

**CASTE QUESTION IN INDIA
- OUR PERSPECTIVE**

**Central Committee
Communist Party of India (Maoist)**

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Caste Question in India – Our Perspective
First edition – 2017 May
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Central Committee
CPI (Maoist)

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Note for the Second (Amended) Edition

The Central Committee of the CPI (Maoist) formulated the document 'Caste question in India – Our Perspective' and released it in 2017 May. Later the CC received certain suggestions, comments and amendments from few of the CC comrades and comrades of the State Committees. The CC discussed these and is releasing the amended document.

2021 January

**Revolutionary Greetings
Central Committee
CPI (Maoist)**

Foreword to the Third (Amended) Edition

As a result of the internal theoretical political struggle made by front rank comrades such as Comrades CM and KC against the diehard revisionism and modern revisionism of CPI and CPI (M) and their efforts since 1964 in the preparation for the New Democratic Revolution in the light of MLM, there was a breakthrough in the political sphere in India. This began with the spate of the Naxalbari Armed Peasant Revolution that took place with the concrete analysis of the social condition of the country and the theoretical solution of the fundamental problems of Indian revolution. This is a great turn in the history of democratic revolution in India. It stood as the commencement of New Democratic Revolution in India. It rejected the deep rooted line and organisation of the revisionist leadership and led to the formation of CPI (M-L) in the leadership of Comrade Charu Mazumdar (CM) in 1969 April and MCC in the leadership of Comrade Kanhai Chatterjee (KC) in 1969 October. Both the leaders led their leadership teams, worked in practice with fundamentally correct understanding of the class oppression, social suppression, casteist oppression and the problem of Dalit people suffering from its utmost oppression and paved the way for the accomplishment of New Democratic Revolution and the establishment of classless, casteless Communist society free of all kinds of exploitation, oppression, suppression and discrimination. Although there were few differences in the understanding and experiences of these two streams of revolution earlier to its merger into the CPI (Maoist), the fundamental understanding was the same and both the parties led struggles against social suppression together with the class struggle. The parties could improve its practice since it was centered around the oppressed classes and oppressed social communities. We see this enriched understanding in the fundamental documents of the CPI (Maoist) – 1. Party Program 2. Party Constitution 3. Strategy and Tactics of Indian Revolution. The same understanding united the CPI (Maoist) and the CPI (M-L) Naxalbari in 2013.

After the successful Unity Congress-Ninth Congress of the CPI (Maoist) in 2007, the Central Committee decided to formulate a document on Caste Question in India. However, the party leadership was engaged in fulfilling the tasks of the Unity Congress fighting back the intense enemy offensive that the Indian comprador exploitive ruling classes unleashed on

the countrywide revolutionary movement in the dictates of the imperialists with the emergence of the new party. The draft document prepared by the drafting team was not available due to the enemy offensive. These were the main reasons due to which the CC could formulate and release the document only in 2017. Because of the delay, the CC decided to first release and enrich it later with the opinions of comrades.

“According to the scientific, clear and correct understanding of our Party that works in the guidance of the theory of M-L-M, the history of thousands of years of the Indian society since classes were formed is the history of class struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed classes. Since classes formed first as varnas in India there was class struggle in the various social phases of the Varna system, feudal system/caste system, colonial-feudal/semi-feudal system, semi-colonial, semi-feudal system and this is the main reason for social development. There was persistent class struggle in all these societies in the ideological, social, cultural, spiritual, economic, political, judicial and other fields. The oppressed never stayed away from fighting against the oppressors. This struggle continued in various forms and intensified, whether in a violent form or in a non-violent form, in a severe level or in a moderate level. Whatever the number and level of the successes and failures of the oppressed in this struggle, it goes on. We have to highlight the legacy of struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors and all its positive experiences. As a part of it we have to highlight all the positive aspects of the struggles against class oppression and social oppression and reject the negative aspects. We must take lessons from these. Class struggle/People’s War is going on in the leadership of our party as a continuation and development of these struggles of the oppressed. We have to take these to its ultimate success and achieve liberation from class oppression and all kinds of social oppression including emancipation from caste. In this way, the people of the oppressed classes and oppressed social sections constituting more than ninety per cent of the population of the country will be liberated” (Last of the ‘Strategic Tasks’ mentioned in Chapter-VII of this document).

Comrades of any level in our party must bear this fundamental understanding. They must study the struggles of the various streams that strived for social liberation against social oppression and the writings of its leadership; especially they must definitely study the writings of Phule,

Periyar and Ambedkar who greatly influenced the society; must study the writings of Marxists and non-Marxists. They must study the history of Indian social development since the primitive phase to the present. This apart, they must also study the writings of diehard enemies of social liberation, the leaders of Brahmanic Hindutva organisation. If we do not study the movements and the ideas that contributed to social development and the reactionary ideology that suppressed these, in the present period, we would face limitation in politically mobilising the people with a comprehensive understanding and leading the revolutionary movement to success.

There are few changes in the following important aspects in the document 'Caste Question-Our Perspective' released in 2021 with amendments and enrichment of that released in 2017. Few aspects related to history were amended basing on facts. Certain necessary information was updated.

One aspect mentioned negative regarding assessment of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar was amended such as to give the correct meaning. This amended document mentioned thus regarding the assessment of Ambedkar. He "...approached Parliamentary democracy to achieve his aim. This attitude in practice diverted them from the path of militant struggle and created illusions on the Parliamentary system. On the other hand, his services helped the British imperialists after 1941 and the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the feudal classes after 1947...On the whole, Ambedkar chose annihilation of caste as the goal for his life and sincerely attempted with his entire strength...He was always prepared for change...we have to take the positive aspects in him. We have to shed those that stand in the way of the path of revolution...Ambedkar's theory of annihilation of caste is a prominent part in the protracted process of construction of democratic society. But it is not the ultimate. This theory alone will not be enough. This process began before Ambedkar and continues in the present. We have to take it until the end..." ('Assessment of Ambedkar' in this document).

We enriched the strategic and tactical tasks mentioned in the Special Program for solving the caste question mentioned in Chapter-VII. This apart, the document stated that the oppressed classes, the workers, peasants and middle classes, the Dalit and other oppressed social communities play an active role in the three magnificent weapons of New

Democratic Revolution, the Party, the People's Army and the Revolutionary United Front. It clearly mentioned that to develop the conscious and active role of the oppressed social sections in the entire spheres of revolution and in all the revolutionary units, we need to mold these in a revolutionary manner, develop and establish proletarian leadership upon these which will be the utmost vital strategic task. It emphasized the need to mold the party into a genuine proletarian party by proletarianizing the party in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, imparting proper training and rectifying the wrong understandings, methods of work and trends through self-criticism-criticism in the party, in order to smash the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system. We rectified repetitions and alphabetical mistakes.

We amended the word upper castes with oppressor castes and lower castes with oppressed castes. The economic and social hegemonic castes are yet unleashing exploitation and oppression on the rest of the castes utilizing the hierarchical Brahmanic caste system. Therefore, it would be proper to address such castes as 'oppressor castes' instead of the ordinary word 'upper castes' and the 'lower castes' as the 'oppressed castes'.

We know the history of the people of the oppressed castes of our country, especially the Dalit people who transformed into Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism, owing to untouchability in the inhuman caste system, caste suppression, discrimination, harassment and other such miserable conditions. But we see that whichever religion they transformed into from the caste system, castes surfaced in those religions. We can say that no nationality is without castes. We also see that castes penetrated into the tribes or the emergent nationalities in varying degrees. In essence, the people of the basic classes are not away from the influence of caste system whichever religion they adopted. They are facing caste discrimination and oppression in varied forms.

On the other hand, the Sangh Parivar organisations made several campaigns of 'ghar vapasi' (conversion of religion) in our country since the beginning. It made violent attacks on minorities. No state is left without communal violence, social massacre and communal riots. Brutal attacks of the double engine governments on the colonies and business establishments of religious minorities with bulldozers are on the rise since the Hindutva forces came to power in the past decade in the name of 'ghar

vapasi' all over the country and especially in the states where the Hindutva forces are in power. Ban on Cow slaughter, Acts to prevent conversion of religion and 'Love Jihad' Acts were made stringent to unleash Brahmanic Hindutva ideology in a bureaucratic manner.

We must mobilise the entire oppressed castes including the Dalit people and the democratic sections among the oppressor castes against untouchability, caste suppression, discrimination and harassment basing on this document in the areas where our party works. We must discourage conversion of religion. We must mobilise the people against ghar vapasi, against the attacks of the Hindutva forces and the Brahmanic Hindutva Acts that curtail the freedom of food habits, marriages, clothing and religious belief. We must fight against caste oppression and discrimination, religious conversion (pro-Hinduism and anti-minority religions) Acts and against the attacks of Hindutva fascists. We must explain the essence of the hierarchical caste order and the essence of religions to the people.

The poor and the toiling masses of all castes in the country are under the influence of all the exploitive class-caste parties including the left parties. We know that all these parties form caste organisations and cash votes in elections. All the ruling class parties strengthen casteism on the basis of castes and split the people. These are causing splits among the various communities inherent to castes. The revisionist parties speak a lot on elimination of caste. But the policies these unleash in practice contribute only to strengthen casteism. The Dalit and other oppressed caste people and tribal people are mobilised behind all these parties in a certain form and to a certain extent. However, the need to unite all these people on the basis of not only class but also against the caste and religious oppression is more imperative under the rule of the present Hindutva forces.

Earlier to the colonial rule (until the self-sufficient rural economy existed), there was equal distance between caste and class. However, there were considerable changes in caste based feudalism owing to the internal contradictions in the society, the feudal wars, the changes that had been taking place prior to colonial rule due to class struggle and the later socio-economic changes due to colonial rule. There was class division in various castes. Thus, the equal relation between caste and class gradually lessened. After the transfer of power in 1947, in most of the rural areas of the country, the social hegemony of Brahman and Kshatriya castes started to decrease

considerably and the 'hegemonic castes' of the earlier Shudra varna took the place. A small 'creamy layer' emerged out of the Dalit communities. Despite these, except for a very small section, all the Dalit people are yet an oppressed class. Although there were many such changes in the society, Brahmanism is the base for casteist society and continues to be fundamentally so. Today, the Brahmanic Hindutva forces are giving new life to it. The hierarchical feudal hegemony continues to be the ideological base for the existence of every caste and of Hindu religion. Brahmanism constantly influences the society in various forms. It props reactionary values and relations. Therefore, we need to fight against caste oppression and for the elimination of caste in the base and superstructure of the society since the beginning until the final accomplishment of the New Democratic Revolution.

In the existing social conditions of our country, most of the toiling masses belong to the Dalit and other oppressed social communities. So, their representation in the leadership teams in the struggle organisations against class oppression and social oppression is very important. We must raise their active role in these organisations and movements. We must develop these organisations and its leadership strong, broad and efficient. We must impart Marxist education to the active members, train them in class struggle, make them part of class struggles in practice and bring better forces into the party. The party must thus strengthen its base of oppressed class and oppressed sections. In fact, this is the process in which the proletariat of our country divided into castes develops 'itself into a class'. It is one important task of the proletarian party to constantly effectively lead this process in both the spheres of class struggle and ideology.

Caste question is entwined with the economic life and the sentiments of the people for the past centuries and is very sensitive and complex. Caste order is outdated but casteism is rooted in the people. It is weakening but continues in the base and superstructure standing as an iron wall in the way of solidarity among the people, the democratic values, aspirations and social equality. It is an utmost important task to unite the oppressed people in struggle against exploitation and oppression in the entire economic and non-economic spheres to eliminate it. This is an inseparable aspect of the struggles against caste oppression and for elimination of caste.

This document formulated by the CC mentioned the overall fundamental changes that occurred in India since classes formed in the form of varnas and later since it transformed into caste order. Caste order had been being utilised as a strong instrument for exploitation, oppression and power either during the rule of Hindu and Islam rulers, the British rule or in the period after transfer of power in 1947 August. Imperialists, comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie and landlords collaborated to do all the possible so that the society does not overcome the casteist framework. In this process, the Hindutva forces are extremely aggressive, instigating the sentiments of the people and doing all the possible to split the society on the basis of religions and castes. The document studied and understood all these through which we can accomplish New Democratic Revolution by fighting against the casteism used as a strong instrument by imperialism, comprador bureaucratic capitalist and feudal classes and their state. This would end caste oppression, caste hegemony and casteism and ultimately pave the way to transform the society classless and casteless.

The CC gathered the opinions of various levels of comrades of various spheres to the extent possible on the document released in 2017, amended and enriched it, in its meeting in 2021 and released it once again. Later few comrades sent few amendments to the document. The CC studied these, added the necessary and is releasing it again with a foreword.

The document provides the party a better understanding of the developments since the pastoral Aryan clans migrated to the Sindhu riverine area until now. Basing on this, the entire party and concretely those working in this front can understand the utmost peculiar, complex caste question through their further creative and active work and learning from and studying their experiences. The document formulated immediate and long term program to solve the fundamental and immediate problems of the oppressed social communities such as the Dalit, tribal, religious minority people and women. The document provides the fundamental guidance for the education of the entire party regarding proper understanding towards caste question, to educate the people of these communities and the oppressed people of the country and to work with a proper perspective. This will contribute to unite the broad oppressed people, especially the Dalit people and also the people of oppressed classes on the question. We must politically enlighten the people of every state and area of the country where

party organisation exists and especially these social communities in the light of the document. We must build broad Mass Organisations and develop them in a strong manner. We must take up strong, militant struggles on the daily and fundamental political problems regarding caste oppression. We must lead these with the objective to move towards the direction of elimination of caste and social liberation. Only thus we can help people mold their future through self-efforts.

2025 March

**Central Committee
Communist Party of India (Maoist)**

CHAPTER-I

ORIGIN OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

The caste question is one of the specific problems of the Indian Democratic Revolution. Its origins lie in the Varna order and Brahmanism. Linked to the specific nature of the evolution of the Indian society, it has been one of the most important means of exploitation and oppression of the labouring masses by the exploitative classes, from the ancient to the modern period. For the ruling classes in India, the caste system serves both as an ideology as well as a social system that enables them to exploit and repress the majority of toilers. To formulate a correct program to root out the caste system we have to first understand its origin and development.

The history of origins of caste system in our country can be traced back to over 3000 years. It is inextricably linked to the development of class society, the emergence of the State, the development of the feudal mode of production and the continuous but often forcible assimilation of tribal groups, with their own customs and practices, into the exploitative agrarian economy.

The origin and the development of the caste system can be traced through the following three historical periods –

1. Varnashrama Dharma period

In the period from 1500-500 B.C. when Aryan pastoral tribes from the North West migrated into the country and clashed with the local agricultural and non-agricultural tribal communities, varnas (Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya) came into existence as classes. The Kshatriya and Brahman were the ruling alliance and the Vaishyas the exploited peasantry. In this process the Shudra as captive slaves and the lowest Varna, came into existence when agriculture emerged as the dominant production system. Thus, the state emerged around 500 B.C.

2. The period of Proto-feudal state

The period from 500 B.C. to the fourth century A.D., the period of the expansion of agriculture marked by the widespread use of the Iron plough and village settlement. During this period Kshatriyas and Brahmans that were the ruling alliance expropriated surplus in the form of taxation and tributes from the Vaishya peasantry. In the vast tracts of King's lands (Sita lands) Shudras performed forced labour. Trade and large kingdoms grew. The religions of Buddhism and Jainism emerged and became prevalent.

3. The Brahmanical caste-based feudal period

This period from the fourth Century A.D., onwards up to the arrival of the British was marked by the rise of small feudatories and feudal intermediaries between the King and the people who were given land grants and right to collect revenue. The caste system became consolidated. Buddhism and Jainism declined. Brahmanism gained ascendancy.

The above can only be very broad periods. There will of course be differences regarding every specific region in a very broad country. Yet broad trends apply to the whole of India.

By 2000 B.C. itself, in India there were civilized societies belonging to Bronze Age that practiced simple agriculture. The Dravidians in the Indus Valley region grew crops by irrigating lands after building dams on the rivers, when even iron and plough had not been known. Cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were built when the world was still in the threshold of civilization. The merchants of Indus region had trade relations with ancient civil societies like Nile and Mesopotamia. During that period in northern and southern parts of India, there were agricultural societies and small tribal societies of the Bronze Age. Some tribes were engaged in agriculture, food-gathering and cattle rearing. In southern parts there was maritime trade also. But the production was lower in the Bronze Age than that of Iron Age. All of that production was concentrated in the hands of King, Priest and trading class.

Along with the first phase pastoral Aryans, the last phase of Aryans who knew about iron also entered India in 1500-500 B.C. By then itself, they knew weaving, practice of medicine and making of weapons. They defeated the civilized tribes of the Bronze Age Dravidians of the ancient Indus civilization and the Stone Age barbarians who were more backward than themselves. The patriarchal system of Aryans replaced the existing matriarchal system of Dravidians.

The Aryans entered from the North Western side and spread towards the Gangetic delta. They were already divided into an 'aristocracy' (Rajanya), 'priests' (Brahmans) and peasants as ordinary 'clansman' (Vis). In the incessant conflicts and wars associated with the spread of the Aryan eastwards, conflicts among the various pastoral Aryan tribes and between the Aryan tribes and local tribes for cattle, water sources, land and at a later stage also for slaves, sections of tribes that were defeated began to be enslaved, known as *dasas-dasyus*.

Whenever Aryans had wars with other tribes, the Dasas fought on behalf of the Aryans. The Dasas and other non-Aryans who were enslaved by the Aryans did not become slaves to the Aryans since the society of Aryans who took up food production by that time in North India was not based upon private property but was a clan society based on collective property of land and cattle. They became servants for the entire Aryan clans and Shudras by Varna. As the Dasas were not subjugated into slaves but into Shudras, the Roman type of slave system did not evolve in India. Instead an under-developed dasa system emerged.

The wars increased the importance of the chieftains. They relied on ritualism to enhance their prestige and to consolidate it, and to appropriate the surplus through these rituals. Tributes of cattle and dasas were given by the ordinary Vis, the Brahmans who perform the rituals to the rajanyas who make wars, in these rituals. The rajanyas, in alliance with the Brahmans increasingly performed major and minor yagnas. The ruling elite rajanyas and the priests lived off the gifts (dana/bali) given to them by the 'vis' at these yagnas. At this stage the tribal organisations based on clan and kin were still dominant. The emergence of the Brahman and Kshatriya Varnas was the process of breaking down of the kin based clans and the creation of a broader class-the varna-which lived off the tributes and gifts from the vis and subjugated tribes.

The Aryan pastoral tribes had adopted agriculture from the local tribes. These local chieftain clans and the priestly clans were being incorporated in the Kshatriya and Brahman Varna's respectively. There was thus a continuous assimilation of the non-Aryans into the Aryans. In spite of it, the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans constituted only a minority of the Aryan population. The subjugated tribes, both Aryan and non-Aryan, gradually came to form the Shudra Varna. Not all of them were slaves. While domestic slavery existed, yet, basically the Vis of the first three varnas became peasants and the 'Vaishya' peasants that was being formed as the fourth varna (from the kin-based 'vis' the broader Vaishya varna emerged) and the Shudras (a smaller varna in size relatively) who reared the cattle and tilled the soil.

The widespread use of iron, not only for weapons but also for agricultural purposes, from around 800 B.C., marked a qualitative change in the production system of the ancient tribal societies. Plough-based agriculture could generate considerable surplus on a regular basis. Vast dense forests

could be cut down and land cleared for cultivation. Thus, iron enabled the agrarian economy to become the dominant production system in this ancient period. The spread of agriculture was achieved at the cost of the non-agricultural tribes. They were either subjugated or displaced from the forests and their traditional means of livelihood. The conquest of new territories and the possibility of regular settlements further enhanced the importance of chieftains. Few tribal oligarchies emerged. Many of the chieftains consolidated their rule on their own clans and tribes and also the territories they commanded. The Varnashrama dharma was already being developed by the Brahman priestly class. The rituals became more complex, time and wealth consuming. These rituals were the means through which the surplus could be redistributed. The surplus appropriated in the form of gifts was shared by the ruling Kshatriyas and the Brahman priests. Gifts were no longer voluntary. They were forced. The Arya dharma and Varna ideology legitimised the increasing power of the kings and priests and the absorption of the subjugated tribes into the lower varnas. It became the ideological expression of the classes that had emerged from the womb of the various tribes.

The Aryans also utilised social and cultural assimilation and adjustments along with violence, as tools to assimilate the Aryan and the non-Aryan tribes. Varnas are classes of the period when the production was in its primitive stages. The Aryans under the guise of religious-philosophical form appropriated the surplus production from producers. Gradually the differences between Aryans and non-Aryans died down and new tribal economy of the Aryans emerged. The Brahmins who were performing sacrificial rituals like bali of Vedic period and other priestly acts gradually entered the forests in order to introduce the Arya dharma in the barbaric society and gave respectability to the innumerable superstitions of the local tribal communities. They made genealogy of tribes and princely families as epics. They accepted the tribal customs of worshipping serpents and monkeys as well as human and animal sacrifices in order to make friendship with local tribal leaders. Thus, the Brahmins by giving official recognition to superstition of these tribes could muster the co-operation of the opposing forces. They introduced agricultural techniques to the ancient primitive tribes who did not know long-term observation or mathematics while determining the lunar calendar and astronomy which was essential for agricultural activity. Although the emergence of this new system - the use of iron plough and such other new

instruments of production, and food production as the main source of livelihood - had also developed gradually by 1000 B.C. itself, they did not completely give up the form of clan system until (around) 600 B.C.

By 6th century BC, Aryans began to come down towards south in small batches. This brought iron plough to the South. Armed aggressions did not become much necessary to spread Aryan culture in the south. The hitherto chieftains of tribes before the advent of Aryans were recognized as kings. Clan priests were brought into the newly emerged Brahman Varna. These developments led to the decline of clan system. Surplus production increased and trade expanded.

Development of agriculture, including paddy cultivation in the Gangetic plains was accompanied by increasing division of labour and the growth of trade. Private property in land emerged. Towns developed. New classes came into existence - the Vaishya traders and the Gahapatis (the land owners). The Gahapatis did not till the land but got slaves or Shudras to till it. Tensions between the upper (oppressor) two varnas and the lower (oppressed) two varnas emerged, and tensions between those who owned and those who laboured also emerged. This led to the emergence of the state. The first states also emerged in the Gangetic plains, and in Bihar.

The early states and the ruling clans in the proto-states yet relied on yagnas and rituals to buttress and legitimize their rule, upheld the varna order and private property. Gifts were replaced by taxes. The oppressor two varnas, Brahman and Kshatriya were not taxed.

But the newly emerging classes from the Vaishya Varna, the powerful merchant guilds, the artisan guilds and the oppressed two varnas on the whole and the non-subjugated tribal community did not accept the Varnashram dharma ideology and the order it propagated. The emerging agrarian economy too had no use of the expensive rituals based on sacrifice of animals including cattle wealth. Numerous philosophies and 'Lokayata', Buddhism and Jainism gained prominence.

The Mauryan Empire, the first major full formed state in India in the third century B.C., reflected this new reality. The class of wealthy traders, merchants, and landlords from amongst the Vaishya Varna was included in the nobility and in the bureaucracy called the 'Paura-Janapada.' It was from this period onwards that Brahmins considerably leaving aside their traditional

profession of performing yagnas were accommodated in the bureaucracy and came into powerful positions as advisors and ministers to the king.

This new type of state (ancient collective and state ownership) was based on Vaishya taxation and Shudra labour. Guided by the very important Kautilya (or Chanakya's) 'Arthashastra' the first, frank account of how to rule, a state-craft without any religious cover came up. This 'Arthashastra' state was a centralised state which took the responsibility for the extension of agriculture and trade, monopolised mining, settled groups of Shudras where lands could be cleared and brought under the plough, providing necessities and infrastructure like irrigation for cultivation. The 'Sita' lands were farmed directly by the state by enforcing captive Shudra (dasa/helot) labour while 'Rashtra' lands were farmed by the free peasantry (Vaishya), and were taxed on various counts. While owner and slave relations in the Varna order existed, dasas and slaves were primarily used for domestic work by land owning 'Gahapatis', or by the state for processing the grain collected and production of some commodities.

Under Mauryan Empire, there were three kinds of regions. Some were settled villages and some were places of agricultural migrant groups. The majority were of the forest-based pastoral food gathering tribes who did not know the usage of iron.

Skilled 'Karmakar shudras' became free artisans, and were even permitted to enter the Buddhist 'sanghas'. The Dasa Shudras were not allowed to enter Buddhism. A section of the Vaishyas also became skilled artisans in special professions like making the chariots. The upper most section of the Vaishyas became part of the nobility while most of them were pushed into the Shudra Varna by the next stage of Indian history.

While the tribal elite were incorporated into the Brahman and Kshatriya varnas, most of the tribals became labourers and part of the Shudra Varna. Brahman Varna accepted Vegetarianism, Ahimsa and the Karma theory from Buddhism. The cult of demi-God Krishna who was accepted as a God by not only the pastoral tribes but also the barbaric tribes gained prominence. Tribal communities were incorporated and the 'varna-samskara' theory and Manusmriti (2nd Century A.D.) which assigned roles and positions to the incorporated 'Jatis' came into being.

The importance of Brahmans in the unfolding agrarian economy, with their knowledge of the use of the iron plough, the 'Nakshatras', and

‘Aryanising’-thus bringing into submission the various tribes increased their importance and social base. In the king’s court they provided the Genealogy that helped the numerous kings, of emerging feudatories from tribes and its mergers, legitimise their rules. Therefore, neo-Brahmanism gained the support of rulers - especially during and after the Gupta period (fourth Century A.D.).

It was only when the Kushans and the Shakas in the North and the various tribes in the South were assimilated into the varna order, trade declined, all these resulted in the emergence of feudalism from the below, the Mauryan empire fell and self-sufficient village economy came into existence by the sixth Century A.D., that neo-Brahmanism and the Jati system based on Manusmriti gained hegemony over most of India.

Earlier Buddhism had risen as a challenge to the yagna-based Brahmanism and the Varnashram dharma. It was backed by the powerful merchant and artisan guilds. It also reflected the aspirations of the Vaishya Varna, the elite of which (the Nagar-Shettis and Gahapatis) were incorporated into the nobility and bureaucracy in the ‘Arthashastra’ state, which though secular mainly backed Jainism and Buddhism. The lower Karmakar-shudras could also separate themselves and climb up the hierarchical order. Though the Dasa shudras could not join the Buddhist sangha they too had backed the aspirations of Buddha. Later on, as trade declined the village based economy emerged, the largely urban based Buddhist monasteries lost its appeal as they too, by obtaining land grants, became land owning institutions and were seen as part of the ruling classes by the people. These wealthy monasteries supported by lavish gifts did not play a useful role as compared to the Brahmins in the village level. New Brahmanism in comparison played a useful role in the economy to extract surplus and yet subdue the masses. The rulers therefore preferred this new role of Brahmanism for example, the Second Century A.D. Satavahana state south of the Vindhyas, the Pallav state in the South in Five Seventy Five (575 A.D.) called themselves Kshatriyas and Brahmins and backed Varnashram dharma. The features of Buddhism like Ahimsa, Karma theory and Vegetarianism useful in the agrarian economy, were already incorporated by neo-Brahmanism.

Like how the Roman Empire collapsed after the Third Century A.D. in Europe, there was a decline of trade and artisan guilds after the Gupta period in our country, the contraction of money circulation and the settling down of artisans in the villages, accompanied by the development of the self-sufficient

village economy. This created conditions for the rise of feudalism, based on Jatis. The rise of feudalism was marked by the rise of a class of intermediaries which expropriated the surplus in the form of revenue or share of the produce from the peasantry and the labouring masses. Initially only land grants were given (land grants were given to Brahmans, Buddhist monasteries and to army and other officials), later on administrative tasks were also assigned. This started off as early as Second Century A.D. during the Satavahana rule and became prevalent during the Gupta period (Fourth Century A.D.). Thus owner-slave conditions of the Varna order collapsed. Dasas were used only for household work. Their work was to render various services to their masters. On the one hand, semi-serfdom and on the other the transformation of varnas into castes, continued. People of the same profession began to be transformed into one caste. Profession and caste became synonymous.

By providing with some more religious rights during and after the Gupta period, the situation of Shudras was gradually changed. Many artisans and tribals were added to untouchables and the Shudra community was divided. Along with untouchables, those who had been languishing in conditions of slavery from the beginning were considered as pure Shudras and they were specially provided with a religious code. They considered agricultural labourers and some lower level artisans and few others as impure Shudras.

In north India, since the decline of the Mauryan Empire, formation of self-sufficient village system had started. In the process of assimilation of tribal clans in to the self-sufficient village society, the castes expanded. The gods and goddesses of the tribes, that had been transformed into castes, were Brahmanised and temples were constructed for them. The caste system was strengthened. The social bases of the caste system and the Varna system of Yajurveda period were entirely different. During the phase where food production began to be adopted, Aryans used to get the production done by the subjugated non-Aryans, and for that purpose the Varna of Shudra was adequate. To differentiate between Aryan people and the ruling class, the division like Vaishyas, Brahmans and Kshatriyas was sufficient. But for self-sufficient villages this four Varna system was not at all adequate. In the process of expansion of agriculture social production developed, new professions developed according to social necessities and a new rural society was formed. It was in this process that many 'Shudra' castes were formed without any concern to the Varna system. Real cultivators and artisans became Shudras.

Vaishyas became confined to commerce. The population of Shudras increased by leaps and bounds whereas Vaishyas were reduced to a minority.

From around the Sixth Century A.D., the caste system began to consolidate in most parts of India. Varnas became castes. In the four Varna system in India, the agriculturist had the position of Shudras, whereas the jobs like removing the skin of dead animals and cleaning it, killing the animals and other such things which were considered as menial works, were being done by family dasas. In Indian feudal society along with four varnas, the fifth Varna (panchams) came into existence which comprised of untouchables, the most downtrodden (most oppressed) section. In the process where the majority of Vaishyas were slipping into the status of Shudras and population of dasas was increasing, the fifth Varna of untouchables was created to get the menial works done. The Karma theory played a chief role in consolidating the foundation of Varna system and suppressing Shudras. The fourth and fifth varnas could be suppressed by preaching the ideology that the varna-order was ordained by god, and that one cannot but helplessly suffer since fate is all powerful.

The Vaishya Varna became a minuscule part of the population with the decline in trade. Also, most of its members had become peasants and thus part of the Shudra Varna. The Kshatriya Varna also became a very small part of the population since the peasantry were part time soldiers called to war when their feudal over-lords ordered it. In the north, ruling or powerful clans of those invaders like Gujjars, Hunas and the Arya Kshatriyas and the feudal intermediaries consolidated into the Rajput caste. The clan-kin connection of these groups from the feudal strata were consolidated through marriage alliances to form the Rajput jati. The word originated from 'Rajputra', i.e., one who controlled a few villages in the early medieval period. Along the Gangetic-valley there were only Brahmans, Vaishyas and Shudras. In the south in this period the village headman also came to be recognised as an important post. Normally large land-owners from the dominant peasant caste, they separated themselves from their cultivating peasant caste men, and consolidated their position through kin relationship and marriage relationships among themselves over a region. The Pedda-Reddis from the Reddi caste in AP and the Gaudas in Karnataka emerged as separate caste groups through this process. In India the rise of the Jati system was inextricably interwoven with feudalism.

It is in this period that the number of untouchable castes swelled greatly. From the Fourth Century B.C., itself, there are references to the untouchables, in Patanjali for example, who mentions two types of Shudras, the Nirashrit (excluded) and the Ashrit. Initially the number of untouchables was limited. Gradually newer tribal groups began to be included in this. But it is in the feudal period that their numbers went up greatly. The Chamars (tanners) and Rajaks (washers), for example, were reduced to untouchable status. Tribal groups, subjugated by force after being dispossessed of their forests/lands, means of livelihood and freedom were relegated to untouchable status. Some artisan groups too were pushed down from Shudra to Ati-Shudra ranks. They were in the main bonded agricultural labourers who were denied by religious injunctions any right to own wealth (gold etc.) and land. Their only duty (dharma) was to labour for the entire village, especially for the land-owning class, but live outside the village at a distance, polluting even by their shadow. Maximum surplus in production could be extracted from the untouchable labourers, forced into a low level of material existence and perpetual servitude.

The process of the consolidation of the Jati structure in the country was completed in the main by the Tenth Century before the raids of Mohammed of Ghazani. The feudal class upheld the Jati system, even rulers who professed Buddhism were proud upholders of the Jati system. All castes connected with physical labour (peasants, artisans), or those that challenged Brahmanical superiority or notions of the hierarchy were classed as Shudra. The Manusmriti (Second Century A.D.,) provided perfect ideological justification for Feudalism and the superiority of the exploiting classes. It provided sanction for depriving the freedom and the degradation of the majority.

The establishment of Turkish power in North India, through the Slave dynasty in the Thirteenth Century A.D., marked an important phase in feudal mode of production. They centralized the administration and introduced a more systematic method of revenue collection. The composition of the ruling classes underwent a change. Initially Turk families and their relatives ruled. They were successively replaced by dasas of Indian origin, Indianised Turks and foreign immigrants, to be replaced by even more foreigners, low castes in Hindus. The most important changes related to the methods in which rights to revenue collections (Iqta) were assigned. Originally restricted only for life, by the end of the Fifteenth Century they were made hereditary. The Turks were

urban based and favored Islam. Thus, Turkish rulers displaced the original feudatories and created new ones over a period of time.

The administrative changes introduced by the Turks and adopted in the Deccan too, introduced changes in the powers of revenue collection and administration, affecting military service holders, administrators, village headmen and the priestly class. The office-holders came to be known as Inamdars, Watandars, Iqtadars, Deshmukhs, Desais and later as Jagirdars (during Mughal rule). Some of the earlier feudal intermediaries who lost their posts, gained it back during the latter part of the Turk rule where the feudal class composition was unstable. The Turks introduced new technique in the science of war. They also gave a fillip to trade, commerce and artisan production in the urban areas. Hence this period saw the development of the productive forces in Indian society.

In the south the composition of the ruling classes did not undergo any change, except that sections of the oppressed castes were co-opted into the ruling classes. For example, the Nayakar - a class of warriors became the intermediaries who were granted 'Amaram' (75 year) tenures in the Vijayanagar kingdom. In this period, various tribal kingdoms arose, the Doms in the foot-hills of the Himalayas in the Thirteenth Century A.D., the Bodos in Assam from the Thirteenth Century to the 18th Century, the Nagbanshis and the Cheros in Chota-Nagpur and Palamau in the 12th Century the Gonds in central India between 15th to 18th Century, the Mahadev Kolis in south Gujarat in the 13th Century A.D. These tribes had already developed to settled agriculture, borrowing technology and culture from the adjoining plain areas. Inequalities within the tribal societies had grown. Initially opposing Brahmanical Hinduism, they later on adopted Hinduism or Buddhism or converted to Islam. They became vassals under the Marathas or Mughals.

The growth of trade and commodity production and the political and cultural changes created the material condition within the feudal society for the rise of protest against the caste system. Beginning around the 12th Century in south India and a century later in the North, it led to the strengthening and assertion of the traders and artisan groups in their interests all over the country. The Left hand and Right hand caste associations arose in south India during this period. It reflected the rise of commodity production and the growth of the market. While the Left hand association represented the commodity producing and service castes, the Right hand association

represented the trading castes. The two associations often united to resist feudal oppression. In North India, the 'Julaha', members of the artisan castes (weavers) converted to Islam.

It was in this period from the 12th Century to the 17th Century that the Bhakti movement emerged as the most popular and significant opposition to the caste system and Brahmanical superiority. Most of the Bhakti saints were from the artisan castes, like blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, though a few of the religious reformers were also Brahmans. A few like Nandan (a Nayanar), Tiruppan (Aalvar), Chokhamela and Sant Ravidas were from untouchable castes. The movement also brought woman saints into the limelight. The Bhakti movement had a moderate stream like Ramanuja, Gyaneshwar and Chaitanya who stressed on the oneness of all before God. The more radical stream - comprising of saints like Basavanna, Tukaram, Namdev, Kabir and Guru Nanak criticised caste discrimination and Brahmanical hypocrisy openly. Some of them initiated measures of social reforms as well. Kabir and Guru Nanak went out of the fold of Hinduism. The movement, by emphasising the personal relation of the individual with God, transcended the barriers of caste. They struck a major blow at the concept of Brahmanical superiority based on the monopoly of the knowledge of the scriptures.

The Bhakti movement was a major assault on the ideological and material premises of feudalism. Preaching in the local languages, the Bhakti movement brought the regional languages up, laying the bases for the growth of nationalism in the different regions. Though towards the end of this movement a conservative trend also came up in the form of Ramdas and Tulasidas who upheld the Chaturvarna and sought the re-establishment of Brahmanical superiority and prestige yet in the main the Bhakti movement was a movement for religious and social reform. But due to the historical limitation at that time the movement could not attack the base of the caste system – the feudal mode of production and the feudal relations of production therein. Hence it failed to break the caste system.

The Mughals too in the 16th Century A.D., consolidated their rule by associating with the Rajput Chiefs, other wealthy (oppressor) caste intermediaries and ruling groups of kingdoms annexed in the north and in the Deccan. Though the Mughals monetised revenue, brought changes in the irrigation system which increased the output of agriculture and also there was an increase in trade, yet the social structure at the village level was not

affected. At the top of the rural structure were the oppressor castes or Brahman or Rajput intermediaries, large landlords who held administrative responsibility and powers living off the revenue collected from the tenant peasants and share croppers or the labour of bonded labourers of the tribal or untouchable castes. The Shudra feudatories elevated themselves to Kshatriyahood and in some cases acquired even Brahman status. Over the centuries, the cultivating castes claimed the land and right over land and share of produce due to the Jajmani/Balutedari system (their duty is to serve the oppressor castes of the rural order such as the goldsmith, potter and weavers. This was called Jajman. Balutedar represents the caste order in Maratha area) institutionalized between them and the landlords. Anyhow, this system allowed the total withdrawal from manual work of even the village level oppressor castes, who extracted free labour many times. Finally, the system of 'Vetti-Begar' too came forth. Extra-economic coercive, casteist exploitive bonds were forged by this system. The untouchable castes were assigned positions as lower level functionaries, receiving right to cultivate a small portion of the village land while the majority of them were bonded servants attached to particular families, domestic slaves and landless serfs. Bonded labourers comprised 10 percent of the population during the Mughal rule, this percentage was higher in the south.

Spread of Islam – Caste: Christianity and Islam entered the state of Kerala through the religious chiefs much before the invasions of Muslim kings into our country. During the Moghul rule these too expanded along with the expansion of the state. However, the oppressor castes approached the Muslim kings and took up Islam for properties and top posts. The backward castes, mainly the Dalits took up Islam unable to tolerate the caste discrimination in Hindu religion and to untie themselves from it. Thus, we see that though Islam did not discriminate by caste, it penetrated through the Hindus. This applies to the other religions also. Caste is an instrument for exploitation and so it penetrated into all the religions. However, there are differences in caste discrimination of the respective religions. On the whole, Turkish rule helped for a little loosening of the bonds of caste. Yet the oppressor castes were close to the seats of power from the local level to the centre. Feudalism in the Moghul rule collaborated and colluded with Feudalism in the Hindu Kings' rule. So, there were no fundamental changes in the relations of production, that is, in the base. The caste system was maintained by the pre-British feudal states,

for not only they gained financially through arbitration in caste disputes but also, they could extract free labour especially for public works. Last, but not the least, the caste system upheld and legitimised the Dharma of the rulers to wield power.

CHAPTER-II

IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE AND ANTI-BRAHMANISM MOVEMENTS

Class differentiation and changes in Caste system

Colonial rule brought a considerable change in the Brahmanical Hindu order and the inequitable caste system but could not change it basically. In fact, it was given a fresh lease of life by incorporating it into the legal system by-passing the local customary practices. They appointed Brahman pundits to advise British judges in interpreting the Shastras and applying them. Untouchables were denied entry to temples in the name of protecting the 'established customs of other castes.' The British courts entertained caste customs and legalized it. In the name of respecting autonomy of caste they upheld the disciplinary power of castes against violations of caste norms. The British encouraged the finance of the study of Sanskrit and the translation of Sanskrit texts into English. They propagated the racist theory of the origin of caste, emphasising the European origins of the Aryan race and that caste was the means of maintaining racial purity.

Yet, the economic changes introduced by colonial rule in the 19th Century in order to consolidate their rule and intensify the exploitation of India, had a severe impact on the relations of production in the rural areas and created new classes from among the various castes. The colonial rulers commoditized land, they made land accessible to members of all castes in different levels, the various revenue settlements – the Zamindari, Ryotwari etc., the introduction of Railways, Ports, Roads and Jute industries, Defence works, the colonial education system, the introduction of Uniform Criminal and Civil law and the colonial bureaucracy affected the caste system in a severe manner. It changed the role of caste system in the society to an extent. Objective conditions necessary for the rise of movements against the caste system and to loosen the caste system were created to some extent.

With vested interest in seeking support for their colonial rule especially after the Great War of Independence of 1857, the British administration implemented the policy of divide and rule. They encouraged the conversion of the oppressed classes into Christianity by Missionaries. On the other hand, the oppressed castes, mainly the Dalits took up Christianity unable to tolerate the inhuman evils of Hindu religion such as discrimination and untouchability. Those of the oppressor castes also took up Christianity for the sake of education, medicine and such others. From 1901, through the censuses the caste background of people was recorded, providing the various castes a rallying point for organising themselves on regional basis through caste conferences and caste newspapers to record their status.

Amongst the Kayasthas in the North, Nayers in Kerala, reformers started organising caste associations, emphasized the need for changes in the practices of the caste, giving up outmoded customs to adjust to the new opportunities available under colonial rule. Among the oppressed castes too, the petty-bourgeois sections mobilised caste associations to give up occupations that were considered as defiling or degrading, and emulating the customs of the oppressor castes in an attempt to get a higher status. Lastly, under pressure from the Non-Brahman movement and reformers, the British were forced to enact resolutions and legislations granting access to public places like tanks, schools, wells etc., (maintained by public funds) to members of all castes and classes, but they did little to see the implementation of it.

In the land settlements the British ignored the inalienable rights of the actual cultivators, and in many areas the intermediaries, the non-cultivating sections who only had a share in the produce, traditionally, were made the sole proprietors of the land. In the Zamindari settlement areas, the Shudra peasants became tenants at the mercy of the landlords, in other areas a class of peasant proprietors arose, but even in this the larger peasants gained while the actual cultivators became tenants or share-croppers. The Shudra peasantry was divided into an upper section of rich peasants and a lower section of middle and poor peasants. With the intensified exploitation coupled with tax burden, famines and other crises, indebted peasants of all the cultivating castes were pushed into the ranks of the landless, and also a section of artisans became landless labourers.

A class of rural poor, landless or poor peasants emerged from the ranks of most of the lower (oppressed) backward and Dalit castes in the 19th century.

A working class linked to industrial production also emerged from the ranks of the Backward and Dalit castes. A small section among these castes also found avenues of mobility with jobs as small contractors, traders, reach a socially higher status and gain lands. With access to education, service in the army, in the works of Infrastructure and Jute industries and the Government Bureaucracy, a class of petty-bourgeoisie also developed within the Backward and Dalit castes. But they found their avenues blocked by the monopoly of Brahmans over the government jobs. With their tradition of learning and their socially and economically powerful position, the Brahmans and others from oppressor castes took Western education and soon came to occupy most of the posts in the administration and judiciary. Thus, the introduction of Western education helped the Brahman castes to monopolise the colonial bureaucracy.

Movements against Brahmanism

The development of new classes among the non-Brahman castes led to the growth of a democratic consciousness among them. The Movements against Brahmanism came forth in southern and western India in the later part of the 19th century by mobilising the Shudra and Ati-Shudra castes against Brahmanical feudal domination and exploitation. They concentrated primarily on various aspects of caste oppression, superstition, caste-feudal privileges and rights, hereditary nature of posts, education based on Sanskrit, etc. The movement brought forth the racial theory of origin of caste to explain caste oppression, by interpreting Brahmans as Aryan invaders who conquered the Dravidian race. The conservative trend within the Movements against Brahmanism tended to restrict itself to opposing the monopoly of Brahmans in the field of education and government employment, in the legislatures and the struggle to get the representation and control over district boards. The Justice Party, the Anti-Brahmanic Party, the Unionist Party (Punjab) represented this trend. Elsewhere too, the Arya Samaj, the Patidars in Gujarat and Rajput groups represented this trend. The Triveni Sangh in Bihar also restricted itself to the three main erstwhile Shudra castes the Yadavs, Kurmis and Koeris. This trend was not sympathetic to the aspirations and needs of the Dalits and other oppressed castes.

At the same time in many areas in the Western and South India, the non-Brahman people had a contradiction with the feudal wealthy class and the moneylenders who were the social base for colonial rule. Most of those in this

feudal wealthy classes and money-lenders were from the oppressor castes, mainly from the Brahman caste. They had monopoly also on the government administration in these areas. So, a section of the Movements against Brahmanism that was more radical, had a broad basis and a complete anti-caste attitude which absolutely rejected the caste system along with its differentiations and duties.

Phule and the Satyashodhak Samaj

The Movement against Brahmanism in Maharashtra took a concrete shape with the formation of the Satyashodhak Samaj on 24th September 1873 by Jyothiba Phule (1827-1890) in Pune. Phule belonging to the Mali caste (a caste involved in the cultivation of vegetables and its trade) of a middle class family, educated in a mission school, was inspired by the western ideals of liberty and equality and especially by the writings of Tom Paine, the American liberal, to take up social reform.

The British had destroyed the rule of the oppressive Peshwas (Brahman Kings) and had brought distorted capitalist development. They also influenced all castes with western colonialist exploitive ideology. Phule expected much from western capitalism like many members of the intelligentsia of the Eastern countries in his time. Phule concentrated his efforts together with his life partner Savitri bai (1831-1897) on the oppressed sections of the masses, the working class in Bombay, the peasantry and amongst the untouchable sections in and around Pune. Songs, booklets, plays written by Phule using a popular hard-hitting style and language, exposed the various ways in which the 'Shetji-Bhatji' class (the money-lending trader and priestly class) duped the people, especially the peasantry. Interpreting the racial theory of the origin of caste in the context of popular folk-lore that the Aryan invaders had enslaved the local peasantry by duping them, thus defeating the rule of Bali Raja, the peasant king, the Satyashodhak Samaj established links with the peasantry.

The Satyashodhak Samaj rejected the traditional marriage ceremony with Brahman priests, started schools for women and homes and remarriages for abandoned women and children. It led a strike of barbers who decided not to tonsure widows. The Samaj started schools for untouchables and opened drinking water wells for them. Under Phule's guidance, N.M. Lokhande in 1890 formed the first reformist organisation of textile workers in Bombay called the 'Mill-Hands Association.' Phule promoted modern agriculture amongst the peasantry, fought against the superstition of not using canal water, personally

bought land to experiment and set an example. He appealed for nationalization of land. He supported whole-heartedly the move to form co-operatives, and in fact, it was one of the most important points in the program of the Satyashodhak Samaj. Phule was the first to use Shivaji as the symbol of the Shudra peasants' resurgence. He fought for education to be imparted in Marathi and the abolition of hereditary posts in the administration. Phule had a democratic outlook which helped him to ally with the peasantry consistently. His program was aimed at Brahmanism and the exploitation of the Shetji-Bhatji class. The Satyashodhak Samaj's programme reflected the interests of the peasantry.

Even after Phule's death (1890 November 20) the activities of the Satyashodhak Samaj continued in the districts of Ahmadnagar, Satara, Kolhapur in the leadership of Savitri bai Phule. These continued even after her death and also spread in Amaravati in the Berar (Vidarbha) region. The propaganda of the Satyashodhak Samaj's 'Tamasha' groups led to revolts of the peasantry against landlords in 1919-1922 at Satara and in 1930s at Buldhana. Led by their enigmatic leader Anand Swami the peasants demanded reduction in rent, abused Brahmans and their gods, and hit out at the money-lenders and traders, seized British treasuries and attacked police stations. In fact, they attacked the feudal authority in every way in the rural areas and also the British, thus arousing an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist consciousness.

The landlord section of the non-Brahmans did not support but actually denounced these activities. These movements led to the exodus of Brahman landlords from the villages in Western Maharashtra. Also, these movements were entwined with the anti-British. These movements also stood as a guide to the 1940 movement. The famous Nana Patil formed the parallel government - the Patri Sarkar - opposed to the landlord-moneylender combine and the British rule. Later this trend of the Movements against Brahmanism merged into the Peasants and Workers Party and the Lal Nishan Party, also Javalkar and Nana Patil joined the Communist Party of India.

The feudal and the rich peasant sections being dissatisfied with the militant and populist agenda of the Satyashodhak Samaj, formed the Anti-Brahmanic Party in 1915 and contesting the district board elections, entered the legislature. Being strongly anti-Tilak and anti-Congress in the 1920s large sections of this Party joined the Congress in 1930s, became new cooperative bosses and developed a chauvinist Maratha consciousness. The Satyashodhak

Samaj could reform the caste system and feudalism to some extent. The influence of the reforms of the Phules is yet considerable on the oppressed social communities of our country.

E.V. Ramaswamy Periyar (Sadhu, Rushi) and the Self-Respect Movement

The concentration of religious and economic power was in the hands of the Brahman castes in the erstwhile Madras Presidency. The concentration of Brahmans in the modern fields – education and the bureaucracy in this Presidency, the emergence of petty-bourgeois and nascent bourgeois classes among the oppressed castes, including an educated intelligentsia, led to the emergence of the Movements against Brahmanism in Tamil Nadu. The social reform movement in the form of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association (1892), which was active in promoting the education of women, reform of marriage, abolition of untouchability and the amalgamation of castes was a precursor to the Movements against Brahmanism in which progressive sections of the intelligentsia were involved. There were violent conflicts between the oppressed caste toddy tapper Nadars, after they had risen economically through trade and the Feudal Maravars (a landlord caste in Tirunelveli and Ramanadu areas of Tamilnadu) in the vicinity of Sivakasi in 1899, after the unsuccessful attempts of the town Nadars to enter a temple of Vishwanadha revealed that with social differentiation the oppressed castes were astir for their democratic rights, against traditional inequalities and social hierarchy. The Nadar's movement led to the formation of Justice Party that wanted to achieve representation in the Legislative Assemblies through the British formulated caste-based constituencies and to gain posts in the administration with clout.

Justice Party had a strong pro-British stand and clearly represented the interests of the Big Landlords and Traders of the non-Brahman oppressor castes. The Self-Respect movement that had more mass base and was a radical movement in the leadership of E.V. Ramaswami 'Periyar' did not limit to the protection of the interests of non-Brahman castes regarding posts in the administration. It stepped forward and took up a full-fledged attack on the caste system and Brahmanical Hindu religion.

Periyar was born in a rich Nayakar family in Erode in 1879. He actively participated in the anti-British local non-cooperative movement. He joined the Congress. In 1924 he was part of the Vaikom Satyagraha for the entrance of

the untouchable castes in the temples. Gandhi interfered in this affair and dealt it like an internal matter of the Hindus. Then Periyar found fault with the fundamentalist leadership of the Congress. In 1925 since Congress was not prepared to support special representation of non-Brahmans, Periyar left it and launched the Self-Respect movement (Suya Mariyadai Iyakkam). The movement that Periyar started centered in the Tamil areas of Madras province. The developing working class, middle class and traders lent support for this movement. It gained wide support especially from Erode, Madurai, Coimbatore, Selam, Tiruchirapalli, Tuticorin and other towns.

This movement addressed all the oppressed castes along with the untouchables. They took up the necessary measures to make women and youth part of the movement. They started a magazine, 'Kudi Arasu'. This Self-Respect movement took up a militant form with an atheist perspective not only against the Brahmins but also against religion, superstitions, caste differentiations and caste-based rights. Periyar wished to ignite self-respect and equalitarian ideas among the oppressed castes. They praised and took pride in Tamil language and opposed Sanskrit language. They propagated the banning of employing Brahmin priests in marriages and brought forth self-respect marriages. They opposed 'Rali' and called for a ban on using names of castes. They jeered epics like Ramayan. Periyar had a straight style. The style was popular and highly attractive. The movement broke the hold of religion, fought for equality among all the castes and paved the way for materialism. The Self-Respect movement took up activities against the exploitation of money-lenders and on the problems of peasants.

Due to the influence of Communists and Periyar's visit to Russia the Self-Respect movement of the 1930s in Tamil Nadu supported Socialism. Communists like Singaravelu propagated materialist philosophy and socialism through their magazine. Two trends were active within the Self-Respect Movement, one which preferred to restrict itself to social reform and the other trend which wanted to take up anti-capitalist propaganda and activity. The Self-Respect socialists took up organising on problems of the peasantry along with their regular conferences. Under the influence of the CPI leaders the Self-Respect socialists (Samadharma group) merged into the Congress Socialist Party in November 1936. Periyar faced repression from the British government for his attack on the non-Brahmin Government and for 'promoting Soviet Bolshevism'. Periyar retracted. The Self-Respect movement could not sustain

its social radicalism consistently, and was unable to give expression to the sentiments of the masses by demanding a full attack on feudal land relations.

After this, Periyar joined the Justice Party. Later in 1942 he formed the Dravida Kazaghham (DK). They supported the efforts of the British in the Second World War. In 1947, during the transfer of power, Periyar called for August 15 to be observed as a 'day of mourning', demanding freedom from the 'Brahman Raj' that had been inaugurated. During the Congress rule under Rajagopalachari, the DK launched strong agitations in Tamil Nadu against the decision to impose Hindi. In Tamil Nadu the anti-Hindi agitations took place in 1943 and 1952, and again in 1965, thus giving expression to the Tamil nationalist sentiments against the domination of the all India Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie. These agitations were violently suppressed by the then Congress rulers in the centre. The DK also continued its anti-caste propaganda, breaking the images of Lord Ganesh, calling for a boycott of temples, burning thousands of copies of the Constitution in 1957 for maintaining the caste system. The Movement against Brahmanism continued in 1950s as a cultural expression of the oppressed castes and the Tamil nationality. Periyar supported the Congress, when a Nadar, Kamaraj became the Chief Minister, later he supported the DMK government.

Periyar, a militant and forceful speaker gave a sweep to the Self-Respect Movement. Philosophically a follower of the Atheist American thinker Ingersoll, he was attracted to the achievements of Soviet Russia and Marxism. Though Periyar fought against social and cultural oppression of the Non-Brahman castes, raised the issues connected with the real socio-economic processes of the down-trodden masses and identified with the democratic cultural aspirations of the Tamil people, yet his dependence on the Justice Party of the non-Brahman castes favourable to feudalism and imperialism, his support to Kamaraj and the DMK i.e., the pro-landlord, pro-imperialist sections of the Non-Brahman castes reveals his vacillations and inconsistencies. Hence, the Self-Respect Movement could not develop its potential to become part of the wider all-round anti-feudal struggle.

In the 1940s when the masses of the oppressed castes in Tamil Nadu and Kerala took up valiant anti-feudal struggles under the CPI, the Self-Respect Movement was only an observer. Periyar articulated the interests of the weak but growing national bourgeois forces within Tamil Nadu. The support he received from the small industrialists among the Nadars, his strong national

sentiments and his basically urban movement based among the small traders shows that Periyar represented these interests and he was unable to transcend the limitations and the weaknesses of this class.

Since the Movement against Brahmanism did not serve the interests of the Dalits and because of the limitations of oppressed caste reformers, the castes most oppressed by the caste system, the Dalits developed their own movement, especially in South India from the early part of the 20th century. Dalits called themselves as Panchamas and changed their names to Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Andhras, and Adi-Kannadigas, to show that they were the original inhabitants (Moolvasis/Indigenous) of their respective regions and started organising separate conferences.

The Chamars in Punjab broke away from the Arya Samaj and its 'Shuddhi' (purification) program and its defense of the Vedas and began the Adi-Dharma movement. They invoked the name of Sant Ravidas, the Bhakthi movement saint. Initially, these associations emphasised education and Sanskritisation. But soon, the shift from imitation of the oppressor castes took place and the assertion of social equality, the demand for political representation and an end to specific forms of caste oppression began to be articulated.

A successful movement was led by the Ezhava community of traditional toddy tappers in Kerala, under the leadership of Shri Narayan Guru. He founded the 'Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Yogam' in 1902-03 with the help of the first Ezhava graduate Dr. Palpu. Initially, they organised the caste to demand a higher status, and emphasised the need to take to education. They tried to enter temples and the Vaikom Satyagraha, in 1924, was the effort of the Ezhavas along with progressive sections of the people in Kerala. Even now, a big section of mainly agricultural toiling castes of Tamilnadu is under the strong influence of Periyar's ideas.

Anti-Brahmanic self-respect movement took place in the name of Satnami Pant in the leadership of Ghasidas in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh (especially in the area of present Chhattisgarh) in the end of the 19th century. A large section of Dalits called Chamars are the social basis of this movement. The Dalits who took up the Satnami Pant called themselves Satnamis instead of Chamars. During the same time the self-respect movement of Kabirpant took place in Uttar Pradesh with the objective of annihilation of caste. In fact, all these contributed to weaken the Brahmanic casteism.

Doctor Baba Saheb Ambedkar dedicated his life for the liberation of the Dalits

Doctor Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (B.R. Ambedkar) was educated and had higher studies amidst unfavorable conditions. He grew facing caste oppression, social boycott and other such atrocities since his childhood. The existing social condition and since he personally experienced it, naturally, caste became his subject of study. He wrote a book on the caste system in India. He also deeply studied economics and wrote a text. He always strived for equal rights for women. He did not confine himself to writing. He stepped forth and organized the entire Dalit people to realise the analysis that he adopted on caste through his study and the way he suggested for its eradication. He took the earlier reformers who worked for annihilation of caste as his teachers. He used to say that he has three teachers. They were Goutam Buddha, Kabir and Jyotiba Phule. Dalit movement emerged in the leadership of Ambedkar in Maharashtra. He desired the liberation of Dalits and worked all through his life for their interests dedicated to his beliefs. He is a famous person in the history of modern India as a Social Reformer, Economist, Politician and the founder of the Indian Constitution. He also stands as the symbol of self-respect of Dalits. He is a social revolutionary.

Life and political practice of Ambedkar

The Dalit and the Ati-Sudra or the Dalit castes are in the lowest status of caste hierarchy in India. They had to face utmost cruel and inhuman untouchability due to caste oppression. They were called untouchables. They normally worked as village servants or agricultural laborers. Due to lack of stable traditional profession and since they faced casteist violence and atrocities, there was constant migration of people of the Dalit castes from the villages to the towns. They took up work in Jute mills, Railways, Ports, Army, defense related works, small businesses and other such sectors. They obtained opportunities for education in the British Army and Christian missionary schools. Thus, a small section among the Dalits developed into petty bourgeoisie. A considerable section turned proletariat. In Maharashtra most of the Dalits belonged to the Mahar caste. They too migrated to towns in large numbers and some turned into petty bourgeoisie and the majority into workers.

Ambedkar, the son of a Subedar-Major in the British Army, was the first graduate in his community. He went to Columbia the USA for further studies

and completed his doctorate in 1916. After that, he worked as the Baroda Maharaja's Military secretary and later as a Professor in a college. He later went to England and wrote a research book (Ph.D) on economics in the London School of Economics. . He came back to India in 1923 after completing his law degree in London University.

It was in the second half of the 1920s that Ambedkar became active in and led a series of struggles launched to assert the civic rights of untouchables, for the annihilation of caste, to achieve equal rights to the Dalits along with others, for the equal rights of women and for the rights of workers. Prominent among these were, the Mahad Satyagraha, in 1927, for the use of the public water tank in Mahad, a town in the Konkan region, by all castes; the huge conference and the burning of the Manusmriti; the struggles to enter the Amaravati and Nasik temples in 1928 and 1930 - the one at Nasik lasting for five years. These mass struggles galvanised the militant and youthful sections of the Dalit community and created mass awareness amongst the whole community. These struggles developed the dare to deny the social rules and traditions that treat the Dalits as animals among the Dalits. These awoke self-respect among them. These brought theories of equality onto the agenda.

All this period Dr. Ambedkar considered Brahmanism and capitalism as the two enemies of the people but in practice he worked making Brahmanism as the main enemy. He conducted many social movements and workers' agitations against this and the reactionary caste system thus playing a main role as a social and workers' activist.

Later while making efforts for social reforms on the caste problem and for the annihilation of caste, he mainly continued active political activities.

In 1936, Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Its flag was red and there were 11 stars on the top at one corner. These indicated the 11 provinces of India at that time. ILP fought for workers' rights. This party, in co-operation with the communists and socialists led the textile workers' strike and the fight against the Khotedar system (of the Khot landlords in the Konkan). Women mobilized in large numbers in the anti-caste movement of Ambedkar. Apart from caste he also questioned the fundamental rules of Hinduism that is the centre of gender suppression and also took up struggles on certain problems related to women.

While a large part of Ambedkar's activities was devoted to struggles and mass mobilisation, he also made efforts for concessions and benefits for the

Dalit community from the British administration. These mainly consisted in demands for separate electorates, reservation in jobs, scholarships, etc., which would primarily aid the development and growth of the newly emerging Dalit petty-bourgeoisie. In this process he decided to obtain power as the representative of the oppressed classes in 'independent' India with the objective to protect their rights. It was because Gandhi was proclaiming himself as the representative of the weaker classes and was deceiving the rights of the oppressed classes in the new Constitutional system. In these conditions he participated as representative of the Depressed Classes in the 1928 Simon Commission and the Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931.

When World War II broke out, Ambedkar supported the Allies (Britain, America and other countries) against fascism. In February 1941 he even met the Viceroy to demand that Dalits be recruited into the British Army. When his request was granted, he himself toured various places to encourage and appeal to Dalit youth to join the British Army.

At that time there was a dire need for the depressed classes to obtain jobs and to achieve more economical and social development. The Brahmanists also made the British accept the condition that 'Mahars or the untouchables lack fighting spirit' and so they should not be recruited into the Army. The British stopped recruiting the Dalits into the Army. As an opportunity came forth during the World War Ambedkar understood it and contributed for the recruitment of the Dalits so as to provide an economic source for them.

Ambedkar was appointed to the National Defence Council of British India in July 1941 and as Labour minister in the Viceroy's cabinet in June 1942. During this time as a central minister he contributed to the introduction of some labour welfare legislations. In this period too he continued to attempt to secure benefits for the Dalit middle classes, and he managed to secure 8.33 percent reservation for the Depressed Classes in governmental posts and scholarships for studying abroad.

Ambedkar's orientation during this period was basically directed towards achieving appropriate representation to the Dalits in the new constitutional setup that would follow after the British. With this in mind he dissolved the ILP in 1942 and formed the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) to negotiate with the British as a Dalit representative. He became the Law Minister in Nehru cabinet in 'independent' India. After the war he agreed to

serve as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution of the India's comprador bourgeois and feudal classes and thus he had a prime role in its formulation.

Ambedkar was thinking that he needs to do something for the Dalits during his life time and at this time he agreed to join the Constitutional committee. His health too was deteriorating. He felt that the movement he started should not be wasted without achieving some or the other decisive-concrete success. Therefore, as soon as he got the opportunity to write Constitution he accepted. He provided certain opportunities and rights for the Dalits and tribal people. He provided legitimacy for their future struggle for rights. However, after he did this and implemented it only for three years, he stated that the Constitution did not provide equality for the Dalits, that the Congress used him and that he would be the first person to burn it.

After 1947, Ambedkar became the law minister in Nehru's cabinet. However, he was silent towards the brutal repression of the Telangana people's armed struggle by the Indian Army. In 1951, Nehru chose to side with reactionary Brahmanical feudal forces opposing the Hindu Code Bill, rather than agree with Ambedkar who was pushing for its adoption. Ambedkar resigned from Nehru's cabinet in protest.

His researches and analyses on Hindu religion and caste in his life time are very important. He wrote many theoretical books on these aspects. But he could not make a proper inference about the birth of caste. He saw the solution for annihilation of caste in converting to Buddhism from Hinduism and not through the destruction of exploitative social relations. As a result, he took up Buddhism in 1956 before his death and diverted the Dalits of mainly Maharashtra towards Buddhism in a big way. He was seriously ill in his last stage. At that time, he was limited to a few reform activities apart from programs like construction of colleges in Aurangabad and Mumbai. He supported the United Maharashtra movement during this time.

Political Assessment of Ambedkar

Ambedkar took up struggles not only for the equality of Dalit people who are in the most oppressed position in the caste hierarchy but also for the workers and women. In his view equality, independence and sovereignty are integrated in the Indian society. Coming to imperialism his understanding is that without fighting against the friends of imperialism such as landlords, mill owners and money-lenders in the country, we cannot take up any kind of

efficient war against imperialism. He adopted a constant neutral attitude towards the colonial rule only with a strategic view. In his view, the Dalits without any instruments cannot fight the entire powerful enemies at a time. He basically opined the Congress as the representative of the landlords and urban capitalists. He challenged the view that they were doing an anti-imperialist war. He criticized the caste system as Hindu imperialism and stated it was eviler when compared to British imperialism.

In the real sense Ambedkar is the representative of the oppressed classes. He addressed the entire untouchables, oppressed castes, suppressed people and women as a single class. He called the entire suppressed people as 'depressed classes'. In Marathi he addressed them 'Dalit'. This concept of 'depressed class' possesses the concept that the caste system can be destroyed only by organizing it with class outlook. However, his opinion about uniting this people's community class wise is on contrary to the concept of Marx on class. He repeatedly said that Brahmanism and capitalism are the two enemies of the Indian oppressed masses. This depressed class became part of the people's mobilization and people's movements in lakhs in his leadership. These were firstly for social and civic rights and for self-respect and later also on issues of democratic rights of Dalits, peasants, workers and women. He led many anti-caste struggles which were an important part of the anti-feudal struggle. He and the movement he led thus formed an important part of the democratic forces and the movement of that period.

Ambedkar mainly dedicated his life for achieving the rights and welfare of the Dalits. However, he approached Parliamentary democracy to achieve his aim. This attitude in practice diverted them from the path of militant struggle and created illusions on the Parliamentary system. On the other hand, his services helped the British imperialists after 1941 and the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the feudal classes after 1947. On the whole, Ambedkar chose annihilation of caste as the goal for his life and sincerely attempted with his entire strength to utilize each and every opportunity he obtained in the interests of the Dalit and suppressed people. He always had a quest for struggle and ways of struggle. He was always prepared for change. He is a historic friendly force in the broad Indian New Democratic Revolution. In this view we have to take the positive aspects in him for social transformation. We have to shed those that stand in the way of the path of revolution. The movement Ambedkar led and his literature definitely inspire

the struggle for annihilation of caste and for the construction of democratic society. We must study them with a critical outlook. At the same time, we must take up struggle on those who use Ambedkar for their vested interest and on those who draw wrong inferences of his ideas and divert the people. Ambedkar's theory of annihilation of caste is a prominent part in the protracted process of construction of democratic society. But it is not the ultimate one. This theory alone will not be enough. This process began before Ambedkar and is still continuing. We have to take it until the end. For this purpose, we must especially take up political propaganda that the only correct path for the liberation of Dalits is the united militant struggle of the oppressed classes, Dalit and other oppressed castes and other oppressed sections in the leadership of the proletariat and that it is the New Democratic Revolution and organize all of them as a great force.

A number of organisations and associations are working for solving the problems of Dalits for a long time. Political parties are formed and are working on the basis of ruling class, petty-bourgeois, caste and sub-caste in the name of Dalits. These organisations, associations and Parties interpret Ambedkarism as per their will and claim it to be their theory. Among these, we have to expose before the people the ruling class character/pro-ruling class political opportunism of those ruling class Dalit parties, the Dalit organisations and associations that oppose our Party and benefit in the name of Ambedkar; we have to isolate the leadership from the people. We will have to make efforts with the objective of sustaining other Ambedkarite, Dalit organisations and associations in a broad democratic movement, to work with them with a friendly attitude. Party must extend support to their struggles. We have to unite and struggle together with them. At the same time, we must build independent strong movements and organisations on a broad basis on the problems of the Dalits with the aim of liberation of the Dalit people.

Ambedkar's Ideology

Ambedkar theoretically does not oppose Marxism. He propagated Marxism to the possible extent. He did his work basing on the standards of Marxism. He used to say that if ever there was a philosophy close to him, it was Marxism. However, when he was studying in the 'London School of Economics', he was influenced with Deve Fabianism. He called these theoretical ideas as pragmatism or instrumentalism. Instrumentalists realise scientific ideology.

Due to the pragmatist outlook that Ambedkar chose and practiced regarding 'Annihilation of Caste', he did not give importance to its social and economic base. On the question, he presented the incorrect understanding that caste arose characteristically from the devotion to the religious theories, that destroying the religious sentiments that act as the base for caste discrimination is the path to annihilate caste and that caste took birth not from ancient relations of production of the Indian society but from Hindu religion. He therefore thought that caste could be rooted out by reforming the Hindu religion rather than by changing the social system. He thus proposed laws to abolish the Vedas and to set up one common authoritative Hindu religious text acceptable to all the Hindus, for the appointment of priests through examinations open to any caste, etc. He also saw inter-caste marriages as the solution to annihilate caste. He thus felt that changes in the thoughts and ideas of men alone would bring about the end of the caste system. He did not understand therefore that though inter-caste marriages were to be encouraged constantly, without breaking the social and economic basis of caste they would only help in the abolition of the caste system partially. His proposal of reform of Hindu religion and later his conversion did not answer the question as to why caste had persisted in Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and even Buddhism in various forms in India. Thus, naturally his final conversion to Buddhism could not show a path of liberation from the caste system.

Moreover, it led him to rely considerably on the British administration in the fight against the caste fundamentalists. He looked upon the British as believers in western Christian philosophy that was opposed to Hindu caste ideology. Thus, he failed in practice to understand that the British imperialists depended on the feudal caste fundamentalist forces for their exploitative and repressive rule in the country.

Lastly, due to Ambedkar's bourgeois liberal thinking he had a wrong understanding of the nature of the state. Believing in the bourgeois concept of a neutral state and not realising its real class nature as an instrument of repression, he felt that the state's character could be changed through changes in laws and constitutional reforms. Though he was inspired by the bourgeois democratic principles of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity', he could not identify the basic bourgeois class dictatorship character of bourgeois democracy. He especially could not recognise the reactionary character of imperialism and its agents, the Landlords, the Comprador Bureaucratic

Bourgeoisie and the Indian state. He therefore mainly relied on laws, courts Parliament and the Constitution to bring about social change.

The Brahmanical Hindu fascist BJP at the center and all the ruling parties and revisionist parties relentlessly propagate that Ambedkar is the founder of the Indian Constitution, that he is the creator of Parliamentary democracy and ideologically opposed to violence and revolution, keeping in view his enormous recognition among the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes, for their vested interests. All these parties compete to propagate that Ambedkar said that Dalits must patiently make efforts to better their lives through structural changes and democratic methods. Thus, all the exploitative class parties use the name of Ambedkar and confine the Dalits to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois reforms and rigorously hinder them from taking up militant class struggles and organizing in the New Democratic Revolution.

In an unprecedented manner since 1947, Modi government is aggressively fascising the state and the Brahmanic Hindu communal caste chauvinist forces, according to the agenda of the Brahmanic Hindutva fascist Sangh Parivar. While on the one hand Modi government and various state governments have intensified multipronged offensive on the revolutionary movement, on the other hand the Sangh Parivar forces are indulging in theoretical, political, cultural and physical attacks on the Dalit, Adivasi, Minority, Secular, Democratic and Revolutionary forces. They are unleashing utmost cruel repression on the revolutionary forces and other militant democratic forces that fight against these fascist governments without compromise. These fascists are trying to unlimitedly exploit and oppress the people of the country by surrendering other forces of the movement through carrot and stick policy and push the people of the country into slavery. It is in this background that the BJP government in the leadership of Modi had upheld Ambedkar in the celebrations of his 125th birth anniversary in a grand way. We must expose the wickedness behind this symbolisation of Ambedkar that the ruling class adopted in its interests. We must preserve and strengthen the place of Ambedkar as an effective force in the broad democratic struggle, bring him out of the fort of the ruling classes and place him as the genuine symbol of those for whom he dedicated his life.

CHAPTER-III

CHANGES IN THE CASTE SYSTEM IN POST-BRITISH COLONIAL PERIOD

In the post-British colonial period, as a part of the changes in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres in the country, there were considerable changes in the caste configurations. They are a result of – the various people's struggles including the great Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle, the ongoing New Democratic Revolution in the country starting from the Great Naxalbari Armed Peasant Struggle, the Zamindari abolition acts, the implementation of limited land reforms, 'Green Revolution' in some states, the implementation of various reforms, the impact of the economic, political and cultural developments of the world on our country, the weakening of feudal relations to a considerable extent, the gradual growth of capitalist relations and other such reasons. The most significant changes have been in the countryside. The close correspondence between caste and class has become clearly less discernible in most parts of the country.

The old oppressor caste Zamindars and other big feudal landlords have been displaced by smaller landlords, the former big tenants of Zamindars and large peasant proprietors. A small section from the traditionally cultivating castes has become landlords and rich peasants. These middle castes are also found in large numbers among the middle, poor peasants and even among the landless. The lower sections of the middle castes, that is, the artisan castes are primarily middle, poor or landless peasants and some are continuing their traditional occupations. Therefore, today the main exploiting classes in the rural areas consists of oppressor caste elements i.e., Brahmans, Rajputs, Bhumihars and many from the oppressor castes and caste communities such as the Jhats, Yadavs, Vellalas, Reddys, Velamas, Kammas, Nayars and caste communities such as Patidars, Marathas, Vokkaligas, Lingayats and also a few from the other castes who became exploitive classes.

The middle peasants comprising about 20 percent of the rural households largely come from the major cultivating castes and from artisan castes and even a small section of the Dalits. This section has contradictions with the rural exploitive classes, but due to lack of class consciousness they are generally tailing behind the elite landlord sections of their caste. However, the effort to bring the majority poor and middle classes of those oppressor castes against the landlords explaining it as the common objective of all the

oppressed people in class struggle is important. The proletarian party alone can do so.

The poor and landless that constitute 60 percent of the rural households have the greatest number of caste divisions, including a large number of poor artisan and service castes. This class consists also of a large number of households from the Dalits and Adivasis. Thirty-seven per cent of the families of agricultural labourers are Dalits, 10 percent are Adivasis and the remaining half are drawn from the cultivating castes and artisan castes. Hence, caste divisions among the exploited are the maximum. The caste-class relationship in the present period is indeed complex due to the class division in castes.

Along with the growth of the government bureaucracy and public sector, caste discrimination is seen in this sector too with some modifications. In the highest rungs of management, in industrial enterprises and in the government bureaucracy, the oppressor castes are dominant. Dalits on the other hand are accommodated in class IV positions as sweepers, peons and in other menial jobs. Dalits are mainly employed as unorganized labourers (relatively unskilled, low paid and insecure work, as contract labour and in small-scale industry). In the state and central administration, due to the pressure of movements, various governments filled a certain percentage of reserved posts, especially in the clerical category as well as lower managerial category. Yet there is not much change in the social gap between those from the Dalits and from other castes. Out of the total SC-ST population in the country those who got employment in the central and state government due to reservation is much less than the quota of reservation allotted to them. That means 95 per cent of them do not have any stable, secure employment. It is a fact that in the villages or in the innumerable slums of the urban areas Dalits are leading miserable lives in poverty and illiteracy/little schooling.

The majority of those belonging to these castes are agricultural labourers with miserable lives. They are subjected to perennial feudal exploitation and atrocities. While only less than one per cent of the total land was distributed by the rulers, Dalits got very little land worthy of agriculture. In some places though they got some pattas (certificates), owing to the landlord's domination Dalits could not lay their hands on the lands. Even if at some places they actually got the lands, yet they could not have sufficient investment and resources. So, they had to sell the land at throwaway prices, or were forced to mortgage it and at last had to lose the land, being unable to

repay the loan. Most of the rural unemployed who migrate to the urban areas are Dalits. The benefits and reservation that the governments have provided to the SC-STs could not bring basic change in their lives. However, a small section strengthened economically and turned to be a middle class. Meanwhile, LPG policies are being implemented in the country in a very speedy and aggressive manner and the entire public sector is being privatized. Reservations are becoming nominal. Thus, the reservations that were available until now are lacking, depriving them of education, employment and job opportunities.

In fact, the problem of Dalits is primarily the problem of land. So is the caste question, the question of untouchability as a part of it, that of velivada (veli means outcast, vada means residential place), self-respect and the question of state power. So, if we limit the Dalit question to land and neglect the others or vice-versa, we cannot understand this problem in totality. So, in order to solve the Dalit question the other social, economic and political problems too should be taken up simultaneously with the land problem and employment problem. A way for the permanent solution of the Dalit question will be paved by making the axis of New Democratic Revolution, the Agrarian Revolution with the slogan of land to the tiller a success. It means by breaking the exploitative social relations existing in the country, by rooting out the semi-colonial, semi-feudal social basis and by destroying feudalism and imperialism that are the basis of the birth and continuation of the Dalit problem.

Untouchability is still continuing in the villages. Though to a large extent it is not overtly practiced in towns/cities, yet it prevails in the form of discriminatory attitudes and prejudices. At public taps in Bastis, while taking rented houses, in some public places and in various work places many forms of this discrimination is still seen. Undeclared ban on entrance into Hindu temples continues. The most lucrative professions too are under the monopoly of oppressor castes.

In addition to the various historic developments, the linguistic re-organisation of States helped the small sections of the middle castes that strengthened economically to gain power at the regional level, especially in Western and South India. But in the North Indian states to a large extent the oppressor castes have control of the state machinery and the government.

The economic and political crisis of the 1960s led to an intensification of contradictions between the ruling classes at the all-India level, an

intensification of the contradictions between the all-India Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie and the regional Comprador Bourgeoisie and Landlord sections and that of all the contradictions in the country. With the growth of capitalist, new landlord/rich peasant forces in several states due to imperialist sponsored policies like Green Revolution and industrialisation of few regions their demand for a share/for increase in share of the state's resources has grown. The all-India Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie, unwilling to share resources as they asked, attempted to further centralise state power in the centre. As a result, there arose movements and political instability in the country in the late 1960s and the early 1970s.

This economic and political crisis broke out in the form of 'total revolution' in the leadership of Jay Prakash Narayan in North India. This movement mainly centered in Gujarat, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh shook North India. Through this movement, the newly emerging capitalist, landlord/rich peasant forces from among the backward castes entered the arena as the leaders of the new exploitative ruling-class political parties. On the other hand, this political instability led to the assertion of various landlord/capitalist sections that were denied a share of political power in the North Indian states. In western UP, various non-Congress governments were formed in various states such as the Bharatheeya Lok Dal (BLD) of Uttar Pradesh in the leadership of Charan Singh, the representative of Jhat landlord class.

The capitalist, landlord sections and trading elite among middle castes reasserted themselves, in cooperation with the various regional comprador bourgeois sections and a section of the all-India Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie, and formed the Janata Party in 1977 to take chance of the political crisis. But this coalition of various cliques of the ruling classes could not last due to the conflicts for power in the Janata Party. Thus, in 1980 the Congress (I) came back to power representing the interests of the all-India Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie and hold on centralised power and resources in the centre. The capitalist, landlord sections and the central, regional ruling classes on an even wider basis came together in UP and Bihar once again in a coalition of classes to form the Janata Dal which came to power in the centre in 1989. To stabilise their social base they demanded reservation in government jobs and higher professional education for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The appointment of various commissions at the state level and the Mandal Commission in 1977 was a part of this process. The implementation of the

Mandal Commission report dealing with posts in the Central government services was an attempt by the rural elite from the middle castes to guarantee their share in the government education and job opportunities and further stabilise their hold over their caste brethren from the poorer classes.

On the other hand, the intensification of the economic and political crisis of the present semi-colonial, semi-feudal system has intensified the contradictions and brought forth new contradictions in the realm of the caste system and this has manifested itself in - (a) the growing democratic consciousness among the Dalits against caste discrimination – especially the pogroms against them in the rural areas, and (b) demand of reservation for the OBCs and severe agitations against the reservation policy. During the period there were intense reactionary movements against the reservation policy.

Attacks on Dalits

Dalit agricultural labourers were massacred in Kilvenmani in Tamil Nadu in 1968. This massacre was a reprisal by the oppressor caste landlord hierarchical forces against the attempt of the Dalit agricultural labourers to organise a strike to demand higher wages. This has been followed by similar massacres of the Dalits in various parts of the country, especially from the late 1970s onwards. These are the main ones – Karamchedu (1985), Neerukonda (1987), Tsundur (1991), Padirikuppam, Vempenta (1998), Lakshimpeta in Andhra Pradesh; Belchi (1977), Parasbiga (1980), Bathanitola (1996), Lakshmanpur Bathe (1997), Shankarbiga (1999), Balbatara (2006), Ramnagar (2006), in Bihar; Duleena-Jhajjar (2002), Tehrawar (2003), Gohana (2005), Mohamudpur (2006), Kilajaphargar (2006) in Haryana; Thuthur, Bendigeri, Kambalampalli (2000), Vannenur (2001), Kadukolu (2006) in Karnataka; Nanded (1993), Ramabainagar-Mumbai (1997), Khairlanji (2006) in Maharashtra; Bhanapur (1997) in Odisha; Kumher in Rajasthan; Nagipattinam, Kodyamkulam (1995), Nelavalavu (1997), Tirunelveli (1997) in Tamil Nadu; Jehrana and Asanpur in Uttar Pradesh. In Ahmedabad and other regions of Gujarat, the anti-reservation forces destroyed the houses of the Dalits with the support of the state. They also enforced a social boycott of Dalits. During the same time the resistance of the poor Dalit masses against caste oppression grew. The landlord, hierarchical caste chauvinist forces indulged in countless inhuman massacre of the Dalits in every state to crush this growing resistance with the support of the state.

As far as the toiling masses are concerned, the relation between caste and class is mainly intertwined. The aggressors in many of the attacks on the Dalits have been oppressor caste landlords of the non-Brahmanical castes along with the feudal hierarchical exploitative members of the middle castes. It is clear that these massacres and atrocities were done by the caste chauvinists. However, there are inseparable strong social, economic and political reasons behind almost all these incidents. The massacres took place whenever the Dalits tried to raise their head and stand up independently with democratic aspirations, when they attempted to struggle for their just social, economic and political rights or when they resisted atrocities on them. The Brahmanical oppressor caste chauvinistic landlord hierarchical forces in collaboration with the state openly conducted these attacks and could escape the law. One more thing is clear. The police and the judiciary are favorable to the exploiters and the oppressor castes and against the poor and the Dalits.

In many areas in our country where class struggle sharpened and the domination of the landlord hierarchy was given a blow and the domination of the oppressed classes was established/developed in the leadership of our Party, such attacks almost came to an end. Anyhow, in such areas too caste discrimination and partial attitude continue in various direct and indirect forms. In areas where our revolutionary movement has weakened, there are random attacks on the Dalits by the oppressor castes. In areas where the revolutionary movement is in the primary stage the situation is same but with the slight differences from the areas where there is no movement.

Along with division of labor caste divides the toilers also. This is a weapon that the ruling classes inherited to unleash their authority to exploit. In the present situation of economic crisis, the ruling classes established the Brahmanic Hindutva fascist government. Through this there is a new rise in casteist, religious and traditional attacks. Since the BJP came to power at the center in the leadership of Modi, the Brahmanical, Hindu communal oppressor caste chauvinist Sangh Parivar organisations and their armed gangs collaborated with the state and intensified attacks on the Dalits and religious minorities with its support. With the support of the government these forces are utilizing the existing reactionary laws to suppress the Dalits, Muslim and Christian religious minorities, Adivasis, Revolutionaries, Democratic, Secular, Rationalist forces and organisations and are also formulating new fascist laws. As a part of this, these fascist gangs have openly killed, injured, arrested Dalits

and Muslims en masse or deprived them of their livelihood or all of these in many states with the pretext that they ate beef, slaughtered cows, transported cows illegally or that they are running meat shops unlawfully. In many states of the country they are imposing a law banning cow slaughter. Recently, the central government too has started imposing such decisions on the people of the country with rigorous punishments. Thus, Brahmanical Hindu communal, oppressor caste chauvinistic fascist forces and state fascism are creating fear and apprehension among the people of the country.

The attack on the Dalits by the Brahmanical landlord hierarchical forces in Una of Gujarat in 2016 is a continuation of such attacks. In Pathapalli of Telangana there was a big attack on a Dalit colony by the caste chauvinists. There was an attack on a Dalit social activist Krishna in Maharashtra. These attacks spread to the Universities. In Hyderabad Central University a Dalit student Rohith Vemula committed suicide in protest against the harassment of the pro-Hindutva University administration, the pressure and repressive measures of the Hindu communal Akhil Bharathiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and the fascist central government. The death of Rohith Vemula is the negative result of the saffronisation and commercialization of educational institutions and campuses along with the society. The inhuman massacres, attacks, harassments of these Brahmanical Hindu communal caste chauvinist fascist forces and the fascist state and the resistance of the Dalits, Minorities, Democratic and Secular forces against these in various forms are the manifestations of sharp contradictions in the present society desiring a revolutionary solution. They also work as catalysts for the revival of the Dalit movement in the country. Lakhs of Dalits of not only the country but also of foreign countries expressed their protest against this Brahmanical state in various militant forms when these incidents took place. In Una, the Dalits raised their voice high with the slogan 'we shall no more take up the profession of skinning animals, we need land'. Democrats, Revolutionary Parties, Mass Organisations, Muslims, Adivasis and the people of various sections extended their active support to these struggles.

Due to the opportunities for the Dalits in the fields of education, employment, agriculture, trade, industry and politics to an extent and especially due to the education and organized movements there are increasing democratic aspirations in them. They are intervening at every level for their partnership. The Dalit masses are becoming conscious and organized and

taking up agitation against caste discrimination, atrocities and attacks. Dr. Ambedkar is still an undisputed leader for the Dalits. Among the Dalit organisations there are Dalit Panthers in certain areas and in some other areas they are increasingly getting organized in the name of Baba Saheb Ambedkar Seva Samiti, Organisation for protection of the rights of the SCs or as student, youth, women, literary and cultural organisations. When there is an atrocity on the Dalit people, the Dalit people of not only that area but also in the state and the country are increasingly expressing severe anger against the incident, helping out the victims and extending support to that struggle. There is increasing solidarity from the various anti-Brahmanic Hindutva forces also. The protest of the Dalit and democratic forces condemning the pro-Hindutva judgment given by the Supreme Court on the S.T., S.C. Atrocities (Prevention) Act in 2018 and the mobilization of lakhs of Dalit people in Bhima Koregaon are two recent examples. This is the reflection of the increasing democratic consciousness among the Dalits. This is a development that contributes to the Indian Democratic Revolution. Our Party must take up the great responsibility of uniting the entire democratic forces and take up further militant struggles to mold these developments favourable to revolution into the correct path.

Reservation Policy - Our stand

The reservation policy granting reservation of jobs in the administration and seats in educational institutions for the SCs & STs as per the Indian Constitution began since 1950. In fact, the colonial rulers identified 131 Dalit and backward castes and started reservation for the backward castes in some areas of the country in 1919 due to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Prior to this, reservations were implemented in Maharashtra by persons such as the chief of Kolhapur. The Military Commission formed in Mysore recommended 50 percent reservation to the BCs. During the colonial rule reservations were introduced for the Scheduled Castes in 1946. But the rulers implemented this policy in a half-hearted manner at the all-India level till the mid-1960s. With the upper sections of the non-Brahman castes gaining power in the southern states and the pressure of the strong movement against Brahmanism a large proportion of seats in professional institutions and government jobs were reserved for backward castes (OBC) castes as well. This policy was later implemented for the OBC in the northern states also in the 1980s.

India is a backward country with uneven development. Capital in the Industries, Banks, Financial Companies, Businesses, Construction companies,

Mining, Transport Companies, Education, Healthcare, Entertainment and other such organisations is concentrated in the hands of a small elite of the oppressor castes, a small elite class of the non-Hindu communities like the Parsis or in the hands of a section of other castes that turned into a rich class. Most of them collaborated with the imperialists and are working as compradors. Before 1947, the British imperialists and later along with them the US and other imperialists made large-scale investments in various fields in the Indian economic system.

The trend is speedily and aggressively rising with the imperialist LPG policies that began in the 1990s in the country. This led to extreme rise in private sector than the public sector in the country. In this country where recruitment is based more often on kin-caste considerations, the government sector has become the primary means for stable employment for the less privileged sections. For the emerging educated youth among the Dalits and other oppressed castes, aspiring for enhancing economic and social statuses, this became the main source of employment. At the same time, the economic crisis, dependence and distorted development engendered by the increased imperialist stranglehold over Indian economic system have intensified.

The yearly shrinking government sector is unable to satisfy the demands of the educated unemployed whose numbers grow by leaps and bounds. With the scramble for jobs the Brahmanic Hindutva forces aroused hatred among the middle classes among the oppressor castes towards the reserved seats for the Dalits. The oppressor caste chauvinist forces, bureaucrats and the ruling elite have attempted to scuttle the implementation of reservation in every way and deny the Dalits even what is their right under the law. They have also utilised this to divide the oppressed people along caste lines into pro and anti-reservation groups. Thus, reservations have generated a great deal of tensions between the urban petty bourgeoisie of the oppressor castes and the Dalits. What is a contradiction among the people has taken an antagonistic form with the conspiracies of the evil forces of the oppressor castes. This led to student and youth agitations, riots and attacks on Dalits as a whole.

The anti-reservation and anti-Mandal agitations have clearly revealed the casteist mentality and prejudices among the educated of the so-called modern sections of the oppressor castes. The anti-reservation agitation is nothing but an evil attempt by the reactionary sections of the oppressor castes to monopolize the prestigious and the most profitable professions. The ruling

classes instigated them so as to divide the people along caste lines. This is nothing but an attempt of the ruling classes and oppressor caste chauvinists to keep the Dalits and lower sections of OBCs as inferiors and to retain them as toilers to be exploited at will, thereby perpetuating the caste-system. That was why we opposed and we should oppose the anti-reservation agitations. We must unite the people of OBC and other oppressed castes along with the Dalits for the implementation of reservations.

In the recent time a new trend has emerged regarding reservation. The Gujjars in Rajasthan, Kapus in Andhra Pradesh, Patidars in Gujarat, Jhats in Haryana, Marathas of Maharashtra are agitating for reservation. In fact, while the upper section of these castes is part of the ruling classes, many of them are middle class and more than them poor according to class. Anyhow, these castes are not socially backward. They have a socially hegemonic status. Though there are certain differences in the opportunities of gaining a livelihood among the middle class and the poor of these castes there are chances to utilize their social status to an extent, so as to obtain livelihood in various forms. So, their demand for caste-based reservations is neither correct nor just. If their demand is accepted, the interests of the OBCs, SCs and also the STs who are obtaining reservations to a little extent would be affected in various ways. There are increasing conditions for various forms of conflicts among the people of the poor and the middle classes on the basis of caste and social sections due to these demands for reservation. So, we should not support their demand. On the other hand, with its vote bank politics, the Modi government provided 10 percent reservation for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the 'upper' castes in 2019 February who happen to be 4 percent of the country's population in its dedication to the oppressor castes. Our party opposed the reservation.

Anyhow, right from the beginning the children of the poor people of these castes could avail very limited education and opportunities for higher studies were very less. Due to the pro-imperialist, pro-ruling class policies of the central and the state governments, education is increasingly privatized starting from the primary level up to the professional studies. Due to crisis the prices of daily necessities are on the rise. The burden of taxes and unemployment is increasing. So, opportunities for education and jobs for the poor people are decreasing at all levels. The central and the state governments must abolish all kinds of fees for the higher studies for them. The governments

must provide text books free of cost, free hostel facility and other such things for free education. The unemployed must be provided jobs. All these castes need to agitate on this demand. All the sections obtaining reservation must support this. Our Party supports all those agitating on this demand and works to mobilise the students.

The youth of these oppressor castes and the youth of the oppressed castes are able to avail very less education and job opportunities through reservations. In fact, all the youth of the country are facing serious problem of education and employment. This arises from the pro-imperialist, pro-exploitative and ruling classes and anti-people policies of the central and the state governments. Therefore, the youth of the oppressed classes need to fight unitedly irrespective of caste and religion. We have to take up militant struggles in various places against the bankrupt policies of all the governments. At the same time, our Party must expose among the people the ruling class political parties who, for their electoral interests and to divert the people, especially the student and the youth from the destructive conditions arising out of their exploitative policies, take different stands on reservation demands when in power and out of it, instigating struggles.

Muslims, Christians and people of a few very backward castes and tribes who are still being socially and economically exploited are struggling for a long time demanding appropriate reservation. Our Party must support their demands. Communal frenzy Hindutva forces are coming forth with the demand to withdraw the 5 percent reservation to Muslims in Telangana. Our party must strongly oppose their evil demands that split the people on the basis of religion. The struggle on the demand of categorization on the basis of population among the Dalits also is going on for a long time. But a section of the Dalits is opposing this categorization. Our Party must lend support to the just demand of categorizing the Dalits. We must try to convince those who take the opposite stand that this stand is wrong and call upon them to support the demand without affecting the unity of Dalit people.

The higher level leaders of these movements are trying to pose one against the other of the people of their sections for their vested interests and are helping as vote bank for the ruling parties. They must realize that the interests of the people of these two sections are not opposite but mutually dependent. They must be alert to the conspiracies of the ruling classes to push them into mutual antagonism and towards their leaders who become

instruments in the hands of the ruling classes. It is the immediate necessity for all of them to seriously think about the limitations of reservations to the Dalit and other oppressed castes and oppressed classes, the fundamental reasons for social backwardness, caste oppression and class oppression, the protracted and the correct program to be formulated to overcome this ill condition permanently and about the necessary correct path of struggle to achieve success by implementing this program.

There are serious limitations to the reservation policy from the perspective of Dalit liberation. The reservation policy has been used by the ruling classes to create and stabilize a petty-bourgeois class among the Dalits and also to create and co-opt small but influential elite amongst them. This policy has fostered dependence on the State. Social, economic and political equality is impossible without smashing this semi-colonial, semi-feudal system that is the foundation of the caste system and without breaking the relations of productions dependent on the exploitative base. But reservation policy created an illusion among the Dalit castes that they can gain equality within this exploitative system. Reservations are a reformist policy program which provides relief but not a path for genuine liberation from caste. Our Party needs to widely propagate the limitations of the reservation policy and the path of liberation that will permanently end the social, economic and political inequality among the oppressed castes and the oppressed people.

However, in spite of any number of limitations reservations too are necessary to help the abolition of economic inequalities among the castes at least to a certain extent. The oppressed castes, especially the Dalits could avail opportunities to a certain extent in educational institutions and government jobs through reservations in the present exploitative system. Moreover, it has been the main avenue to enter to some extent the higher posts as government employees and professionals, which are still the monopoly of the oppressor castes. Since reservations were not properly implemented, most of the Dalit people are being deceived. On the other hand, although many Dalits are coming into higher positions with their talent, they are deceptively being shown in reservation quota.

One more aspect needs to be kept in mind. There is an argument that the families that have financially bettered to some extent out of reservations is creamy layer and that they must be stopped reservations. This is not a correct argument. Though the families which are said to be within the creamy

layer are financially better off to an extent, they are not enjoying social equality. Due to the imperialist-dictated policies of the governments for the past twenty-five years, the central and the state government jobs are increasingly going wasted to a large extent. Public sector is weakening, private sector is taking its place and there is increasing modernization, thus leading to the unemployment of more than one crore educated youth every year. On the other hand, there are already many vacancies in the Dalit quota in the higher level jobs and also jobs at various levels. These vacancies are filled time to time from the general quota or are abolished with anti-Dalit policies (for e.g., Roster system). In such conditions, it is not correct to argue to lift reservation for creamy layer. So, those of the creamy layer must be continued caste-based reservation. Anyhow, on occasions when reservation quota is filled in the educational institutions or jobs the people of the creamy layer must demonstrate the consciousness to leave them voluntarily so that the backward people in their caste would be able to avail reservation. The organisations and associations representing the Dalit and other oppressed castes need to make efforts to prepare them for it. The Mass Organisations working in the leadership of our Party too need to conduct political campaigns for this.

Due to increasing forces of unemployed and decreasing education and job opportunities there are increasing inequalities between the various sub-castes of one caste and between the various sections of one caste. As a result, the demand for categorization of the Dalits had already come forward. The party realized and supported the just demand. Due to the limitations of reservation and the ill policy of the ruling classes, there are increasing mutual conflicts between the castes and sections of the people availing them in education, employment and others. Our Party must make efforts to solve the problem with a view to take forward social revolution by developing the unity of oppressed classes and oppressed sections. It must build movements with the demand to implement reservations in the private sector. After the proletariat seizes state power the basic program must be implemented with the objective of eliminating the caste system and together with this, reservations must be continued in various forms until the necessary time along with special programs to raise the social, economic and political level of the Dalit people.

Movements in the present period – Dalit Panther revolt

The economic and political policies of the reactionary ruling classes have led to militant movements among the Dalit and other sections of the oppressed castes from the 1970s. After the death of Dr. Ambedkar, the leadership of the Dalit movement was largely co-opted and splintered by the ruling classes. The practice of untouchability continued unabated in the rural areas, caste forms of extra-economic exploitation like vet-begari, vetti, service in the name of caste customs, paying fines etc., persisted in many parts of the country. Caste discrimination and prejudices in urban areas also continued. This situation, coupled with the Brahmanical ideology, Hindu culture's domination and lack of opportunities for education and employment, the corruption of electoral politics and intense social unrest led to tremendous frustration among the Dalit youth. Under the influence of the worldwide upsurge among students, youth and especially the rebellion of the Blacks who were considered secondary citizens in the US in the name of Black Panthers in the 1960s and the Naxalbari movement, Dalit youth in Maharashtra organised and revolted under the banner of the Dalit Panthers.

The movement began in the city of Bombay in 1971. It was initially a cultural movement, of poems and articles printed in the little magazines brought out in that period. Dalit students and youth from the slums, hostels and chawls condemned the Manusmriti, announced that 15th August was fake independence and called for a boycott of elections. The movement did not last long, but it spread rapidly to other urban centres like Pune, Nagpur and even to cities of MP and other states like Chandigarh, Bhopal, Delhi, Agra, where units of the Dalit Panthers were formed. The Panthers revolted against caste oppression. Their campaign to villages, where caste oppression was reported, indicates this. They also attacked the ideological bastion of the caste system by burning the Manusmriti.

They attacked the corrupt Parliamentary system by calling for a boycott of the bye elections to the Lok Sabha in Bombay and managed to get almost 85 per cent of the SCs in the area to boycott the elections. This was the first time in the country that the Dalit movement took an explicitly anti-State stand. They were able to mobilise thousands of people for their demonstrations and faced state repression. On one of their morchas, Maratha chauvinist organisation Shiv Sena created trouble and police firing took place in which a young Dalit poet was killed. They militantly clashed with the Shiv Sena, which

instigated riots in Dalit slums and chawls. The Panthers confronted state repression, but having been a spontaneous revolt led by the petty bourgeoisie, and lacking a unified strategy and tactics, they started disintegrating by 1975, in spite of the influence of Marxism.

The Dalit Panther movement was a part of the Democratic Revolutionary movement of India which emerged in isolation, with the lack of a strong revolutionary class struggle in the region then. The leadership of the movement was won over by the Congress government by giving cultural awards and other enticements and gradually most of them fell prey to lumpenness, political bankruptcy and opportunism. In spite of this, the mass of the Dalit youth and students in various parts of the state have repeatedly become active and their militancy has burst forth on issues like the renaming of the Marathwada University, riddles controversy and other local issues. The Dalit Panther movement shook up Maharashtra. This movement greatly enthused the Dalit people of the country with increasing consciousness. The movement once more strongly brought to the fore the existence of caste discrimination and prejudice. This movement struck a major blow at the oppressor caste monopoly and superiority and to the evil politics of co-option. The cultural sector was particularly influenced, there was recognition to the literature of the oppressed masses that never was. This movement had a large impact on Dalits in other parts of the country.

The Dalit movement of Karnataka started in 1974. Although it was triggered in the towns and the petty bourgeois led it, it quickly spread to the villages. It mobilised the Dalit peasantry and labourers against atrocities of the oppressor castes. However, its tactic was always to protect the Dalits by pressurizing the state and it seldom resorted to direct struggle against the oppressor caste feudal interests.

Within a decade the movement began to give up struggle. It participated in electoral politics and moved close to the Brahmanic exploitive ruling classes. It adopted Gandhian ideology. The petty bourgeois class character of the leadership of this movement and its entrance into the electoral politics quickly led to its break up. As a result of the compromising nature of this leadership it has today become a prop for the Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeois and Feudal ruling classes.

Before the Dalit Panther movement, in 1964-66 in the leadership of Dada Saheb Gaikwad in Maharashtra, there was Satyagraha with the demand

for land all over the country in which lakhs of Dalit people participated. This movement shook the ruling system. This brought forth a new trend in the Dalit movements. Anyhow, due to the compromising attitudes of the leadership it got liquidated in no time.

Elite Dalit – Bahujan Politics

Due to this outburst of revolt the ruling classes have consciously sponsored a small elite section among the Dalits, who have consciously for their self-interests appealed to Dalit unity and a sectarian approach denying any unity with other exploited sections and revolutionary parties representing them. They repeatedly play the role of power-brokers building up faith in the Brahmanic exploitive ruling class among the Dalit masses. In order to fulfill their class interests, these elite Dalit leaders have promoted ruling class ideology in the name of Ambedkarite ideology in a way necessary for the ruling classes. They have been upholding the Constitution as sacrosanct, defending liberal political philosophy and defending the politics of bargaining and lobbying. Hence, they are taking a sectarian approach to the unity of the Dalits with other sections of the exploited masses or talking only of caste unity claiming to be Dalit Bahujan, between Dalits and OBCs without considering the class contradictions that make this unity practically impossible to sustain. They are unwilling to address any of the basic questions of the Dalit and OBC masses. We do not see in these opportunist leaders the self-respect and sincerity demonstrated by Phule and Ambedkar for emancipation of caste and against the Hindutva forces. Thus, the elite political leadership among the Dalits, in league with the ruling class parties, is trying to keep the Dalit masses under their exploitive ideological and organizational influence, repeatedly preventing their democratic aspirations and militancy from going into a revolutionary struggle, and channelising it into parliamentary politics. They possess the same Brahmanic exploitive caste perspective against which they claim to have been fighting and are turning a hurdle to the unity of oppressed classes thus maintaining the status quo of caste system. They are preventing the revolutionary democratic forces to build united struggles which alone can wage a successful fight against all forms of caste oppression and overthrow the caste system from its roots.

The Congress which used Dalit people only as their vote bank right from the beginning, showed 'tremendous love' towards the SCs and STs. Dalit leaders were made its political agents by disbursing various posts starting from

Ward Councilors/village Panchayat Sarpanch, to the Legislative bodies through the reserved constituencies. In villages and towns in every Dalit basti we find this type of Dalit leaders. These persons who have been making illegitimate earnings are exploiting Dalits and are trying to keep the Dalits under them by hook or by crook. For this, they are cleverly taking advantage of the caste norms. This comprador leadership always teach the politics subservient to the interests of the ruling classes and harmful to the interests of the Dalits.

A small elite section of the Dalits has newly emerged as a result of increasing educational facilities, concessions and subsidies. Some families became an industrial bourgeois class, some a merchant class, some became bureaucrats through higher level jobs and these classes are financially rich and have political clout. The election slogan 'power to the Dalits only' profits this class only. The loss to the Dalits out of the subsidies from the ruling classes is equal to the good done to them out of the reservations which started during the Ambedkar period. Moreover, the militant consciousness of emancipation of caste among the Dalit people is getting blunt. Without exposing the pro-ruling class attitude and methods of these leaders, we cannot rescue the Dalit masses from lobbying which had taken solid root among them. Without isolating these opportunist leaders from the Dalit masses, we cannot mobilise them into the New Democratic Revolution in a strong way.

Owing to the development of education, employment and other such social, economic and political opportunities among the Dalits, a few of them are striving to acquire artificial social status imitating the oppressor caste elite, and forgetting about the rest of the fellow Dalits who are still in wretched conditions. There are many others among them who sincerely think about the development of the Dalits. They desire that something good should be done for the Dalits. They are responding to the attacks and inhuman killing of the Dalits and are extending all possible help, participating in the rallies taken out in protest against the attacks and killings of the Dalits in rural areas. Today these forces have to be channelised into the revolutionary movement.

Present Dalit Movement – BSP

In the 1990s, on one hand there was intensification of social contradictions and caste atrocities on the Dalits and on the other there was considerable influence of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist peasant struggles in the leadership of revolutionary parties in many states in the country. This has led to a widespread awakening among the oppressed masses, especially the

Dalits in various parts of the country, especially in the northern states like UP, Bihar, Punjab, Haryana, MP where there was relatively less change in the caste system during the period of colonial rule. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the party formed based on Dalit bureaucrats, has gained legitimacy as it has utilised the democratic sentiments of the Dalits against caste discrimination and for social and political power. But the BSP with its anti-Brahman rhetoric, its emphasis on caste alliance, the exclusion of class unity, the absence of a systematic socio-economic, political program for the liberation of the Dalit masses and its complete base in exploitative ruling class electoral politics which in practice is in alliance with ruling class forces and parties that weaken the democratic aspirations and sentiments of the Dalits and other oppressed caste masses. The alliance of BSP with the parties dependent on comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie and feudal forces betrayed the interests of the poor peasants and landless peasants. When this party was in power in Uttar Pradesh it was nothing less than the other ruling class parties in unleashing cruel repression on the peasant revolutionary movement and in killing peasant activists in fake encounters as a part of it. With its support to the pro-imperialist economic policies which have led to privatisation and increased imperialist exploitation of the agrarian economy, the BSP cannot but betray the interests of even the petty bourgeois sections of the Dalits.

Thus, under the leadership of the comprador bureaucrats among the Dalits and the upper stratum of the intelligentsia of the urban petty bourgeois class and with the support of one section of the Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie, the BSP has become a party reliably at the service of Indian ruling classes. BSP believes in the Indian Constitution and Parliamentary democracy, and it has no program whatsoever towards land reforms or against imperialism and its reluctance to build up movements organising the people at the grassroots. It has become an acceptable party to the Indian ruling classes. Thus, in the name of Dalits and Bahujans, it has become a representative of the Indian exploitative ruling classes. The theoretical understanding of its leadership, its political stances, its program, the distribution of seats to the oppressor castes in elections, opportunist political alliances with the Brahmanical oppressor caste dependent ruling parties, its long-term practice prove that like all other bourgeois Parliamentary parties, BSP also cannot solve the basic problems of the Indian people and that it is fundamentally similar to the main ruling parties.

BSP is serving for continuing the exploitation and oppression of the imperialists, landlords and comprador bureaucratic capitalists in the country. In fact, BSP is dragging the Dalit and other oppressed masses into the bourgeois Parliamentary mire and is diverting them from the genuine democratic struggles and the revolutionary path. Similarly, Ram Vilas Paswan (until he lived) and other upper class leaders among the Dalits, the Dalit leaders in the ruling parties are working as agents of the ruling classes and as a part of the ruling political system and are politically playing the same role as that of the BSP leadership.

Bourgeois Parliamentarism, reformism, constitutionalism, narrow sectarianism being fostered by the elite corrupt leadership of the Dalits is weakening their unity and dissipating their militancy. This leadership is pushing them into the ruling class parties and organisations and forcing them to depend on those. Similarly, this leadership is diverting them into political lobbying and lumpenness. Thus, the interests of the broad Dalit poor masses will never be fulfilled through the rotten parliamentary path. Anyhow, with the intensifying major social contradictions along with the intensifying social and economic crisis the conditions for the poor Dalit masses and the Dalit petty bourgeois class to enter more and more into the democratic struggles and the genuine path of liberation are developing further.

CHAPTER-IV

RELATION BETWEEN CLASSES AND VARNAS AND CASTES IN INDIAN HISTORY

A correct theoretical understanding of the relations between class and caste is of great importance for correct strategy and tactics of New Democratic Revolution. Let us therefore now trace the relation between classes-varnas-castes during the various social periods of their origin, development and transformation in the background of explanation outlined in the earlier three chapters. Let us also concretely analyse this relationship in today's society.

The Period of Indus valley civilisation

Classes emerged in India primarily during the period of the Indus Valley civilization before 2000 B.C. However, these classes were not known to be endogamous hierarchically placed groups. Thus, castes or forms of castes cannot be traced to this pre-Vedic period.

Varnashrama Period

It was only in the next period when the Aryans entered in 1500-500 B.C. that Varna as the earliest expression of class came forth for the first time. The caste system that was formed in the later period has its roots in this. Through a prolonged process of conflict and assimilation between the Aryan tribes and the original Dravidian civilizations and tribes, and with the break-down of kinship-based relationships and the development of agriculture arose the varnas which were the form that classes took during that period. Though varnas were not castes as we know them today, they provided its origins in the process of social development.

The two upper varnas, the Kshatriyas and Brahmans, were the classes from which arose the tribal oligarchy, around the 7th century B.C., that kept control over the Vaishyas (or Vis) and the Shudras. The state was yet to come into being but the Varnashrama Dharma provided a code of conduct and control for the Varnas. Thus, class and Varna coincided during this period.

The Proto-Feudal State

From around 500 B.C., however, with the emergence and growth of the proto-feudal state, the relation between class and Varna too changed. Class differentiation started within various varnas. Brahmans took on administrative functions and also became merchants. The Vaishyas had among them merchants, wealthy landowners and craftsmen. Even the nature of Shudras changed with them being taken as hired agricultural labourers. Thus, varnas did not correspond as closely to classes as in the earlier period. The ruling classes of this proto-feudal state consisted of the Kshatriyas, the Brahmans and the upper strata of the Vaishya Varna. Thus, one section of the Vaishya Varna had become a ruling class while another vast section of this Varna remained a ruled class.

Another thing to be remembered is that this Varna system was still not the caste system. There was still some mobility possible from one Varna to another and it was only in the next stage that castes emerged, spread and consolidated. Manusmriti established iron shackles that do not give a chance for conversion of caste in a life-time.

Brahmanical Caste-based Feudalism

The stage of caste-based feudalism from around the 4th century A.D. marks the establishment of the caste system in India. As feudalism expanded, tribes were absorbed as endogamous occupation-based castes within the self-

sufficient village communities. They were assigned the status of Shudras or became part of the Ati-Shudras (untouchables). A large section of the Vaishyas, particularly those in the rural areas, came to be recognised as Shudras, while a small Vaishya section which remained in the urban areas remained as the merchant class. Foreign invaders and erstwhile Shudras who newly became part of the ruling classes were accommodated as castes with the status of Kshatriyas. The Brahmins took up priestly functions and also consolidated their position as landlords.

It is in this period that the innumerable number of castes (or Jatis) developed and got consolidated as separate endogamous communities with a separate occupational role within the self-sufficient village economy. These castes (or Jatis) became the prime unit for a person's identity or social and economic interaction. The countless castes that developed as feudalism grew were different from the broad varnas of the earlier period. But they were fitted into the framework of Varnashrama Dharma by the ruling classes. Also, the new entrants were given befitting status according to the newly invented 'Varnasamskara' theory. Thus, the Varna ceased to be the endogamous group but instead became a category indicating the broad status of each caste which became the actual endogamous occupational group.

The relation between class and caste was thus to a great extent established and consolidated during this period. The caste system being much more rigidified, there were strict laws preventing members of a particular caste entering into another profession or occupation not assigned to them. Thus, one's caste and occupation, or in other words one's position in the production relations and therefore class, was decided by birth and remained unchanged till death. A particular class for example, the peasantry, would be composed of various castes, but a caste would always be fixed within a particular profession, e.g., village menial, artisans, peasantry, merchants, priests, agricultural labourers, landlord etc.

While this strict co-relation between caste and class remained rigid particularly at the level of the self-sufficient village community, the only exception was among the ruling classes. The ruling classes were broadly the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, but many a time members of other castes or foreign invaders became part of the ruling classes through conquest of territories or states. Some of these rulers accepted Kshatriya caste (as in North India) but others maintained their previous caste as Shudras or Muslims.

However, there were no major changes in the caste system as a whole. In fact, throughout the feudal period the ruling classes made full use of the caste system to facilitate and consolidate their exploitation and class rule.

Colonialism, Semi-Feudalism

The colonialists too followed the policy of all earlier ruling classes of using the caste system for their exploitation and rule. But changes which were already taking place before colonial rule and the economic changes brought in the 19th century by colonial exploitation and rule itself resulted in significant changes in the caste-based feudal setup. With the birth of new classes there was class-differentiation between various castes. It was from this period that there was class division in a caste and among the castes, exploitive relations came into existence behind caste relations and caste and class coincided less and less.

Before the British colonised India, during the Mughal rule, trade and urbanisation had again gained ascendancy – a new mercantile class was born. This nascent national bourgeoisie was crushed by colonial plunder in its infant stage itself. It was during the British period that the modern proletariat was born, so also the Comprador Bourgeoisie was born and brought up by the imperialists. Within the peasantry too, a slow and gradual differentiation was taking place. During this time equal relation between caste and class became more and more less. For, from the peasant and artisan castes that are part of the Shudra castes came the factory workers.

The former Ati-Shudras and untouchables, the Dalits were recruited in large numbers in the Army, Railways, Road construction and in unskilled jobs in the factories. The Dalits and the Adivasis also worked in mines and plantations. All these together constituted the modern proletariat.

The merchants and money-lenders were from the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, the trading communities, from the erstwhile Shudras and also from the Muslims.

The comprador business houses came from amongst the 'Bania' i.e., trading castes and communities like the Parsis, Jains and from the Khattiya, i.e., Kshatriya caste. A few were from the Brahman and erstwhile Shudra castes.

The Brahmans, Kayasthas, Anglo-Indians, Parsis, Muslim educated elite dominated the bureaucracy.

The British also legally constituted classes notified as landlords (other than Vatandars or Inamdars), tenants and labourers. Though the Zamindars, Khotedars and Talukdars mostly came from the oppressor castes, the smaller landlords and rich peasants notified as Tenants came from the erstwhile Shudra castes. The Ati-Shudra, Adivasi, and nomadic tribes constituted the bulk of the landless and agricultural labour force. Also, a large section of the impoverished Shudra peasants became labourers and landless.

The new classes that arose in this period were thus born as multi-caste classes. The modern proletariat in particular was created with mainly the poor people of the backward castes and Dalits within its fold. However, the most significant change was that many castes ceased to exist as single-class entities as in the earlier period. Class differentiation had resulted in the break-up of castes into various classes, in particular, small but influential sections of the former Shudra castes were rising to take positions among the ruling classes. Small petty bourgeois sections grew in most castes. And even some sections of the most oppressor castes had entered the proletariat.

However, over all it was the sections from the oppressor castes who mainly continued to own and control the means of production and continued to be the main section of the ruling classes. On the other hand, over 95 percent of the Dalits remained as agricultural labourers, poor peasants and workers.

Semi-colonialism, Semi-feudalism: Post-47 India saw even more changes, especially in rural India. Semi-colonial, Semi-feudal India saw the rise of new caste-class configurations, due to the expansion of capitalist relations and blows delivered by the people's movements. In the rural areas especially, as said earlier, the pre-dominance of the Brahman and Kshatriya castes has been considerably reduced and their place has been taken up by the oppressor castes of the erstwhile Shudra castes. The ruling elite in the countryside now composes not only of the Brahman, Rajputs, Bhumihars, etc., but also Patels, Marathas, Kunbis, Jhats, Yadavas, Kurmis, Vokkaligas, Lingayats, Vellalas, Kammas, Reddys, Velamas etc.

Anyhow, a considerable part of them are rich and middle peasants and a few are agriculturists and poor peasants. Almost half of the Backward Castes are agricultural laborers and poor peasants and a major part of the rest are middle and rich peasants. A few landlords too exist. A major part of the Dalits is agricultural laborers and landless poor peasants. A few are from the middle

peasantry. A very few are from the class above this. Thus, the Dalits still continue to be the oppressed class.

Thus, today the correspondence between class and caste has reduced even further. Exploitive forces emerged in varying degrees from almost all castes and there were changes in the composition of classes and castes. Though now caste-based feudalism weakened, it is nevertheless solidifying itself in new forms due to the continuing semi-feudal relations and the interests of the ruling classes and imperialism to maintain these relations.

The tactics of electoral politics of the ruling classes and the rise of Hindu chauvinism has given new life to the caste system in different forms. The ruling classes are trying to use the caste system to build multi-class organisations along caste lines under their leadership. There are, however, also some organisations of oppressed castes under petty bourgeois leadership. The synthesis of the entire process defines the essence of the existing Brahmanic theory thus –

Brahmanism is the theory of classified inequality, hegemony and oppression. It bans independence, equality and sovereignty. Its origins lie in the Vedic period thousand years ago. However, whichever exploiting class emerges and unleashes authority, it has been rebuilding Brahmanism according to the needs of that class and thus it sustained. Today Brahmanism is the nucleus of the world outlook and value system of the entire sections of Indian comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie and feudal ruling classes. The outlook of classified hegemony and inferiority it possesses is preserving and influencing each and every casteist and religious community in varying degrees. It is giving way and propping reactionary values and relations in the Indian society.

Brahmanism looks down physical labor. Caste system pushes the Dalits into miserable conditions formed out of the inhuman Brahmanic ideology and separates the toilers on the basis of caste. Anti-women outlook, oppressive relations and habits are inseparable aspects of this theory. It instigates hegemony and hatred towards the tribal people, discrimination towards the nationalities and communalist antagonism towards the religious minorities, especially the Muslims. It provides theoretical basis to the 'national integrity' of the Indian reactionary state. It denies the just right to self-determination of the innumerable nationalities in India. Its idealism creates utmost horrible blind

beliefs and irrational thoughts. It mainly creates the differentiation of great and menial by birth.

It is in this scenario that the party of the proletariat formulates its alternative program that will fight caste oppression and smash the caste system.

The proletarian Party takes up powerful fight to expose this dangerous theory and to root it out in the ideological sphere in all the phases of revolution in its leadership in the entire process of going from the phase of New Democratic Revolution to Communism through Socialism. The proletarian party further develops its class consciousness and that of the broad masses and effectively play the role of leadership in revolution, only by firmly taking up anti-Brahmanic struggle and anti-bourgeoisie struggle in the ideological sphere.

The struggle for annihilation of caste is the utmost important among the various streams of political struggles against Brahmanic ideology. It is because it is inseparable from the relations of production in Indian society and plays a dominating role in the superstructure. This is presented in the following chapters.

CHAPTER-V

ERRONEOUS TRENDS ON THE ISSUE OF CASTE ANNIHILATION

Understanding of CPI on Caste Question

The CPI did not properly understand the caste question in India. Not only did it not give importance to the questions of caste discrimination and inequality and the fight against Brahmanical ideology, questions which are part of the superstructure, but it did not understand that caste existed in the realm of production also, i.e., in the base.

It only saw imperialism as a target, did not see its alliance with feudal and comprador bourgeois classes, which, also in league with imperialism, had an interest in keeping India backward with all its age-old systems and even the caste system intact – changing them only to that extent which suited their needs.

CPI did not give importance to the mobilisation of the peasantry in the independence struggle against British colonialism in which the interests of the small and landless peasants and agricultural labourers were upheld. It did not

connect up the 'land to the tiller' slogan to the question of seizure of political power, thus paving way for the destruction of feudalism and also the caste system.

It did not form United Front with all progressive and democratic forces, especially anti-feudal forces on the basis of the alliance of workers-peasants. It tailed the comprador bourgeois class. The CPI cadre took up the problem of caste at the local level. So, there were United Fronts on the basis of workers-peasants and strong class unity in some areas. Many laid their lives for this. These foundations contributed to the upsurge of future revolutionary struggles. Some cadres brought forth the concept of forming an alliance against untouchability with the participation of all progressive and democratic forces. But the dogmatic, mechanical thinking dominant in the CPI leadership failed to form UF on a genuine basis.

Starting from 1952 up to Naxalbari and later too basically CPI held the same attitude. CPI (M) too had basically the same stand. Since these revisionist and neo-revisionist parties took up entirely elections and the opportunist parliamentary alliances, they play all the dramas on caste question necessary to attract the Dalit masses in this regard. At times they mobilise the Dalit masses to submit memoranda regarding untouchability and caste suppression, with an outlook of economism, so that they depend on the laws of the bourgeois parliament and liquidate their militancy. Thus, on the question of caste both the revisionist parties followed a bourgeois line in practice. Upholding the Lal-Neel movements is its zenith. Instead of molding the rising democratic consciousness among the Dalit people towards militant struggles and emancipation of caste, these parties are making them scape goats of Parliament politics and class harmonious policies.

Present day Erroneous Trends

Today, there are mainly two wrong trends on the issue of annihilation of caste, also among those who claim to be practicing Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

First is that caste is a factor related to only the superstructure; since caste, like all other factors pertaining to the superstructure, will be annihilated once the system is changed, there is no need to take up any programs (struggles) on this issue and, even if we do, there will be no benefit. This is a mechanical understanding. A few ML groups supporting this line argue that struggles should be taken up only on clear-cut class demands. It is clear that

these groups have not properly understood the concrete conditions in India and are merely postponing the caste annihilation struggles to the post-revolutionary phase with a mechanical perspective. This tendency will not only fail to contribute towards mobilising the oppressed masses, but also in practice help the ruling classes divert the oppressed castes against the communists.

A different, but equally erroneous trend is the one which does not distinguish between caste and class and says that caste struggle itself is class struggle. Though some ML groups superficially claim class struggle to be primary, they are forming caste associations and taking up caste struggles as the absolute with pure opportunism, undermining class struggle with the non-Marxist argument that there is no class liberation without caste liberation.

A few claim to be creatively applying Marxism and few others Marxism and Ambedkarism together, to the concrete conditions of India and are negating class existence in the name of 'Asthithwavaada saptha varga kutami' (identitarianist seven class alliance) theory and are bringing forth caste revolution. According to this theory, they propose the power of 'Dalit, Bahujan Identity Alliance' in the present social order through parliamentary line in the political sphere. They speak of caste class struggle but in practice give up class struggle and give the slogan of caste revolution that will pit the backward and Dalit castes against the so-called oppressor castes. They theorise that class order has lost independent existence in the country, there is a caste-dependent class order and that the Marxists here have shrunk Marxism into class. They say that at present the immediate task of the revolutionaries is to take up anti-caste struggle and that not recognizing this is the reason for the failure of the Communist movement.

Moreover, they are arguing that a 'new type of proletarian party' should be built for the success of Indian Revolution and that comrades from the oppressor castes should be banned from entering the higher level committees in this. They are also circulating the erroneous logic that if the country's president is elected from the Dalit and tribal people, it will curb casteism to some extent and opposing such an argument will be tantamount to casteism. By depicting the oppressor castes as the principal enemy, they are keeping the masses from learning who are their real enemies and who are their friends and are diverting the class struggle. They are creating illusions among the oppressed masses of this exploitative society by asserting that caste annihilation is possible through social struggle in the name of reformist

movements and through parliamentary path within the framework of the present system.

Of late CPI (M) is opportunistically trying to cash in the Dalit votes by taking up a walk (Yatra) in Telangana with Neel (Blue) and Lal (Red) flag (Ambedkarism and Marxism) in order to divert the severe discontent mounting among the Dalit masses against the ruling system, to drown them in reformism and to divert them into the parliamentary path. A few others attempt to mix Ambedkarism and Marxism in the name of Neel Salaam and Laal Salaam. As has been said above, these bourgeois and petty bourgeois trends are no solutions for the Dalit question. We have to take up theoretical struggle against these erroneous trends. We must also make efforts to tactically work together with the positive forces among them in the struggle against Brahmanical Hindu communalism and oppressor caste chauvinism. Our Party needs to build independent broad-based strong movements on the Dalit question.

Post-modernist theory

Some Dalit, backward caste and tribal organisations are directly working on the basis of this theory. This theory refuses to recognize the existence of classes and says that only identities exist. It theorises that since the oppressed masses are divided into various groups it is impossible for them to work collectively. It says that every group must fight for its interests and that it is not necessary and it is impossible to unite the whole oppressed masses in struggles. This theory opposes all kinds of suppression. But it is silent about the exploitative ruling classes and their state that are working as a source and supporter of severe repression on the oppressed masses. Due to these reasons this trend too does not at all contribute to the annihilation of caste and moreover it does not let the oppressed classes and people unite. It has a role in keeping the status-quo of the present exploitative system. Until now, this theory has created tremendous theoretical damage to Marxism internationally and in our country. We have to oppose and expose this theory. However, we have to adopt appropriate forms of struggle and organisation in the appropriate time so as to reflect the demands and aspirations of the people of various sections of the Dalits, backward castes and tribal people. Wherever there was a failure in this regard and wherever our movement became weak, identitarian (asthithva) movements arose in the areas of our movement.

Though it is true that class and caste are inter-linked in India, it is important to appreciate that they are not one and the same. However, in the

case of the Dalits (SCs), caste and class are to a large extent combined. Barring the Dalits who have joined politics, reached a high stage and became part of the ruling classes, a few intellectuals and bureaucrats who serve the cause of the ruling classes and a very small section of traders, the majority of the Dalits (over 90 per cent) belong to rural wage labourers, poor peasantry, and other toiling masses in the slums of the poor in the towns. Among the backward castes, class polarisation has been very sharp and a considerable section among them has transformed into landlords, rich peasants, industrialists and businessmen and became part of the ruling classes. Some castes among the backward are in a pathetic condition while some are relatively better off. On the whole, majority among the BCs are of proletarian character and are desirous of revolution. Caste oppression and discrimination is being unleashed on these castes also in various forms. Especially, the people of these castes are in the forefront in the struggle for reservations. We must organise the people of these castes along with the Dalit people against caste oppression and discrimination being unleashed upon them.

It is also not proper to say that all the people among oppressor castes be treated as exploiting class. Though it is true that a majority of the composition in the exploiting class belong to the high (oppressor) castes, all those of the oppressor castes are not exploiters. A considerable section of them join the New Democratic Revolution. It is imperative, and indeed possible, to unite them with the oppressed masses of the other castes to conduct struggles on various issues. Especially, we should try to unite them in anti-caste struggles. It is not possible to unite all the downtrodden people without exposing Brahmanic ideology that is the basis of the division of oppressor and oppressed castes and stands in the way of unity of the oppressed classes, waging a struggle against caste chauvinism and dominating ideology among the oppressor castes and against the narrow sectarian attitude among the oppressed castes. In this struggle the concentration of our attack must be only on the oppressor caste economic hegemony, the caste chauvinism and casteist ideology.

Anti-caste struggle should be turned into an integral part of the New Democratic Revolution for the success of this revolution, recognising that only the success of the New Democratic Revolution can provide the material basis for the complete annihilation of caste.

Relation of Caste to Base and Superstructure

Due to the wrong understanding prevailing in various ML groups on this question, it is necessary once again to state our understanding.

Firstly, we must understand that it is un-Marxian and mechanical to see caste as only part of the superstructure or as only part of the base of society, as some groups do. We must recognise that aspects such as Brahmanic theory that appear to be superstructural ones are an integral part of the relations of production, i.e., the base of society. As we have shown earlier, the role of caste in the base which was the strongest under caste-based feudalism, is on the decrease with the development of semi-feudalism and the growth of capitalist relations and with the development of class struggle in the political sphere. However, caste will continue to play a role in the base in various forms, as long as the country continues to be in semi-colonial, semi-feudal system and as long as the caste system is used by the ruling classes to facilitate its exploitation and rule.

Today, the notions of Brahmanism, Hindu religious chauvinism and oppressor caste domination are in dominant position in the superstructure and are helping the existence of this exploitative system. At the same time, scientific, progressive, democratic, advanced, revolutionary ideology and politics, the forces representing them, their organisations and class struggle that are opposing and fighting Brahmanism, Hindu religious chauvinism and oppressor caste domination and in fact that will totally transform the base itself are taking birth in the superstructure from the same base. They are bringing down the forces that maintain the present outdated base and are continuing the class struggle in all the aspects of the superstructure that breaks this base. Today, two mutually opposite forces existing depending on the same base are in severe conflict in the superstructure. Of them, the struggle in the ideological sphere and political sphere is the main, vital and the decisive one. We have to strongly oppose the deceptions of the bourgeois class and petty bourgeois reformist evil-logic that rejects this aspect and the effort for the revolutionary transformation of the society and speaks of reforming the existing system.

The main principle that flows from the above is that caste cannot be seen and tackled only at the base or only at the super structural level. The path to the annihilation of caste will be paved only through an all-round attack on

caste at both base and super structural levels, from the very beginning of the New Democratic Revolution till its final victory.

CHAPTER-VI

THE CASTE QUESTION – UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF OUR PARTY

Our Party treats the caste issue as one peculiar to Indian society. Our Party says that just as the people were divided into different classes, they were also divided into different castes and so, we should have a clear approach towards the issue generally as well as particularly. In our basic documents 'Party Program' and 'Strategy and Tactics of Indian Revolution' passed by the Unity Congress-Ninth Congress of our new Party in 2007, we clearly mentioned that we have to mobilise the people of Dalit and backward castes and also democratic forces in other castes and build a strong movement on this particular problem against caste oppression with the objective of New Democratic Revolution thus –

“For thousands of years the feudalism that has dominated Indian society is rigid caste-based feudalism which was built on a Brahmanical ideology. This pernicious caste system was of enormous value to extract large surplus from the oppressed particularly the so-called outcastes, who were pushed to a slave-like condition.” (Party Program, Page 1)

“In India feudalism/semi-feudalism does not take the conventional European form. Here caste oppression and Brahmanism are inextricably interwoven with the existing semi-feudal, semi-colonial system. The Caste system is not only a super-structural phenomena but it is also a part of the economic base. For this reason, the destruction of the caste system, including the eradication of untouchability, together with a struggle against all manifestations of Brahmanism, is a necessary part of the NDR in the country. Casteism and Brahmanism are essentially elitist, hierarchical, and gives people a sense of superiority over other castes lower than theirs from very birth itself and all this is sanctified in the name of religion. It is also a deadly weapon with which to divide the oppressed masses. Such an elitist structure is ideal for any exploitative system.” (Strategy and Tactics, Page 6)

“Caste-based Brahmanical feudalism acts as fetter on the development of the productive forces by holding down the vast majority of the Indian people under backward relations of production. Economically, it keeps the

overwhelming majority of the people in dire poverty and destitution, and depresses their purchasing power. It thereby, restricts the growth of the home market, retards industrial development and leads to massive unemployment and stagnation of the economy. Politically, it suppresses the democratic rights of the masses and in some places, even creates a 'state within a state' i.e. a parallel landlord raj in the rural areas with their own private armies or with the support of state-hired armed mercenaries. It keeps the peasantry in perpetual subjugation and bondage. Socially and ideologically, Brahmanism and the caste system bring an added oppression to the oppressed castes and Dalits. With Dalits it takes the inhuman form of untouchability. These also act as measures for extra-economic forms of extracting surplus by the feudal interests." (Strategy and Tactics, Page 8).

"Condemnable caste system and casteism, especially the Brahmanical casteism, is a special feature of the semi-feudal system prevailing in India. The obnoxious caste system and casteism, which is being perpetuated by the ruling classes for thousands of years, is specific form of social oppression and exploitation affecting the oppressed castes of the country. Casteism crushes the self-respect of the individual, treats them as inferiors and creates a social hierarchy with each rung in the ladder looking down on the other. It is such a weapon, which is used both by the Indian ruling classes and the imperialists to instigate and divide the poor people and the oppressed. The majority of the oppressed castes is poor and faces acute caste oppression in addition to the class oppression. Casteism is used for derailing their actual struggles directed against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucrat capitalism." (Party Program, Page 8)

"Dalits are at the lowest rung of this casteist ladder facing acute social oppression from all social categories above them, particularly from the feudal forces. The inhuman practice of untouchability is still continuing and is being maintained. Accordingly, the Dalits are being treated as second-rate citizens. Even today 90 to 95 per cent from among them are either landless and poor peasants or village labourers.

"Even today their age-old struggles against feudal oppression and for getting equal status in the society are being targeted and Dalits have become victim of these vicious attacks by the feudal and fundamentalist Hindutva forces patronized by the ruling classes and their state machinery. These attacks are being manifested in the form of massacres and en masse gang rapes.

“Though the Dalit question is in essence a class question, the Party should lead the struggle against caste oppression on Dalits and other backward castes as a part of New Democratic Revolution and fight for their equal place in all spheres of social life by fighting all forms of caste discrimination and oppression, towards abolishing the caste system.” (Party Program, Page 9)

“The vast majority of the peasantry is in urgent need of the agrarian revolution to change the miserable, wretched semi-feudal conditions of existence which are further aggravated by its Brahmanical and caste-based character. This circumstance derives from the fact that the democratic revolution in India remains unfinished and that the land question remains unresolved. Hence the content of the new democratic revolution remains the peasant war for land and political power—a factor that can be effectively utilized by the Party to rouse and organize the vast peasant masses into the People’s Army.” (Strategy and Tactics, Page 20)

“India is a deeply caste ridden society where caste oppression and Brahmanical superiority is widespread. Dalits are at the lowest rung of this ladder facing the inhuman practice of untouchability. Though all forms of caste oppression must be opposed the Party must particularly focus on the oppression of Dalits and eradication of untouchability. The dalits or Scheduled Castes should be treated as a special social section that is peculiar to the obnoxious caste-ridden Indian society. Though the vast majority among them (over 90%) belongs to the poor and landless peasantry and to the proletariat and other wage-earning sections, they are also victims of social oppression and oppressor caste atrocities and discrimination in all spheres of life. The most heinous and inhuman manifestation of this social oppression is the practice of untouchability still practiced in most parts of India. The real solution to the problems of dalits lies in smashing the existing semi-feudal, semi-colonial setup by successfully completing the Agrarian revolution on the basis of distributing land to the tiller.

“While mobilizing the vast masses of the Dalits who constitute around 17.5 percent of the Indian population into the agrarian revolution, we must also lay special emphasis upon the task of fighting all forms of social oppression and caste discrimination practiced by the oppressor castes against them. Appropriate organisational forms should be evolved at various levels to fight the evils of untouchability, oppressor caste atrocities against the Dalits and other forms of discrimination based on caste. At the same time, we must desist

from forming exclusively caste-based organisations for the Dalits, which will only lead to their further segregation.

“The Party must fight for equal rights, reservations and other special privileges for Dalits and other backward castes. These should be considered as an integral part of the struggle for democracy. Simultaneously we must expose the hollowness of the policies of the ruling class parties and the state on these issues. We must also expose the opportunist Dalit leaders who build their own electoral fortunes in the name of taking up Dalit issues. We must initiate and lead the struggles against all forms of violence and discrimination on Dalits from our own class organisations. There is also urgent need to build organizations to fight untouchability, caste discrimination and for the eradication of the caste system as part of the new democratic transformation of society.

“The petty bourgeois Dalit sections in certain states have formed some exclusive organizations of Dalits and are organising movements on some issues related to their problems. We should work jointly with these petty bourgeois organizations on these issues while at the same time conducting ideological and political debate with them on their orientation towards reformist solutions to eradicate caste, like conversion and reservations and exposing the reformism and opportunism of the leadership. We should propagate the revolutionary policy on the caste system. It is only due to lack of a revolutionary alternative that exclusive Dalit organizations are proliferating in various parts of the country. Such organizations will become irrelevant if the revolutionary Party and mass organizations take up the issues of Dalits and build a broad-based movement by including all sections of people.” (Strategy and Tactics, Page 70).

“There has been a strong Dalit movement in the country fighting untouchability. Though part of this has been co-opted by ruling-classes the spontaneous struggles keep breaking out against attacks on Dalits and against their humiliation. This is so not only in the rural areas but also in the urban areas where Dalit assertion has increased. It is important to participate in these movements and where possible lead them. While doing so we should seek to give these movements a correct orientation linking caste oppression and untouchability to the task of the entire democratization of society, i.e., the tasks of the NDR.” (Strategy and Tactics, Page 77).

“After the People’s Democratic Revolution, the production relations will be revolutionized step by step, in the process of removing the class distinction between exploiter and the exploited. It will continue the efforts to eradicate Brahmanical ideology, caste oppression and discrimination by promoting a scientific socialistic outlook.” (Party Program, Page 18)

“Women, Dalits, Adivasis and religious minorities are the most important of the social sections to be taken cognizance of by the party of the proletariat leading the revolution in the concrete conditions prevailing in India. All these sections have special problems of their own and specific types of extra-economic oppression apart from the class oppression. We have to pay due attention to solve their special problems and to chalk out special tasks to mobilise them effectively into the revolutionary movement. Towards this end, we have to not only bring these sections into class organizations along with other oppressed masses, but also evolve the necessary forms of organizations and forms of struggle for the widest mobilization of these sections on their special problems both on a short-term and long-term basis. Broader joint fronts too should be formed wherever and whenever necessary to address the specific grievances.

“However, while taking up specific tactics on the special problems related to these sections, we should keep in mind that the tactics should always be subordinate to our strategic line. We should place the specific program for the solution of their specific problems in relation to, and in the overall context of, the on-going people’s war in the country. We must educate these sections how their problems are essentially class questions; how the material basis for the final solution of their problems can be laid only by liberating themselves from class oppression; and hence, the imperative need for waging war against the common enemies- imperialism, feudalism, and comprador bureaucrat capitalism, that are oppressing the vast toiling masses in the country-united with other oppressed masses under the leadership of the proletariat.

“We must demonstrate in practice how the people’s war and the ongoing class struggle is bringing these sections increasingly into the center stage; how the latent potential and creative energies, the revolutionary initiative and capacities of these oppressed sections are being released in the course of the people’s war and the deepening class struggle. It is only by paying special attention and making conscious effort based on concrete planning by the leadership of the Party to develop the oppressed among these sections, that

we can bring a qualitative change in their overall status in the Party and position in the revolutionary movement. Hence, in all our guerilla zones and areas of class struggle, firstly we have to follow the class line and mass line seriously, i.e., to work mainly among the landless and poor peasantry and agricultural labourers who generally belong to Dalit section. Basing firmly on this aspect, we have to take up a special program for bringing these sections to the forefront in all fronts, apart from drawing up specific forms of struggle and organization to mobilize broader masses of these sections on their specific demands with a clear-cut plan to involve the advanced elements from these sections into the Party and the class organizations.

“By pursuing the above-mentioned general line and approach, we will be able to draw the clear line of demarcation with the parliamentary and revisionist parties, with the reformist NGOs and other petty bourgeois organizations, as well as with the so-called Communist Revolutionary organizations in our country with regard to the solution of the problems of these special oppressed social sections. We must also take up consistent political exposure of the various bourgeois-reformist-revisionist trends within the movements of these sections.” (Strategy and Tactics, Page 68).

The understanding and practice of the erstwhile CPI (ML) (People’s War) and MCCI on the caste question were fundamentally alike. They are fundamentally correct. Anyhow, there were certain limitations and shortcomings in the understanding and practice of the two erstwhile parties. Though the people of the Dalit and other suppressed castes in the rural areas were mobilized and struggles built against caste and other social oppressions and achieved considerable successes, no special organisations or considerable special movements were built on this question. We also could not take up theoretical, political, and organizational and struggle efforts in all fields on this problem to the extent necessary. So, we could not develop special tactics in time and we could not strongly sustain for a long time and keep the oppressed masses that had an active role in the Agrarian Revolution away from the influence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois reformism on the caste question. Until the formation of the new Party, owing to the differences in the process of development of the two parties, in the social conditions of the areas they worked; in certain important problems the movements faced and, in the ebb and flows of the movements that these led; there were a few differences in the theoretical, political and organizational effort on the caste question. The

limitations and shortcomings of the two parties on the caste question made a negative impact on the movements to that extent. However, in the mid-1990s the understanding of CPI(ML)(People's War) considerably developed and made a leap with fundamentally developing its understanding that the caste question is not related to superstructure alone, it is part of the base too. It realized the feudalism in India as caste based feudalism. With the formation of the new Party and the successful Unity Congress-Ninth Congress, the understanding of the entire Party was enriched and further strengthened and there was another leap. Anyhow, even now there are a lot of shortcomings in our efforts in this field. There is a serious immediate necessity to rectify them and build a strong movement in this sphere.

Since the time of the great Naxalbari, Srikakulam, Sonarpur, Kanksa and other Revolutionary Peasant Struggles we made concerted efforts to mobilise the people of the basic classes in the rural areas with New Democratic Revolutionary politics, to build Armed Agrarian Revolutionary movement and to strengthen the Communist Party organization among these classes. So, we took up activities mainly concentrating among the poor classes of Dalits and backward castes in a conscious and planned manner. Only since we worked thus, since we mainly concentrated among the poor and the middle class peasantry, we could build strong Agrarian Revolutionary movements. The Party guided the students and the youth in the political campaign of 'go to villages' that the number of days one stays in the Dalit villages would be the criterion for the success of these campaigns. Students and the youth put this guidance in practice exactly and achieved good results.

Apart from the people's problems like abolition of bonded labour, hike in the wages of the labourers and bonded labourers, return of the money the landlords seized, Agrarian Revolutionary problems like the seizure of wastelands and government lands, seizure of the landlord's lands, we also took up agitations against untouchability, caste oppression-discrimination, atrocities on the Dalits and other social problems and thus we could bring about unity among the Dalit-backward castes and the poor and the middle class people of the oppressor castes. Along with the anti-feudal struggles we took up anti-state struggles, anti-imperialist struggles and struggles of the students, youth, workers, women, democratic rights, literary and cultural, employees and others in the urban areas and achieved unity among various castes, especially the poor and the middle classes of the Dalit and the

backward castes. We built agricultural labourer organisations/Krantikari Kisan Committees and also consciously made efforts to bring the poor and the middle classes of the Dalit-backward castes to take up leadership in the youth, women and cultural organisations and made conscious efforts to achieve recognition for them among the people. Similarly, we could develop the leadership in the urban mass organisations. The majority poor and middle class people of the backward castes and the oppressor castes too are accepting the democratic political role this leadership had in the village affairs, in the leadership of the Party. Thus, gradually the unity among the poor and the middle classes is developing and the democratic struggle for the annihilation of caste is building up.

We took up many struggles against the class exploitation, oppression and domination of the landlord and the hierarchical forces and against the social untouchability, atrocities, suppression and physical attacks in the rural areas of many states in the country. When the landlord hierarchical oppressor caste chauvinist forces massacred Dalits in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh we stood very firmly on behalf of the victims and took up large-scale propaganda and protest activities exposing these cruelties. We wiped out such reactionary forces in places like Lakshmanpur Bathe, Senari, Dalil Chowk-Bhagoura, and Karamchedu. In Bihar, starting from the end of the 1970s until the end of 1990s evil landlord caste hierarchical forces formed Brahmarshi Sena, Bhoomi Sena, Savarna Liberation Front, Sunlight Sena, Ranaveer Sena and other such caste armies with the support of the leaders of the political parties of the exploitative classes and the state-administration and made medieval-type massacres and innumerable atrocities on the people of the Dalit and other oppressed classes and oppressed castes with the objective of eliminating the revolutionary movement. The oppressed people armed under the leadership of the Party suppressed these armies and the diehard oppressor caste feudal forces one by one and only thus the revolutionary movement advanced.

The government reforms are mainly the result of the people's struggles in various forms but to deceive the people and for their vested interests the ruling classes propagate that they brought them. So, we have been exposing the falseness of the ruling classes, explaining the limitation of these reforms to the people, supporting the SC, OBC, ST, reservations and conducted struggles to achieve them in which we are in the forefront. We took up agitation and propaganda against Brahmanical Hindu oppressor caste

chauvinism that instigates casteism, the Sangh Parivar that is its hero and against BJP. As a part of it we mobilized the people and conducted many meetings.

One great achievement of our revolutionary movement is that we brought forth a new perspective and a new path of struggle for the permanent solution for this problem by politically mobilizing and consolidating the poor people of the Dalit and other backwards castes and also the poor and the middle classes of the oppressor castes through armed agrarian revolutionary movement in the vast rural areas of the Indian society, faced feudalism and oppressor caste chauvinism for a long time, fought it blow by blow, shook its foundation and the outdated Brahmanical oppressor caste values based on it. Another great achievement is that the oppressed people of the Dalit, backward castes and Adivasis trained in class struggle and revolutionary politics and their leadership increased not only in the village-level Mass Organisations, Revolutionary People's Committees, Party, People's Liberation Guerilla Army but also at the state and the central level.

We mobilized and consolidated the people of the Dalit and other backward castes politically and in the process took up many struggles to destroy the chauvinism, social, political, economic and cultural domination of the oppressor caste feudal, vicious hierarchical forces and could instill self-confidence in the oppressed people. Depending on the strength of the movement in areas where our Party has worked, accusing in the name of caste, addressing the Dalit masses in an insulting and humiliating manner were almost totally or to a large extent stopped. We could remove the inferiority complex in them that existed for a long time. Thus, we could develop the social consciousness in them that they are equal to all. Thus, we made efforts to unite the oppressed castes and the oppressed classes of various castes in the revolutionary movement in the process of courageous resistance to untouchability and caste discrimination in the rural areas in the process of struggle. We worked in the same manner among the urban people too.

Anyhow, our experience proves that our attempts are not enough as per the nature of the problem. It is a fact that we could not take up deep, constant, firm attempts to the extent of the depth of the problem as explained in the above chapters. Generally, Party has a proper understanding of the caste question but if seen specifically and deeply there are yet certain limitations and shortcomings in understanding and practice. Due to these, there were

shortcomings in taking up a comprehensive special program on the question of annihilation of caste, in taking up new struggle and organizational forms and in continuing them at least to the extent taken up.

Only by taking up class struggle in the social sphere against various social problems, especially Brahmanical ideology, untouchability and caste oppression, linking it with anti-feudal, anti-imperialist class struggles, the consciousness that they too are like all the people and they too have the right to live equally like all others, would rise among the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes. It is a sign of increasing individuality among them. Without such individuality and consciousness, it is impossible to develop revolutionary consciousness. So, along with the economic and political struggles against feudalism and imperialism with the objective of New Democratic Revolution, only by concentrating on taking up struggles on social and cultural problems can we mold the personality and consciousness of the people of Dalit and other oppressed castes in a revolutionary manner. With this individuality and consciousness, the oppressed class people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes who are the backbone of revolution will develop revolutionary consciousness rapidly.

Until now we have been making efforts mainly through class organisations to mobilise revolutionary classes in the New Democratic Revolution and took up struggles against caste oppression and discrimination through them. Our experience tells us that it is not possible to abolish social inequality only through class organisations. The struggle against caste oppression is not only a struggle against the ruling classes but also an ideological social and cultural struggle to be taken up among the people. In the caste-based Indian society the people of the oppressor and the oppressed (backward and Dalit) castes are divided into thousands of castes and sub-castes. Various kinds of social inequality, differentiation, oppression and contradictions regarding the hierarchical caste system exist among the people of the oppressor and the oppressed (backward, Dalit) castes and sub-castes. For example, like in the other castes among the Dalits too there are differentiation and contradictions along with a kind of untouchability between the various castes and sub-castes of the Dalits. There are no marriages between them. They have separate houses, temples and churches. This kind of situation exists among the backward castes too. In such conditions, we have to take up struggle to eliminate caste differentiation among the people,

especially the oppressed, and to achieve equality and to see that there is no way for any kind of untouchability, with the objective of annihilation of caste.

There are increasing attacks and crimes by the oppressor caste chauvinists and landlords on the Dalits. Although thousands of cases are registered every year in the police stations against these attacks and crimes, there are punishments in very little of them. If we have a deeper look into the matter in the rural areas, we understand that thousands of crimes on the SCs and STs are in fact, not being registered or else in many places the police are denying even to register them legally. On the other hand, thousands of cases are pending in the courts. Some other cases have been cancelled due to the terrible negligence of the police and the absolute antagonistic attitude of the public prosecutors. According to the survey of National Crime Records Bureau, Prison statistics India 2020, out of the total undertrial 3,52,495 prisoners in the total of 1,306 jails of the country, 77,716 are Dalits, 39,031 Adivasis, 1,27,736 OBCs and 66,384 Muslims. Out of the total 1,12,589 who met with punishment, there were 23,498 Dalit people, 15,613 Adivasis and 41,850 OBCs. In cases of the thousands of crimes of the oppressor castes and Hindu communalists on the Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims and Revolutionaries the number of the arrested criminals is very less. The number is so little as to not having been added in the National Crime Records Bureau data. These criminals are being proved not guilty and escape without much punishment. The oppressor caste and oppressor class accused in the sensational massacres in Kilvenmani, Bathanitola, Lakshmanpur Bathe, Sankarbiga, Karamchedu, Tsundur, Kambalampalli and other places were shamelessly proved not guilty by the courts. All these prove the biased nature of the police and the judiciary towards the oppressor castes and oppressor classes. On the other hand, large numbers of Dalit and tribal people, Muslims and revolutionaries are put in jails and punished mostly on wrong allegations and trivial crimes. Bhima Koregaon is a live example for this.

Thousands and lakhs of atrocities are continuing on the Dalits and Adivasis that do not account in the government records. The number of murders is very high. In the present situation when the Dalits do not condone scowling or beating, the oppressor caste chauvinists took it as a method to kill the Dalits. The oppressor caste feudal, hierarchical forces are committing mass atrocities, destroying houses and killing in scores to suppress the Dalits who are increasingly becoming enlightened. Especially in the recent years, the

Hindu communalists attacking the Dalit, tribal and minority girls, sexually assaulting them and killing them in incidents such as the Khairlanji, Unnav, Kathuva, Barabanki and Hathras is going on as a trend in the country. These serial incidents expose the fiasco of the slogan 'beti bachao, beti padao' of Modi. Dalit youth are being inhumanly murdered in the name of prestige. The murder of Pranay in Telangana is one such incident. In Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the boycott and murder of Dalit people is continuing in a big way in the name of Khap panchayats.

In Andhra Pradesh police officers tonsured and humiliated Dalit youth with the backing of these hegemonic forces for opposing a sand mafia and for plucking a mango fruit from the garden of a landlord. They are unleashing attacks on the Dalits for opposing the oppressor caste chauvinists and the anarchic gangs that are supporting them in destructive deeds such as opposing the installation of and demolishing Ambedkar statues. Of late the Hindu communalists demolished the temple of Sant Ravidas whom the Dalits consider sacred. There is a rise in the attacks on Dalits all over the country since Modi came to power. However, the Brahmanic Hindutva ruling classes in power in the central and the state governments claim in the Parliament and Assembly that there is a drop in crimes against Dalits, minorities and women.

Pro-ruling class parties like the BSP claiming to have emerged for the upliftment of the Dalits and many such opportunist organisations are coming forth in these conditions. They are utilizing the increasing conscious and firm will to fight for their rights among the Dalit masses and trying to divert them into the path of reformism. Never before the Congress and the BJP held caste conferences. They are attempting to keep them under their hold. Unless we isolate such pro-ruling class opportunist leadership from the people of the Dalit and backward castes, we cannot make Social Revolution a success. Only by making the struggle for annihilation of caste a part of the class struggle can we take the oppressed masses in the right direction on the path of liberation from not only social oppression but also from the economic, political and cultural oppression.

In areas of sharp class struggle it is necessary to formulate a specific program for solving the caste question and concentrate especially. Where we are weak and the class struggle is in the primary level, we have to support the movements of the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes for special demands and take an active part. We have to lead these movements and

gradually spread them so as to unite the people of all the oppressed sections of the society.

We realized that in order to take up the struggle for annihilation of caste as an integral part of class struggle, it is not enough to theoretically see that 'the caste question is in essence a class question' but appropriate organisations too are necessary to take up this struggle as a part of the New Democratic Revolution.

We are opposing the age-old organizations that the oppressor castes have formed to unleash their class-caste domination.

The countless caste organisations that are formed and are spreading are contributing in the development of caste prejudices and misunderstandings and divert the people's thoughts. We are telling the people to be alert towards the leadership of such caste organisations.

There are organisations that the Dalits and the oppressed castes formed for the protection of their rights. Some of them are democratic but since they lack in proper objective they are often carried away by the lure of the ruling classes. We are trying to provide proper direction to them.

We realize that now there is a strong necessity to spread 'organisations for annihilation of caste' fighting against caste oppression and with the objective of the elimination of the caste system and develop strong movements as a part of the New Democratic Revolution.

In order to achieve this objective, we have to make efforts to unite all the oppressed castes (S.C.s, B.C.s), continue alliance with the sections and persons of the oppressor castes who do not practice caste discrimination but oppose it and also make serious efforts to actively mobilise the advanced forces among them into the movement for annihilation of caste. We have decided to rectify our shortcoming in this regard.

We have to fight against feudalism and imperialism that is protecting the caste system, see the Feudal forces that are the strongholds of feudalism and the caste system as the main enemies of the movement for annihilation of caste and necessarily enhance our efforts to intensify the struggle against Brahmanical Hindu communal, caste chauvinist forces.

The movement for annihilation of caste is working to unite with all the organisations and persons fighting against Feudalism and Imperialism.

We are making efforts to propagate in all forms the ideas of annihilation of caste, to resist the social oppression in the name of castes and to develop the social and cultural level of the oppressed castes.

In order to eliminate untouchability, we need to develop activities like encouraging inter-caste marriages, common dining, construction of joint wells and pipes and allotment of house plots for common residence from the government at a scale of social movements.

There is also the need to take up social movements for special educational activities, night schools and cultural activities to enhance the educational and cultural level of the oppressed castes and to conduct cultural programs highlighting the dignity of labor and exposing the putrid caste system of the Hindu religion.

We have to build such organisations in the guerilla zones too where there is sharp class struggle and try to consciously eliminate caste differences among the people. Student, youth, agricultural laborer, women, literary and cultural and other mass organisations must include a special program for the annihilation of caste as an important issue in their basic program. They must work for political polarization, consolidation, building of movement, efforts in United Front with this understanding. The cultural organisations in the rural and the urban areas must formulate special programs on the caste question and take up propaganda through cultural teams. There is a dire need to effectively take up the program of our Party for the annihilation of caste.

Chapter VII

Special program

We must take up anti-caste struggle in all the fields with the objective of creating a favorable objective situation for the complete annihilation of caste system by bringing down Feudalism and Comprador Bureaucratic Capitalism and Imperialism that are protecting the caste system in India and making the New Democratic Revolution a success. We have to take up the following strategic and tactical tasks to achieve this objective.

Strategic tasks

1. We must create the necessary objective conditions for the permanent annihilation of caste system by rooting out the caste system through making New Democratic Revolution successful by

mobilizing the people of the four revolutionary classes, the people of the Dalit-Adivasi-Religious minorities-Oppressed nationalities and Women in the leadership of the proletariat, to bring down caste-based Feudalism and Comprador Bureaucratic Capitalism and Imperialism that are – a shackle for the development of the forces of production by binding the broad masses of our country to backward relations of productions; the basic cause of exploitation and oppression, poverty and miserable condition, inhuman untouchability and caste oppression of the majority people; a major hurdle for the genuine freedom, democracy and sovereignty, economic, political and cultural advancement of our country.

2. Under the guidance of the great proletariat theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) the proletariat party – must fight relentlessly mainly targeting the Brahmanical caste-based feudal ideology and culture and its various manifestations during the New Democratic Revolution along with firmly fighting the Imperialist ideology, culture and its various manifestations; as a part of effectively continuing revolution in the cultural sphere, must consciously and widely mobilize the subjective forces and the broad oppressed masses in the New Democratic Revolution by widely bringing to the people the Dialectical and Historical Materialist theory, Democratic ideas, Socialist ideology, New Democratic politics and New Democratic culture to mold the world outlook of the subjective forces and the people; must take up revolution in the cultural sphere along with the revolution in the political sphere, eliminate Brahmanical, caste dominating, feudal, imperialist cultures that represent outdated reactionary forces and establish genuine democratic and socialist culture that does not give way to untouchability and caste oppression.

3. Workers, peasants, urban middle class people, especially the workers, agricultural laborers, poor peasants and the semi-proletariat are in the majority among the population of the country who face utmost severe class exploitation and oppression from the imperialist, feudal, comprador bureaucratic capitalist policies and also social oppression; participate in the New Democratic Revolution; form class sectional organisations and associations; are in the organisations of Party, People's Army and United Front, the magic weapons in the

hands of the proletariat that lead the revolution; make the revolution a success and establish the New Democratic state; first accomplish Socialist transformation under the people's democratic dictatorship and later advance with the aim of Socialism and Communism through relentless class struggle under proletarian dictatorship. In the specific social conditions, a majority of them are from the Dalit and other oppressed social sections. In such conditions, they must have concrete representation in the New Democratic Revolutionary United Front and in the new revolutionary political power. However, the strategic task of establishing proletariat leadership by developing the conscious and active role of the people of the oppressed classes and oppressed social sections in all the fields of social revolution would be most vital. Our Party must accomplish this task by working in a creative manner interpreting the class line and the mass line in view of the specific social conditions of our country in the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

4. According to the scientific, clear and correct understanding of our Party that works in the guidance of the theory of M-L-M, the history of thousands of years of the Indian society since classes were formed is the history of class struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed classes. Since classes formed as the foremost varnas in India there was class struggle in the various social phases of the Varna system, feudal system/caste system, colonial-feudal/semi-feudal system, semi-colonial, semi-feudal system and this is the main reason for social development. There was persistent class struggle in all these societies in the ideological, social, cultural, spiritual, economic, political, judicial and other fields. The oppressed never stayed away from fighting against the oppressors. This struggle continued in various forms and intensified, whether in a violent form or in a non-violent form, in a severe level or in a moderate level. Whatever the number and level of the successes and failures of the oppressed in this struggle, it goes on. We have to highlight the legacy of struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors and all its positive experiences. As a part of it we have to highlight all the positive aspects of the struggles against class oppression and social oppression and reject the negative aspects. We must take lessons from these. Class struggle/People's War is going

on in the leadership of our party as a continuation and development of these struggles of the oppressed. We have to take these to its ultimate success and achieve liberation from class oppression and all kinds of social oppression including emancipation from caste. In this way, the people of the oppressed classes and oppressed social sections constituting more than ninety per cent of the population of the country will be liberated.

Tactical tasks

Let us formulate the following general tactical tasks to make the strategic tasks successful. We must creatively take up other forms of struggle and organisation along with the tactical tasks given here, in view of the unequal development and diversity of our country in its implementation.

1. The various class organisations and sectional organisations in the leadership of our Party must politically mobilise the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes, oppressed classes and sections and build movements against caste oppression with the objective of annihilation of caste. In view of the extent and impact of the present movement we have to make efforts to develop the struggles on this issue to a higher level. We have to coordinate these struggles with Agrarian Revolutionary Struggle and Anti-Imperialist struggles and take it up in an effective manner. Our class organisations must coordinate their activities with the various special organisations and forums of United Front working on this issue.

We have to politically mobilise the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes and the democratic forces of the other castes opposing caste oppression and formulate appropriate special forms of struggle and organization. In view of the unequal development in the social conditions and in the Revolutionary movement of the country we have to formulate special organisations depending on the political consciousness and struggle preparation of the people and thus the people will be able to take up higher forms of struggle and organization with their self-experience.

In this regard we have to form forums of tactical United Front with the ML parties, their mass organisations willing for united action, other democratic organisations and individuals. At times we have to work

together with the revisionist parties, their mass organisations and individuals on the basis of issues. Through all these we have to politically mobilise the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes and the democratic forces in the other castes who oppose caste oppression and build a broad and strong movement in the country. Our objective in all these activities will be the abolition of the caste system.

In this process, not only will the organization of the movement become extensive and strong but the leadership too will become efficient. We have to mold these forces of the movement, especially the forces from the oppressed castes theoretically and politically and mobilise them into the Party and thus our Party will gain a mass character. The class basis and social basis too will be strengthened.

2. The Party has to intensify class struggle against the Brahmanical caste-based feudalism not only in the ideological sphere but also in the political sphere. Mainly we have to expose and fight the ideological, religious, cultural propaganda and activities of the governments, Brahmanical organisations, Hindu religious chauvinist organisations utilizing the Brahmanical-oppressor caste nature of the Constitution of India and the state. We have to expose the Hindu and the oppressor caste nature of the Constitution and the state.

3. When the Party units take up investigation on social relations, they must study the class contradictions in view of the various forms of caste in the base and superstructure. The various manifestations of caste contradictions too must be specifically studied. On the basis of specific study and summarisation, the program for annihilation of caste must be combined with the program of Agrarian Revolutionary program and be implemented. The two programs taken up simultaneously will make mutual positive impact.

4. As a part of the constant efforts and campaigns to enhance the theoretical political level and organisational strength in order to theoretically, politically, organizationally and culturally proletarianise the new forces joining the Party and to rectify the non-proletarian trends among the old forces and proletarianise them for effective leadership of the revolution, we have to also discuss the influence of caste ideology in the Party and various spheres in the Revolutionary

movement. In these discussions we have to recognize the specific theoretical, cultural, political and organizational manifestations of caste ideology and the negative impact they make and follow the method of self-criticism-criticism to rectify them. We have to continue study and education on this question. In view of the intensity and extent of the erroneous trends about this question, we have to take up theoretical and political struggle. We have to take up this method in the whole Party (Party units in all the fields) constantly. Our Party is leading the ongoing social revolution with the immediate aim of transforming the present semi-colonial, semi-feudal society into a New Democratic society, with the ultimate aim of later transforming it into a Socialist society and Communist society and it must stand in the forefront in this regard too.

5. We have to support the identitarian (asthithva) movements that are part of the democratic movements but have to point out the impact of Postmodernist theory on them. We have to make efforts to see that they go in the proper direction and to make them part of the revolutionary movement. We have to make efforts to educate the people of various oppressed social sections and backward areas fighting for their democratic demands to imbibe a democratic perspective to also respect the rights of the people more socially, economically and politically backward and support their struggle. Only then will unity be achieved among the broad oppressed masses in the direction of democracy and social justice that we have to achieve.

6. We have to form tactical United Front against Brahmanic Hindutva fascism on a broad basis. We have to form this with organisations for annihilation of caste, with the organisations of various Dalit, Backward Caste, Adivasi, Religious minority, Oppressed Nationalities, Women's Organisations, Secular forces and ML forces with democratic character that are prepared to work. We have to give a correct direction to the movement against Brahmanic Hindutva fascism going on in the country and consolidate it politically. We have to form tactical front but only on the basis of the issue with the revisionist parties and the bourgeois parties and their mass organisations that are prepared to work. When forming issue-based

fronts with the parliamentary parties we must take care that the people do not develop any illusions on them.

7. We have to enlighten the oppressed people by providing them with scientific ideology to remove the backward ideology and through mobilizing them into the democratic revolutionary political movements. For this the various Mass Organisations in the leadership of our Party must work in a planned and relentless manner. The role of the students, youth, literary and cultural fields will be important in this regard.

We have to take up ideological struggle against caste ideology and all other forms of casteist thought. We have to expose the casteist hate ideology in epics and Upanishads such as Manusmrithi-Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharat and other such texts. As a part of carrying out revolution in the superstructure we have to concertedly fight Brahmanism and casteism ideologically.

The ruling classes, especially the BJP-Sangh Parivar forces are constantly utilizing the mass media along with all kinds of propaganda, broadcasting instruments, various kinds of Hindu religious fundamentalist-chauvinist organisations, domestic and foreign organisations in its favor, voluntary organisations and government machinery under the veil of social service and are molding the brains of the people ideologically, theoretically, politically and culturally in their favor. They intensified the exploitation, oppression and domination of themselves and the imperialists and led to a much dangerous situation. In these conditions we have to necessarily face them in an active and effective manner. If we are to make the social revolution successful, it is imperative to revolutionise the ideas of the oppressed people to mobilise them in a united, active and militant manner. So, we have to take up the most important ideological and theoretical task of facing the counter-revolution in the superstructure to achieve this objective. For this our Party must especially concentrate on the media, social, literary and cultural, educational, intellectual and youth fields and develop the necessary forms of struggle and organization.

We must fight against blind beliefs, untouchability and other such issues.

We must oppose the degrading symbols and language that express casteism and casteist culture. We must make efforts in our literary and cultural spheres to bring the necessary change in the language and culture with a democratic view.

We must oppose the ban on cow slaughter. We must oppose the ban on eating beef. We must oppose the discrimination towards certain professions of the oppressed castes and people's custom of eating meat, birds and serpents.

We must fight for equal participation of the oppressed castes in social ceremonies. We must try to develop the culture of social interaction of the people of these castes participating in class struggle. We must encourage common dining of the people of various castes. Our mass organisations must arrange common dining with people's participation on the occasions of various social, cultural and political programs and try to utilize them as important forums of education.

We must oppose casteist sentiments and thoughts among the activists of Mass Organisations and educate and rectify them.

We must rectify the false consciousness and illusion among the poor people of the oppressor castes that they are equal to the rich of their castes.

8. We have to mobilise the people of the oppressed castes in a wide, militant manner in the anti-state struggles. We must make efforts to muster the support of the various oppressed classes and oppressed sections for these struggles. We must make efforts to see that the people of the oppressed castes stand in support of the struggles of the people of other oppressed classes and oppressed sections.

We must expose the pro-oppressor caste intentions of the governments in implementing housing schemes based on caste segregation that helps to maintain the status quo of the caste system. We must support and encourage inter-caste and inter-religious marriage. We must tell that the children of the parents of inter-caste or inter-religious marriages can avail the facilities given to any of the parents. The activists of all the organisations of mass movement must be a model in this regard. All the organisations of the mass movement

must take up campaigns in their respective organisations and people on the inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.

We must fight for the proper implementation of the reservation policy. We have to fight back the attempts of the NDA government in the leadership of Modi to liquidate reservation according to the agenda of the Sangh Parivar. We must also fight for free education to the poor children of other castes. We must mobilise the SC, BC, ST people and the poor people of other castes, especially students, youth, unemployed, teachers, Trade Unions, employees, democratic academicians and take up struggles against the policies of the central and the state government that are corporatizing government education, privatizing public sector organisations and liquidating reservations. We must fight against the saffronisation of education. We must fight for the removal of the anti-Dalit casteist ideology and to add about the movements for self-respect and those against caste and for the eradication of caste in the textbooks.

We must fight against the delay and corruption in the administration in giving loans and subsidies to the SCs and OBCs.

We must fight against the repressive laws and repressive measures the government is implementing in support of the landlords to nullify the rights the Dalits have achieved in the rural areas.

9. We must support and participate in the struggles of the Dalits for self-respect. We must make efforts to lead them. We must ourselves build a movement on this issue in the areas of our movement. We must fight against the murders of Dalits in the name of prestige and the Khap panchayats.

10. The organisations for annihilation of caste and other mass organisations must provide legal aid to the victims of untouchability, caste oppression, discrimination, massacres of the oppressed castes, atrocities, humiliation, cruelties and suppression. They must support them and provide moral, economic and material help. They must build solidarity movements in their support. In practice we see that creative forms of struggle and organization are coming up against caste oppression. Our Party must strengthen them. We must give them organizational suggestions and make efforts to lead them. We must make planned efforts to consolidate them politically and

organizationally and develop these movements in the direction of achieving the aim of annihilation of caste.

11. We have to expose the social cultural dominant character of the oppressor caste organisations and fight against their activities against the Dalits and other oppressed castes. We must severely oppose the organisations instigating oppressor caste chauvinism. We must aim our attack on these.

We must fight against the casteist fundamentalist leadership forces in the oppressed castes that prevent the class unity of the oppressed people and the unity of the people of oppressed social sections. We must aim our attack on the oppressor caste domination and oppose the sectarian tendencies in the oppressed castes.

We must fight against Hindu communalism. We must oppose the attempts to continue oppressor caste domination and caste system in the name of Hindu unity. We must have the initiative to resist casteist atrocities and attacks. We must be in the forefront in punishing those that indulge in atrocities and do justice to the oppressed people. For this purpose, we have to form self-defense squads.

Apart from these special tasks we must review other tasks that we took up until now and take lessons. In view of the unequal conditions in our society and the movement, we have to work creatively for achieving these tasks but must not limit our thinking to them. Like in the case of tasks in other issues we must not think in a metaphysical way. Generally, our Party formulates tasks that help the development of the movement to achieve the aim, depending upon the specific analysis of the specific conditions keeping in view the changes in the International and domestic politico-economic situation and the changes in the movement. Creative forms of struggle and organisation will come up from their subjective practice to the extent we mobilise the broad oppressed masses into the political sphere in great numbers and in an active way. There will be a change in the tactical tasks accordingly. The leadership must improve and develop them. Regarding formulating tasks and tactics on the caste question the units of the whole Party and the mass organisations must work in a creative manner with initiative keeping in view our general understanding.

Chapter 8

Caste Question in post New Democratic Revolutionary period

In our country, after the New Democratic Revolution, as the vanguard of proletariat the Communist Party leads People's democracy and later Socialist democracy. It plays its bit of responsibility for the success of World Socialist Revolution and strives to establish Communism and for elimination of caste in the entire process.

1. Indian society will enter a new higher historical stage with the establishment of People's Democratic system after the success of the New Democratic Revolution in the leadership of the proletariat and the workers, peasants, urban middle class people, small and middle kind capitalist, people of the Dalit and other oppressed sections who until then were subjects will politically become rulers. With this, the oppressed masses will enter a forward going, great, historic stage with the aim of establishing a classless society – where the oppressed masses abolish class oppression and social oppression and discrimination like caste, religion, nationality and gender that continue until then, in the leadership of the proletariat; where they can decide on their own and build with their own hands their and the country's future; where there is no exploitation and oppression – and Socialism and Communism, standing on their own legs, stepping forward overcoming difficulties one by one.

The People's Democratic state makes and implements decisions regarding economic, political, social, cultural, military, environmental and other sectors keeping in view the changes in the specific social conditions of our country and the international conditions in order to bring a total change in the social relations specifically in the caste angle and relations of production with these immediate and protracted aims in the leadership of the proletariat.

2. Under the leadership of the proletariat the People's Democratic state brings a fundamental change in the relations of production in the society. This state will distribute the main instruments of production, the land in the hands of the landlords, the big agricultural estates in the hands of the various private organisations and the large-scale land in the hands of the temples that are the basis of caste and caste oppression and discrimination in

various forms on the basis of land to the tiller; seize the industries, banks, business organisations and other properties of the imperialists in the country and socialize them; seize the industries, business organizations, banks, agricultural estates and other properties from the Comprador Bureaucratic Capitalists and socialize them – thus abolishing the caste system in the base and the relations of production. It abolishes caste-based exploitation.

Thus, the basis of caste will be destroyed in the political and economic spheres and there will not be any material basis for the caste to exist as a system in the superstructure.

The People's Democratic state shall constantly raise the consciousness of the people against the social, political and economic inequalities in the rural areas. It strives to bring considerable development in agricultural production by formulating appropriate schemes in practice. It industrializes agriculture in a planned manner. It gives importance to agriculture-based industrial development. It bases on agriculture, keeps industries in the leading position and develops the economy step by step basing on both. In view of the unequal development of the country, it makes special efforts for the development of the backward areas. With this a great change will occur in the economic, political and cultural development of the rural and the urban poor people and social relations.

The People's Democratic state provides special training and incentives to the people of the Dalit and other oppressed castes as long as necessary to enhance their knowledge and skill not only in the rural areas but also in the towns.

It removes the basis of caste-dependent professions by industrializing agriculture in the rural areas and developing industrial products by establishing small and medium industries. It provides employment opportunities in agriculture and industries to those who are out of caste-dependent professions. It provides alternative employment to them by teaching new methods and techniques. It develops agriculture-dependent industries locally. It gradually mechanizes handicraft industries.

In a planned manner it will soon achieve good results and mobilise the people to go forward towards collectivization and Socialist

transformation and will take up cooperative movements. Along with these, the people's governments at various levels provide the necessary help to become self-sufficient in education, healthcare, drinking water, transport, supply of daily necessities, and in other such fields in the villages and take up cooperative movements. The poor classes and oppressed social sections of the society will have preference in all these.

3. People's democratic state will legally ban untouchability. Practicing untouchability will be a punishable offense. It opposes caste oppression and discrimination. It strives to control it legally. It not only makes efforts to eliminate it from the society in various legal forms but also to inculcate democratic, socialist consciousness among the people. It supports and helps not only various mass organisations fighting against untouchability and caste oppression and discrimination but also for the annihilation of the caste system.

It abolishes the old education system that ideologically, politically and culturally served the old rotten system and introduces new, scientific, democratic education system that helps the comprehensive development of the people of the country without giving way to caste, religion, nationality, gender and other such social oppression and discrimination and the country and for social progress. It also gives utmost importance to providing free education to all. It rewrites history basing on objective standards with a scientific and people's perspective. Thus, there will be a great revolutionary change in the superstructure.

It strives in a planned manner to eliminate all kinds of caste inequalities. As long as casteist inequalities exist, it provides reservations and other benefits to the Dalits and other oppressed castes in the field of education. It also provides reservation in jobs.

The state power shall be secular. Religious rituals, symbols and worship in government organisations and works shall be banned. The people's democratic state shall be answerable to the people.

One important decision that shall be taken immediately after the country-wide seizure of the workers, peasants, urban middle class and the national capitalists in the leadership of the proletariat is – the main organs of the old Brahmanic Hindutva state, the military, paramilitary,

police and the judiciary will be abolished and in its place a new state that is dedicated to the service of the people, that works for the people - for the government - for the protection of the country, that consolidates New Democracy without caste, religious, nationality, gender and other social oppression and discrimination and shall take up the immediate aim of Socialist transformation will be established. The new state will suppress the conspiracies and rebellions of the exploitative classes, oppressor castes and their agents who have been brought down from power and the ownership of the main instruments of production. The new state established in the liberated areas by breaking the old state in the process of Protracted People's War will act as a base in this regard. It will also fight back the interferences, conspiracies and occupation by the imperialists. Most of the persons in the top positions in the old administration are from the oppressor castes and oppressor classes. They are an inseparable part of the ruling classes. The rest few are from the Dalit and other oppressed castes and poor classes. Anyhow, many of them unleash class oppression and social oppression. The new state will remove all the old bureaucrats excepting those with democratic ideas and are sincere. It selects sincere persons from the oppressed classes, oppressed sections and democratic forces and appoints them to immediate responsibilities. Also, according to the necessities it will educate and train those from the oppressed classes, oppressed social sections and democratic sections and recruit them. It removes the reactionary forces in the low and middle level employees in the old administration, and on one hand makes efforts to educate and democratize the rest and utilize them. On the other hand, it mainly recruits from the oppressed classes, oppressed social sections and democratic forces. Thus, there will be a great change in the social production relations and superstructure and the social basis of caste system will wither away.

4. The People's Democratic state encourages inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. It protects and gives incentives to those who marry in this manner. There are maximum or a considerable number of inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-nationality marriages in the Party, People's Army, Mass Organisations and People's Governments only in the process of the New Democratic Revolution that are largely

influencing the society. After the success of the revolution too, those from these fields will be in the forefront of the people in inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. Cultural organisations and cultural teams will constantly strive to encourage such marriages.

The people's democratic state opposes Brahmanical practices, worship, blind beliefs and superstitions in the ideological and cultural fields. It makes efforts to control caste and religious prejudices legally. Anyhow, the personal right to follow one's own religious beliefs will be secured. It will strive to shed the influence of the Brahmanical ideology and culture through fundamental change in the education system, development of sciences, the continuous spread of materialism, sciences and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the development of the cultural level of the people and the development of the role of the broad masses in all the fields of society and life, the constant class struggle against the most vicious, deceptive, cruel, open theoretical, political, economic, physical attacks and against the ideology and culture of the reactionary forces that represent the brought down exploitative classes. It bans the method of carrying feces on the head. It bans the appointment of people of a particular caste to sweep sewage tanks, pipe lines, canals and cleaning. It provides other means of livelihood to Dalits in this work. It applies modern technology in cleaning works. Thus, the superstructure and service sector will be revolutionized. For this the proletariat Party, state and the organisations working in the cultural-scientific-educational-ideological and other spheres will strive constantly.

5. First the People's Democratic state and later the Socialist state makes planned efforts to eliminate the gap between mental and physical labor and the differences between towns and villages and in terms of gender, caste and nationality. It continues relentless class struggle in the Socialist society under proletarian dictatorship and in the guidance of a correct line. It continues the revolution in the superstructure and revolutionizes the relations of production. These differences will be brought down step by step by creating appropriate objective and intellectual conditions and ultimately the material basis for their existence will be eliminated. Similarly, the material basis for the existence of classes that are the basic cause of all kinds of

exploitation and oppression will vanish and classes itself will disappear. Humankind will step into Communism.

6. We have to learn from the positive and the negative experiences of the past, present and the future world proletarian revolutions, especially from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the leadership of Comrade Mao in China, not only to protect the Indian New Democratic Revolution but also the New Democratic system after the revolution and later the Socialist system. We must highlight the positive experiences of the Great Cultural Revolution of China and the positive experiences of other revolutions for the onward march of the Indian oppressed masses together with the world humankind to achieve Communism in the leadership of the proletariat. The conspiracies and rebellions of the modern revisionist forces hidden in the Party-Army-Government leadership to restore Capitalism – who repeatedly come in the way of consolidating and advancing the Socialist construction in the correct line under proletarian dictatorship and for it to play its part of active role with the aim of achieving the success of World Socialist Revolution – must be suppressed and the interference and occupation of the imperialists to destroy Socialism must be fought back. Marx said that this advancement is ‘normally’ a process of ‘eradication of all classes, the class differentiation, all kinds of relations of production that act as its base, all the social relations related to them and all the ideas emerging from these social relations’. For this, there must be constant class struggle in the superstructure and proletarian cultural revolutions. Thus, continuing constant class struggle and cultural revolutions in the superstructure, we must mold the world outlook of the people in a revolutionary way and thus revolutionise the relations of production. We will have to consolidate Socialism with the aim of achieving Communism by making daring and efficient efforts to overcome the twists and turns in the protracted process of Socialism. Even in specifically taking up socialist revolution in India, the vital task would be to advance and sharpen struggle for elimination of caste against Brahmanism and its concrete manifestations. Only in this process, we will have to create the social conditions where there is no basis for any kind of exploitation and oppression in the society. It means classless

society must be formed. New human beings must be created. We must step into Communism. In this way, it will end class oppression and all kinds of social oppression on the entire humankind.

**Central Committee,
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