Response to the Hindu Council UK Report on the Denial of the Caste System and its
Effects)**

"Know Truth as Truth and Untruth as Untruth"

Buddha

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Preface

Due to the success of democracy, fast communications, scientific achievements, and the rise of social conscience the world is changing fast. It has already eradicated apartheid and is tackling slavery, and also striving for the elimination of all forms of social, religious or political activities which limit or curtail freedoms for the advancement of the individual or certain groups of people, no matter in which country or culture they exist.

The societies which have discriminatory cultures should take note that there is nothing wrong in being proud of their past, but this does not mean they have to live in the past and become stagnant instead of evolving. There is no argument that the past has also laid down fine ideals from which have developed the best in modern society, but it also gave respectability to slavery, apartheid, and to caste, race and gender discrimination, all of which are unacceptable in today's world.

The attention behind writing this document is not to undermine or vilify any individual or group, it is only to clarify some misconceptions about the caste system and the damage it has done, as it still threatens to wreck the social harmony of society. I shall be failing in my duty if I fail to thank Dharminder Chahal, Arun Kumar, M.S.Bahal, Balram Sampla, C.Gautam, Ram Pal 'Rahi' Dr.Muni, Neresh Banga and Raj Kumar Oshoraj for making some positive suggestions. My grateful thanks are also due to David Haslam for laboriously editing this document and Jeremy Corbyn MP who was kind enough to write a Foreword. My thanks also go to the 'Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK' for publishing this booklet 'The Evil of Caste', in association with the 'Dalit Solidarity Network UK'.

Chanan Chahal

Foreword to '*The Evil of Caste*'

Caste-based discrimination (CBD) has become an increasingly important issue in human rights work over the last few years. It is now generally recognised as the largest systemic human rights violation in the modern world, affecting up to 300 million people in over a dozen countries. Most of those affected are in the countries of South Asia, especially India, where some 250 million Dalits and tribal peoples face varying degrees of 'Untouchability'. It has recently become clear that caste has also travelled with the Indian Diaspora and the modest Dalit Solidarity Network UK research report 'No Escape' (2006) indicated there are caste issues here in the UK, especially in the fields of education, employment and temple access. Dalits are of course the former 'untouchables', called by the Indian Government 'Scheduled Castes' and 'Scheduled Tribes, and by Gandhi 'Harijans'. 'Dalit' means broken or crushed but Dalits themselves have imbued it with a sense of resistance and a united identity.

In March 2008 the Hindu Council UK (followed later by the Hindu Forum) responded to DSN's work with a report which contained a number of inaccuracies and misconceptions. More importantly it sought to downplay the issue of caste without really acknowledging the enormous amount of damage CBD is still doing to millions of the Council's fellow citizens in India. It claimed that reservation (affirmative action) in education and employment is overcoming the effects of CBD, that some higher caste people in India are themselves 'terribly poor', that caste is dying out and that Dalit communities in the UK are doing well.

The report also suggested that myself and other Parliamentary colleagues have been misled, to some extent by 'Christian groups who want to convert people to Christianity'. I take some exception to this, partly because I and my colleagues are not so easily 'misled' on human rights issues and have met with Dalit groups both here and in India and heard their stories, and partly on behalf of Christians (which I am not) who I believe seek simply to expose and challenge the dehumanising and exploitative caste system. The Dalit Solidarity Network is not a 'Christian organisation' as has been suggested, only one of our current funders is Christian and only one of our Trustees.

More importantly again, however, Dalit communities in the UK have also taken exception to the Hindu Council report, not least because it contained a statement purporting to come from the Southall Valmiki community, objecting to being described by 'Christian missionary groups' as 'Dalit', blaming British colonialism for setting CBD in place and accusing Christianity of 'spreading hatred'. This 'statement' was rejected by that community, the rejection appears here in the appendices. I welcome this very useful report by Chanan Chahal as it gives so much information about where CBD originates in certain Hindu scriptures and communicates the strength of feeling Dalits have about how 'higher-caste' Hindus have used caste. When human rights violations occur it is my experience that one gets a picture much closer to the truth from those discriminated against rather than from those doing the discriminating.

A specific and particularly unpleasant manifestation of CBD in today's India is the practice of 'manual scavenging', a polite term for cleaning the toilets of the higher castes by hand, a practice into which certain groups of Dalits are condemned by birth. Despite this practice having been outlawed by the Indian Parliament, and hundreds of millions of rupees having been allocated to stamping it out over the last few years, still around 1.3 million people are engaged in the practice because caste continually undermines democratic efforts to eliminate it. The DSN's current main campaign is to support the SKA, the 'scavengers'' own liberation movement, to end manual scavenging by the time

of the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in October 2010. It would be good to have the Hindu communities join these efforts.

The main concern of the Hindu community, however appears to be a horror of the possibility of caste being introduced into the UK's anti-discrimination legislation. It is true that I and other British MPs hope it will appear in the Single Equality Bill which is expected to come before the next Parliamentary session. What I cannot understand is that, if there is appalling treatment of Dalits, as the Hindu Council report agrees, and if they are opposed to such treatment – presumably both in India and the UK – why not support the inclusion of CBD in UK law?

This would then send a clear message not just to Dalit communities here but also in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the other countries where it exists. It would also send a message to the European Union, the International Labour Organisation and the various UN bodies who are currently addressing CBD. I urge the Hindu Council and the Hindu Forum to look again at this issue, and join with us in both our support for the SKA and our request to include caste in the Single Equality Bill. If they wish simply to retain caste as a form of cultural identity, or a 'clan system' as they call it, in which all are 'British Hindus', surely that would be possible while at the same time rejecting caste-based discrimination? Otherwise the only conclusion could be that the Hindu community is not opposed to such discrimination, rather than ensuring this 'blot on humanity', as the Indian Prime Minister has called it, is eradicated.

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Chair of the Dalit Solidarity Network UK and Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights

1. Introduction

India has been the centre of attention of the world in recent years, because of the globalisation and the availability of rich amount of human resources of a 1.3 billion population. India also is a major beneficiary of recent developments in IT technology and outsourcing businesses. A major question arising here is will all the Indians reap the benefits from this boom?

This is not the only reason India is well known, India is also widely talked about in the past due to some good Samaritans in this country who have raised their voices against oppressed people in the World. Some concerned Indians have raised their voices in the past against discrimination in other continents whether they were blacks in South Africa or Palestinians in Palestine.

Ironically and sadly, the real India stands contrary to this perception, what we hear or read is largely skewed version of media propaganda to keep India's name on top of the world. Indians are appalling towards their fellow Indians; they caused huge sufferings to Dalits¹ in the name of caste, mythical beliefs and religious ignorance.

Indians might have been known to support black people in eradicating apartheid in South Africa, but they forgot to look at their own backyard where over 260 million people are victims of systematic discrimination. Over a hundred million people are degraded to 'manual scavenging', removing and carrying human excreta on their heads. This is the ultimate human tragedy that one can see and witness in India. India is the only country in the world where human

scavenging is pushed upon a section of society by the government officials and religious rulers of India.

India also is one of the few countries where discrimination on the basis of birth has existed from centuries. This has resulted in segregation and suppression. Neither Indian governments nor the people of the society made honest and practical plans to get rid of this culturally and religiously enforced cruelty. The government, media and religious leaders who travelled outside the country were notorious in blindfolding the people of other nations to prevent them knowing the truth about Caste and its evil practices. Indians don't want to talk about it as they are afraid that it will defame India. Whenever somebody tried to discuss caste, it has been branded as an internal issue. Even if somebody from India opened his/her mouth on this matter, it is cleverly defended by Hindus by saying the caste system is wrongly interpreted. They even go to the extent of disguising the truth, by saying caste was created for the sake of the stability of the whole society. A system that teaches discrimination against fellow humans as higher, lower and 'untouchable'; a system that treats a certain section of Indians worse than animals is considered to be for the sake of stability. What a pathological explanation is this?

Thanks to the British society for their forthcoming and forward looking discussion on the "Single Equality Bill" where provisions to remove disabilities and discriminations based on colour, race, gender, religion and age will be made.

It is beyond question that caste discrimination, which exists in the UK and some other foreign countries, is imported from India by Hindus. As

¹ Dalit is the newly given name to the former 'Untouchables' of India.

discrimination based on caste is also beginning to raise its ugly head in British society, some organisations are campaigning to include caste-based discrimination in the Equality Bill. But the 'Hindu Council of UK' who considers themselves as champions of equality is against inserting caste discrimination in the bill. If they are genuinely interested in a fair society based on equality and liberty, then why are they opposing the inclusion of Caste discrimination into 'Single Equality Bill? Shouldn't they be supporting such laws which prevent all known discrimination, full stop?

Instead, the news that the Single Equality Bill is to include measures against all known human discrimination has created unprecedented alarm in the Hindu circles. They have come up with a 35 page biased, disingenuous and inaccurate report to condemn a bill that any humane organization should welcome into their society. We the victims (the Dalits), the good humanitarians, citizens of UK and other nations are presenting this response to counter the untruthful, cruelly construed and misinformation that has been disseminated by the Hindu Council UK.

India probably is the only country in the world today whose inhabitants take pride in the divisive nature of their society. It has been designed to maintain itself by means of 'graded inequality' in accordance with laws of Chaturvarnya²; each and every caste can look down upon another to be their inferior. Caste membership is not voluntary, it's exclusive to birth. It is a hereditary system, which is dependent on hierarchical privileges and disadvantages. Even though the original creation of Chaturvarnya had only four Varnas (Castes) it has multiplied to about 6000+ Castes. Chaturvarnya

² Fourfold Varna or Caste System.

means four Castes namely Brahman (priest), Kashatriya (soldier or ruler), Vaishya (accumulator of wealth) and Shudra (menial servant). Theoretically it seems plausible, because for a society to function progressively, it must have its intellectuals, soldiers, economists and menial workers. It should be the policy of the state to take advantage of people's interests and experiences and also prevent any form of discrimination inside or outside the work place. Instead, unfortunately in India Caste rules supreme.

Whereas the caste divide is pathology to begin with, it has every aspects of virulence of a deadly virus, it is degrading, divisive and atrocious in character. If allowed, it is destined to produce the same virulent pathology in UK's society. It is an extremely sinister and anti-social creation. Its inherent discriminatory character has proved ruinous to Indian society. The Caste system is a religious dogma, which has the 'blessings of the Hindu Gods'. These anti-social creators and their followers have made this religiously worshipful and spiritually blended it into day to day practices and beliefs. They preached it to create a unique and unshakeable Hindu mind-set devoid of all reason or logic. This is exactly why, so many humanitarians, great scholars like Dr. Ambedkar (the Dalit creator of India's Constitution) could not dismantle or eliminate caste. If the nations, their people and leaders become aware of the true nature of caste and its evil practices, they will raise their voice against such pathology. There are chances that we can collectively one day eliminate this dehumanising system.

Due to international pressure, Apartheid in South Africa has been eradicated and because of this, anti-human rights abuse momentum is running high. The world communities are turning their eyes

towards suffering humanity elsewhere. Caste prejudice and the atrocities against Dalits in India and other countries of South Asia are the worst human rights violation in the world today. There is a new consciousness in the world, dedicated to the eradication of human rights violations, from human society. There was a time when countries refrained from interfering in what happens in other nations and kept silent, but not any-more. This is a globalised World, which is fast becoming conscious of the burdens and fears of other societies. Over thirty years ago when 'The Republican Group of Great Britain' took a memorandum against atrocities on the 'Untouchables of India', to the British Prime Minister, **James Callaghan on 4th.September 1977**, to be forwarded to the Indian Government on our behalf we received a diplomatically polite letter, which said "foreign Governments are sensitive to what to them appears to be interference by another Government in their internal affairs."³

The Untouchable Castes in India have suffered in silence for long enough, it is time the world took notice of their plight and came to their aid. Due to international consciousness of fair play **Apartheid has been smashed**, similarly now, Caste prejudice should take priority to be shattered and abolished, so over 260 million Dalits can escape their serfdom. This would bring social equality, which will enable society to maintain the spirit of Justice, in accordance with 'United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights' to which most countries are signatories:

- **Article 1:** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and

should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

- **Article 2:** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the bases of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or the territory to which a person belongs, whether it is independent, trust, non self-governing or any other form of limitation of sovereignty.

In this reply to 'Hindu Council U.K' a lot of emphasis has been put on the creation, implementation and survival of the Caste system. The Hindu Council report has tried to take advantage of general ignorance about Caste in the Western world, so they deceptively fabricated the facts to misguide the people in general. The aim of this response, however, is to explain the true nature of Caste and the real motivation behind its creation.

2. The Evolution of India's Caste System

Hindus express pride in having elevated the Brahman to the level of Gods while subjugating lower Castes to the level of Untouchables. The status of a Brahman according to Manu Simiriti (the most notorious of all religious books in the world today that teaches atrocious beliefs against each other in the name of religion) is that "Man started to be purer above the navel, than below; hence self-existent (Svayambhu) has declared the purest part of him to be the mouth. As the Brahman sprang from the Brahma's mouth, as he was first-born,

³ Letter from Downing Street 7th.September 1977.

and he possesses the Vedas, he is by right the lord of the whole creation. What created being can surpass him, through whose mouth the Gods continually consume the sacrificial viands?...Very birth of a Brahman is an external incarnation of the sacred law; for he is born to fulfil the sacred law, and become one with Brahma. A Brahman, coming into existence, is born as the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings, for the protection of the treasury of the law. Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahmin; on account of the excellence of the origin of the Brahman is, indeed, entitled to it all. The Brahman can but eat his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own alms; other mortals subsist through the benevolence of the Brahman."⁴

Women have been treated very badly, religiously they have no status, in their domestic life, and they are to be supervised at all times, during childhood by father, in fullness of age by husband, in old age by sons. **According to Rig-Veda "There cannot be any friendship with a woman. Her heart is crueller than that of a hyena."**⁵ "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."⁶

There are over 260 million people who have been stigmatised as Untouchables, because of which they suffer untold atrocities at the hands of high caste Hindus. The only crime they have committed is being born in a Caste, which has been condemned as lowest of the low even before their birth. There is no provision for reprieve in this life.

⁴ Manu Simiriti. I.PP.92-93, 95, 98-101

⁵ Reg-Veda. 10/95/15

⁶ Manu Simiriti. Chapter IX, Verse 15

They are the largest minority in the world today, equivalent to the total population of United Kingdom, France and Germany put together, who have suffered this stigma for over three thousand years and still continue to do so.

It is a misconception on the part of foreigners and deliberate deception on the part of Hindus, to say that Caste is a profession-based system or a division of labour. Caste is a religious concept by which each Caste disowns any social connection with any other Caste and they neither inter-dine, nor inter-marry. It is a hereditary and exclusive system, based on one's birth. What is written in the Hindu Scriptures stands as a clear testimonial to that very fact? The ability of the Hindus to believe this pathological and virulent social system and force it upon generations after generations of Indians almost made this pathology into an acceptable and respectable social system. This is a melancholy of the highest order the World has ever known. This is what they preach inside their temples and spiritual places. They bring it up in daily interactions with each other and feel proud to talk about this barbarism: The creation of Chaturvarnya is found in the ninetieth Hymn of the Tenth Mandala (chapter) of the Rig-Veda, in which the Gods have sacrificed a godly deity called Purusha to carve out the universe and in the verse 11 and 12 the creation of mankind is described;

"When (The Gods) divided Purusha, into how-many parts did they cut him up? What was his mouth? What arms (had he)? What (two objects) are said (to have been) his thighs and feet?

The Brahmana was from his mouth, the Rajanya (rulers) were made from his arms; the being called the Vaishya was his thighs; the last Shudras sprang from his feet." Such anti-social religious

creation was forced upon people; it should be accepted in society as "The names that are chosen should be auspicious in the case of the Brahman, indicating power in the case of the Kashatriya, indicating wealth in case of the Vaishya, and indicating contempt in the case of the Shudra."⁷

Each Varna (Caste) comes with complete privileges, duties and disabilities.

2.1 Brahman (First Varna)

"For the sake of preserving all this creation, the most glorious being has ordained separate duties for those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet. For Brahman he ordered teaching, study, sacrifices and sacrificing as priest for others and also giving and receiving gifts."⁸

"The Brahman's superiority is inherent and it remains intact, no matter what his condition in life may be. Rich or poor, unfortunate or prosperous, he always goes on the principle engraved in him that he is the most noble, the most excellent and the most perfect of all created beings; the rest of mankind are infinitely beneath him, and that there is nothing in the world, so sublime or so admirable as his customs and practices."⁹

2.2 Kashatriya (Second Varna)

"The Kashatriya are responsible for defence of the nation, giving alms, sacrifice, also study, and absence of attachment to subject of sense, in short these are the duties for a Kashatriya."¹⁰

The Lord Krishna said to Arjun (the hero of the Mahabharata) "O Arjun, having regard to your natural pattern of behaviour to fight, there is no reason for you to hesitate to kill others, as for a

Kashatriya there is nothing more meritorious than to fight. O Bertha (Arjun), only lucky Kashatriya (warrior Varna) have the chance to such a war presenting itself unsought before them is an open door to heaven."¹¹

2.3 Vaishya (Third Varna)

"Tending to the cattle, giving alms, sacrifice, study, trade usury, and also agriculture is for the Vaishya."¹²

These upper three Varnas have been separated from the beginning. They have been called the 'twice-born', "There are four Castes (Varnas) Brahmans, Kashatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The upper three Castes Brahmans, Kashatriyas and Vaishya are the twice-born. Their first birth is from the mother; the second from the investiture with the sacred girdle. In that (second birth) the Savitri (one of the numerous of Hindu Goddesses) is the mother, but the teacher said to be the father. They call the teacher father, because he gives instructions in the Vedas."¹³

2.4 Shudra (Fourth Varna)

The maintenance of superiority of the Brahman and subjugation of the Shudra is the real success story of the Hindus, "A Traivarnika student shall never study (the Vedas) in a burial ground nor anywhere near it within the throw of a Samya. If the village has been built over a burial ground or its surface has been cultivated as a field, the recitation of the Veda in such a place is not prohibited. But if the place is known to have been a burial ground, he shall not study there. A Shudra and an outcast are included in the term burial ground, and the rules given in the Sutra 6 applies to them. Some declare that one ought to avoid study in the same house where they

⁷ Vishnu Simiriti. Chapter XXVII, Sutra 6-9

⁸ Manu Simiriti. Chapter. I. Verse 87-88

⁹ Abbe J.A. Dubois as quoted by Oliver, J Cox in Caste, Class and race P. 155

¹⁰ Manu Simiriti. Chapter I, Verse 89

¹¹ Bhagavad-Gita chapter II verses 31-32

¹² Manu Simiriti. Chapter I, verse 90

¹³ Vashishtha Dharma Sutra. Chapter II. Verse 1- 4.

dwel. But if a student and Shudra women merely look at each other, the recitation of the Veda must be interrupted.”¹⁴

“The Brahman Caste is sprung from the Gods; the Shudras from the Asuras (daemons).”¹⁵

“The Shudras sprung from non-existence.”¹⁶ “The wicked Shudra-Race is manifestly a burial ground. Therefore the Vedas must never be recited in the presence of a Shudra.”¹⁷

2-5 Avarna (fifth Varna)

The original ‘Chaturvarnya’ had only four (Varna) Castes. There was some people of Aryan and Anaryan origin who revolted against it; “Oh you, Indra¹⁸, who saved us from the hands of the cruel Rakshasas¹⁹ and from the Aryas living on the banks of Indus, do thou deprive the Dasas of their weapons.”²⁰ The people who rejected philosophical aspect of Brahmanism and its Caste based social division of society came from all walks of life. “Oh you most revered Indra, those Dasas and Aryas who are irreligious and who are our enemies, make it easy for us with your blessings to subdue them. With your help we shall kill them.”²¹

Manu in his Simiriti put all those people who did not accept the authority of the Vedas, who would not pay homage to their Gods, refuse to be categorised in separate Castes, did not abide by religious dictums by abstaining from inter-Caste liaison and the Shudras were put into the fifth Varna ‘Avarna’. “In

¹⁴ Apastamba Dharma Sutra Prasna I. Patala 3 Khand 9 Sutra 6-11

¹⁵ Taittiriya Brahmana. i.2.6.7. Quoted by Muir op. Cit. I, p21

¹⁶ Muir Vol. I. P 21

¹⁷ Vashishtha Dharam Sutra. Chapter XVIII< verse 11-15

¹⁸ One of Hindu Gods

¹⁹ Outcastes or Untouchables

²⁰ Rig Veda , Viii.24.27

²¹ Rig Veda, x.38.3

Manu Simiriti, not only the rules and regulations for Four Varnas are described, but also, in the tenth chapter those of the Avarnas are also described. This supports the contention that five classes of the Hindu society of Brahmana, Kashatriya, Vaishya, Shudra and Avarnas were the creation of the Manu.”²²

3. Categories of Discrimination

3.1 Superiority by age.

“One should consider a Brahman ten year-old and a Kashatriya hundred year old as father and son; but of them the Brahman is the father. Wealth, kindred age, sect and knowledge, those are the causes of respect; the most important is the last mentioned. In whom amongst the three higher Castes the most and the best of those five may be, he is worthy of respect; a Shudra is not worthy of respect on the ground of his wealth or knowledge no matter how high he may be. It is only on grounds of his age and that too only if he has attained the tenth decade of his life that he becomes worthy of respect and not before.”²³

“For not by years, not by grey hair, not by wealth, nor kindred is superiority; the seers made the rules, who knows the Vedas completely, he is great amongst us. Of Brahmans, superiority is by knowledge, but of Kashatriyas by valour; Vaishya by reason of property and wealth, and of Shudra by age only. One is not therefore aged, just because his head is grey; however, although a youth, has perused the Vedas (Brahman), him the Gods consider an elder.”²⁴

3.2 Duties

²² DR. Patwardhan. Manu Simiriti. Introduction.

²³ Manu Simiriti. Chapter II. Verse. 135-37.

²⁴ Manu Simiriti. Chapter II. Verse 154-56

"The one duty the Lord assigned to the Shudra is to serve the upper three Castes without grudging."²⁵

"To serve the upper three Castes is ordained for the Shudra. The higher the Caste which he serves the greater is the merits."²⁶

"Now the supreme duty of the Shudra and that which ensures his blessings is merely obedience towards celebrated priests who understand the Vedas and live like householders. If he be pure, obedient to higher Castes, mild in speech, without conceit, and always submissive to the Brahman, he attains (in the next transmigration) a high birth."²⁷

The Caste system is set up in such a way in the Hindu religion that one's Caste is recognised at a glance by means of appearance, dress sense, by name, the way one greets others, general pattern of behaviour and use of language in general.

3.3 Greetings

"A Brahman should salute stretching forward his right arm on a level with his ear, a Kashatriya holding his arm on a level with the breasts, a Vaishya holding it on a level with his waist, a Shudra holding it low and stretching forward from the waist with joined hands."²⁸

3.4 Names

"The name to be chosen should be auspicious in the case of a Brahman, indicating power in the case of a Kashatriya, indicating wealth in the case

of the Vaishya and indicating contempt in the case of the Shudra."²⁹

3.5 Dress

"The wealth of the Shudra shall be Dogs and Donkeys. The dress of the Shudra shall be the garments of the dead; they should eat their food from broken dishes, black iron shall be their ornaments and they always should wonder from place to place."³⁰

Nobody can accuse the Hindu law givers for leaving something to chance or incomplete as far as the superiority of the Brahman and degradation of the Shudra was concerned. The Caste system deprived the Shudras of all the worldly opportunities. It deprives them of social equality, the right to think for themselves, to safeguard their welfare, to migrate to other parts of the country to get better employment and it is also designed to economically exploit and suppress the lower Caste masses.

3.6 Economical exploitation

"A Brahman may take possession of the goods of the Shudra with perfect peace of mind, for, nothing at all belongs to the Shudra as his own, and he is one, whose property may be taken away by his master."³¹

"Indeed, an accumulation of wealth should not be made by a Shudra even if he is able to do so, for the sight of mere possession of wealth by a Shudra injures the Brahman."³²

3.7 Fines and punishments

"A Shudra can be slain at the pleasure of his master, and the penance is the same as killing the Crow, chameleon, peacock,

²⁵ Manu Simiriti. Chapter I, Verse 91

²⁶ Apastamba Dharma Sutra. Prasna, I, Patala, 1, Lhanda I, Sutra 7-8.

²⁷ Manu Simiriti. Chapter IX, Verse 334-335

²⁸ The Apastamba Dharma Sutra Prasna I, Patala 2, Khanda 5, Sutra 16

²⁹ Vishnu Simiriti XXVII, Sutr 6-9

³⁰ Manu Simiriti. Chapter X, Verse 52

³¹ Manu Simiriti Chapter VIII, verse 417.

³² Manu Simiriti, Chapter X, verse 129.

a duck, a swan, a vulture, a frog, an ichneumon, rat or a dog.”³³

“The man of the first three Castes who commits adultery with a woman of the Shudra Caste shall be banished. A Shudra who commits adultery with a woman of the first three Castes shall suffer capital punishment.”³⁴

“With whatever limb an inferior insults or hurts his superior in Caste, of that limb the King shall cause him to be deprived. If he places himself on the same seat with his superior, he shall be banished with a mark on his buttocks. If he spit on him he shall lose both lips. If he breaks wind against him, he shall lose his hind parts. If he uses abusive language, he shall lose his tongue. If low-born men, through pride, give instruction to the member of the highest Caste concerning his duty, let the King order hot oil to be dropped into his mouth. If the Shudra mention the name or Caste of the superior revealingly, a red hot iron pin ten inches long shall be thrust into his mouth.”³⁵

From having studied the Hindu scriptures and having been victim of this vicious pathological culture, Dr.

Ambedkar came to the conclusion that, “A religion which glorifies ignorance and impudently preached inequality, hatred, divided human beings into multitudinous Castes and sub Castes, sanctioned poverty and adopted economic measures to keep the majority of its followers poor, illiterate, ignorant, disunited and divided was nothing short of infamy.”

Under the influence of such teachings social and economic exploitation still continues; “During the study of the ‘Discrimination in Food Security

³³ Apastamba Dharma Sutra. Prasna I, Patala 9, Khanda 25, Sutr 15

³⁴ Apastamba Dharma Sutra. Prasna II, Patala 10, Khanda 27, Sutra 8-9

³⁵ Vishnu Simiriti Chapter V, Verse 19-25.

Programme’ conducted by the Indian University Grants Commission (UGC), the present UGC chairman Sukhdeo Thorat (a dalit) and Joel Lee of Columbia University (USA), it was found that discrimination in quantity, quality, price, favouritism and Untouchability is rampant across the country. The result is startling enough to make the government re-orient its food security programmes.

With Casteism heavily dominating the ‘Public Distribution Programme’ (PDS), Dalits are not only denied access to food, but are also made to pay more money for lesser quantity and are charged higher prices. Of the total 521 Villages surveyed in five States:

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh- almost 40% reported that Dalits were found to be receiving lesser quantities for the same price as compared to the Upper Castes.

States	Percentage
Bihar	70%
Uttar Pradesh	56%
Andhra Pradesh	30%
Tamil Nadu	29%
Rajasthan	16%

There is no reason to believe that it is any different in rest of the country, the caste inheritance of ignorance transcends centuries, generations and extends throughout India and neighbouring countries: Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and even Shri Lanka. The dalits suffer wherever they are domiciled.

3.8 Sex

The Authors of the Hindu scriptures never considered sex as a taboo “For the twice-born men, at first, a woman of the same Caste is approved for marrying; but those who act from lust, lower Castes women may be in order (as

wives). A Shudra woman alone is the wife of the Shudra; but she and a woman of his own Caste are legally wives of a Vaishya; they two (Shudra and Vaishya) and also woman of his own Caste are wives of a Kashatriya; these three (Kashatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) women and a woman of his own Caste are the wives of the Brahman."³⁶

3.9 Social Boycott

"A Brahmana who performs a sacrifice for a Shudra should not be invited to dine with other Brahmans at a Shraddha ceremony. His company will destroy all merits, which may otherwise be obtained from such a dinner."³⁷

"If the Brahman dies with a food of the Shudra in his stomach, he will become a village pig in his next life or be born in the family of the Shudras. For through a (Brahman) whose body is nourished by the essence of the Shudra' food may daily recite the Vedas, though he may offer (Agnihotra) or mutter prayer nevertheless he will not find the path that leads upwards. But if, after eating the food of the Shudra, he has conjugal intercourse, even his sons (begotten from a wife of his own Caste) will belong to the giver of the food (Shudra) and he will not assent to heaven."³⁸

These quotations taken from various Hindu religious books indicate how Hindu religion was created and how the caste concept of society was imposed on Indians. There are plenty more evidence available in the Vedas and other religious texts, which indicate that barbaric and inhuman caste system is a religious institution of the Hindus, it is nothing to do with any foreign ruler, as the Hindu Council would have us believe. The division of society was proclaimed,

forcefully introduced and rules were created to be legally enforced by the authorities.

Dr. Ambedkar observes "The Chaturvarnya cannot subsist by its own inherent goodness. It must be enforced by law. That, without penal sanction the ideal of Chaturvarnya cannot be realised, is proved by the story in the Ramayana of Rama (one of the reincarnations of God) by killing Shambuka. Some people seem to blame Rama because he wantonly and without reason killed Shambuka. But to blame Rama for killing Shambuka is to misunderstand the whole situation. Ram Raj was a Raj based on Chaturvarnya. In this raj, as the King, Rama was bound to maintain Chaturvarnya.

It was his duty therefore to kill Shambuka, the Shudra, who had transgressed his Caste and wanted to be a Brahman. This is the reason why Rama killed Shambuka. But this also shows that penal sanction is necessary for the maintenance of Chaturvarnya. Not only penal sanction is necessary, but penalty of death is necessary. That is why Rama did not inflict on Shambuka a lesser punishment. That is why Manu-Simiriti prescribes such heavy sentences as cutting off the tongue or pouring of molten led in the ear of the Shudra, who recites or hears the Vedas. The supporters of Chaturvarnya must give an assurance that they could successfully classify men and they could induce modern society in the twentieth century to re-forge the penal sanction of Manu-Simiriti."³⁹

A large number of massacres, carnages, rapes and killing of Dalits in India are carried out even now. It has been like this for the past several thousand centuries. Dalit children are raped, Dalit

³⁶ Manu Simiriti. Chapter III, verse. 12-15

³⁷ Manu Simiriti. Chapter. III. Verse 178

³⁸ Vashishtha Dharma Sutra. Chapter. VI. Verses 27-29.

³⁹

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children's penises are cut, Dalit woman paraded naked and gang-raped and houses burned. Dalit men and woman are massacred. They are forced to eat human excreta, they are being hanged in trees, the atrocities are numerous and beyond description.

4. Denial of Justice and Denial of Existence

The existence of the Caste system cannot be denied, because it is not based on the mere evaluation of historians or scholars, one should seek evidence in Hindu Religious Texts. It is based on solid proof that one can touch, feel and see over 260 million 'Untouchables' segregated from society as lepers, even to-day in this 21st century. The 'Hindu Council's report 'The Caste System' by Dr. Raj Pandit Sharma, in which they have tried to justify their position, seems to claim that:

1. The Caste System is not a hereditary hierarchical system based on birth.
2. The Caste system is not the creation of Hinduism, it is the creation of foreign rulers
3. The Hindus have suffered greatly under foreign rule
4. The Hindus withstood the challenges from their opponents of Caste in ancient times
5. Due to reservation in favour of Scheduled Castes, the Brahmans have to do menial work
6. The Caste is not a hindrance to progress. [Caste destroyed brotherhood the most important element of fair society in India.]

7. The segregation of the Untouchable Castes is to maintain purity of the Brahman.
8. The Hindus are tolerant society. [not true]
9. Other religions also have caste practices.

They have targeted in the Report, the role of some British Parliamentarians, in particular Rob Marris MP and Jeremy Corbyn MP. The report seems to have followed the concept of 'offence is better than defence', Unfortunately it will not do, because one cannot make people believe that simple misinterpretation of the word 'Varna' into 'Caste' has created thousands of Castes, sub-Castes and 260 million Untouchables.⁴⁰ Nor can it be justified that foreign invasions are responsible for creating the Caste System.

However the report has opened up a discussion on the subject on which the Hindus rarely enter. The Hindu Council claims in the report that it is a 'fallacious lie created by foreign invaders and their religious leaders'.

"Adversaries of Hinduism and proponents of hereditary caste cite various Hindu scriptures to assert their claims that caste is intransigent, hierarchical and determined by birth.

⁴⁰ The 'Untouchable' is a person who is considered to be inferior by birth according to Hindu Caste system. He is an outcast, his touch, accidental stepping on his footprint, coming in contact with his Shadow can pollute the higher Caste people. So it should be avoided at all costs, if polluted one has to bathe in the Ganga (sacred river) to purify oneself. The untouchables have acquired many names in the past such as Dassas, Asuras, Avarnas, Rakshasas, Non-Aryans, during the Vedic period, Mahatma Gandhi came up with Harijan (sons of God), the British Government with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Constitutional terms, and Dalits has been chosen in the present day. The changes occurred in terminology only, but the stigma still remained.

In particular they quote Purush-Sukta (X. 90. 11-12) of Rig-Veda and verses (IV. 13) and (XVIII. 41) of Bhagavad-Gita, claiming these prove the different castes can be depicted as portions of the divine being, Purush, and that the fourfold caste system is a creation of the Almighty assigned at birth. Verses of the Manu Simiriti are also cited as another religious endorsement for a discriminatory caste system.

It is important to dispel such fallacious assertions at the outset and explain why the defenders of this warped version of Varnashram and those who would denigrate the Hindu faith continue to perpetuate this myth."⁴¹

Dr. Sharma does not deny the authenticity of these Rig-Veda, the Manu Simiriti or Bhagavad-Gita verses, nor does he dispute the creation of Varna (Caste), but cunningly tries to deceive the Western World by claiming it is not hereditary, hierarchical or determined by birth.

Mahatma Gandhi, whom Hindus consider to be a saint of the twentieth century, says, "The object of the Varna system is to prevent competition and class struggle and class war. I believe in Varna System because it fixes the duties and an occupation of a person. Varna means determination of a man's occupation before he is born. In the Varna system no man has any liberty to choose his occupation. His occupation is determined for him by heredity."⁴²

"To destroy Caste system and adopt Western European social system means that Hindus must give up the principle of hereditary occupation which is the soul of the Caste system."⁴³ Can Dr. Sharma as a Hindu, comprehend what this means to him in his report?

Discrimination does not only extend to the Shudras, it also caters for foreigners. Pundit Nehru took Lord Mountbatten when he was a Prime Minister to the Sarnath Mandir, and when Mrs. Indra Gandhi as Prime Minister went to the Somnath Mandir herself, these Mandirs (Temples) were purified with 'Punch Gov' (dung, urine, butter, milk and yogurt of cow) on both occasions, because in Hindu religious terms both the foreigners and women are at the status of the Shudra (impure).

During the twenties and thirties when Dr. Ambedkar, was advocating that, if the Hindus are sincere about destroying the practices of Untouchability, and other Caste-based prejudices, they should organise inter-Caste dinners and inter-Caste marriages, to encourage social integration and interactions. These proposals were opposed by none-other than Mahatma Gandhi himself. Probably under the influence of aforesaid teachings, he was violently opposed to any changes to birth-based Varna He said; "I believe that if Hindu society has been able to stand, it is because it is founded on the Caste System. I believe that inter-dining and inter-marriages are not necessary for promoting national unity. Taking food is as dirty an act as answering the call of nature. Just as we perform the act of answering the call of nature in seclusion so also act of taking food must also be done in seclusion. To destroy Caste System and adopt Western European social system means that Hindu must give up the principle of hereditary occupation, which is the soul of the Caste System. Hereditary principle is an eternal principle. To change it, is to create disorder. It will be a chaos if every day a Brahman is to be

⁴¹ The caste System. By Dr. R.Sharma P8

⁴² Mahatma Gandhi in Navajivan (in Gujarati)

⁴³ Mahatma Gandhi Navajivan (Gujarati)

changed into a Shudra and a Shudra is to be changed into a Brahman."⁴⁴

One has to admire Dr. Sharma for his courage when he writes; *"Non-Hindus commonly misinterpret these verses as meaning that because the feet are the lowest extremity of the body, the 'Shudra' must be inferior to other caste.*

*Yet a verse in the same chapter (X.90.14) declares that Earth was born from the same feet of Purusha, thus implying that Shudras are closest to nature and mother earth (Prithvi Mata). Further, during Hindu worship, a devotee will prostrate him or herself before the deity and place their head on its feet, completely invalidating the argument that anything emanating from the feet of the Divine Being is impure and untouchable."*⁴⁵

Could one dare to ask Dr. Sharma to furnish a few quotations from vast multitude of Hindu scriptures where it says that the Brahman should wash Shudra's feet or put his head upon those feet. If birth of the Shudra was so pure just because feet are closer to the mother earth, then what happened in the case of Shri Shattarpati Shiva ji?

It is a well known historical fact that, Shivaji, after having established a Hindu kingdom in the Western part of Maharashtra, thought of proclaiming himself a king by having a coronation ceremony performed by a Brahman. But he was denied by the Brahmans by proclaiming that Shri Shattarpati Shivaji was a Shudra by birth. Therefore the coronation could not be performed, because he was not a Kashatriya. Even though the Kashatriyas had failed to defend the state, or regain it, from the

Moguls, it took a Shudra warrior to take it back.

Brahman's refusal to crown Shivaji, meant lot of the tribes would not follow him in battle, because he was not a legitimate king duly crowned, so Shivaji offered ten times as much to a Brahman called Gagabhat from Benares to perform the coronation ceremony on 6th.June 1674. Even then the Brahman would not touch him with his hands to anoint his fore-head instead he used his left toe. The name of Shivaji is mentioned with great pride throughout India, as one of the greatest warriors who stood up to the mogul might, but to a Brahman he was nothing, but a Shudra. Such was and is the attitude and approach of the Hindus.

Take Shri Jagjeevan Ram, a life-long servant of the Congress Party, he was a Cabinet Minister of the Congress Government from 1947 to his death in 1986. He was acting Prime Minister after the death of Shri Lal Bahadur Shashtri. He was invited to inaugurate the statue of Shri Sampurnanand in 1971 at Benares Hindu University, and having completed the ceremony Jagjeevan Ram went away. Then the statue was taken down, because it was polluted by the touch of an Untouchable. So it was purified with mixture of 'Punch Gov'⁴⁶, according to the ritual stated in the religious texts, the necessary substances are mixed with water from Ganga and washed for 21 days, then the pollution created by Untouchable's touch is purified. Shri Jagjeevan Ram's life-time service to the nation came to washing with cow's urine and cow's dung? He was deliberately chosen to be humiliated. It was designed to send a message to the wider public that Caste along with its prejudices is very much

⁴⁴ M.K.Gandhi, Gandhi Shikshan (Gujarati). Quoted by Ambedkar in 'what Congress and Gandhi have done for the Untouchables. PP275-76

⁴⁵ The Caste System Report by Dr . Sharma. P 9

⁴⁶ 'Punch Gov' consist of Cow's dung, urine, milk, curd, butter.

alive. No matter how high a position an Untouchable acquires, but he is still an Untouchable in the eyes of the Hindus.

Was there no one from these learned noble Brahmans to point out to these ignorant masses, to stop humiliating these Untouchables they are pure, because they are born from the feet which are closer to mother earth? If the Caste was based on occupation as Dr. Sharma claims, then how is it that when Shivaji was a Warrior he had done what Kashatriyas could not do, Shri Jagjeevan Ram was a Government minister, almost a presidential candidate, the Hindus could only treat them as Untouchables, nothing more.

Dr. Ambedkar is accepted to be the father of the Indian Constitution, a giant amongst scholars and the first law minister who wrote the constitution. He has undertaken enormous economic and legal reformation to uplift Indians, especially Dalits, how is it no Hindu Pundit ever referred him or called him Pundit? In-fact, Dr. Ambedkar's intelligence and humanity cannot be matched by any Pundit alive or dead in the history of India. But they just think about him as a dalit. If such a great and a noble man like Dr. Ambedkar is treated like this, then how can Dr. Sharma maintain that caste system is profession-based?

Dr. Sharma quotes various passages from Hindu scriptures to express sanctity of the mother earth. The importance and need of every part of the body to function normally, indicating that, even though the Shudras were created from the feet of the Purush, it was still an essential part of the body. Instead of denouncing this age-old discriminatory practice he is doing his level best to justify it from the Brahmanic prospective. How else would they get every fourth person of the

society, without any expectation dedicated to their servitude? If it is not heredity based on birth, why is it still very much alive after over three thousand years? In today's society all Caste members have chosen different occupations, so why are they not recognised and accepted accordingly? Why are they subjected to Caste prejudices which they inherited from their ancestors?

5. Lord Buddha's Challenge

It is well known that, the first and most trenchant opponent of the Caste System was the enlightened Buddha, who refused to accept its validity. He refused to accept the origin of Brahman he said "The Brahmans and their wives indulge into sexual activity. Their women are known to have periods, conceive, give birth, suckle and nurse their children and yet these women born Brahmans maintain that they are the children of Brahma, born from his mouth, his offsprings, his creation and his sole heirs. This is false through and through." The Buddha maintained the following practice which is contrary to Hinduism. "It is not the birth that makes the man mean, nor is it the birth that makes a man noble. It is the conduct that makes a man mean and it is a conduct that makes a man noble."

The Buddha built his doctrine on character and individual nobility, instead origin of birth, everyone is treated equally, nobody is penalised because of their Caste, Gender, and Colour of skin or place of birth. During the Buddhist era Brahman washed the feet of the Shudra, and Shudras were raised in status of superiority. To eradicate the inferiority and superiority complexes, the Buddha ordained the Untouchables first and Brahmans later, so Brahman had to accept an Untouchable as his senior. Mahatma Gandhi refers to it with

great pride "The joyous period of India's bloom was the Buddhist period. India attained the zenith of frontiers... Brahman and the Shudra sat together in love; there was no pride in the former and no hate in the latter. Both lived in sweet brotherliness, diffusing love beyond the borders unto the ends of the earth."⁴⁷

The Hindus never forgave Buddha for ridiculing the Hindu concept of society based on Caste divisions. So they assisted the Muslims to undermine Buddhism.

"The religion of the Buddha got the severest blow from the Muslim invasion. They destroyed the Buddhist idols and killed the Bhikkhus. They mistook the Nalanda University, as the fort of the Buddhists and killed a large number of Monks, thinking they were soldiers. The few Bhikkhus who escaped the onslaught fled to neighbouring countries like Nepal, Tibet, Burma and China."⁴⁸

They destroyed Nalanda and Taxila universities, which were Buddhist institutions not Hindu, as Dr. Sharma seems to indicate.

As vast numbers were converted to Buddhism, to stop this wave of conversions the Brahmans plotted to kill the Buddhist king Brhadratha and gain power. "The Manu Simiriti itself undoubtedly is a Brahman document probably written during the epoch of Brahman revivalism led by Pusyamitra Sung, the general and Purohita (priest) of King Brhadratha, the last in the line of the illustrious Mauryas whom the Brahmans usurper killed thus supplanting the rule of the Mauryas. The present redaction was perhaps finalised during the rule of the imperial Guptas

but the kernel as also its main principles and various details were composed without doubt during the Sunga epoch of the second century BC. The code, although it reflects its time, has, nevertheless, remained throughout the later centuries down to the present day the main authority on social and legal matters and thus it may naturally reflect equally the social trend of latter times."⁴⁹

Vincent A Smith writes "The reign of Pusyamitra appear to mark a violent Brahmanical reaction against Buddhism, which had enjoyed so much favour in the time of Asoka."⁵⁰

Dr. Radha Krishnan⁵¹ writes "The Hindus quarrelled not so much with the metaphysical concepts of Buddha as with his practical program. Freedom of thought and dignity in practice has marked the Hindus from the beginning of his history. Hindus will accept as orthodox the Samkhya and the Purva Mimansa system of thought regardless of their differences to theism, but will reject Buddhism in spite of its strong ethical and spiritual note, for the simple reason the former do not interfere with the social life and the organisation, while the latter insists on bringing its doctrine near to the life of the people."

The pioneers of progress are regarded in every age with not unnatural suspicion, as the champions of revolt and rebellion. By putting the spiritual brotherhood in place of hereditary priesthood, personal merits in place of distinctions of birth, logic and reason in place of Vedic relations, moral life in place of ceremonial piety and the perfected sage above God, the Buddha provoked the wrath of the Hindu priests who regarded him as an anti Brahman force, they

⁴⁷ Young India p 192

⁴⁸ Dr. Ambedkar speech in Colombo Sri Lanka 29th May 1950.

⁴⁹ Chitra Tiwari. Sudras in Manu. Introduction p 5

⁵⁰ Vincent A Smith. The Oxford History of India. P 138

⁵¹ Radha Krishnan: The Second President of India.

thought the Brahman dogma's will be shattered by the upraising of Buddhist believers. What made Buddha and his followers' unpardonable heretics in the eyes of the Brahman priests is the social revolution which they preached. There is nothing in the doctrine of the Buddha which cannot be reconciled with the Hindu thought; but the conflict between the social system, based on Brahmanical supremacy, and one which denied it is radical."⁵²

"The Buddha had the courage to attack popular religion, superstition, ceremonial, and priest-craft, and all the vested interests that clung to them. He condemned also metaphysical and theological outlook, miracles, revelations and dealing with the supernatural. His appeal was to logic, reason and experience. His emphasis was on ethics, and his method was one of psychological analysis, a psychology without a soul. His whole approach comes like the breath of fresh wind from the mountains after the stale air of metaphysical speculation." ⁵³

Dr. Hardyal states "The priests (Brahman) exterminated Pali (language of the Buddha) in India. They did not detest Pali on account of philosophical doctrines or the ethical precepts of Buddhism. They even acknowledged Buddha as their great teacher and deified him. But they wished that Buddha's wonderful words should not be heard within India, as those words would have the power of dynamite against the citadel of Caste. They (Brahmans) said, "Perish Pali, Perish India, but Caste must rule". This is the clue to that period of Indian history."⁵⁴

The combined onslaught of Brahmanism and Islam proved fatal to Buddhism,

Buddhist monks out of fear of their lives and preservation of their faith, migrated to neighbouring countries. The ordinary people, who converted to Buddhism, came from all Varnas. They had rejected their old Caste loyalties at the time of conversion hundreds of years earlier. So they could not be identified with any Caste of Brahmanism. This situation created a problem for the Brahmins. The Buddhist masses had to be accommodated, but how? The Manu came up with the perfect answer to create another fifth Varna and called it 'Avarna' (Somebody who is outside of four fold Varna, commonly known as Untouchables). This was the final blow against Buddhist people. The Brahmins put all the Buddhist people in this fifth Varna (Avarna), the present day Untouchables. Brahmins explained it that because of absence of Caste barriers in Buddhist way of life preventing them from co-habitation and inter-caste marriages left them impure.

6. Caste Contamination of Other Faiths

One must however agree with Dr. Sharma when he says there is Caste in other religions. It is important that one understands that those religions which came into contact with Hindu India or Hindus converts to other religions have Caste. The Hindu Caste has penetrated into other religions from Hinduism, not the other way round because Caste is a hindu phenomenon. All the religions, which came in contact with Caste-infectious Hinduism, got infected. The religions which came from outside India co-opted Caste and the religions, which sprung from Indian soil inherited Caste, with exception of Buddhism. Christianity and Islam had no Caste before they arrived in India. Other Christian and Islamic countries around the world do not even know the concept of hereditary Caste.

⁵² Dr. Rada Krishnan, Indian philosophy , pp691-3
⁵³ Nehru. Discovery of India p 120
⁵⁴ Dr. Har Dyal Mahabody Journal 1938. P474.

It seems that foreign religions have totally misunderstood the concept of Caste, they must have accepted it as a social custom, but it has come to haunt them. It is said that one of the twelve disciples of Jesus came to India. The first Church they are reported to have established developed on Caste lines. Even today we find Churches where Untouchables cannot go and others where 'High Castes' would not go. The Islamic people came as conquerors so they forcefully converted people; "Such invaders like Muhammad and Timur seem to have been more concerned with iconoclasm, the collection of booty, enslaving of captives and the sending of infidels to hell with the 'proselytizing sword' than they were with the conversion of them even by force. But when rulers were permanently established the winning of converts became a matter of supreme urgency. It was the part of the state policy to establish Islam as the religion of the whole land.

Outb-ud-Din, whose reputation for destroying temples was almost as great as that of Muhammad, in the latter part of the twelfth century and the early part of the thirteenth, must have frequently resorted to force as an incentive to conversion. One instance may be noted: when he approached Koil (Aligarh) in A.D 1194, those of the garrison who was wise and acute were converted to Islam, but others were slain with the sword."⁵⁵ Even after thousand years of these conversions they could not shake off Caste loyalties. The Muslims from Indian sub-continent are still proud of their Caste.

The people they converted to Christianity and Islam did not give up Caste System, nor did some of the missionaries insist before conversion

that they must discard Caste loyalties, which their beliefs demand. It seems that they were largely interested in numbers and fearing backlash they compromised on Caste. Today some Indian Christians and Muslims are as rigid on Caste practices as Hindus.

The Sikhs on the other hand had no excuse, it is the newest religion and the teaching of their Gurus, had no accommodation for Caste. It is unfortunate however that Sikhs did not follow in the footsteps of their real and honest Gurus and were unable to fully divorce Hinduism from whom they originally converted. One can gain some comfort in knowing that Caste System has no place in their religious teachings as it exists in Hinduism. Caste loyalties and prejudices must be condemned no matter which religion or culture is harbouring them. The time has gone when people can be converted by force or by claiming that they can do what they want as long as they become members of their club. No matter which religion recognises people by their Caste instead of their worth, it should be publicly exposed and denounced.

Dr. Sharma mentions some names of Bhakti Movement Saints and he incorrectly claims them to be Hindus. A Hindu is a person who accepts the authority of Vedas acknowledges Chaturvarnya and lives according to its rules. These Saints have done none of these, in fact, this is self-evident from their teachings that they did not only refused to acknowledge the Hindu concept of Caste, in-fact they were the strongest opponents of Hinduism since Lord Buddha.

After the death of these Saints the Hindus played their master card, which was to declare these saints to be the God-Heads of the Caste in which they were born. By such a proclamation they

⁵⁵ Dr.Titus: Indian Islam p31-32

limited their influence from universal appeal to a single Caste. Knowing well that no matter how strong a single Caste becomes it cannot uproot the Caste system. By acknowledging them to be Caste God-Heads, the Hindus effectively reduced them to be non-entities. Due to ignorance of their followers these Saints ended up strengthening the very system, they set out to destroy. This is the greatest injustice done to the Bhakti movement Saints, by the Hindus, for their personal preservation and by the disciples for not understanding their message and establishing a personality cult in their name.

Brahmans directed their vengeance against Buddhists. They were barred from education, prevented from any social interaction, stopped from self improvement, barred from possessing or taking up arms, or from accumulating wealth. Continuation of such treatment has resulted into the sorry state of the Untouchables that we see today. It is the true testament to the kind of cruelty and violence that so-called peaceful Hindus can resort to for the protection of their Caste system.

Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Bhagti Movement saints have one thing in common that they do not have any concept of hierarchical based hereditary Caste in their fundamental teachings. Therefore, it is in their interests and humanity to take moral stand against the tyrannical of Caste System.

7. Invasion of India and Foreign Rule

Dr. Sharma refers to history and explains how extensively the Hindus suffered at the hands of foreign invaders and how they misinterpreted the word Varna into a Caste and divided people into manageable units and ruled. It cannot be denied that under foreign

rulers Indian society suffered greatly. But claiming that they created the Caste System is stretching it a bit, to say the least. But the question arises, how such a vast country was so easily conquered? Here again answer lies in the practices of rigid Caste System. When Hitler attacked Britain, the Government of Britain issued an order that every able bodied person over the age of eighteen should report to enlisting offices and prepare for war. So every young man irrespective of class reported and the women gave up kitchens, domestic duties and took over the jobs in factories, which was left vacant by the men who had gone to war. Due to collective effort they won the Second World War.

What does their respected Chaturvarnya says, it says that out of 'Brahman, Kashatriya, Vaishya, Shudra and Avarnas' only Kashatriya shall have the right to fight and possess arms. So at a stroke 80% of the population is cut off from defence responsibilities, and of the 20% who remained, half were women. When one considers children, aged and the sick amongst them, the number dwindles even further. So less than eighth of the total population are allowed to fight against fully prepared powerful invaders who rely on 100% of their people, the outcome was inevitable. When the Kashatriyas lost at the border the rest of the society just gave up and accepted serfdom.

"In January 1026, Mahmood of Ghazni advanced towards Somnath. On the way he met number of Hindu armies. Had they attended, the Hindu armies, even if they could not have joined together with other Hindu armies, at least, could have put up a fight against him and dampened his spirits. But the Hindus laid down their weapons, for they believed that in the city of Somnath, the Hindu army was protected and blessed by Lord

Somnath and he would destroy Mahmood along with his armies. When Mahmood reached the city of Somnath, thousands of soldiers and civilian Hindus were present there. They had done nothing to save the city as they believed that Lord Somnath would reduce the invading armies to ashes.

Historian Iban Asir writes that people were sitting on the walls of the fort feeling happy and thinking that the wicked Muslims would be destroyed in next few seconds. They were telling the Muslims that their God would annihilate each one of them. When Mahmood army began the human slaughter, a group of Hindus ran towards the temple, knelt in front of the deity and began to pray for victory. In this way, one group after another, entered the Temple, their hands folded, weeping and in a very emotional tone began to pray to Lord Somnath. After their prayer when they came out, they were killed by the soldiers of Mahmood. This continued until the Hindus were completely wiped out."⁵⁶

Muhammad Ghori raided India seventeen times but the Hindus did not put away the rules of Chaturvarnya and recruited an army from the Indians irrespective of their Caste, to combat Muslim invaders. When Alexander the Great attacked India, his historian Megasthenese wrote "The Kashatriyas were fighting on the borders, but the farmers nearby were peacefully engaged in ploughing their land, as if nothing had happened."⁵⁷

One must appreciate that the invaders came as conquerors and they conquered, looted, ransacked, plundered, destroyed, humiliated, punished and ruled. They did not come as social workers, they came to

dominate and exploit and that is precisely what they did. It is up to the vanquished to consider and learn from their ordeal. What the Hindus should consider: did they do everything they could have done to prevent this catastrophe? Before pointing fingers, one must act as objective observer and think, had everything been done that could have been done? The answer obviously is no. To start with they did not make proper use of the manpower they had at their disposal. They accepted humiliation at the hands of the invaders, but would not sacrifice the rigid rules of Chaturvarnya in favour of national unity, and join hands with fellow Indians to confront the common enemy at the borders. The Brahmans were rewarded for their loyalty by the invaders.

Dr. Sharma refers to Portuguese conquest which began with Vasco da Gama's visit in 1498. When he returned to Portugal, he reported to his king that Indians are so divided among themselves that they are incapable of mustering any form of effective defence force. Upon hearing this king Albuquerque began enthusiastically preparing for Indian conquest. he succeeded in conquering Goa in 1510. The Portuguese were no different than any other conqueror who came to exploit the rich resources of India. Dr. Sharma is probably right when says that word 'Varna' was translated as Caste by the Portuguese. It is quite common that when a word is translated from one language to another it loses its original meaning. But in this case translation lost nothing. The Varna means hierarchical based hereditary status fixed before one's birth and the Caste means precisely that. The translation of Varna to Caste has not reduced the privileges or status of the Brahman, nor has it raised status or reduced disabilities of the Untouchables. It is just another ploy

⁵⁶ Dr. Ajnat. Who Weakened India. P16-7
⁵⁷ Ibid p 23

to divert the attention of the world from true nature of Caste.

The British history began with battle of Plessey in 1757 and they ruled India until 1947. During this period they took full advantage of the Caste and ruled. The privileges of a Brahman were maintained. During the British rule they even kept immunity from prosecution for the Brahman, even for murder, until 1817. The Brahman fully co-operated with the British, occupied place of repute in administration by doing so British eliminated any chance of revolt, because the Brahmans were the only Caste resourceful enough to plan one.

Dr. Ambedkar refer to this period and confronted the British Government in 1931 during 'Round Table' conference held in London to discuss transfer of power to Indians; "when we compare our present position with the one which was our lot to bear in Indian Society of the pre-British days, we find that, instead of marching on, we are only marking time. Before the British, we were into a loathsome condition due to our Untouchability. Has the British Government done anything to remove it? Before the British, we could not enter the temples. Can we enter now? Before the British, we were denied entry into the Police Force. Does the British government admit us in the Police Force now? Before the British, we were not allowed to serve in the Military. Is that career open to us now? To none of these questions can we give formative answer. That the British, who has held so large a sway over us for such a long time, have done some good we cheerfully acknowledge. But there is certainly no fundamental change in our position. Indeed, so far as we were concerned, the British Government has accepted the social arrangements as they found them, and has preserved them faithfully in the manner of the Chinese tailor who, when

given an old coat as a pattern, preceded with pride an exact replica, rents, patches and all. Our wrongs have remained as open sores and they have not been righted, although 150 years of British rule have rolled away."⁵⁸

Historically the word 'Hindu, is not of Indian origin, it was given to them by Muslim invaders who needed it to identify the natives of India. The Hindus did not feel necessary to have a common name. "The word 'Hindu' does not occur at all in our ancient literature. The first reference to it in an Indian book is, I am told, in a 'Tantrik' work of the eighth century Ac., and it means a people not the followers of a particular religion."⁵⁹ The meaning of the word Hindu in the Persian language dictionary is not so honourable. The name 'India' was also given by British during their occupation.

8. Affirmative Actions and Unimplemented Reservations

Dr. Sharma says *"It is a further irony that those who criticise caste on the grounds it is abusive and discriminatory nevertheless happily vilify Brahmins who presently account for just 4.32% of the total population of India, for allegedly holding key positions within the Indian government and society. This could not be further from the truth. Recent research has revealed that almost half the population of India are below the poverty line. Of these, Brahmins actually have a 10% higher level of poverty, compared with other communities in this category. Many Brahmins are engaged in menial occupations, having been forced to forfeit skilled positions under the highly discriminatory State sponsored reservation system, which allocates up to half the governmental and university placements to the 'scheduled class', to which Dalits belong. Some Brahmin communities such as the 400,000 Kashmiri Pundits, recently driven from*

⁵⁸ Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar writings and speeches Vol 2 p504.

⁵⁹ The Discovery of India p. 74.

*their homeland by Muslim extremists, are refugees within their own country.*⁶⁰

The question Dr. Sharma should ask is which of the Government departments are not dominated by Brahman politicians or bureaucrats?

As far as reservation is concerned, the round-table conferences held in London in 1930–1932, to debate the transfer of power in India. The Conference was held between the British Government and representatives of the Indian people. It was the first time that 'Untouchables' were acknowledged as a minority and their representation was allowed to take part in discussions which would decide the future of India.

Mahatma Gandhi, however, fought tooth and nail against the recognition of Untouchables. At first he refused to acknowledge their representation and secondly he was violently against any separate rights for the Untouchable communities, which would put them in control of their own destiny. It was unacceptable to the Mahatma who wanted them to remain at the mercy of 'High Caste' Hindus. Due to lack of agreement between Indian representation and the British Government, the conference broke up without any decision. It was due to total refusal and uncompromising stance of Mahatma Gandhi on the issue of Untouchable rights. The British Government however issued their decision in which every minority was acknowledged and Moslems, Christians, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians and Untouchables were given separate electorates. The separate electorate meant that they would select and elect their own representatives to represent their cause in parliament, without interference from other sections of the society.

Mahatma Gandhi still remained vigorously opposed, when he did not get his way he resorted to his old ways of blackmail by undertaking a fast unto death on 20th September 1932. He maintained that he was prepared to die unless the separate electorate awards were withdrawn from the Untouchables. Gandhiji undertook 22 fasts unto death during his lifetime and one of them against Untouchable rights. None of them were to remove practices of Untouchability. It was designed to arouse the religious sentiments of the Hindus, who considered him to be a living saint. It did not seem to matter to Mahatma Gandhi that other minorities got their awards. It pained him however to see the slaves of the Hindus, Untouchables, having the right to make their own decisions, to be masters of their own destiny, instead of Hindus deciding for them. It is quite understandable from the Hindu point of view, that if the Untouchables began to choose their leaders, make their own decisions, then they would surely escape from the tyrannical clutches of the Hindus. So as a devout Hindu Gandhiji could not tolerate that, under any circumstances.

On 27th September 1932, and agreement was reached between the Congress Party and Dr. Ambedkar as representative of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Untouchables), which came to be known as the 'Poona Pact', according to which the 'untouchables' were to surrender their right to elect, 79 members by means of separate electorate, instead they would elect 179 representatives by joint electorates. They would be elected by the majority and there would be 22.5% reservation in Government-sector jobs and education. The Poona Pact was incorporated in the Constitution of India.

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The Reservation system, which was to finish after ten years, instead is reviewed every ten years and extended for further ten years. It has been going on for the last sixty years, but why? Who votes to keep it going? It is not the Untouchables. Is it because it has proved beneficial to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes? No. Was it because it proved beneficial to the Hindu political parties who could handpick stooges from Untouchable communities to represent them? Yes.

Recruitment to Govt. Services

Job Level (Class one being the highest)	Target	Actual %
Class One	22.50%	10.14%
Class Two	22.50%	12.67%
Class Three	22.50%	16.15%
Class Four	22.50%	21.26%

The recruitment to the Government services target was 22.5% to be achieved within ten years, but after sixty years it is still trailing at 10.14% in Class one (Senior officers) 12.67% Class two (minor officers) 16.15% in Class three (clerks, caretakers and peons etc.) and in Class four is 21.26%, which includes sweeping roads, cleaning latrines, drains etc. This is the situation after sixty years of 'Home Rule'. Reservation is used very effectively to deceive people by Government officials, to claim that we are doing everything for them. It is nothing more than propaganda by people like Dr. Sharma who still maintains that SCs and STs are getting everything, because of which the Brahmans are having to do menial work is due to Reservation. Is this not talk of a Hindu fundamentalist?

If the provisions of Reservation in the constitution were sincerely implemented, Caste inequalities and prejudices thereof would have disappeared and the

educational standard would have risen. The leadership of the country has been playing to the crowd for last sixty years. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru said "Our religion is one of the butchers; of what to touch and what not to touch, of baths and top-knots, of all manner of works and fasts and ceremonies that have lost all meanings." He is also on record to have said "There can be no equality in status and opportunity with Caste frame work nor can there be political democracy and much less economic democracy. Between these conceptions conflict is inherent and only one can survive."

It looks so good on paper, but in practice it is another story. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of independent India, his premiership lasted for 17 years, but Caste prejudices remained strongest during this Pundit's rule. Why? Was it, because he was not totally committed to the provisions of the Constitution? When they were agreed upon he was the main player along with other Congressmen. He was reluctant to allow the reservation to be continued for more than ten years. Why it was not discontinued after ten years? What had changed? Was it, because Congress Party politically exploited very successfully pulling the wool over people's eyes and gained their trust? He was committed to uphold the Law and honour the agreements the Congress party had made with the minorities. Judging from his letter it becomes clear that he was not prepared to do either, "I dislike any kind of reservation, more particularly in services. I react strongly against anything which leads to inefficiency and second rate standard."⁶¹

Reservation was designed for the deprived people to catch up with rest of

⁶¹ Pandit Jawarlal Nehru. Letters, 1958-64, Vol 5

society. There was no question of any compromises on educational standards. The feeling that he has expressed is the feeling of all other high caste' Hindu officials, who could not tolerate seeing an Untouchable to be their senior or sitting by side of them. Like her father Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi remained in power as Prime Minister for 19 years. During their 36 year premierships plenty of crocodile tears were shed in sympathy, but Caste prejudice, victimisation, exploitation and atrocities continued unhindered. It is no surprised that recruitment in Government services remained between 3 to 5% during their Premierships. The Prime Minister Morarji Desai, in his address to the nation on the 30th Anniversary of Independence (1977), declared that stigma of Untouchability and all other prejudices would be eradicated within five years. Many 'five years' have come and gone, but Untouchability remains. The people like Dr. Ambedkar, Iyothee Dasar and Phule have made revolutions to uplift the Dalit society, yet in the 21st century we have to face such a cruelty against Dalits. The caste discrimination exists in countries which have no history of such discrimination. Caste prejudices do exist in UK, USA and all other countries where Indians are settled. It is an Indian import.

The present Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh said when he addressed the 'Dalit Minority International Conference' 2006, "In studying the problem captured by this theme, it is necessary to make a distinction between the problems faced by the Dalits in India and the problems faced by the minorities in all other societies. Dalits have faced a unique discrimination in our society that is fundamentally different from the problems of minority groups in general. The only parallel to the practice of

Untouchability was Apartheid in South Africa. Untouchability is not just social discrimination. It is a Blot on humanity". Only time will tell, if he will put any flesh on the bones of his speech and actually do something about it.

The Hindu Council UK claims that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are a drain on the public purse and are a liability to the nation. As it has been said above reservations were promised in 1932 to receive 22.5% Public Sector. After 76 years they have only reached 10.4%. If the Brahmans, are having to do menial jobs, why do they not join hands with other menial workers and secure decent pay and working conditions? What is stopping them? They have the ability, so is it their Caste or religious pride stopping them to stand with their fellow workers?

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes writes in the preface of their Report for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 as follows, "Policy of reservation in appointments and educational institutions was provided in the constitution to insure equitable share of these communities in governance. It is true that reservation in appointments would benefit only small proportion of their population, but reservation in various levels was expected to ensure incorporation of the concerns and development needs of these communities in formulation and implementation of programme for their socio-economic development. But in spite of reservation, the representation of SCs and STs continues to be much lower than the prescribed proportion in Group A and Group B services, both under the government and in public sector undertakings. The poor representation of Scheduled Tribes in all the Groups of services is particularly disturbing. One of the reasons for this situation is relatively low levels of

literacy and poor quality of education. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who come mainly from the rural areas do not have good quality education' and are thus found wanting while competing for a higher level of posts and those requiring technical and professional qualifications.

Most of the concessions and relaxations provided to the SCs and STs in the matter of reservations in services were withdrawn by the Government in 1977. Through this single decision of the Government a large number of backlog reserved vacancies just disappeared. Besides, under the existing scheme of things reservation policy in small cadres, whose number is very large in various Government departments and publicly funded institutions, has become a farce and reservation can never reach the proportion prescribed by the government. The implementation, of reservation policy according to executive's instructions, which is frequently subjected to judicial intervention, has failed to achieve the desired objective. The Commission has been recommending for a long time to give statutory bases for reservation policy and to insulate it from judicial intervention.⁶²

The President of India said in January 1999 "Eligible persons from SC/ST categories are available and their under-representation or non-representation would not be justifiable."⁶³ Does that appear that the depressed classes are milking the country dry, as Dr. Sharma seems to be implying?

9. Disparity in Humanitarian Aid to Dalits

The misuse of funds and pitiable humanitarian aid that is allocated or meant for Dalits (SCs/STs) only reaches them after the very hope of survival is challenged for these people. Let us look at the latest natural disasters in India and how the dalits were betrayed by the national and international aid organisations.

1. On the night of second and third of December 1984, the world's worst industrial disaster occurred in Bhopal, when the chemical processing plant of Union Carbide exploded. It killed more than 30,000 people and injured over 500,000, over a million houses were destroyed and hundreds of deformed children are still being born. But at the time of compensation, Caste seniority was observed. Some of the Untouchable communities are still waiting for compensation twenty four years later.
2. The Tsunami waves on 26th.December 2004, during which between 50 to 60 thousand people died and over 2.5 million people were displaced saw a similar response. The world reacted swiftly and responded to calls for help, food, money and medicine poured in. the Indian side of the affected area got the aid, but when it came to distribution, the Caste seniority was put in place. The Untouchables were dragged out of their shelters to make room for the higher Castes, they were forced to deal with the dead bodies, they were not allowed in the common shelters built by international aid, even though there were vacant spaces.

⁶² National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes report. 1999-2000 and 2000 - 2001

⁶³ Dr. Narayanan President of India 1999.

What is happening in Kashmir due to terrorism is nothing less than criminal; Indians had to leave their ancestral homes and run for their lives, and being treated as refugees in India is wrong. It is up to the Indian Government to care for these Indian nationals. But it also should not go unnoticed by the international community how the terrorists are making the lives of Kashmiri people unbearable. We also must not overlook the plight of those Indians who have migrated from rural villages to the cities to escape tyranny of discrimination. They are forced to dwell on the roadside without any running water, shelter or sanitation.

There are places like Dharavi near Mumbai where one million people are gathered to escape Caste prejudices. They have also migrated to other states to seek work, but they fall prey to national prejudices and are treated as second class citizens. There are countless people who have become victims in the name of national progress. Wherever these people are domiciled, the government callously will allow third parties to build a dam, a factory or multi-storey complexes, the people are forcefully evicted without an appropriate support system or monetary compensation and aid. Some people who have been evicted are still waiting for compensation years later. Nobody talks about these people because they are from an Untouchable background, so they can be treated as non-entities. In reality, these are people who lay the roads, who erect the multi-storey buildings, who clean up the dirty stuff and keep the environment clean, but for Hindus they are dirty, so 'untouchable'. Dr. Ambedkar rightly observes that "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

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 to the deserving. There is no appreciation for the meritorious. There is no charity for 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 those of other Castes. Would a Hindu acknowledge and follow the leadership of a great and good man? The case of a Mahatma apart, the answer must be that he will follow a leader if he is a man of his caste. A Brahman will follow a leader only if he is a Brahman, a Kashatriya if he is a Kashatriya and so on. The capacity to appreciate merit in someone apart from their Caste does not exist in Hindus. There is appreciation of virtue but only if a person is of the same Caste. The whole morality is the bed of tribal morality. He/she belongs to my Caste, right or wrong. He/she belongs to my Caste, good or bad. It is not the case of standing by virtue and not standing by vice. It is the case of standing or not standing by Caste. Have not Hindus committed treason against their country in the interest of their Caste?"⁶⁴

10. Segregation: The Highest Form of Human Rights Violation

Dr. Sharma would have us believe that out of fear of contamination the Hindus segregated Untouchable Castes, *"Although the science of cross-contamination and the spread of disease is a relatively modern concept in western countries, the Vedas documents how disease proliferates through microbes. In order to avoid contracting life threatening diseases, some Castes such as Brahmins, in order to maintain*

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Dr. Babasahib Ambedkar writing and speeches. Vol. 1, p 56-57

physical purity and remain functional, would shun physical contact not only with such persons engaged in 'polluting' work, but society as a whole. It is not surprising therefore given the climate of India and the risk of cross contamination through water borne diseases such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid that removal of any potential source (excrement, human corpses and animal carcasses etc.) was advocated. It is plausible that those associated with such unsociable tasks would be avoided by others and not interacted with socially. This has probably accounted for the current outdated practices of some members of the Community not sharing food with such individuals or discouraging them from drawing water from the same well.

*Many westerners are highly critical of this behaviour, however quick to comment on such practices and ignore them in their own countries. There are now record levels of homeless people in UK today, who are analogous with the outcastes of Indian society. British menial workers seldom interact socially with those of the higher echelons and food and hygiene legislation strictly governs how food is handled, prepared and served to the public. Even in restaurants, chefs habitually wear disposable gloves when preparing food and more frequently, vendors handle fruit, vegetable and other produce, which are to be consumed with gloves. The discerning UK public would not tolerate anything less. "*⁶⁵

If it is true that cross-contamination was the reason for Caste segregation, then is one to believe that over 260 million people designated as untouchables are permanent carriers of infectious diseases? If that is so there are over 200,000 Indians in Britain today, the

majority of them are from lower castes and they have been here since the early fifties. Why is it that no epidemic has started from their infections? Is this infection only designed for high Castes and Brahmins? What nonsense these people are spreading across the world in the name of religion?

If they are frightened from infections affecting their purity, why does the Vedas condone 'Niyog' (sex with any women other than wives) "Devatas, Rishis, Munis and Brahmins used to participate in Niyog"⁶⁶

They did not limit their sexual encounters to human species "O men, with a she- goat etc. For regulating the vital airs and the air which goes downwards and out of the anus and for attaining eloquence with a Ram and for achieving worldly prosperity do 'Bhog' (copulation) with an ox, use them."⁶⁷ "Oh horse, come to me. I will draw your semen inside. I want to be pregnant with your semen." ⁶⁸

There is evidence in the Vedas that encourage copulation with animals. The queens perform sexual acts with sacrificial horses to be blessed with prince, who would rule the world.

Talk about precautions against cross contaminations. Probably that is why Dr. Ambedkar said that if every Hindu knew what their scriptures taught, they will not hesitate to discard it.

Dr. Sharma compared treatment of menial workers in Britain with Caste discrimination. That is absurd. There are some chemicals which are capable of contamination with which people work. They have to wear protective clothes but only for the duration of handling the

⁶⁵ Dr. Sharama, The Caste system p24-5

⁶⁶ Mahabharata Aadi Parv, Chapters 64, 95, 103, 204.

⁶⁷ Athurv Ved chapter 21 Verse 60.

⁶⁸ YAjur Veda Chapter 23 Verse 19.

substance. There are people who work in hospitals, food preparations etc. They only wear protective uniforms to maintain hygiene. They are not condemned to live in isolation without social contact with other section of society. How can one compare to the practices of cleanliness and safety with Untouchability, which is based on Birth?

Dr. Sharma ji please come out of your ivory tower and see India in reality and also see what price Indians have paid for so called ideal society of the Hindus.

Dr. Sharma writes *"It has become vogue for Hinduism's critics to describe the caste system as every bit as bad as Apartheid in South Africa and the 1950s American south. This comparison is as ridiculous as it is untrue, especially given the fact these barbaric systems were born under the shadow of slavery or indentured labour, based on the colour of one's skin, and actually conceived and perpetrated by Europeans, not Hindus.*

*The Hindu faith has never condoned or supported slavery, unlike the Brahmanic faiths, and this is why, historically, India is distinctive in its ability to assimilate and tolerate migrants of diverse faiths and backgrounds, seeking sanctuary in its territory, simultaneously allowing them to live and practice their beliefs as free and equal citizens."*⁶⁹

The people who study Hinduism in depth are coming to the conclusion that Casteism is worse than Apartheid. Apartheid was practiced against people of different race and colour, but Untouchability is practiced against people of the same race and colour. Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Indian Prime Minister, acknowledged that the practice of Untouchability is similar to Apartheid in South Africa.

Dr. Ambedkar writes "The Romans had their slaves, Spartans their helots, the British their villains, Americans their Negroes and the Germans their Jews. So the Hindus had their untouchables. But none of these can be said to have been called upon to face a fate which is worse than the fate which pursues the Untouchables. Slavery, serfdom, villeinage have all vanished. But, Untouchability still exists and bids fair to last as long as Hinduism lasts. The Untouchables are worse off than the Jews.... The untouchable is not merely despised but is denied all opportunities to rise. Yet nobody seems to take any notice of the untouchables much less espouse their cause."⁷⁰

It is difficult to understand how Dr. Sharma can say the Indian society assimilated and tolerated the migrants. To start with they came as Conquerors, so the Indians had no choice and secondly they converted very large numbers of Indians to their Faith. These conversions are responsible for partition of India in 1947. There are over two million Christians in India today. Assimilation can only be claimed if all the migrants who came adopted their faith and remained as Hindu Indians.

During the Vedic period Chaturvarnya was not rigidly enforced, people could rise and fall in Varna. There is also evidence of Inter-Caste dining and marriages. With the birth of the Manu Simiriti it all disappeared. Untouchables were barred from education, broke all social contacts, interaction. They became victims to social boycotts, which are still in place today. They wrote dictums to be enforced by Law. Due to illiteracy Untouchables could not object to it. They could not improve themselves because it was forbidden from earning, accumulating wealth or having ambitions

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Dr. Ambedkar. Mr. Gandhi and emancipation of Untouchables p. 11

other than to please their masters. In reference to this Dr. Ambedkar said "That religion which regards the recognition of man's self respect as a sin is not a religion but a sickness. That religion, which allows one to touch a foul animal, but not a man, is not a religion but madness. That religion which says that one class may not gain knowledge may not acquire wealth, may not take up arms is not a religion but a mockery of man's life. The religion which teaches that the unlearned should remain unlearned, the poor should remain poor, is not a religion but a punishment."⁷¹

Once again Mahatma Gandhi comes to the Hindu rescue, "I believe that the division into Varna is based on birth. There is nothing in the Varna System, which stands in the way of the Shudra acquiring education or studying military art of offence or defence. It is open to a Kashatriya to serve. The Varna System is no bar to him. What learning the Varna System enjoins is that a Shudra will not make way of earning his living by what he has learned. Nor will Kashatriya adopt service as a way of earning a living. Similarly a Brahman may learn the art of war or trade. But he must not make them way of earning a living. Contra a Vaishya may acquire learning or may cultivate the art of war. But he must not make them a way of earning a living.

The Varna System is connected with the way of earning a living. There is no harm if a person belonging to one Varna, acquire the knowledge or science and art specialized in by person belonging to the other Varnas. But as far as the way of earning a living is concerned he must follow the occupation of his Varna to which he belongs, which means he must follow the hereditary profession of his forefathers."⁷²

What an extraordinary belief to have, one can become a doctor but one must not earn his living by practicing healing, but he must do it by sweeping the

roads, one may become an engineer but he must not employ his knowledge to improve or design something new, but one must remain a servant of others. Why? Just because their forefathers had done so, Gandhi Ji called it 'ancestral callings'. In other societies these intellectual professions are considered an asset, but in Hindu society it is a handicap. One wonders who will do the occupations which were not in existence at the time of their ancestors. Would they have to create another Varna and somehow insist that they only give birth in that Varna? The new occupations such as electronic engineers, computer technicians, brain surgeons, astronauts and archaeologists etc., would they have to be created or would they just be born in a specific Caste?

The Hindu scholars have always maintained that India had adapted and learned from her experience of the past and remained vibrant. It is difficult to understand that a society which remained under foreign rule for over 1200 years, during which it suffered untold atrocities at the hands of foreign rulers, but they still maintain they remained vibrant. They fail to see or even consider the reason of their failure and decline. If the Hindu's only goal in life was to establish Chaturvarnya, preserve the supremacy of Brahmins, subjugate the Shudras, Untouchables and degrade Women. They have achieved their objectives with flying colours. But if they wanted a harmonious and free society based on Equality, Liberty, Fraternity and Justice then they have failed miserably. The Brahman could not rise above self preservation, the Kashatriya failed to defend the borders, Vaishya could not benefit society by rising above personal greed and Shudra was subjected to servitude.

The Indian society is being scrutinised by the world society and the Hindus do not like it. The Indians express pride in their Castes. They choose to ignore the destructive elements of it. Referring to Dr. Ambedkar's onslaught on the foundation of Hinduism Pundit Nehru writes, "It survived not only powerful

⁷¹ Mahar Conference 1932

⁷² Mahatma Gandhi Varna Vayavastha Gujrati.

impact of Buddhism and many centuries of Afghan and Mughal rule and the spread of Islam but also the strenuous efforts of innumerable Hindu reformers who raised their voice against it. It is only today that it is seriously threatened and their very base has been attacked."⁷³

The Late President of India, Dr. Radha Krishnan, tried to boost Hindu morale by expressing pride in the length of its survival "The civilisation in itself has not been a short-lived one. Its historical records of civilisation which has continued 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 people 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 the Hindus to their view. The Hindu culture possesses some vitality which seems to be denied to some other forceful currents. It is no more necessary to dissect Hinduism than to open a tree to see whether the sap still runs."⁷⁴

Dr. Ambedkar questions, is survival the ultimate aim and quality of life not? "It seems to me that the question is not whether a community lives or dies; the question is on what plane, does it live. There are different modes of survival. But all are not equally honourable. For an individual and as well as for a society, there is a gulf between merely living and living worthily. To fight in a battle and to live in glory is one mode. To beat a retreat, to surrender and to live a life of a captive is also a mode of survival. It is useless for Hindu to take comfort in the fact that he and his people have survived. What he must consider is what the quality of their survival is. If he does that, I am sure he will cease to take pride in the mere fact of survival. A Hindu's life has been a life

of continuous defeats and what appears to him to be life everlasting is not only a living everlastingly, but is really a life which is perishing everlastingly. It is a mode of survival of which every right-minded Hindu, who is not afraid to own up to the truth, will feel ashamed."⁷⁵

11. No End in Sight-India today

Due to youngsters interaction in Schools, Collages, University, other social places and by taking advantage of government initiatives inter-Caste marriages are taking place. But it is also provoking the violent wrath of the Hindus.

Uttar Pradesh

The Guardian (London) reported on 2nd. April 1991, on "The upper Caste Hindu girl 'Roshni' who ran away from home with her low Caste boyfriend, 'Birjayendra' with the help of another low Caste friend Ram Kishan. Local people apprehended the three and held a kangaroo court in the Village Mehrama in the northern State of Uttar Pradesh and condemned them to be hanged by the neck by their own parents. Their parents were beaten to a point of submission, and then forced to put the noose around the necks of their own children. This execution was carried out to the letter. The youngsters were not even dead when they were cut down and dragged and put on a funeral pyre. They tried to crawl out of the fire, but only to be pushed back in, again and again."

Near Agra in the Village of Nehra, the village panchayat decided to kill the couple who defied the Caste laws. The couple, nineteen year old Gudiya and her lover Mahesh Singh ran away from the Village and sheltered in Mahesh's uncle's house 30 KMs away, but they were caught and brought back to the Village and hacked to pieces and burnt them near the drain 1.5 KM from the Village. The honour killings are quite common in the state's Western district of Muzaffernagar, Saharanpur and

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Nehru Discovery of India p. 246

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Dr. Radha Krishnan. Hindu view of life.

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Dr. Babasahib Ambedkar writings and speeches 'Annihilation of Caste. P 66.

Bijnor. Agra, home of the World's most famous monument to love 'Taj Mahal' got on the map six months ago, courtesy a horror in Garhi Rathore Village. In Muzaffernagar, 22 couples were killed in 2003 and 16 in 2005.

Punjab

In the Punjab State in Ludhiana, Mr. Hardeep Singh (Ramdasia Sikh) and Amardeep Kaur (Jat Sikh) ignored the Caste prejudices and opposition from girl's parents, they got married. The girl was beaten by her parents to force her to abandon the idea of marriage to a lower Caste and they even reported it to the police. But on 9th January 2005, they were beaten by iron rods and killed by slitting their throats. The girl's parents however were conveniently out of the country.

The Times of India reported on 10th September 2007 "Amritsar: A 55 year old Dalit woman was tortured, stripped and tied to a tree in Ram Duali Village of Punjab because her nephew eloped with a girl from the same community.

Orissa

Trying to live with the Inter-Caste marriage is probably worse than death itself. "Rejected by the in-laws, Madhumitra's fight for acceptance is the grim reality of Caste discrimination that is still prevailing in the Society. Being a Scheduled Caste Madhumitra's marriage to Rashmيرانjan, a Brahman, was unacceptable to her in-laws. "After three years of marriage, my husband Rashmيرانjan abandoned me as my in-laws did not accept me on Caste grounds", "she said, she is determined not to quit, she lodged a police complaint following which the couples came together in January 2007. "Under the pressure of his parents, my husband forced me to abort our child in the fifth month, when I refused, he again deserted me on June the tenth" Madhamitra added although she apprised police of her problems, they are yet to react. She has taken shelter under Orissa's Mahila (women) Commission.

Rajasthan

On 6th June 1992, in the Village of Kumber, in the State of Rajasthan, a massacre took place during which 160 people were killed, 400 cattle were burnt alive in their barricades, 500 houses were set on fire and more than 50 women were raped. What is more frightening about this incident is that before there were isolated incidents and they were always blamed on some anti-social elements. But, this time a meeting was organised on 4th June in which about 600 people from 46 Villages took part, which included former MPs and MLAs. A decision was taken to teach a lesson to the Untouchables of Kumber, which they will never forget. The massacre took place on 6th June 1992 under the guidance, supervision and participation of the police force. The police locked up all the young men in police cells prior to the massacre. All this happened just because one university graduate (Untouchable by birth) went to a local cinema and unknowingly in the dark sat next to a Brahman priest of his Village. An Untouchable sitting next to a Brahman Priest, it was unthinkable, so all hell broke loose. During this meeting an Untouchable came by on his bicycle they stopped him dragged him into their Goddess Temple cut him up limb by limb and anointed their foreheads with his blood and vowed to carry out the wishes of the meeting.

Haryana

Five innocent Dalits were lynched by the police in connivance with local 'Vishve Hindu Preshed'⁷⁶ activists on 15th October 2002 at Dulina police post, Jhajjar in Haryana. This was because of mere suspicion of cow-killing, not even proven, but suspicion was enough. The National Vice President of the Vishve Hindu Preshed, Acharya Giriraj Kishore, has publicly justified the killing of five Dalits as nothing, because it is said in the Hindu Shastras⁷⁷ that a life of a cow is worth more than the lives of

⁷⁶ The Hindu Fundamentalist conception of Hindu society

⁷⁷ Hindu Religious Books

Untouchables. They defied and dared the police to take action.

Maharashtra

The Asian Human Rights Commission reports "On 29th September 2006, four members of a poor peasant Dalit family in Khairlanji Village of Bhandara, in the northeast of Maharashtra State, were brutally killed in planned, mob violence, by Caste Hindus. Four members of the family were paraded naked before almost the entire village, and tortured and savagely assaulted with sticks and axes on their genitals, and sodomised. The mother and daughter were raped. All this happened in full public view. Only the father, who was working away from home escaped.

Bihar:

Lakshmanpur: Bathe or simply Bathe, has become a synonym for brutal massacre. After the killing of 58 persons, particularly women and children, while they were asleep, in the early hours of 1 December 1997 by the Ranbir Sena, the Jehanabad village attained tragic notoriety.

<http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv4n2/lakshman.htm>

TWENTY-THREE residents of Shankarbiga village in Bihar's Jehanabad district, all from families of landless agricultural workers belonging to the backward communities of Paswan, Chamar, Dushad and Rajwar, were murdered in cold blood on 25th January 1998. The killers were members of the outlawed Ranbir Sena, a private army of upper-caste Bhumihar landlords. Five women and seven children, including a 10-month-old, were among those killed.

The incident is but part of a series of massacres that mark the recent history of the central Bihar districts. Killings have occurred with frightful regularity - in Arwal and Kansara in 1986, Golakpur (1987), Malibigha (1988), Lakhwar (1990), Sawanbigha (1992), Aiara (1994), Khadasin (1997), Lakshmanpur-Bathe (1997) and Chouram and Rampur (1998).

Tamil Nadu:

Melavalavu Village Murders:

On June 30, 1997, Melavalavu village witnessed one of the bloodiest caste clashes in the state's history. The Thevars, a dominant caste in the state's southern districts, brutally hacked to death seven Dalits, including the Melavalavu Panchayat president, K Murugesan, and his brother K Raja, the vice-president. Their crime: Daring to stand for elections to the panchayat (reserved for Dalits) and questioning the "mismanagement" by the Thevars of the large temple funds
<http://www.mail-archive.com/zestcaste@yahoogroups.com/msg03045.html>

Karnataka

Kamballapalli Massacre in Kolar District: On March 11, 2003 seven Dalits including three women were burnt to death in Kambalapalli village in Kolar district of Karnataka. The attackers were from the upper caste of Reddys who resorted to the dastardly act as a reprisal against the killing of an influential Reddy by certain Dalits a few hours earlier.

http://www.upliftthem.blogspot.com/2006_12_03_archive.html

The literacy rate amongst untouchable women is at 24% and it is expected to fall, and amongst higher Castes women it is 45.72% and expected to rise.

Atrocities against Untouchable women:

Year	Cases
1998	131474
1999	135772
2000	141373

Women raped:

Year	Cases
2000	16494
2001	14375

More up to-date figures are hard to find and many crimes go unreported. Most observers believe that atrocities against women are on the rise.

Discrimination against Dalits is rampant in schools, colleges, universities and

higher educational centres, and in Medical Schools.

All the noise against extending reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in centrally-funded institutions might be a little irrelevant given that an institute like IIT Madras has recruited only a fraction of the 22.5 percent quota for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs). According to information provided by the institute's deputy registrar, Dr K. Panchalan, in September 2005, Dalits accounted for only 11.9%. They were even fewer in the higher courses — 2.3 percent in masters (Research) and 5.8 percent in Ph.D. Out of a total of 4,687 students, Dalits made up only 559.

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main31.asp?filename=Ne160607Dalits_not.asp

Dalit student's battle with prejudice and violence is ongoing process.

NEW DELHI: Vikram Ram, a Dalit student at the University College of Medical Sciences (UCMS) in east Delhi, got a rude shock when he sat down for his first meal at the hostel canteen "Bloody Shaddu"⁷⁸, he was told fiercely by a group of upper caste students, "you cannot eat with us". Hurt and bewildered, he made his way to the row of tables where the Dalit students normally sit.

According to the Dalit students, even the hostel has de facto been ghettoised, with most of them on two floors. When Rakesh Kumar, an SC student, was assigned a room elsewhere, a neighbour said: "we will not let you stay here, Shaddu. Your kind of person cleans our toilets." Faced with the prospect of constant harassment, he asked to be shifted.

So called elite and higher educational institutes like Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) New Delhi, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore breed and promote discrimination, abuse and atrocity against lower castes. The caste atrocity is quite open, incidence of dalit student abuse and isolation is evident, there were three suicides recently, in (IISc) and Chandigarh Medical College, and

students were abused and attacked at the AIIMS hospital hostels.

The acknowledgement and plan of action of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India:

The Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh addressing a meeting of the Honourable Union Cabinet ministers, honourable Chief Ministers of the State said; "We are here to discuss the most serious issue of Untouchability against Scheduled Castes and offences of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

It is indeed a matter of anguish and concern for the nation that despite having adopted the Constitution over 55 years ago, Article 17 of which abolished 'untouchability' and its practice in any form forbidden and punishable in accordance with the law, the offences of atrocity and untouchability not only continue against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes but the data that is available indicates that their perpetuation is with higher propensity in some States.

The atrocities are more pronounced in rural and semi-urban areas of the country, the practice of Untouchability is disguised and latent form continues even today, which is reflective in behavioural patterns and selectively discriminatory approaches.

Apart from caste prejudices, the practice of Untouchability and deep-rooted social biases, there are other factors responsible for major atrocities; namely, land disputes, land alienation, bonded labour, indebtedness, non-payment of minimum wages and forced labour or 'begaar' (Bonded labour). It is also a matter of worry that where-as in the year 2004, the rate of conviction of cases registered under Indian Penal Code was over 40%, under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 it is only 8.03% and 15.71% respectively. The reason for such wide disparity has to be looked into and a solution found at the earliest opportunity. The system of

⁷⁸ An abusive term for Dalits.

having designated District Session Courts as Special Courts for trial of offences of atrocities has not provided for expeditious disposal of cases of offences of atrocities, as the statistics indicate that 85.37% of the cases remained pending with such courts at the end of 2004.

There has been some increase in conviction rate in respect of cases under POA Act⁷⁹, from 10.35% in 2002 to 15.71% in 2004. The statistics also indicate that the number of cases under POA Act has marginally declined from 27,894 in 2002 to 23,629 in 2004. However, we should not rule out that this decline could be due to less cases being registered.

The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, that a special package be evolved on priority basis towards, development of these areas so that the propensity of atrocities is checked on regular bases.

Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have identified atrocity prone/sensitive areas in their respective States. However, it is required and equally significant to effectively implement programmes and schemes, aiming at educational and economic development of Scheduled Castes. The equality of opportunities and ultimate economic empowerment would spawn assertion in them and they would no longer remain weaker section and vulnerable to atrocities. Planning Commission has issued guidelines that the State Governments provide budget allocation in proportion to their population of Scheduled Castes. However, available information indicates that the States/Union Territories of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Pondicherry have not yet done so. As such, Planning Commission has given

⁷⁹ Protection of atrocities Act.

conditional approval for Annual Plan 2006-07 and these State/Union Territories have been requested to ensure strict adherence to the guidelines.

They identified quantifiable targets and concomitant measurable indicators to monitor its progress. On a similar pattern I would like to suggest that we in India, work on a definite timeframe goal i.e., by 2010 to make India completely free untouchability and atrocity. I have given necessary directions to my ministry to prepare an actionable blue print for the aforesaid purpose and we shall be soon circulating it amongst you for your valuable comments. **I propose to set it rolling by the year 2007-08 by declaring it Untouchability and Atrocity Free Year."**

Before such ambitions can be realised, the Government has to deal with thousands of Brahman Priests in the country, who continuously preach, that their loyalties lie with the Vedas, which are infallible without beginning and end. They are beyond change, but not the Constitution, which is fallible; it's man-made and subject to change.

The total such atrocities committed against Untouchable people:

Year	Total Atrocities
2002	27894
2004	23629

Year	Murders	Grievous Bodily Harm	Rape
2002	486	3298	1034

These figures are only covering SCs, but STs are not included. The total numbers of cases before the Courts in year 2000 were 126434.

Year	Total Cases	Pending Cases
2000	126434	100891

Disposed	Convicted	Acquitted
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12956	982	11605
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The questions arise why so few convictions and so many acquittals?

The reasons are simple: -

- 1) Victims depend on their oppressors for their livelihood.
- 2) They do not have financial resources to pursue their oppressors.
- 3) The oppressors use their influence, money to bribe, and political muscle to intimidate the officers to rule in their favour.
- 4) Thousands of cases do not get reported because fear of humiliation by police and by Village elders. If one is determined to register them then social, economic and political pressure is brought to bear on them so under such circumstances they give up and suffer in silence. These figures reported in the Government lists are only the tip of an iceberg.

Referring to the atrocities and maltreatments against Untouchable Castes, the South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre rightly states "It is a shameful tragedy and irony of the fate for the hapless Indians belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes that inhuman and barbaric treatment is meted out to them by their own Countrymen. Sometimes their women are paraded naked in the streets and their children butchered like animals, their hearth and homes are burnt at whim destroying their meagre livelihood. The state and its machinery play at best, helpless mute witnesses or indifferent analysis or still worse active collaborators."

Indians should learn from history, they should not take shelter in ignorance and delight in hypocrisy and refuse to acknowledge true reality and change. It is not only the Indians who have maltreated their fellow Citizens; there are other cultures that have done the same. Due to faster modes of transport and with the rise of a multi-cultural society there is new consciousness in the world today, which feels that the globe is multicultural village. Therefore all who reside in it must be protected from

oppressive elements of the society. Due to this consciousness Apartheid in South Africa has been eradicated and it seems that Caste prejudices are fast coming to world attention. If Indians do not react now, they do not only run the risk of facing Caste warfare in the streets of India, they also would be ridiculed world-wide. The present generation cannot be taken for granted to accept and suffer age-old Caste indignities indefinitely, like their forefathers did before them. The world's societies are reflecting on their pasts and trying to express remorse about the actions of their ancestor's for anti-social behaviour towards weaker sections of humanity.

The Government of Australia has apologised to their victim Aborigines for taking their land and destroying their cultural way of life. Mr. Blair as Prime Minister of Great Britain apologised for the Slave trade. The Americans have apologised to Native Americans for taking their land and the massacre of over fifty million of them. The German Government have also apologised to the Jews for their massacre during the Second World War. Other societies are expected to do the same. The Indians must be aware that due to Caste prejudices, the Caste issue has been debated in British Parliament. The European Parliament has passed a resolution condemning Caste prejudices. The United Nation's human rights Commission brought out a report highlighting the plight of the Untouchables in India and the suffering they endure every day. The Hindus must acknowledge, accept responsibility and apologise for past executions of the Untouchables, and undertake to act decisively to prevent further injustices from happening in the future.

Whenever the Hindus were challenged in the past, they just shifted their position, created new Gods and wrote new scriptures, instead of making necessary changes to escape ridicule. The Buddha was the first to challenge the validity of categorisation of human beings into Castes even before their birth. It is said that there is not even a single Verse of the Vedas, which the Buddha did not

contradict or prove wrong. Therefore, Hindus could not stand up to the reasoning and the logical approach of the Buddha. They could have changed their social structure which the Buddha was so adamant to destroy, or written different religious texts. They chose the latter, moved away from the Vedas and compiled new religious books, such as, the Upanishad, the Dharam Shastras, Simirities, Ramayana and Mahabharata etc. The concept of reincarnation of God into human form to destroy the evil doers, such as Rama and Krishna, is the creation of this period.

These newly compiled scriptures came under attack by the Muslim and European scholars. The Hindus were unable to stand their ground and justify their concept of Caste so they shifted once again and this time back to the Vedas. The role of the 'Arya Samajists' is quite significant in the revival of the Vedas. "The Arya Samajists' have done a great mischief in making the Hindu society a stationary society by preaching that the Vedas are eternal, without beginning and without end, and infallible, and that the social institutions of the Hindus being based on the Vedas are also internal, without beginning without end, infallible and therefore requiring no change. To be permeated with such a belief is the worst thing that can happen to a community. I am convinced that the Hindu society will not accept the necessity of reforming itself unless and until this Arya Samajists ideology is completely destroyed."⁸⁰ Mahatma Gandhi also endorsed the idea of back to the Vedas "The best remedy is that small castes should fuse themselves into one big Caste. There should be four such big Castes, so that we may reproduce the old four Varnas." However, Gandhi ji does not explain the procedure by which over 6000 castes can be forged into four Castes.

The pre-Buddhist period was called a 'Vedic Era', post-Buddhist period was called 'Brahmanic Era' and post-Muslim period came to be known as Hindu period. They avoided change in the past

for the sake of Caste system. They should not relish the fact that they have survived despite fierce opposition, from the Buddha and Bhakti Movement Saints. The Hindus could not win by the strength of their arguments to justify Chaturvarnya nor did they ditch the Chaturvarnya so they accepting humiliation and ridicule instead.

The Hindus must seriously consider before they decide to change or not. All the past opponents of the Hinduism, preached against it by word of mouth, but in 21st century things are done little differently. In the 21st. Century their opponents would come from four sources, which did not happen before;

- 1) Some Hindu intellectuals are becoming self-conscious about their status in world societies. They are not afraid to say that their past is nothing to be proud of.
- 2) Untouchable intellectuals can-not not tolerate tyranny at the hands of Upper Caste Hindus nor can they accept inferior status in Indian society any more, as their ancestors did. All sections of Lower Castes are on the rampage against Caste prejudices.
- 3) The commitments of world society to eradicate human rights abuse and oppressive features from any society or culture. The United Nations has already put the strategy in place to realise their objectives.
- 4) The strongest, opposition would come from international media, which takes pride in exposing hidden characteristics of oppression from all cultures. Due to Globalisation no society is closed to them and they will expose all discriminatory elements of the society. The world-wide media, radio, television and internet, which are open to all. It does not only influence others but it also

⁸⁰ Ambedkar; Who Were the Shudras. Preface xvii.

encourages one to contribute towards it, it even dictates dress-sense and fashion through-out the World, and India is no exception.

Once the age-old deceptions of the Hindus are exposed to the world at large, Hinduism will not be able to survive in the present form.

12. Caste and the Wider World

How does the Caste, affects the rest of the world? According to Katker "As long as Caste in India does exist, the Hindus will hardly behave to treat and approach another human from outside India or within India who is not a upper caste as human, they will not inter-marry or have any social intercourse with outsiders; and if Hindus migrate to other regions on the Earth, they will carry this filth and pathology, because their mind-set is so hardly wired. Indian Caste would become a world problem."⁸¹

It is already becoming a world problem, in UK and in USA caste-related discrimination is emerging in areas where Caste Hindus live. In USA and UK, temples still practice discrimination, to Hindus, whites, Blacks and Dalits are untouchables, so they are treated differently, which is pathetic considering USA and UK are democratic and developed nations. They have no history of such prejudices. The Hindus have the audacity to come here and preach the Caste system. This is just a tiny example of the cruel intentions and capabilities of Hindus. They will carry the Hindu Varna system even to the moon and will spread it there, such is the Hindu mentality.

Dr. Ambedkar said in the early twenties that if Hindu-minded Indians migrate to other parts of the world, they would take the evils of caste with them. The United Kingdom is the prime example of that very fact.

After the Second World War, Britain needed manpower to build its infrastructure and its industry. The Indians took advantage of this opportunity, to come to Britain and improve their financial lot. In the early fifties people from India began arriving. In the beginning, they came as single men and settled together in a close net community thinking there is safety in numbers. They lived in brotherhood frequently visiting each other's residence, sharing meals and congregated in local public houses without any feeling of Caste distinction. They felt the need for a common meeting place so they collected funds and bought a single place of worship. Everybody donated funds and everyone attended the morning worship, it mattered not who belonged to which Caste.

As the numbers grew, the families began to arrive and so did the Caste consciousness. The arrival of the priest was the final blow to the newly found Caste unity. The priest's intervention in the Caste issues made it impossible for the lower Castes to worship under the same roof. There was no picketing at the doors of these religious places, nor any physical action to throw out the lower Castes. But subtle, hints were dropped, to make lower Caste people conscious of their inferior or lowly status. Continued harassment and mental torture of such kind compelled these people to move out and establish their own places of worship, which have resulted in as many places of worship as there are Castes in the area. They do not represent any religious sects; instead they are Caste worshippers of same gods and traditions.

When one picks up an Indian newspaper, there one finds matrimonial adverts, and the most fundamental requirement for an intended spouse is the caste, looks, qualification and profession, become secondary issues. If a person from one Caste falls in love with a person of another Caste and

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Ketkar. Caste, p 4

expresses a desire to marry, then all hell breaks loose. The parents, relations and friends fall in line against the proposed union. The elderly threaten suicide, the parents threaten to disown and disinherit them. If with persistence such a marriage does take place then it is boycotted by relations, friends and in some cases even by the parents. The relations and friends boycott the marriage not only to express their disapproval but also to send out a message to their own children, about what they can expect if they dare to follow the same example. In the past girls were taken back and wedded to persons they has not met or known, the only thing they had in common was Caste.

Log onto Shaadi.com, the famous Indian matrimonial website which many British Asians use to find a suitable life partner, and there are whole sections dedicated to matching up your castes.

Strict rules about intermarriage amongst most South Asian religious groups also maintain caste and status differentials. The rules are more favourable to men, as it is the male caste position that determines the family caste. A man can marry a lower-caste woman without it affecting his caste, but a woman cannot marry lower than her caste, as this will lower her family caste and bring dishonour. These rules add more barriers to social mobility.

Caste prejudice also leads to crimes of violence, the well-publicised case of Samaira Nazir, a 25 year-old graduate and recruitment consultant is an example. The 'Daily Telegraph' dated 15th July 2006, states she was stabbed 18 times and her throat was tied tightly with a scarf and slit. The attack took place in front of her brother's two and four year-old daughters, who were splattered with blood. The incident occurred in Southall. She was murdered in a brutal manner because she fell in love with a man of a different caste which the family did not approve of. Recently the govt has set up special unit to deal with issues of forced marriages and 'honour killing'. The government

seriously needs to address the caste issue as an underlying cause.

Last year, the bicentennial of the abolition of the slavery was commemorated. William Wilberforce, a parliamentarian, led the struggle against slavery in the House of Commons. He described caste as "a detestable expedient ... a system at war with truth and nature"

Hindu Council's denial of caste discrimination belongs to the lead of Professor Deepankar Gupta of India's Jawaharlal Nehru University, appearing before the UN treaty body the CERD (Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), on February 23, 2007, who claimed there are no parallels between racial and Caste discrimination. His testimony was heavily criticised and rejected by CERD members.

A report titled "Minorities within minorities: beneath the surface of South Asian participation" by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust found caste thriving in Bradford:

"Caste is an important part of the social structure of most of the South Asian communities. Caste acts as a glass ceiling to participation, which sooner or later will block women, lower-caste men and independent-minded higher-caste men from bringing about change that is not sanctioned by the higher-caste 'gatekeepers'. Caste division severely limits social mobility and political influence".

The Daily Telegraph, of 11th.October, 1990 reported that there are public houses named after castes; "in Bedford there is a Public house 'Gardener's Arms, it is owned by an English person, it is called by the Indians 'Chamar pub' (Untouchable Caste)." So how can they maintain that there is no Caste issue in Britain?

Hindu beliefs

The Hindus believe their religious scriptures are 'infallible without beginning or end, therefore require no change. They defend creation of Caste authenticity at every opportunity; 'The Bedfordshire

Times' on 26th August 1976, questioned the religious institutions in Bedford about their faiths and culture. Mr. Gupta said "The Untouchable people are (**Sub-humans**) made by Brahmans to serve them'.

Naresh Puri presented a programme on BBC Radio 4, on 5th July 2004, during which he interviewed Dr. Bhikhu Parekh, a Centennial Professor at the London School of Economics and the Chair of the recent Commission on the future of Multi-ethnic Britain. Referring to 'Untouchables' he said "Those people who are engaged in work which one considers as dirty like collecting human dirt which was not only seen as very menial, but also activities which could spread disease. These people were kept at a distance because they were sources of infection if you like. So there was a moral pollution because they were not good enough to other things. There was physical pollution because they dealt with human dirt and therefore these people were regarded as those people not to be touched. Hence they came to be called Untouchables. The British called them depressed classes and Ghandi called them Harijans (children of God) and today they call themselves Dalits which means the oppressed".

The Hindu (Brahman) intellectuals seems to think that if a total fabrication of the truth is repeated often enough and for long enough it will be accepted as truth itself. All the constitutionalists of the world know that all 429 Untouchable Castes registered in the Indian Constitution in 1950, were not all dealing with human waste nor were all 260 millions of them infectious to other human beings. It's nothing more than Hindu propaganda to hide the fact that caste is a Hindu religious creation, based on hereditary and hierarchical privileges.

Education

It is a common belief amongst the Indian population that whenever an 'Upper Caste' Hindu occupies a position of power; he/she will abuse it. He will try to preserve the Caste hierarchy as it has been tried in Coventry, in 1995. Mr. Davinder Parshad (Caste watch UK) states 'The Coventry City Council produced a 'booklet called' A guide to ethnic minorities: - their beliefs and culture' to be taught in the schools.

Councillor Mr. Joshi, chair of the Social Equality Department of Coventry Council wrote in the booklet of 1995/6 'the Caste is inherited by birth and one cannot change or leave one's caste. Hindus in Britain may wish to observe the caste system and wish to avoid dining and inter-marriage with members of other castes'. People were outraged over inclusion of such a demeaning statement in a booklet produced by City Council. Mr. Parashad continues, "The draft booklet was eventually withheld and Coventry City Council had issued an apology but the author was not reprimanded. When we contacted Mr Joshi he said; "I regret that because that has done a lot of harm on the way things are developing, people belonging to higher caste are placed in a very difficult position. When I was a councillor a document was produced where there was only very small reference towards Untouchables and they created the allegations. These castes have become very sensitive; they're very vocal. Difficulty in defence that lot can be said but there are very few people that have come forward".

Mr. Joshi's claim that high Castes are put in a 'difficult position' is not true, what is true is that they lack the power to enforce Caste 'superiority' in Britain.

Caste prejudices in the media

Recently an Asian rapper, Shiv Gharu, talking on BBC Breakfast, stated that he suffered from childhood because of his Caste. "When I was a child, I was taunted and abused and called slave boy and untouchable", he said. "I was involved with a woman who was from a higher caste and her father would not even let me in the house. I was not accepted and when people from the higher castes found out about my relationship, I was beaten up, all

because I'm from a low caste", he further stated.

"Casteism is also being promoted by the Indian media via Bhangra music. The songs played on radio stations frequently refer to the superiority of the Jats who regard themselves as upper Castes".

A few years ago singer Apache Indian, alias Steven Kapur, stirred up a storm in Britain over a song that challenged caste and arranged marriages. The song was major hit and entered the British charts. But the singer was heavily criticised by members of the caste Indian community for exposing problems that should be 'kept within the community'.

The caste contamination of British Politics

A report by Paul Dale in the Birmingham Post on 8th May 2008 quoted a leading Asian City Councillor insisted that "the "disgusting" Caste System of the Indian sub-continent is threatening to destroy the credibility of local and national Elections in Birmingham. Tariq Khan, Deputy Leader, of the Council's Liberal Democrat group said "Gangster Politics" and intimidating tactics and arising from the 'Biradri' (Caste) clan system were being used to force people, particularly Women, to vote against their will, in the way dictated by their wider families".

His remarks followed a major report published recently by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust which warns that election fraud driven by immigrants practicing the 'Village politics' of the Indian sub-continent could be a crucial factor in deciding the future control of Birmingham City Council. In a 90 page report called 'The purity of the elections in UK- causes for concern' the Trust

argued that the UK's election system was at breaking point.

The study, which said numerous convictions for electoral fraud resulted from incidents in Inner-City Wards where a large concentration of voters originate from the Indian sub-continent, added, "Significantly, these convictions have emerged alongside anecdotal evidence of more wide-spread, and long-run, practices associated with Pakistani, Kashmiri, and Bangladeshi traditions of Biradri (Brotherhood) clans influencing the voting behaviour."

"It is widely suggested that extended family and kinship networks, frequently with their origins in settlement patterns in Pakistan and in Bangladesh, are mobilised to secure the support of up to several hundred electors, effectively a Block Vote." Councillor Khan commented "the Biradri System is disgusting. We live in the Western society, I was born and bred in Birmingham, yet certain people criticise me for my Caste. It has all come down to a gutter level of politics. The people were saying 'Tariq is from the clan or this part of Pakistan' but I am British through and through. I represent every part of the Community, English, Afro-Caribbean, Irish, every Religion and every Race; my politics are to work with people, all people. This is gangster politics in Birmingham and I won't tolerate it. We are in 2008 but we cannot progress until we eradicate the Biradri System."

Caste is also thriving in British Asian politics. The former Mayor of Coventry, Ram Lakha, a Labour Councillor who is a Dalit, faced intense discrimination from

'upper castes' when he contested in elections in a ward which was largely populated by Indians. 'During campaigning he was often told that he would not get people's votes as he was a "Chamar". So he filed his nomination in a non-Asian constituency and was able to win.

Lord Nazier Ahmed, member of House of Lords has also fallen foul of caste politics. He has stated on record that in Peterborough, Bradford and Birmingham, candidates from Jat caste or Rajput, regardless of their politics, when it comes to voting people will vote for their own.

Caste in the workplace

Caste discrimination is 'worse than racism because in UK, one cannot see the enemy. People of the same colour discriminate against their own people and it goes unnoticed'.

Balram Sampla, a speaker at a fringe meeting at the Trade Union Conference (TUC) on 11th September 2007 in Brighton said, 'the Amicus union became involved in an incident that happened on the factory floor of an engineering company in Medway. The incident occurred as an 'upper Caste' lady got transferred to another department, where the trainer was of lower Caste origin, on discovering that she made his life hell. She made written complaints to the management of being bullied, intimidated, threatened and harassed. The company upon investigation found claims of being bullied, intimidated, threatened and harassed were completely untrue. On Tuesday 6th December 2006, the company issued a Final written warning for raising grievances that was untrue and caused undue stress and anxiety to the person whom she made complaint against'.

In 2006 there was another incident, involving the USDAW union at a Distribution Depot in Swanley Kent. Due

to lack of understanding of caste discrimination an experienced trade union official reached an out of court settlement in an unfair dismissal case. A Dalit had accused three Sikhs of the Jat caste of conspiracy to have him dismissed, due to their caste prejudice.

If the study is done to find out that how many and which Caste persons are employed in a particular industry, particularly where employees are taken on by personal recommendation then it will usually be revealed that they are from one Caste. The majority Caste persons try to make life a misery for any minority Caste person.

Caste in places of worship

A Granthi (Sikh priest) was serving a Kara Prasad (flour-based sweet received with cupped hands) to the congregation. A woman in the audience refused to take the Kara Prasad on the grounds that he was untouchable. She made a big scene and the Granthi felt humiliated that the question of his caste was raised. He made an official complaint to the Executive Committee of the Gurdwara (Sikh temple) concerning the incident. The Committee duly acted and called a meeting for the woman to explain her behaviour. The woman again insulted and humiliated him in front of the Committee. The Committee could not take any action, even though her action was against Sikh religious principles.

13. Conclusion

From the above examples it becomes self-evident that Caste prejudices are passionately believed in and practiced amongst the people of the Indian sub-continent residing in Britain. It is beginning to penetrate into Education, Industrial Relations, Media and the political life of Britain. It requires the foremost attention of the Law-makers and parliamentarians to secure safeguards against it. There is now a great opportunity for caste discrimination to be included in the proposed 'Single Equality Bill'. A suitable punishment should be prescribed by law for anyone responsible for Caste-based

discrimination no matter which religion they practice.

In the past discrimination has normally been confined to social and marriage interactions and these were sorted out within communities. Due to higher education and financial enhancement Indians are fast coming into positions of influence, they may soon be making recruitment and dismissal decisions in manufacturing, banking, local and national administration, health and social services, etc., and Caste prejudice will, most definitely raise its ugly head, if nothing is done to curtail it.

Parliamentarians from the British governing and opposition parties together must ensure the people who migrated to Britain to escape Caste prejudice and victimisation are protected from Caste atrocities. They have lived here from the early fifties, peacefully and honourably. They have been productive members of society. They have abided by the law and promoted equality, liberty and fraternity. The minority fundamentalists must not be allowed to undermine this process of integration or bring the evil of Caste from the Indian subcontinent to law-abiding Britain.

Remember, a creation of discriminatory system like the caste system is extremely dangerous and powerful, it will not see any barriers, borders or forces, it has to be nipped in the bud, before it starts growing with branches and infecting British society. From decisive action, the world will get the message that the British will not tolerate betrayal of human rights in Britain. So before discrimination in education, services or employment takes root, the possible cause should be eliminated by declaring Caste discrimination illegal.

Indians must take their head out of sands of ignorance, myth and unscientific beliefs and face the reality, that Caste loyalties can no longer be tolerated in this day and age. The democrats and progressive social scientists of the World will not let this inhuman belief system go unchallenged.

Instead of denying the existence of Caste prejudices, the 'Hindu Council UK' must join us and our illustrious Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh who considers that Caste discrimination and Untouchability are a 'blot on humanity'. The Hindu Council UK should also join us in assisting the UK Government to remove this blot which has threatened, destroyed and dehumanized millions of Indians in the past and now threatens to spread its tentacles to other progressive world societies.

All those from Indian sub-continent settled in United Kingdom who are concerned about this problem, have suffered from Caste prejudice or have witnessed others being victimised due to their Caste should urge their MPs to support the inclusion of the outlawing of Caste discrimination in the forthcoming '**Single Equality Bill**'.

13. Responses to HC UK Report from various Organizations:

For immediate release Dalit Solidarity Network UK

Caste Discrimination Sadly is Alive and Well

The Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN) views with interest the recent report by the Hindu Council UK which questions (but does not deny) the existence of caste discrimination in the UK, and blames the British Raj for discrimination in the caste system. It appears to be a thoroughly defensive report, which does not accept in any way that discrimination on grounds of caste is alive and well in the UK today.

This flies in the face of a range of anecdotal evidence given to DSN and to CasteWatch UK, the other organisation attacked by the Hindu Council. It denies accounts given in the media, in employment disputes and on other platforms by those affected by caste, including the former Mayor of Coventry. Both CasteWatch and the DSN have called for more research to establish the extent of the problem.

It claims that MPs such as Jeremy Corbyn and Rob Marris, both DSN Trustees, have been 'misled' by those who want to convert Hindus to Christianity, and hypothesises an agenda of 'Christian missionary organisations'. It suggests that these and other intelligent MPs, who have long experience of lobbying on a wide variety of causes, are unable to distinguish between fact and fiction.

Commented Jeremy Corbyn, DSN Chair, 'I strongly resent the implication that I and colleagues are gullible Parliamentarians who cannot tell a misleading initiative when we see one. I am not a practising Christian and have no interest whatever in the 'conversion' of Hindus. What I do oppose most vigorously is discrimination by any means, including caste'.

DSN Chair of Trustees Revd David Haslam stated, 'The DSN has never attacked Hinduism as such, we have stated our fervent hope that Hinduism can exist without caste and that all right-thinking Hindus will themselves challenge vigorously discrimination by caste. We are very troubled that the Hindu Council should use this report to misrepresent the views of DSN members, both Christian and non-Christian'.

DSN UK is a member of the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN), whose Council meets next month in Geneva. IDSN has recently concluded a research programme in the five countries of South Asia which describe in detail the ongoing enormously negative effects of caste, affecting up to 300 million people in those countries. Every day news come over the internet of further practices required of, and atrocities perpetrated against Dalits in India and other countries.

Meena Varma, DSN Director, commented, 'DSN has just become engaged in supporting the campaign by 1.3 million manual scavengers, cleaning the dry toilets of the upper castes in India, for the eradication of this 'worst job in the world' by 2010. We would be delighted if the Hindu Council would join us in seeking to rid India of this shame, and we promise faithfully there will be no attempt to convert them or the manual scavengers. We believe strongly that everyone has the right to their own religious belief'.

Further information, contact: **DALIT SOLIDARITY NETWORK UK**

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Registered Charity Number 1107022



March 1st, 2008

Dr J C Sharma

Chairman & Director of Human Rights

Hindu Council UK (HCUK)

Boardman House, 64, Broadway

Stratford, London E15 1NT

Dear Dr Sharma

RE: "The Caste System" - HCUK Report by Dr. R. P. Sharma

We have read with interest the HCUK Report by Dr. R P Sharma, on 'The Caste System'.

HCUK has not denied that the Caste System plays a part in regulating the social life of the Indian Diaspora in Britain and has acknowledged its global implications by including Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism as the other infected religions. Clearly, the HCUK feels justified in explaining its position on the foundations of the Caste System with respect to their religion.

The report has a Brahminist bias and attempts to lay the blame for the incipient form of Caste Practices at the feet of foreigners - foreign invasions and foreign agencies. This is not the first time this argument is presented where foreigners are blamed for the country's ills. However, the report is extremely low on admitting that the Hindus had anything to do with the Caste System despite ample evidence to the contrary found in the Hindu Sacred Literature. The Report manifestly contradicts itself in numerous places.

It is not the purpose of CasteWatchUK to go into the historical foundations of The Caste System but only briefly touch on these to show how the ancient pattern of society descended into its present form. Although the British could have been guilty of the many sins and evils they may have perpetrated in the name of Empire around the world, Caste System was definitely not their invention. Neither is it

our purpose to interpret the Sacred Literature of the Hindus. You would agree with us that ancient social divisions have descended into modern times. Sadly, ancient Religious Laws persist as a custom and plagues modern society. Taking a couplet composed by Shri Guru Ravidass Ji, who prevailed before the British arrived in India, this is what he says which proves the point that Caste existed in pre-British-colonial era :-

“Jat Jat Mein Jat Hai Tin Kelan Ke Pat Ravidas Na Mans Na Ban Sake Jab Tak Jat na Jat” Shri Guru Ravidas Ji is arguing that there are Caste within Caste just like the banana leaf which has leaf within leaf. Until caste is annihilated human beings will not be liberated.

HCUK report also over-emphasises the fact *“giving priorities to Dalit means those from higher castes are now complaining that even if they score highly in their entrance exams, they cannot get places”*. This statement has no relevance to caste situation in UK and serves no purpose other than importing caste prejudice and casteist euphoria from India into the minds of young British Asians in this country. Dr R P Sharma presumes that people from Dalit communities lack in abilities or intelligence. The report makes no mention about the brutal suppression, institutional bullying and widespread harassment of young Dalits in places of education by their higher caste peers and teachers and consequent trauma disabling their psychological development. This brutal mistreatment of young Dalit children have been in existence from pre-historic times e.g. *“The story from Mahabharata when a Dalit pupil called Eklavaya acquired fighting skills that no higher caste person could match. Eklavaya’s martial abilities, competence and fighting skills were brutally taken away from him by a higher caste teacher by amputating his body part.”* The situation in schools in India is no different today and newspapers are full of atrocities and humiliation of young Dalits in schools and universities. Higher caste establishment is trying its best to maintain the status quo in social caste structure by disrupting the learning process of Dalits and preventing their educational, psychological, social and economic development. However, younger generations of communities, that are victims of caste prejudice in UK, have proved all “Hindu Theories” wrong. Given equal opportunities in education, right environment to learn and availability of financial means, they have demonstrated that they can achieve new heights in their lives without any reservation in schools, universities or employment. It is very worrying that Hindu Council has chosen not to recognise this phenomenon, learn from it and use it as success stories to educate ill-informed and caste prejudiced Hindus in India and here in UK.

CasteWatchUK is only interested in the psychology of Caste, its traumatising effects on individuals and the resulting damage to the morale of Dalit communities in UK. We now consider ourselves as British citizens and expect protection of our basic human rights by British government. Whether the writers of the ancient Hindu doctrines intended to write one thing & meant another is none of our concern. As responsible citizens of UK, we are interested in the removal of the social evil of Caste, to provide relief to those who are affected by Caste prejudice by raising awareness of Caste based discrimination in a democracy that is prepared to listen and legislate.

CastewatchUK is a secular organisation without any religious agenda, working to address issues that arise out of Caste practices that affect the lives of people living in Britain as victims of Caste Discrimination - whether they are members of the Hindu Faith, Sikhs, Islamic, Buddhists or any religion, however widespread. We strongly resent and condemn Hindu Council UK for the accusation on page 6 of HCUK’s report that *“CasteWatchUK’s intention appears to be to make money and create further divisions in society”* whereas in fact the opposite is the case. The HCUK by presenting the Statement

from the Shri Guru Valmik Sabha Southall are guilty of mischief and the Sabha is guilty of a collusion, which they will one day regret.

CasteWatchUK has also been accused by HCUK of misleading the political classes in Britain which imply that political classes are gullible. It is very unfortunate and makes us feel sad that decades of exposure to British values has not been able to rid the rigid mind set of members of Hindu Council UK of caste prejudice. We believe that first step towards solving a problem is to accept that the problem exists and from our experience Hindu Council UK has always been in a denial mode. How can their offer of help to CasteWatchUK and other organisations to address the caste related issues be taken seriously? Clearly HCUK is more interested in improving the public image of their religious faith and has no real intention to help us root out this social evil from British Society. Since its inception, CasteWatchUK has successfully raised public awareness about existence of caste discrimination in UK. BBC Documentary "Caste Divide in Britain" in 2003 and numerous other media coverage of caste discrimination in UK are the result of such work. CasteWatchUK has successfully raised public awareness about existence of caste discrimination in UK. We have highlighted the fact that those who practice caste discrimination in UK deny that they are doing it and the victims are too scared to highlight their plight and chose to suffer in silence because there is no one who can provide help. Caste prejudice is so deeply ingrained in the minds of Indian Diaspora that they do not seem to be consciously aware that their caste prejudice and social behaviour is causing suffering to others.

Hindu Council UK has raised question about how widespread is Caste Discrimination in UK and whether it is necessary to prevent this form of discrimination in law. These concerns were never raised by Hindu Council UK when Race Relation Act was going through parliament to protect black and ethnic minorities from racial discrimination. CasteWatchUK would not want to drag the Black community into our debate by highlighting prejudices "High Caste Hindus" have towards black people. Although we have many references and testimonials given by individuals to support our contention we have urged government to conduct an inquiry into Caste based discrimination in Britain. We also take the view that although a legislative framework will send a powerful signal to society our real interest lie in social transformation. It's about changing the minds and attitudes towards ancient customs that have no validity in modern times. You have rightly acknowledged and it is a welcome sign that 'The Caste System should and will undergo reforms in the social arena, through education'. It is this part of your statement that we are in full agreement with. However, you go on to say that 'unjustified discrimination and abuse will be eliminated and the original concept of caste re-established' which appears warped. Are you suggesting a return to *Chaturvarna (4 Colours /divisions of society)? If so, how will present society be re-organised into the four *varnas (colours)? Who is going to undertake that stupendous task? Is there a 'justified' form of discrimination or is positive discrimination implied here? We agree that 'every human deserves dignity and respect'. The issue before us is what ways this goal can be achieved.

Referring to the Times2 supplement dated Monday, 25th February 2008 one can see an open letter written by Mr Sathnam Sanghera brought up in a 'Caste-conscious Sikh community' to his mother saying 'sorry mum, but I'll marry who I want'. Of course, there are numerous examples of the younger generation breaking away from the grip of Caste but there are others who are subsumed by it. Sathnam sets himself free from the burden of Caste because the founder of the Sikh faith said that 'Caste is worthless and so is its name'. All the Sikhs have to do is to follow their religious calling and unburden themselves from Caste. Similarly, the same principle could extend to Christians and

Islamists. Can the Hindu call upon his religion for the expression of such a sentiment? Can the Hindus express their moral indignation towards the Caste System and declare an open war against it? If it can then they will surely have to discard part of their Sacred Texts and open a new chapter in their Religion. Whilst the practice of Caste System is found amongst the non-Hindus it does not have the same religious sanction that Hinduism has.

Numerous temples and Gurudwaras emerged in early sixties in Britain founded on Caste lines because at one time members of the 'Dalit' community were made unwelcome by Caste minded Hindus and Sikhs. Indeed the first Ramgarhia Sikh temple opened in 1969 in Foleshill Road, Coventry that resulted from a split in Sikh Temples in UK on caste basis. Questions are raised in school playgrounds, colleges and even Universities where students enquire about others Castes. Questions of Caste are raised in pubs and clubs and on the factory floor. There was a case of a Shopkeeper in Wolverhampton where the customer refused to take small change from the vendor lest they found their touch polluting and insisted that the change be placed on the counter to avoid contact. A similar incident came to light in Coventry. On the factory floor, again in Wolverhampton, we know of women of so called upper Castes not taking water from the same tap from where the so-called lower caste person drinks. These stories are also coming to light from other cities which have a significant South Asian population. There was an attempt by "High Caste Hindus" to introduce and legitimise caste based discrimination into Local Government Procedures in 1995 in Coventry. A campaign was started by victim communities and authorities were alerted. Coventry City Council stopped the introduction of this unacceptable document from becoming a part of their work procedures of personnel department. Hindu Council UK was aware of this incident but we have no evidence whether they were the instigators. Hindu Council did not offer any help or disapproved it at the time and the problem was resolved by intervention from Coventry City Council. Banners are painted on car windscreens extolling Caste virtues. Caste based Bullying occurs in schools and higher places of education. Caste System is taught as part of the Hindu Curriculum in schools reinforcing unacceptable Hindu practices in the young and innocent minds belonging to all castes. Some have been so stigmatised by Caste at university that their experiences have caused them to write Post Graduate dissertations to expose the discrimination they faced. Others experiencing Caste Discrimination have found expression in art and music.

Matrimonial sections of the English speaking ethnic press also have Caste underpinning, not to mention web sites like Shaadi.com. There have been cases of physical violence against those who have broken through the Caste barrier and have undergone inter Caste marriages or those who have eloped. Mr Virender Sharma, M.P. for Ealing & Southall, when interviewed by More4 Channel News, recently says that people are committing suicides in this country on grounds of caste. The list of testimonies and examples can go on and on but what use it to those who suffer from a disease of impaired vision and selective hearing.

The issues Caste raises are profound. Its archaic forms are open to challenges and thousands of questions arise. It is the view of CasteWatchUK that all forms of Caste based Discrimination be examined and a study be made in Britain and any remedial action taken. It is not the purpose of CasteWatchUK to examine each and every foundation of Caste origins but to acknowledge the right of victims to be heard fairly, justly and unequivocally. We live in a democratic country wherein the Parliamentarians are committed to remove all forms of discriminations including Caste. We request each and every community to cooperate with this effort to address the social anomalies felt by

individuals and communities. Thus we can strive to create an open and cohesive society, based on respect and equal opportunities for all.

We would like to suggest that you reconsider your position on caste discrimination in UK, as highlighted in your HCUK report. Instead of pointing blaming fingers at others, we urge you to join us, the victim communities, the host community, politicians, other social institutions and academics in UK in taking appropriate actions to root out this social evil from British Society before it is too late. Communities, that are victims of caste prejudice in UK, consider themselves to be fortunate and liberated and it feels great to be living in a free, fair, civilised and the best democracy in the world. We are sure that you would agree with us on this, otherwise most of the members of Hindu Council UK would not be living here. Please support us in our efforts to get the legislation on equality amended and to make caste discrimination unlawful in UK. We are confident that your support to our cause would demonstrate to Hindus in UK and around the world that we are all equals and would be a giant step in ensuring that people feel proud to be Hindus in a casteless society. It would also send signals all over the world that the time has come for a global action to put an end to the centuries of disadvantages and oppression faced by lower caste Hindus in the name of caste across the world.

Yours sincerely,

Satpal Muman

Davinder Prasad

Chairman

General Secretary

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Press Release

TIME NOW FOR ABOLITION OF CASTE

The celebrations to mark the Act of abolishing the Slave Trade in 1807 were invoked at a meeting in Parliament seeking an end to caste discrimination. Chairing the meeting the Bishop of Chelmsford, Rt Revd John Gladwin, said what an important weekend this was, marking the 200th anniversary of Abolition, and drew parallels with the need to abolish caste discrimination also. Dr Joseph D'souza from the Dalit Freedom Network quoted Wilberforce who had achieved his aim 200 years ago in this same Parliament. Wilberforce said, 'Caste is a system at war with truth and nature'.

The meeting was organised by the Dalit Solidarity Network, in conjunction with Christian Solidarity Worldwide which is hosting the delegation for two weeks, to brief MPs and others on the current situation in the caste struggle. Professor Kancha Ilaiah drew attention to the recent statement by the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, who drew a clear parallel between untouchability and apartheid. He said the situation was getting worse and could lead to civil war. The police continue to be severely repressive towards the 250 million Dalit and Tribal Peoples, with beatings and killings. 'What has changed', said Professor Ilaiah 'is Dalit consciousness and that at a global level'. He spoke also of the need for Dalits to be taught English as that was the language of opportunity.

Indira Athawale spoke about the particular repression experienced by Dalit women. She recounted the incident last September at Kherlanji where - over an argument on land ownership - a mother and daughter were paraded naked, beaten, raped and killed. Two sons were also murdered. Scores of people were involved, thirty were arrested but all have now been freed. Thousand of Dalits came out in protest and such acts of resistance are growing more frequent.

The next speaker Moses Parmar told the story of a village where his organisation was offering support to the Dalit communities. One Brahmin family had controlled a village of 500 Dalits, until finally they rebelled and the Brahmin family were almost murdered. He said that Christianity offers liberation and a future for Dalits.

Dr D'souza, also speaking about the Kherlanji incident, said that in the past it would have been swept under the carpet - now it is being exposed even by the media, largely controlled by the oppressive castes. 'What is being done to Dalits and Tribals is unpardonable and intolerable', he said. He noted that at the beginning of the year the Indian Finance Minister had crowed that with 'India rising' there had been 9% growth last year. What he did not say however that this was only for 20% of the population, little is changing for the many millions of Dalits.

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Chair of the Dalit Solidarity Network (UK), commented afterwards, 'In the light of what has been said today we have a real responsibility continue the struggle, inside the UK Parliament and outside, to raise the consciousness of people in the UK'. Revd David Haslam, Chair of the Network Trustees, said, 'We must get people to realise this is an international struggle for human rights on the same level as the battle against apartheid in the last century, and against slavery the centuries before'.

March 23rd 2007

For further information please contact: Revd David Haslam (020) 7274 6633

Meena Varma (020) 7501 8323 or 07966081558

David Griffiths (CSW) 07823 329661

The Hindu Council UK have also published a following statement, which is supposedly is by the Shri Guru Valmik Sabha, Southall but it has been disputed by The Guru Valmik Sabha Executive. We publish both documents for reader's attention so they can form their own opinions.

Statement

By the Valmiki Community of Southall

In our Executive meeting of 10th February 2008 we discussed the issue of Dalit discrimination. As a result of that meeting we agreed the following Statement for inclusion in the Hindu Councils report on Caste:

1. We resent having the word Dalit ascribed to us by Christian Missionary groups and the British media. Both Christian Missionary groups and the British media have attempted to come and talk to us but we reject their advances, believing they are spreading a hateful malaise in our community with the intention of dividing us. When a few months ago we asked one such woman to leave the temple she accused us of discrimination, whereas it was in fact she who was spreading discrimination.

2. We are aware organisations like Caste Watch UK are now securing large funding from Government agencies. While we attend their meetings, we feel their intention appears to be to make money and help create further divisions in our society.

3. We do have problems with the mainstream Hindu community in that we feel that some in the older generations do think of us lowly. But our children are setting a standard that is changing all that. In this temple alone there are many inter-caste marriages. We have also noted that now some of our surnames are the same as those of higher castes.

4. The word Dalit means 4broken5 or 4crushed.5 The high caste surnames are evidence of how people who did not convert under Islamic rule went into hiding in order to maintain the survival of their Dharma.

5. We also believe our problems were exacerbated by British Colonialism which drained us of all resources and set caste discrimination in place.

6. We abhor the billions of dollars going into India to convert our community. Sometimes we too think how someone after conversion believes he or she can get a good job they could not get before. We wonder, but we are equally saddened that they have forsaken the oldest religion, the Valmiki Dharma: there is one God Brahma and Lord Ram was His incarnation, for the younger religion of Christianity.

7. We wish to protect our Dharma because it loves all and hates no one. It seems to us that Christianity loves only itself and spreads hatred among other communities through seeking conversion.

8. We appeal to the British Government: Please help us to maintain our Dharma. We do have problems but with organisations like Hindu Council UK we will sort them out. We are a proud community here but the British media and some Christian and other money oriented organisations are bringing shame on our family life and on our children. Please protect us, we are British people.

Kewal Gill (President)
Piara Lal Soba (General Secretary)
On behalf of the Executive Committee,
Shri Guru Valmik Sabha Southall



SHIRI GURU VALMIK SABHA

SOUTHALL



16 / 18 Featherstone Road ▪ Southall ▪ Middlesex ▪ UB2 5AA ▪ England
TELEPHONE: 020 8571 6318 ▪ FAX: 020 8571 3211

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Mr. Anil Bhanot
General Secretary
Hindu Council UK
Boardman House,
64 Broadway, Stratford,
London, E15 1NT

07 Mar 2008

Dear Sir,

Sub: regarding the report "The Caste System" by Dr.Raj Pandit Sharma and the subsequent statement in page 6 reflected in the report of the Hindu Council UK.

We are shocked to see the Statement in page 6 of the above report. At no time did we authorise the Hindu Council UK to take or publish any statement on our behalf. In the interest of transparency we only had an informal discussion with Mr. Anil Bhanot who took it upon himself to produce a fabricated statement, then further manipulated it to his own cause. We are gravely disappointed by these actions.

The contents of the statement is unrepresentative of our views and angers our community. This manipulation is not surprising as the so called Hindu dominants for many centuries have abused our people to best serve their own needs. It is actually our view that the suppression of our people by the Hindu dominants (through the practicing of the caste system) drove them to Christianity during the British Raj. As more often than not, it was the British missionaries that offered the only real opportunities for Education and Progression which had been denied to them through the ages. We feel that your present actions are simply another attempt to hold us back.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- We object to your plans to stall our lobbying work with the UK Parliament for an amendment in legislation to include Caste Discrimination in the Single Equality Bill, so that the victims of Caste Discrimination may seek legal remedy and the perpetrators are brought to books.
- We did not produce in writing any such statement, nor did we pass it in our Executive meeting.
- We vehemently condemn the Hindu Council UK for refereeing to Bhagwan Valmik Ji as a Dalit in the foreword section of your report.

We now seek an immediate formal withdrawal of the above mentioned statement and references from your report and formal apology you.

We would appreciate your prompt reply,

Yours sincerely,

P.L. Saha Gen. Sec.

AJIT NAHAR

Gurpal Gill

Nirmal Ram Saha

C.C : Gurpal Gill
Shri Guru Valmik Sabha International

