

CHAPTER ONE

AWAKENING IN 19TH CENTURY MAHARASHTRA

The East India Company took over the administration of Bengal and Bihar in 1765 in a condition of economic and political confusion and disorder. Feudal system of India, which suffered from certain weaknesses for lack of proper communication system and governmental system, had brought the total system to decline. East India Company also made worst out of it in the initial stages but gradually it, through its experiments in government and revenue, established administrative order through the process of evolving administration.

By the second decade of the 19th century, British, with a few exceptions, completed the conquest of India and established their own rule. The uniformity of administration based on rule of law, European means of communication and English education were unique features of their rule and this subjected Indian society to an altogether different pressures of change. Before them India was divided in different States. Each State had its own system of administration differing from others.

British East India Company had its centres at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay and these centres became the capital places of their subsequently established Presidencies. Pitt's Act of 1784 maintained the separate autonomous governments for the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, but extended the control of Governor General of Bengal in Council over the other two presidencies. This Act first sought to centralise the Government of India.¹ The Governor General, Governors of other

Presidencies, the law member and the Commander-in-Chief formed the Supreme Council for the Government of India whose orders and instructions were binding on the Governors of the other Presidencies. A further step was taken in this Act by establishing a general control of the Governor-General over the finances of India.²

The Executive Government of each of the Presidencies was vested in the hands of a Governor and three Councillors, the Governor General in Council being also Governor in Council for Bengal. As the time passed the new Presidencies were created like North Western Provinces, Central Provinces, etc.³

Administration of Bombay

The beginning of the 19th century witnessed quick territorial expansion of the Bombay Presidency, and it took its future shape between 1805 and 1827. In addition to the territories ceded by the Peshwa, the Sindhia and the Gaekwar before 1818, the Company obtained on the extinction of the Peshwa in that year an extensive territory including certain parts of Gujarat, the whole of the Western Deccan (except the portion left with the Raja of Satara and the two parganas given to the ruler of Kolhapur), the whole of Khandesh and the District of Dharwar including Belgaum, Ratnagiri and Kolaba. There was further expansion of the Presidency between 1818 and 1858 by the lapse of two Native States, namely, Mandvi (in Surat) and Satara and the conquest of

Sindh (1843). In 1848 the Bijapur District included in the territory of the Raja of Satara, lapsed to the Company and in 1861 the Sindhia finally transferred to it the Panch Mahals, Aden was added in 1838.⁴

The territorial expansion of the Bombay Presidency necessitated the extension of the administrative system. The newly acquired territories were divided into Districts whose administration followed generally the lines adopted in Bengal. Each district contained eight to twelve talukas or sub-divisions, each of which consisted of 100 to 200 villages. The village officers were the Patel, the Kulkarni or Talathi, the Mahar and the Watchman. Each taluka or sub-division of a district was placed in charge of a Mamlatdar whose duties in respect of revenue affairs and other matters of local administration in his area were varied and heavy. Above the Mamlatdar was the Assistant or Deputy Collector, usually in charge of three or four talukas. Above the Deputy Collector and in charge of the entire district was the District Collector and Magistrate.⁵ Thus, the administrative hierarchy was created which was governed by definite code of law and not by the will of anybody.

Similar hierarchy worked in other departments of administration. Besides the Police, the other specialised administrative Departments were those of the Sea-customs, education, jails in charge of an Inspector General of Prisons from 1855, the Public Works and the Ecclesiastical and Medical

Departments. Besides looking after revenue matters and magisterial works of his District, the Collector was required to supervise the stamp revenue and administer the excise and other special taxes. He had to perform various other important duties as in Bengal and Madras.⁶

A system of judicial administration based on that of Bengal had been introduced in Bombay by Regulations of 1799. But modifications were made in 1827 under Mount Stuart Elphinstone. The modified scheme set up District Courts for Civil and Criminal justice, from whose decisions appeals lay to the Sadar Diwani Adalat and the Sadar Faujadari Adalat in Civil and Criminal cases respectively. The former consisted of four judges, a registrar and an Assistant Registrar, while the latter was composed of the junior member of Governor's Council as Chief Judge and three Puisne Judges, retained cognizance of the most heinous crimes. A special court was established for trying political offences. It consisted of three judges selected from those of the Sadar Diwani Adalat and District Courts. But in 1841 an Act was passed providing that crimes against the state should be tried in ordinary courts. The Provincial Court of Appeal was abolished in 1830, and the judges of criminal courts were given the powers of session judges and courts of circuit. Joint sessions judges were appointed in 1845.⁷

In the initial stages Government supported the system of Panchayat. But when a definite system of law was introduced, the

Panchayats gave way to the civil courts which became more popular. The popularity of the law courts was enhanced after 1837, when Government prescribed the use of the vernaculars for judicial and revenue proceedings. Penal Code was issued in 1827, first in Bombay and afterwards in 1861 in Bengal and Madras.⁸ Courts had only the power of giving justice but the execution of it was not in their hands, which was a great change in the judicial administration. Previously the rulers had all powers of giving justice and its execution.

Two results of the judicial system may be briefly noticed, viz., the establishment of the principle of equality and the creation of consciousness for rights. The last was a plant of slow growth owing to the object submissiveness of the lower classes, which prevented them from taking advantage of the system of equal laws and vindicating their rights by legal action,⁹ but it definitely created class consciousness in them.

A further inroad into the social structure of the village and its traditional routine was made by the activities of the State, as the system of government became more closely organized and, by undertaking functions which had hitherto been left to the villagers themselves. The old customary regime was changed by the application of the western idea that the people should be thoroughly governed for their own good, which ran counter to the traditional view that the less people are governed, and the more they are left to live their own lives in their own way, the better.

Special departments were created for different branches of the administration such as education, excise, forests etc. each with its staff of officials, who came into contact with the rural population. The village communities were no longer left to manage their communal affairs without supervision. Some of the functions which they had exercised were either taken over or controlled by officials, while the rates necessary for their discharge, which had been voluntary contributions assessed and levied by the villagers themselves, became a state demand. The status of village functionaries was changed as they were given a quasi-official position and were no longer answerable to the village community of which they had been the representatives or servants.¹⁰

The foundation of collectivism on which the village community was based, was further weakened by the system of land revenue administration which, to an increasing extent, substituted individual for communal responsibility, in other words individual holdings were assessed separately whereas formerly the village was assessed as a whole, the quotas to be paid by each family being determined by the villagers themselves. A subsidiary factor has been the recognition of rights of private ownership in land. Formerly, the cultivator had a right only to the produce of it and had no title to the soil, even in times of scarcity or famine he sold his cattle and chattels but not the land comprised in his holding. Land, however, has now become a marketable commodity and can be mortgaged, sold, or otherwise disposed of. Transfers of land have become common and outsiders have consequently come

into the village who had no previous connection with it, the peasant proprietors in many cases being displaced by capitalist landlords who sub-let to tenants. The intrusion of this new and incongruous element has done much to destroy the homogeneity of the village community and to weaken the solidarity which it possessed.¹¹

Revenue system was a backbone of Government's economic stability. In early 19th century there were no industries to supplement Government's finances, land revenue was the only source of income. For many centuries Indian peasants were giving land revenue in the grain heap, which varied between one-sixth and one-half of the gross produce. The system was elastic, collection in kind relating payments to productivity. Cultivators had practical permanency of tenure, so long as they paid their share.

By Cornwallis's famous Permanent Settlement of 1793, which was applied to Bengal, Bihar, the Northern Circars of Madras, and certain districts of the United Provinces, the sum payable as land revenue was fixed in cash on each Zamindari holding but recognized zamindars as full proprietors and left them to make their own arrangement with the cultivators who became their tenants.

Thus, landlord class was created in Bengal, in pursuance of English theories of ownership, which was ruinous for the actual cultivators, who formed majority of the peasant class. But these theories were not applied to Madras and Bombay, where a ryotwari

settlement was made, i.e., the actual cultivators of the soil were recognized as proprietors, and there were no intermediaries between them and the government.

In Madras and Bombay the settlement was ryotwari i.e., directly with the ryots, who paid rents to the State in the same manner which were revisable at each settlement. The Government demand was excessive in the ryotwari areas. So far as the tenant was concerned, he paid 1/5th of gross produce as rent in Bengal and in N.W.P., but considerably more in other regions. About 1860 the Government itself had become aware of this and thought of extending the benefits of permanent settlement to other provinces to check exploitation of ryots in all areas, including those permanently settled.¹²

In other provinces there was a wide divergence between theory and practice and the evils of periodical settlements appeared in the worst form during the early period. A few figures supplied in respect of five talukas in Bombay Province by an official committee, show the enormous increase in the land revenue in course of the revision of the settlement which commenced in 1866. The revised assessment at the expiry of thirty years showed an increase of more than 100 per cent. Over the collection of the first year of the survey, the percentage of increase between the assessment in the last year of the new settlement, i.e., in a single year was 53 in those five talukas, and in general above 30 per cent. The Poona Sarvajanic Sabha protested against the high assessment.¹³

There was a special circumstance which aggravated the evils. The restriction of common imports to England from America due to Civil War stimulated cotton cultivation in Bombay, and this was seized as an opportunity for enhancing the assessment in the Revision Settlement which commenced in 1866. This temporary sign of prosperity was taken by the officials as permanent. Dadabhai Naoroji made an emphatic protest against it. He said that the signs of prosperity were hollow and ephemeral, and that the inormous increase in the land revenue was oppressive and unjustifiable. Complaints against the new assessment were also universal in the Deccan, but the warning was unheeded. After the conclusion of the Civil War, America once more began to export her cotton to England; cotton cultivation declined in India, prices and wages fell, cultivators in the Deccan were unable to pay the new and enhanced revenue demanded; money-lenders refused to lend when the credit of cultivators was low and the law was in favour of the creditors. Agrarian disturbances, such as have seldom been known under the British rule, followed in 1875. Rioting was committed, shops and houses were burnt down, stocks were destroyed.¹⁴

A commission was appointed by the Government of Bombay to inquire into the causes of the disturbance. It consisted of Auckland Colvin and two members of the Indian Civil Service, Bombay. Colvin pointed out that excessive enhancement of the revised settlement was one of the causes of the riots, But all

these remonstrances from the public and the officials fell on deaf ears. They led to no substantial change in the method and procedure of settlements. They led to no remedial measures affording security to cultivators against undue enhancements. They led to no rules for the strict enforcement of the principles of the Land Tax laid down by the Court of Directors and the Secretary of States. The Government declined to frame such rules for its own servants as had been framed to restrict the powers of private landlords in Bengal. The Government sought to relieve the cultivators of the Deccan only by restraining money-lenders. That was the object of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879.¹⁵

The Government of Bombay not only did not take any steps to improve the procedure of assessment, but they made the powers of the settlement officers more absolute than before. When in 1873 the High Court of Bombay decided on assessment suit against the settlement officer concerned, the Government retorted by passing in 1876, the Bombay Revenue Jurisdiction Act which excluded assessment of land revenue from the jurisdiction of all Civil Courts. A greater defiance of British law and tradition is difficult to imagine.

Three years after the passing of this Act, the Bombay Land Revenue system was comprehensively treated and legalised in the Revenue Code of 1879. It was an excellent code and it clearly affirmed the cultivators' rights of inheritance and

transfer in respect of their holdings. But the Code gave no protection against undue enhancements and no security against excessive assessments in violation of the principles laid down in 1856 and 1964.¹⁶

British rule and British land policy altered the status and economic position of various classes. Although the absolute and relative burden of land revenue was reduced the burden of rents and permanent indebtedness were increased, whilst sub-tenants, owing to their liability to eviction and enhancement of rents, remain at the mercy of their landlords. Moreover, pressure of population, the laws of inheritance, widespread indebtedness, and the prevailing poverty led to the progressive sub-division and fragmentation of holdings which further reduced them to poverty.¹⁶

More valuable crops tended to replace less valuable crops, but owing to increased pressure on the soil there has been a decline in acreage per head and in the average size of holdings.¹⁷

Railways and irrigation works enabled better cultivation, but the decay of indigenous industries removed a former source of income and increased the pressure on soil.

William Digby published large portions of the confidential reports of 1888, which may be summed up as follows:¹⁸

In the province of Bombay, it is denied that the greater portion of the population live on insufficient food. But there are "depressed classes" all over the province and some of them live below the poor standard of the Indian workman's life and earnings. In the Ratnagiri District, with its miserable soil and heavy payments for land there was hardly a season in which the population did not endure without a murmur the hardships of a Deccan famine. Land is less fertile in the Deccan than in Gujarat, and authorities are unanimous that many cultivators fail to get a year's supply from their land."

An administrative report of 1889, surveying the previous thirty years, concluded that land-owners had gained greatly from the rise in land values and rent, and from reductions in rates of land revenue assessment. During the second half of the century price statistics were published and an index of wholesale prices (based on 1873 figures) was prepared. These show that from 1860 the price level tended to rise. Wage statistics were also published but were extremely unreliable and unrepresentative, whilst wage-earners formed only a small class. Then, it appears that wages were strongly influenced by custom and changed less rapidly than prices.¹⁹

To summarise, it can be said that the available evidence leads to the conclusion that during the nineteenth century productive capacity increased, but was probably not accompanied by any appreciable movement in the standard of life.²⁰

When these two classes of landlords and landless labourers

were created by government's land settlement, a middle class was also in process of formation, consisting of the owners of landed estates and urban property, merchants, traders and members of various professions such as lawyers, doctors and journalists, including a number of men of the first literary rank.

After establishing their rule Britishers found that there was not a single road of any length fit for wheeled traffic; even the main streets of many of the largest towns were unusable by vehicles. Wheeled traffic was limited to rough farm carts on solid wheels. Lord William Bentinck conceived the idea of a new trunk road connecting with the Upper Provinces and this project was pushed forward by Mr. Thompson, Lieutenant Governor of North Western Provinces from 1843 to 1853. The conquests of Lord Dalhousie created greater needs for control over roads. And road-construction received much impetus during his administration. Hitherto the main roads were under the control of a military Board in each Presidency. An important reform was made. The Public Works Departments in the Provinces under the general control of the Central Government exercised through its newly established public works secretariat was created. This reform of Lord Dalhousie marks a new era in the improvement of communications in India.²¹ His achievement in this regard has been summarised in the following quotation:

"His engineers metalled a long mileage of roads than had been constructed by the four preceding Governor

Generals. Before he resigned office a system of trunk lines had been stretched, and the first section of the East India Railway had been opened, the modern postal system had been inaugurated, a telegraph line ran from Calcutta to Agra, Modern India had begun to take shape."²²

It will not be incorrect to state that the conditions of internal trade and communication were mostly the same for centuries past until about the commencement of the railway age. Transporting foreign merchandise to the people at large and persuading the agriculturist to produce goods for overseas markets alike had to wait till the railway system was well advanced by about the decade 1860-70.

It was in 1843-44 that the earliest proposals were made for construction of railways by companies incorporated in England, a minimum profit being guaranteed by the East India Company for a definite period. So contracts were made with the East India Railway Company and the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company, formed in 1845, for construction of two small railway lines near Calcutta and Bombay, respectively. In 1855, the total length opened was 121 miles from Calcutta to Ranigunge by the former and 37 miles from Bombay to Kalyan by the latter. The Madras Railways completed 65 miles from Madras to Arcot in 1856. Five other Railway companies were formed, but their lines were not open before 1858.²³

It was Lord Dalhousie, who during his term of Governor

Generalship of India (1846-56) launched important schemes of railway construction. In his famous Minute of 1853, Lord Dalhousie advocated the construction of a system of trunk lines connecting the interior parts of each Presidency with its chief ports and several Presidencies with one another. His objects for the introduction of the railways in India, as he stated, were the immense increase in striking power of his military forces at every point of the Indian Empire "to bring British capital and enterprise in India", to "secure commercial and social advantages to India and to bring into the ports produce from the interior."²⁴

The improvement and extension of means of communication had further repercussions on the economic organization of the country, different parts of which became increasingly interdependent.

The improvement of communications had far-reaching effects. It has opened up the country and facilitated internal movements. Facilities of transport moreover affected the organization of village life. As the villages lost much of their isolation, there was an increased mobility of labour, which was attracted by the demand for it in towns and cities, in commercial and industrial undertakings, and by the higher wages offered by them. Artisans and labourers were no longer tied to the village of their birth or their ancestral occupation, but went further afield, where they obtained better prices for their wares or their labour. The economic equilibrium of the village community was consequently upset by outside competition and the interrelations

of its members with the village servants were altered. The latter began to work for individual employers instead of for the village as a whole, and to receive cash payments for their services instead of customary share of the crops.²⁵

The ensuing depression affected Western India between 1866 and 1871, causing failures of many enterprises of Bombay, financed by the speculative profits of cotton trade. But during these years a commercial revolution had been taking place, accompanied by the first phase of industrial evolution in India. It was in the sixties that the railways expanded rapidly and the beginnings of jute and cotton industries were laid. For the first time in India's history British capital had begun to flow into India on grand scale.²⁶

In the thirty years between 1845 and 1875, however, about 95 millions were invested by British Companies in India guaranteed railways. Besides railways, British capital was being increasingly invested in jute manufacture, tea gardens, banks, shipping and, of course, as before in India debt. About 20 millions had been invested in jute and tea. In 1879 only about

11 millions in raw cotton were exported i.e., less than one-third of the figures for 1865. But indigo was coming out of the doldrums of the last thirty years, and jute, jute manufactures, tea, coffee, grains and hides were showing improvement.²⁷

The high price of raw cotton during 1861-65 retarded, but the spread of railways helped the growth of Indian cotton

manufacture. After a temporary slump in the early 1870s the second cotton boom occurred between 1875 and 1877, by which time India had 51 cotton mills. A third boom between 1885 and 1890 took the number of mills to 137.²⁸

The Bombay Spinning and Weaving Mill was established by Cowasjee Nanabhoy in 1853. The Broach Spinning and Weaving Mill began to produce in 1855. Proximity to vast cotton tracts of the Deccan, availability of capital, the Parsee tradition of daring entrepreneurship, experience gained in the hereditary cotton trade with China and Africa, and duties that came to be levied on British manufacture after the Mutiny combined to spell success for the industry. By 1861 we find that 13 mills had been erected (10 in Bombay and 3 in Ahmedabad) seven of which were in actual operation. In 1890 the number of mills had risen to 137, Bombay leading with 94.

Heavy industries could not develop in India during the 19th century because of lack of high grade iron ore and inadequate production of coal. In Bengal Jessop and Co. tried to start iron works at Barkar^a in 1839. Others also tried, but all met with failure. Thus, all the iron and steel needed for the Indian railways, textile mills, etc. almost every mechanical appliance used by the planter or the peasant, were imported from Britain in the 19th century. This factor heavily weighed against industrialisation of India. Lack of solid base of domestic

production of iron and steel, the ancillary engineering industries were dependent on foreign trade for development. India also suffered long for lack of adequate production of high grade coal. Seams of coal had been discovered in Bengal early in the 19th century and upto 1854 only three mines were operating the commencement of the East Indian Railway gave an impetus to the industry, not only by easing the means of transport but by creating a regular demand for coal itself.

In the Charter Act of 1813 the first grant of one lakh of rupees a year set apart, out of the Indian revenue for the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction of a knowledge of European sciences among the people. The money sanctioned in 1813 remained unspent and it was not until 17th July 1823, that the General Committee of Public Instruction of Calcutta was formed and was put in charge of the existing government institutions and of the one lakh grant. Lord William Bentinck may be said to have responded to a popular demand when, on 7 March 1835, after studying Macaulay's well-known minute, he announced his decision in favour of English education - a decision which has been described as the great landmark in the history of the British Empire considered as an institute of civilization.²⁹

The enthusiasm for English education, however, was practically confined to the Hindus. The Muslim community was bitterly opposed to it. In 1835, as soon as the new educational

policy was announced, it made known its views in a memorial which stated outright that the object of Government in encouraging English, and discouraging Hindu and Islamic studies, was the conversion of the people to Christianity. Due to this stand, English education remained almost the exclusive possession of the Hindus, and only of the upper classes among them, for it did not as yet penetrate to the lower strata of society.³⁰

A highly significant step regarding education in India was soon taken by the Company's Government. It was the famous Educational Despatch No. 49, dated 19th July 1854, which was drafted by Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control and which imposed upon the Government the duty of creating properly articulated system of education, from the primary school to the University. The educational Despatch of 1854, described as the "Magna Carta of English Education in India", formed a landmark in the history of education in modern India, because it outlined a comprehensive plan which supplied the basis for the subsequent development of educational system in this country.

In accordance with the recommendation of Wood's Despatch steps were soon taken to form an Education Department in each of the great territorial divisions of India as then constituted, and before the end of 1856, the new system was fairly at work. A Director of Public Instruction was appointed in each Province, with a staff of Inspectors and Deputy or Assistant Inspectors. The Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were incorporated

in 1857. The affairs of each university were to be managed by a Chancellor and Fellows who were mainly Government servants. Each of these universities had at first the four Faculties, namely, those of Arts-cum-Science, Law, Medicine and Engineering to which was added subsequently a separate Science Faculty. These universities remained affiliating and examining bodies.

In 1815 the Bombay Native Education Society was formed and three schools in Bombay, Thana and Brooch were opened. Mountstuart Elphinstone extended the Society's operations to supplying vernacular and school book literature. The Society continued its work till 1840, when it became the Board of Education. The Poona Sanskrit College was opened by Mr. William Chaplin in 1821, for the encouragement of the study of Sanskrit and of ancient Hindu literature and sciences. The scope of this college was widened and it became later known as the Deccan College. The Wilson College, originally called the General Assembly's Institution, was founded as a high school in 1834. By 1850 there were only eight schools subordinate to the Board of Education throughout the Bombay Presidency.

In October 1845, the Grant Medical College was formally opened, and the first regular session began on 16th June 1846. An Engineering Institution was in existence in Bombay in 1824. The nucleus of a college of civil engineering existed in the Poona Engineering Class and Mechanical class. The Poona College of Science grew out of an engineering school founded in 1854. In

1847 Sir Edward Perry, President of the Board of Education, advocated the institution of a law class of the Elphinstone Institution. The Grant Medical College, the Elphinstone, Wilson, Deccan, St. Xaviers and Fergusson were the principal colleges. The Government maintained model schools at the headquarters of each district.

The American Missionary Society, which did the pioneering work in female education, established the first native girls schools in Bombay Presidency in 1824 and two years' later they reported an increase of 9 girls schools. The first of many female schools of Mrs. Wilson was opened in December 1829. The Church Missionary Society established its first school in 1826. There was a substantial increase of Normal Schools and Elementary Schools by the seventies of the last century. In 1904, 4.74% of the female population of school-going age attended schools. In both male and female populations, the Parsis took the lead.³¹

It has been held that the effect of English education has been to create a group sharply separated from their fellow Indians, and almost setting up a new caste in this caste-ridden country. Nobody can deny the truth of this charge so far at least as the best part of the 19th century is concerned. The main reason for this is the very small number of men who were educated in English as compared with the rest who had no such education. Besides, the English educated classes at first occupied higher

administrative posts and this created a cleavage between them and the masses. Far worse was, however, a dual mentality which the English educated people had to maintain. Their liberal ideas found little favour with the orthodox members of the family, particularly the women folk who clung to the old traditional ideas, customs and practices. The educated few might discuss the liberal principles among themselves, in clubs or other associations, but fell in the old groove as soon as they returned home. This is one of the main reasons why western education did not produce all the benefits that could be reasonably expected.³²

With the acceptance of British rule as a settled fact, a growing sense of unity was generated. The administrative symmetry due to a common system of government, common codes of law and common system of taxation, were the important unifying factors. Another unifying influence has been the spirit of nationalism, which has been evoked largely by the diffusion of political ideas derived from the West and by the freedom of speech allowed under British rule. This is a new phenomenon in India. Shortly before the Mutiny a few vernacular papers began to take up the discussion of political questions and to assert the right of Indians to the exercise of political rights and to a larger share of the higher administrative posts. After the Mutiny politics became a popular theme. The number, circulation and influence of the papers increased. By 1879 there were twenty papers published in English which had become the lingua franca of the educated classes, and

about 200 in Indian languages. The voice of the vernacular Press became more united and claimant, and it affected not only Indian opinion, but also, with the added influence of the English Press opinion in England. Indian opinion had begun to be recognized as a power with which government had to reckon. The nascent spirit of nationalism was fostered at the same time by political associations such as the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha (1870) and the Indian Association (1878). The Indian Association was only the forerunner of the Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885. It was not a permanent body, but merely met for a few days each year to discuss public affairs.³³

Among the Hindu literati the reaction against western influences on the one hand and the desire for a western system of self-government on the other operated to produce what was called Indian unrest. In western-educated class, which had increased rapidly with the establishment of universities and the multiplication of colleges, demanded that the principles of western democracy should be applied to the system of government. The very class which it had been expected, would be the firmest supporter of British rule, now proved to be its most hostile critic. Politics became an obsession, and racial feeling took a strong anti-European bias. Rancour and animosity were fostered by a section of the vernacular press, which carried on a kind of journalistic vendetta against the government and whose columns became almost a daily hymn of hate.³⁴

In 1818 Britishers defeated the last Peshwa and established their rule over Maharashtra. They established rule of law which was absent under the Peshwas. Rulers' individual considerations were rules in the absence of written laws whereas under new rulers its bureaucracy was bound by rules and regulations. Thus, the administration worked for a kind of awakening and new experience. The new means of communication also fostered the growth of consciousness of oneness but in all this English education introduced by the new rulers was a great landmark in the process of awakening Indians.

The Charter Act of 1813 proposed that Rs. one lakh be spent every year on education. It also made schools open to all irrespective of caste and creed. The Government established in 1821 a Hindu College at Poona known as Sanskrit College, but it was open only to the Brahmin students. The Bombay Native Education Society, which was the first organized attempt in India to spread education, started schools in 1820. As early as 1825, the Government of Bombay had begun to establish primary schools at its own expense in district towns and had placed them under the control of the Collectors.

In 1830 some reformers in consultation with the British officers in Poona started a school for girls at the old residence of the Peshwa but their attempt came to naught. For some time children studied clandestinely there and dispersed secretly.

Higher caste men discouraged the low caste people from taking education. Once it so happened that boys from lower classes were summarily dismissed from the school of the Bombay Native Education Society at the instance of Dhakji Dadaji Prabhu, an orthodox leader in Bombay, who was a notable member of the Bombay Education Society.³⁵

A new generation of scholars, patriots and social reformers with European knowledge, replaced the old leadership. Of these, the most prominent was Balshastri Jambhekar. Born in 1812 at Pomburle in Rajapur Taluka in a Karhade Brahmin family, with brilliant academic career, he made a profound impression on his generation. It was he who started on January 6, 1832, the 'Darpan', the first Marathi fortnightly magazine whose English section brilliantly written by Balshastri himself represented the people's views and grievances to the British Government. Its Marathi section was written by Govind Vithal alias Bhau Mahajan. Bhau Mahajan (1815-1890) started 'Prabhakar', a Marathi weekly in 1841, and also conducted 'Digdarshan', a Marathi magazine, 'Dhumketu', a Marathi weekly and 'Dnyana-darshan', a Marathi quarterly.

Both Balshastri and Bhau Mahajan attacked the diehard prejudices and ignorance of Hindus, appealed for broader sympathies and social reforms and favoured even widow-remarriage.

The third important leader was Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar

(1814-1882). He was a religious reformer of note and was regarded by all as a religious thinker of two generations that followed him. He had just then formed a secret theistic society called Paramahansa Sabha with a view to breaking down all social barriers and the caste system.

Jagannath Shankarsheth Murkute alias Nana Shankarsheth (1803-1865) was a leading business magnate, who supported various educational, social and cultural activities in Bombay. Together with Dr. Bhau Daji Lad he started political movement in Bombay. In Bombay big industrialists established Bombay Association on August 23, 1852. Shankarsheth worked as the President and Dr. Bhau Daji as the Secretary of this Association. These men Balshastri, Bhau Mahajan, Nana Shankarsheth, Dadoba Pandurang and Bhau Daji, were mostly known as Bombay leaders, Bombay being in those days, the centre of progressive ideas and Western thought.

About this time a young man from Poona, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, better known as the Lokahitavadi (1823-1892), came to the forefront. He wrote in 1848 his historic series of Marathi articles in the 'Prabhakar'. His articles, mostly addressed to the Brahmins, advised them to give up their fruitless ancient learning and rigid social conservatism and to take to modern learning and Western thought. He made a very bitter attack on the lazy and debased Brahmins of his day.

All these leaders belonged to the middle class families

and rose to eminence by sheer dint of their merit and intelligence. Their teaching mostly remained addressed to the upper castes, namely, the Brahmins. They generally attacked those evil customs which were mostly in practice among the Brahmins. But the idea of reform or social cohesion through education and preaching to the lower strata of the society, was also the need of the time and this was fulfilled by Jotiba Phooley. Jotiba Phooley (1827-1890) who sprang from the lower class of society, gave a new kind of leadership. Jotirao belonged to the Mali caste. His ancestors were well known florists in Peshwa's Court. In those days it was the sincere belief that Sudras and Atisudras had no right to education. Only Brahmins had it. Joti's father Govindrao Phooley decided to give education to his son. Jotirao received education in Missionary school. Western education and missionary teachings had effect upon the mind of Jotirao. He obtained much of his knowledge at the Scottish Mission, which taught him the duties and rights of man. Jotirao read various books from Bible to Thomas Paine's Rights of Man.³⁶

The caste system was solid, unbreakable and enduring. Because the lower classes had no education, they had respected the mental slavery for ages. Jotirao, therefore, resolved to raise the banner of revolt against the mental slavery and to throw open the gates of knowledge to the lower classes by disseminating education among them. He also decided to emancipate Hindu woman from her ancient slavery. India had kept women and the Shudras

out of the pale of education. Ignorance meant darkness and education meant light. It is one of the principal means to a full life. It is a pre-requisite of speedy social change. Jotiba made a noble resolve to throw open the gates of knowledge to women and to the Shudras. He, therefore, decided to open a school for girls. In 1848 he started first girls' school in Poona with the help of his friends. The stronghold of orthodox Brahmins raised an outcry against this act.

But Jotiba added fuel to the flames. As he could not get a teacher to help him, he took the help of his wife whom he taught at home. A wave of uncontrollable anger swept over Poona. A woman doing the work of a teacher was unheard of. They hated the sight of Savitribai Phoolley. They threw mud, dirt, stones at her when she was on her way to school. This was not sufficient.

Jotiba started another girls' school in 1857. Savitribai was made Head Mistress of the school. Jotiba took great pain to run the school. He himself taught selflessly. Girls were brought to school and taken home. They were induced to keep daily attendance by providing eatables and clothes. Success was thus achieved by Jotiba's constant, untiring efforts. Upto March 1852 Jotiba started three schools. Jotiba's name became known all over Maharashtra as the champion of female education and the education of the low caste people.

In May 1852 Jotiba gave a broader base by forming a society

for promoting the education of Mahars and Mangs, under the Chairmanship of Sadashivrao Govande. These schools were supported by Jotiba out of his private means, aided by subscription collected from Europeans and enlightened natives.

Although the problem of remarriage of widows was confined to Brahmins and some other high caste Hindus, Jotirao was moved by the miserable condition of the widows, and often by their immoral behaviour. Sometimes they were involved in child murder. A man of flaming indignation against injustice, Jotirao actively supported the movement for widow remarriage. He wanted to liberate the woman from her age-old shackles.³⁷ It is said that Jotirao encouraged the marriage of a Shenvi widow in 1864. Moved by the tragic condition of the widows, Jotiba, who attached more importance to deeds than words, resolved to found an orphanage where widows would secretly come either for delivery or for keeping their babies. This social institution was the first of its kind in India. Although meant for pregnant widows the orphanage was guided by the motive of humanity.

Jotirao's wife Savitribai looked after the children in the orphanage as if she were their mother. She had no child, but with her kind and generous disposition she tenderly and lovingly cherished the infants. Several widows delivered their children safely in this orphanage. The orphanage continued its noble work, and eminent men showed keen interest. Later the problem of widow remarriage was taken boldly by Vishnushastri Pandit. Vishnushastri

accepted the editorship of the Indu Prakash, which was a mouthpiece of the social reformers. He wrote thought-provoking articles on the subject, made fervent speeches at important centres in Maharashtra and published a number of booklets on it. Vishnushastri founded on January 28, 1866, a society for the promotion of widow remarriage, whose branches sprang up at Ratnagiri, Ahmedabad, Poona and other places.

Jotirao's father was grieved that Jotirao had no child. The old man advised him to marry a second time. But Jotirao refused this suggestion. According to him, it was a cruel practice for a man to marry a second time because he had no issues from his first wife. Jotirao lived up to his philosophy. But that was not the case with his generation. Jotirao stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries in respect of high moral conduct, and so he outlived the dangerous attacks made by the reactionaries. He courageously threw open his own cistern in 1868 to the untouchables. It provoked orthodoxy.

Jotiba published some books on ballads and poems. One of his books "Priest Craft Exposed" was on the economic exploitation of the ignorant and Shudras by the priests. In the sequel of this book he wrote second book named Slavery. In this book he advocated for a society in which the peasant and workers were freed from the thralldom of Brahminism that crushed them under its various forms - dark superstition, colossal ignorance, endless religious rites, never ending debts,

and the fear of God. His writings and his speeches focussed Government attention on the grievances of the peasants and of the workers engaged in Government Departments of Engineering and Public Works.

Feeling the need of an institution for guidance of his movement, he founded "Satyashodhak Samaj" - Truth Seeking Society. Jotirao was elected first President and Treasurer of the Satya Shodhak Samaj and Mr. Narayanrao Govindrao Kadalak was elected its first Secretary. The objects of the Samaj were to redeem the Shudras and Atishudras from the influence of Brahminical scriptures under which the Brahmin priests fleeced them, to teach them their human rights, and to liberate them from mental and religious slavery.³⁸

Membership of the Samaj was extended to all castes including Brahmins and Mahars and Mangs, and even Jews and Muslims were its members in its early stage. The weekly meetings were held on Sundays at the place where branches of the Samaj were established. The subjects discussed were the necessity of compulsory education, encouragement of Swadeshi goods, dislodging the Brahmin priest from the position he held in the religious field, making arrangements for performing marriage at minimum expenses, and freeing men from the beliefs in astrology, ghosts and demons. The main attack was upon the caste system and idol worship.

The Satya Shodhak Samaj was, thus, the first institution to launch a social movement in modern India. It raised its voice against social slavery and demanded social justice. It was the shrill voice of a long suppressed people in India.

The teaching of the Samaj was summarised as follows:

- a) All men are the children of one God, who is thus their parent.
- b) As there is no necessity of an intermediary to approach the mother or to please the father, there is no need of an intermediary such as a priest or a preceptor to enable the devotee to offer his prayers to God.
- c) Any one accepting that principle is qualified to be a member of the Satya Shodhak Samaj.³⁹

The spirited young Krishnarao Bhalekar started in January 1877, a Marathi Weekly, 'Din Bandhu' (Brother of the Poor), to spread the mission of the Satya Shodhak Samaj and to give vent to the grievances of farmers, workers and the poor classes.

In 1876-77 the Deccan had been in the grip of acute famine followed by an epidemic of plague which added to the miseries of the people. The occurrence of famine had been pretty frequent since 1860. In 1875 there had been serious agrarian riots in the districts of Ahmedabad, Poona, Satara and Solapur. Jotirao was terribly worried about these events as the peasants and poor

classes were largely affected by them. He had often shed a clear light in his writings and speeches on the frauds committed by money-lenders. The Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry and their Report led to the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, 1879.

The object of the Act was to relieve the agricultural classes from indebtedness and to improve the relations between the agriculturists and money-lenders by providing some safeguards against money-lenders committing frauds in their accounts and making false documents. The 'Din Bandhu' had supported the Act and said it would prevent money-lenders from depriving poor and ignorant cultivators of their lands and their property.⁴⁰

In these famines lakhs of people died of hunger. Jotirao played a prominent part in relieving the distressed. He wrote article after article in the Din Bandhu urging Government to give the people work and food. He was deeply moved at the terrific death rate of innocent children. At Dhankawadi Camp he opened an orphanage where two thousand children were fed two times a day. He was helped by Seth Uravane, Hari Raoji Chiplunkar and Shinappa, the Chief Officer of the Poona Municipality.

Jotirao's frequent visits to Bombay made him conscious of the hardships of millhands. They were harnessed to work from sunrise to sunset with a brief spell for eating. His chief lieutenant N.M. Lokhande, who, by then had taken charge of

the Din Bandhu since May, 1880, was devoting his time to the study of the problems of millhands. He was born in 1848 in a poor Mali family at Thana. After receiving Highschool education in Thana, he came to Bombay and stayed at Byculla. After serving in a railway locomotive office and then in a Post Office as a clerk, he got a job of storekeeper in a Cotton Mill at Mandvi, Bombay. Here he studied the various difficulties and hardships the Mill workers had to undergo. A young leader of the Satya Shodhak Samaj, he determined to fight for the improvement of the condition of millhands.

The first cotton mill called the Spinning and Weaving Company, was established on July 7, 1854 by Cowasji Davar at Tardeo, Bombay, with support from a cosmopolitan bond of co-partners. A few weeks later, Mancenkjee Petit followed his example. Since then the mill industry had grown but there was no organization to represent their grievances, although Sorabjee Shapoorji Bengalee, a Parsi scholar and social reformer, tried to talk to the Millowners and evoke their sympathies for the millhands. A few progressive individuals supported his stand.⁴¹

Lokhande and Jotirao addressed several workers' meetings in Bombay, and Lokhande organised the workers.

Jotirao broke the bondage of Indian woman and enabled her to make herself free. He broke the bonds of mental slavery that were tied to the necks of the lower classes by scriptures and priest-craft. He broke the fetters of the Untouchables which

they had borne for ages. It heralded a new dawn for them. It was he who raised a hue and cry against their exploiters and tried to impress upon the nation that if the farmer was happy and contented, the whole nation would be happy and contented. He was the first Indian leader to start a movement for the uplift and welfare of the lower classes, to use the weapon of boycott; to teach the peasants to fight for the removal of their grievances, and to preach to the labourers to voice their grievances. On 11th May 1888, in a unique function, organised and inspired by common people, they conferred upon Jotirao the title "Mahatma". Mahatma Jotirao Phoolley died on 28th Nov., 1890

Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade was another reformer who dominated the period between 1875 and 1901. Ranade is known more as a social reformer. His whole life is nothing but a relentless campaign for social reform.

Ranade entered public life while he was a student. The Association called Dnyan Prasarak (spread of knowledge) Sabha was the organization which he used in order to express his thoughts on subjects of social value. His interests in this period, 1859-64, were indicated by the subjects of his essays read before it, which were, Duties of Educated Indians, Maratha Princes, Signs of Future Progress of Marathas and Bengalis, A Comparative Study, Evil Effects of Overpopulation. For some months in 1862-63 he edited the English section of newly started paper, Indu-Prakash. Ranade joined Prarthana Samaj and provided

the intellectual background to its activities.

In 1871 Ranade left Bombay and came to Poona as Sub-Judge. Here he became actively associated with the Sarvajanik Sabha (to discuss and to study public questions), the Poona N.G. Library, the Reay Museum, the Spinning and Weaving Company, the Metal Manufacturing Factory, the Fergusson College, the Female High School, the Arbitration Court (to settle disputes outside the law courts), the Poona Mercantile Bank, the Prarthana Samaj, the Oratory Encouragement Society, the Marathi Literature Encouragement Society, the Vasant Vyakhyanmala, the Poona Dyeing Company, the Reay Paper Mill, and the Industrial Association. The most notable among these was the Sarvajanik Sabha, started by the zealous patriot Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi alias Sarvajanik Kaka. Ranade completely identified himself with this Sabha and very soon he and Joshi became its most respected leaders.

Ranade's serious interest in Indian Economics dates from 1872 when he delivered a lecture on the foreign trade in India. He deplored that India's imports consisted of manufactured goods, and pleaded that Indians must save and invest money in industries.

Ranade's study of the Indian Revenues system in about 1874 was probably the basis of his view that the revenue was excessive and the report of the Sarvajanik Sabha on the conditions of farmers in some districts in Bombay made him acutely conscious

of the poverty and misery that stalked rural India. In 1876 a severe famine broke out in Poona, Ahmednagar and Solapur districts. The Sarvajanic Sabha organised the collection of complete information and the administration of relief. After the famine was over Ranade analysed its causes and showed that not failure of rain but the chronic poverty of the farmer was the true cause, and that the ultimate cause was the excessive land revenue imposed by the Government.⁴²

In 1874 Ranade began to take part in politics. This he did through articles and memoranda which did not bear his name. He did it through Poona Sarvajanic Sabha. In 1874 the Sabha sent a petition to the British Parliament, requesting that the Parliament should include among its members a few representatives of India, and that questions relating to Indian administration should be decided in consultation with them. A little later, there were riots in Nagar and Solapur districts, in which the money-lenders were the targets of mob violence. Ranade made a penetrating analysis of the riots. He argued that the ultimate responsibility for them lay with the Government who, by levying excessively high land revenue, did not leave any choice to the cultivator but to borrow from the hard hearted money-lender. The Government was enraged at these activities of the Sabha and after another memorial of the Sabha proving that the Government were responsible for the famine of 1877 it was exasperated. It knew that Ranade controlled and guided the Sabha, and transferred him from Poona to Nasik.⁴³

From Nasik also he continued to criticise the administration. He made the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha hold a public meeting to protest against the passing of the Press Act. The Government wrongly suspected him of complicity with the rebellion of Vasudeo Balwant Phadake in 1879 and transferred him to Dhulia. Ranade wrote in the Sarvajanik Sabha journal that, except in the case of Vasudeo Balwant, the motive of the rioters was economic, and not political as believed by officials. In 1885 Indian National Congress was founded. Ranade was one of its founders. From 1885 till his death in 1901, Ranade attended regularly annual sessions of Indian National Congress.

Agarkar, who basically championed the cause of social reform too had his own economic thinking. He had foreseen that as industrialization would advance in India, the labour would fight for their rights and from it a class-struggle would arise. In 1891, only through his article on Railway Companies and their employees he had advised the railway employees in this country to organize themselves to fight for their rights.⁴⁴ He had stated that it was necessary for not only the railway workers but for the entire working community that they organize themselves and prepare for strike, without which they were not likely to get their employers to admit of their just demands; that like the ruler ruled strife of the past, this strife too was to be a regular feature of the times to come. He had also stated clearly that the increasing economic and educational inequality leads to

political revolution. In his view, the ultimate aim of any social reform was to establish equal distribution of power and property among the members of the society.⁴⁵

After Mahatma Phule, the man who could catch the imagination of the masses in the field of reform was Chhatrapati Shahu of Kolhapur. Born on July 26, 1874 he was adopted by the House of Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. Educated at Rajkot and Dharwar, Shahu toured the country extensively in his student days.

On April 2nd, 1894, Shahu Maharaj took over the administration of Kolhapur and ruled the state for over 30 years.

Chhatrapati Shahu championed the cause of education for the masses. He opened many hostels in Kolhapur. He also donated money even outside Kolhapur for hostel purpose. He opened many schools in his state and propagated the cause of education knowing that education can be the only panacea for all social evils.

The Chhatrapati also carried on crusade against untouchability. He appointed many untouchables in the administration. He openly dined with them, freely mixed with them and in the end advocated the idea of casteless society for India. It was his policy that the various social forces should be equilibrated in the politics and administration of the nation. It was for this reason that he declared his revolutionary decisions of reserving 50% of the services from his Kingdom for the Backward classes.

When Shahu's own priest refused to perform ceremonies using Vedic recitations, Shahu confiscated his land which he enjoyed as State priest. Shahu then promoted the cause of Satya Shodhak movement and launched the non-Brahmin Movement in his State and outside. From 1910 to 1917, the Maharaja led the non-Brahmin movement in a stormy way.

Shahu Maharaj continually strove for the economic development of Kolhapur. He knew that the farmers should know that for the increase of foodgrain production and for freedom from poverty, they must improve their methods of cultivation and should increase the water supply to their farms. In the famine of 1897, his state had suffered greatly. The Maharaja had, therefore, started lot of relief activities. He started food distributing units. He advanced loans to the drought affected people. He got their lands freed from the money-lenders. He provided for food and water for their cattles. He set free his Jungles for their cattles to graze. He gave them concession in the land revenue and also advanced them loan

In 1904, the Maharaja cultivated tea plantations. He tried to plant Tuti for the production of silk. He cultivated coffee in the Panhala region. For Jute production he planted Korphad (A Maharashtrian variety of Jute). The Kulkarnis and Inamdars had been exploiting those who tilled the lands. The Maharaja discontinued the practice of hereditary appointment of Kulkarni. The work of Kulkarni was handed over to the Talathi.

The Mahar Vatan was also abolished. However, the lands attached to the Vatan were retained. The compulsory exertion of work from the Mahars was prohibited by law in 1918. In 1919, the guild system (Balutedar system) was also discontinued.

In 1908 Shahu Maharaj started constructing a big dam on Bhogavati river near Dajipur, 35 miles to the west of [] Kolhapur, for water supply to cultivation. Near the dam a new village called Radhanagar was established. By 1917, most of the construction work of the dam was over. Some 20,000 acres of sugarcane producing land was provided with water. Power generation was also started. Along with the dam on the Bhogavati the Maharaja had also planned for another dam to be built at the origin of Doodhganga river. He could not complete it but the same project is under construction as the Kalamawadi Project now.

In the month of September 1906, Shahu Maharaj laid the foundation of "Shahu Chhatrapati Spinning and Weaving Mill". In 1907, a Cotton Mill was started on a co-operative basis. But as the share holders did not run this mill well, the Darbar took over this mill and the mill later came to be called Shahu Mill. He was a great patron of the Swadeshi Paper Mill of Pune. He himself used the Swadeshi made paper. The Maharaja also encouraged the co-operative movement. It was he who had founded the Balbhim Cooperative Society.

Shri Narayan Lokhande, a follower of Mahatma Phule, was

the first labour leader. Then R.B. Sitaram Keshav Bole started an institution called People's Union. Shahu Maharaj was a patron of this institution. In 1918 on 10th and 24th November he delivered two lectures before the workers. In his speech on the 10th Nov. he expressed:

"The city of Bombay is famous for trade and commerce. Till this day, it was the belief of people here that trade and commerce depend on the capital from the rich and the managerial skill of the industrialists. In the Western countries, capitalists and the labour are the two classes. The capitalists used to have an untussled authority of the labour. But now the labour class has formed unions. A single show doesn't have much strength, but from many such shows, if you twist and turn into a rope you can tie an elephant with it. In Europe the labourers organisations have gained a lot of importance, the representatives of this people have entered into the institutions such as parliament and the Councils of Ministers, and they are protecting the right and welfare of their own class of people".

He further said:

"Now when we turn to the circumstances in India, the mainly backward section of the society here is of the peasants. All of you now working in various factories are basically farmers. It is, therefore, possible to think about all at once. It is necessary that in our country too there is a need to protect the interest of the depressed classes. In England the labourers have organised themselves and devised the way of self-reliance. In the same fashion we should also well organise ourselves. By educating our

children and by improving our health, we should evolve ourselves. Expectation that some body may do something for us is wrong."⁴⁶

Again on 24th November 1918 he said:

"In Western countries workers have succeeded in weilding their influence in administration against capitalists. Russia and Germany, which were under the dictates of the Kings there, Labour Republics are emerging now under the banner of labour parties. In England also, the influence of the labour party is increasing. The neutral nations such as Holland also cannot escape from this wave. Every adult individual must have a right to vote, so that the administration would work as per the wish of the majority of the people. ... As in England here too, we must have labour unions and all must know what their rights are. Among the capitalists, Brahmins and Vaishyas are in majority. Unless we put them under control, labourer uplift is impossible."⁴⁷

He also pointed out the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the workers in Bombay telling that the Russian workers have become rulers. They should, therefore, organise themselves here fearlessly.⁴⁸

Shahu died in May 1922 leaving a tremendous impact or legacy for the succeeding generation.

Inspired by Shahu, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil took up the task of spreading education among the masses. Bhaurao Patil

born on 1st September, 1887 and educated at Kolhapur, came under the influence of Chh. Shahu Maharaj. He also came under the impact of Satyashodhak movement at Kolhapur.

During the year 1914 to 1922, he worked for the Satya Shodhak Samaj. In the programmes of the Satya Shodhak Samaj he would speak in a point-blank language pointing out the defects of the society.

It was at this time that Gandhiji was rising on the political horizon of India, Sant Gadge Maharaj moving from one end to the other of the whole of Maharashtra, was bringing new life and giving new message to the people. Karmaveer Vitthal Ramji Shinde was busy in Pune carrying on the work for the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar also had made beginning of his mission.

In 1909, at Dudhgaon in Walwa taluka, Bhaurao Patil started an institution called, 'Dudhgaon Vidyarthi Ashram' in which the provision for all caste students was made. Similar experiments were made later on at Nerla in Walwa taluka and at Kale in Karad taluka. In 1922, at Satara, in the 'Dhanini's Garden' he laid the foundation of the Rayat Shikshan Sanstha. In order to provide a wider form to the work he had done at Dudhgaon, Nerla and Kale in 1924, he established at Satara a hostel for students of all religions and castes.

He established a hostel and named it after Shahu Maharaj. Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated this hostel. Bhaurao started this

hostel by admitting a Harijan student. All were required to stay together. In 1927 Mahatma Gandhi particularly paid a visit to this hostel, and on noticing how harmoniously the touchables and the untouchables, the Hindus and Muslims - all students - stay together, and eat together, he had a special word of honour for Bhaurao. Particularly because such an experiment Gandhiji himself had tried in Sabarmati Ashram and had failed in achieving his goal. On this background, Karmaveer's achievements proved to be all the more worth complimenting. Subsequently Bhaurao started many schools and colleges in western Maharashtra.

To make the student self-supporting while studying in schools and colleges, he introduced an unique scheme called 'Earn and Learn'. By persuasion he got land for schools and colleges and lands were got cultivated by the students who lived on the products of the land. Thus, mind and body were combined together to make the total personality built up. While asking for land, Bhaurao used to say, "Give us waste land and we shall turn it into the best land". Bhaurao was the first in India to experiment successfully the idea of self-dependent education.

As a result thousands of poor students could take advantage of receiving education even at graduate and post-graduate levels.

The untouchables comprise a number of distinct groups which form the lowest strata of the Hindu society, and were condemned as untouchables by the caste Hindus through centuries. They

numbered about sixty million out of three hundred million Hindus. That is to say, very nearly twenty per cent of Hindusthan was untouchable.

Their social disabilities were specific and severe and numerous. Their touch, shadow and even voice were deemed by the caste Hindus to be polluting. They were forced to occupy the dirty, dingy and unhygienic outskirts of villages and towns for habitation where they lived in dark, insanitary, and miserable smoky shanties or cottages. These untouchable Hindus were denied the use of public wells, and were condemned to drink any filthy water they could find. Their children were not admitted to schools attended by the caste Hindu children. Hindu temples were closed to them. Barbers and washermen refused to render them service. These untouchable Hindus were treated by the caste Hindus as sub-humans, less than men, worse than beasts. This picture is still true of villages and small towns; cities have now mostly overcome this state.

As they were illiterate, ill-treated and untouchable for ages, all public services including police and military forces were closed to them.

Times changed after the establishment of British rule. Radical reformers like Phule did pioneering work for untouchables and for their education. But Ambedkar did distinguishing work for he taught untouchables self-respect and made them rebellious against untouchability.

Ambedkar came from a poor family belonging to one of the Hindu untouchable communities and rose to become a renowned leader in his country. He worked for the upliftment of the Untouchable community, for social reforms in Hindu society and for improvements in the constitutional and legal framework. Under his leadership many untouchables united and organized for bringing about reforms needed for their self-development as individuals and as citizens. This movement affected not only the Untouchables but the other Indian communities as well. It brought about at least a modification in Hindu views as the grievances of the sixty million downtrodden masses were realized more seriously.⁴⁹

Born on April 14, 1891 of a Mahar family, Bhimrao had the good fortune to get a solid home foundation for his development into a great leader. Bhim's residence in Bombay being in a labour locality, he was in a constant touch with the labour life which was full of hardships.

Dr. Ambedkar studied in Columbia University in the U.S.A. and in London University, England for Ph.D. and D.Sc. degrees, he received those and returned to India to launch the emancipation struggle of the Untouchables.

The Southborough Committee, dealing with the franchise in the light of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms examined representatives of different interests and communities. Karmaveer Shinde and Ambedkar were called upon to give evidence before them. Ambedkar demanded separate electorate and reserved seats for

the Depressed classes in proportion to their population.⁵⁰ Ambedkar secured some financial help from Shahu Maharaja and started on 31st January 1920 a newspaper called Mook Nayak (Leader of the Dumb).

On March 21, 1920, Ambedkar presided over a conference of the Untouchables at Mangaon in the Kolhapur State in which Chhatrapati Shahu made a prophecy that Ambedkar would emerge as a national leader. Another important conference in which Ambedkar's voice echoed was held in the last week of May 1920, at Nagpur. This was first All India Conference convened by Untouchables and was presided over by no less a personality than Chh. Shahu Maharaj himself. About this time Karmaveer Shinde suggested on behalf of his Depressed Classes Mission that the representatives of the Untouchables should be selected by the Members of the Legislative Council and not by Government or by the Institutions belonging to the Untouchables. He had deputed his men to Nagpur to get his point of view accepted by this conference. Ambedkar, who boiled at this gross insult, made a fighting speech resenting the attitude taken by Shinde and the Conference by a special resolution protested against such a step being taken by Government.⁵¹ It was during this debate that Ambedkar's skill and presence of mind as a debator and his ability as a prospective leader were seen to a remarkable degree.

This Nagpur Conference gave him an opportunity of turning the eyes of the Untouchables from the Depressed Classes Mission.

At the conclusion of the conference Ambedkar made an attempt in the direction of consolidating the forces of the Depressed Classes.

On July 20, 1924, he founded an organisation called 'Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha'. The organisation devoted itself to the cause of socio-economic rights for the Untouchables.

In the Bombay Legislative Council in 1923 Mr. S.K. Bole moved a resolution which recommended that the Untouchables be allowed to use all public wells and Dharmashalas built and maintained out of public funds or administered by bodies appointed by the Government or created by Statute, as well as Public schools, Courts, Offices and dispensaries.

To make this resolution effective, Mr. Bole moved another resolution on August 5, 1926 which recommended to the Government not to give any grant to those Municipalities and Local Boards which refused to give effect to the former resolution.

Ambedkar was a believer in the principle of self-help. He exhorted the Untouchables to fight for self-help, self-elevation and self-respect. Ambedkar did not join the movement for the political independence of the country. This he did with full understanding. He knew he would have to fight with the caste Hindus, and also deal with the British Government to secure Political rights for the Untouchables.

The Governor of Bombay nominated Ambedkar to the Bombay Legislative Council.

In pursuance of the Bole resolution the Mahad Municipality had thrown open its tank called the Chowdar Talav to the Untouchables. However, the resolution of the Municipality remained a mere gesture in that the Untouchables had not exercised their right owing to the hostility of the caste Hindus. A conference was held at Mahad on March 19 and 20, 1927.

In his presidential address Ambedkar urged his people to gain self-respect, learn self-help, and gain self-knowledge. He further urged to agitate against the Government ban on their entry into the Army, Navy and Police. Then he led the march to the Chowdar Talav and drank the water. He was followed by other Untouchables. So enraged were the orthodox people of Mahad that they rudely interrupted the Conference, causing a period of confusion in which delegates were brutally attacked.

Another Conference was held at Mahad on December 25, 1927. This was the culmination of days of agitation during which time Dr. Ambedkar had burnt the old Manusmriti, the symbol of injustice to the Untouchables, and demanded a new one to reshape the Hindu code. This action was done for the main purpose of showing antipathy towards the orthodoxy of the caste Hindus.

The Conference passed a resolution which included the declaration of human rights, and attack on Hindu reactionaries, a demand that the Hindu society be reduced to one class, and that the priestly profession be turned into a democratic institution

allowing anyone to become a priest if he so desired.

When Simon Commission visited Bombay on February 3, 1928 he placed the case of the Untouchables before it. In May 1929 he issued his own report, differing from the Simon Report. He said:

"The most vital need of the day is to create among the mass the sense of a common nationality, the feeling not that they are Indians first and Hindus, Mohammedans or Sidis and Kanarees afterwards, but that they are Indians first and Indians last."

As regards representation he said:

"Territorial and separate electorates are the two extremes which must be avoided in any scheme of representation that may be devised for the introduction of a democratic form of government in this undemocratic country. The golden means is the system of joint electorates with reserved seats."

He recommended Cabinet responsible to the Legislature and the government based on adult franchise and the constitution.

Though his report to the Simon Commission, Dr. Ambedkar became renowned as a great politician, patriot, statesman and champion of the cause of Untouchables. He was recognized for his dedicated drive to establish reforms not only for Untouchables but also for the Indian political structure as well.

As declared, the British Government convened a Round Table Conference in London consisting of the representatives of India, the British Government and the British Political parties

to frame a constitution for India with a view to satisfying the demands of the people of India. In the eightynine members' Conference Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan represented the depressed classes. To the Untouchables it was an epoch-making event in their history, for it was at this Conference that they were being invested along with other Indians with the right to be consulted in the framing of the constitution for India.

The first conference was convened in November 1930. One of the nine Committees at the Round Table Conference was the Minorities Committee, which was headed by Ramsay Macdonald and dealt with the Untouchable question. Dr. Ambedkar, who had been nominated by the British Government to represent the Scheduled Castes in the conference, submitted a list of safeguards for the Untouchables' safety, rights and citizenship. The safeguards, rights etc. were:

- 1) Equal citizenship; fundamental rights;
- 2) Free enjoyment of equal rights and punishment of social boycott; (defined by Dr. Ambedkar as a suppression of the depressed classes)
- 3) Protection against discrimination;
- 4) Adequate representation in legislature;
- 5) Adequate representation in government services;
- 6) Redress against prejudicial action or neglect of interests;

- 7) Special departmental care;
- 8) Depressed classes to have representation in Cabinet.

Reports of the Committee showed unanimous acceptance of the right of the Untouchables to recognition as a separate entity for political and constitutional purposes. This angered the Congress party which subsequently boycotted the first session of the Round Table Conference.

The Second Round Table conference was convened on September 7, 1931. The main purpose of the Conference was to examine and amplify the reports prepared by the committees of the first session. Most of the work was to be done in the Federal Structure Committee and the Minorities Committee.

Dr. Ambedkar and Srinivas Shastri submitted a supplementary memorandum requesting special representation for the depressed classes in Provincial Legislatures and Central Assembly in proportion to the population, demanding separate electorate or joint electorate with reserved seats and then referendum only after twenty years, and demanding a change of nomenclature of Untouchables to non-conformist Hindus.

On August 20, 1932 the British Premier issued the Communal Award against which Gandhi undertook fasting unto death. After a prolonged discussion between Congress leaders and Ambedkar, Poona Pact was signed on September 26, 1932. According to it the depressed classes got 148 seats in the Provincial

Assemblies and 10% of the seats of the Hindus from British India in the Central Assembly and a referendum after ten years. It was later embodied in the Government of India Act, although it aroused the dislikes of Hindus as well as Untouchables. Nevertheless, it was a compromise.

In Bombay, early in 1929 the first textile workers' strike was held. Dr. Ambedkar opposed the strike sponsored by the Girni Kamgar Union because he felt that the strike was a tool of the Communists for political ends and would not benefit the depressed classes anyway. He believed in the workers' right to strike and that the strike should be used sparingly and to the advantage of the workers and not to any other political party, especially not to the communists. As a result of an extensive propaganda programme to counteract of the Girni Kamgar Union, the Textile Labour Union met on April 29, 1929 and passed a resolution against launching the strike. Thus, Dr. Ambedkar took interest in the labour problems.

In August 1936, Dr. Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party and drew up a programme to meet the needs and grievances of the landless, poor tenants, agriculturists and workers. By founding the I.L.P., he hoped to win more seats in the Legislature and thereby establish a more active opposition because he felt that 15 reserved seats for Untouchables were insufficient for this purpose. In the election on February 17, 1937, the I.L.P. captured 13 seats out of 15 assigned to

the Scheduled Castes and in addition it won 2 general seats. Dr. Ambedkar urged the labourers to organize and have a united front to elect labour representatives to the legislature.

On September 17, 1937 during the Poona Session of the Bombay Assembly, he introduced a bill to abolish the Mahar Vatan for which he had been agitating since 1927. Ambedkar was the first legislator in India to introduce a Bill for the abolition of the serfdom of agricultural tenants.⁵² Dr. Ambedkar also introduced a bill to abolish the Khoti system of land tenure in the Konkan. However, this was just taken up by the Assembly. The peasants then presented their demands to and protested before the Council Hall for the legislature to abolish the Khoti system.

But the Bombay Government did not put into practice the abolition of the Mahar Vatan. They soon reversed their previous support and levied additional taxes on the Mahar Vatan. The depressed classes became quite angry at this decision, and held a rally on March 19, 1940 at Mahad. This day was also celebrated as their Independence Day for on March 19, 1927 at Mahad their struggle to throw open Chowdar Talao for Untouchables started.

Now Ambedkar turned his attention to the organization of railway workers. A Conference of Untouchable Railway workers was convened at Marmad on February 12 and 13, 1938. In this

conference he had remarked how the Untouchables were excluded from opportunities for appointment and advancement. He said that if labourers were to unite they must first extricate Brahminism "the spirit of inequality" from among the workers.

In September 1938 the Bombay Legislative Assembly discussed the Industrial Disputes Bill. Dr. Ambedkar opposed it because it made striking illegal under certain circumstances and thereby affected the workers' right to strike. The conflict culminated in a strike by labourers against the Government on November 7th. Hundreds upon hundreds of workers participated. Most of them belonged to Dr. Ambedkar's union. Many textile Mills and Municipal workshops closed down. This was the first such strike programme launched against the government by labour leaders.

In June 1942, the British Viceroy expanded the Executive Council and appointed Dr. Ambedkar as labour member in the Executive Council. His activities and agitation for reform had gained him recognition. After his appointment to the Viceroy's Executive Council he was in a position to bring about reform measures. He persuaded the Government to earmark 3,00,000 rupees a year for scholarships to send Untouchables abroad for study. He also got $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of government posts reserved for qualified Untouchables.

In March 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps came to India and proposed that the Constituent Assembly be convened immediately

to draft the constitution. Dr. Ambedkar and the depressed classes opposed the scheme since it bound them to Hindu rule and forced upon them a Constitution without their consent. Because of this announced policy of Britain, Dr. Ambedkar became active as leader of the depressed classes.

England now acknowledged India's right to independence on March 15, 1946, and sent a Parliamentary delegation to India to discuss possible solutions to the deadlock which was ensuing over the Constitution and the new Government to be formed after independence.

However, during July 1946 Dr. Ambedkar was elected as a member of Constituent Assembly. His talents and knowledge as well as his desire to serve his people were all being utilized when the nation was emerging from British rule. When India became independent on August 15, 1947 he became its first Law Minister. Legal ground was gained for social reform as the Constituent Assembly declared that:

"Untouchability in any form is abolished and the imposition of any disability on that account shall be an offence".

In the Constituent Assembly Dr. Ambedkar was elected as the Chairman of the six-man Drafting Committee. On November 4, 1948 he introduced the Draft Constitution consisting of 315 articles and 8 schedules, which he had to defend before the

Constituent Assembly before it could be ratified. He worked arduously on the Constitution which he deemed so invaluable for establishing the foundation for an orderly, free, democratic nation.

In order to eradicate the evils in the existing social and economic structure Dr. Ambedkar submitted in October 1948 to the Constituent Assembly the Hindu Code Bill which he had revised. He aimed to codify and modify certain branches of Hindu Law so that the same set of laws should govern Hindu social and religious life. Again Dr. Ambedkar emphasized that people should think in terms of national welfare and prosperity, not to maintain separate entities, but to win the sympathies of all political parties in the country in this important task of laying firm foundation. In November 1950 he circulated a booklet regarding the nature and scope and contents of the Hindu Code Bill so that the populace might understand the need for change and the reasons for the particular changes he was proposing. However, the orthodox element in the country opposed it tooth and nail.

The Hindu Code Bill did not secure support from the Cabinet and the Congress. Shortly thereafter, on September 27, 1951 Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the Cabinet. He told newspaper reporters that the Government was not interested in upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and were hesitant about establishing measures

for true social reforms.

Although the Hindu Code Bill was not passed at that time, the force of Dr. Ambedkar is quite evident in the life of the Indian body politics. His constructive criticism and his constructive ideas were particularly evident in his work in the Constituent Assembly and his Hindu Code Bill.

Dr. Ambedkar loved India and wanted India to have a strong democratic foundation. He said "The secret of freedom is courage and courage is born in combination of individuals into a Party. A Party is necessary to run a Government. But two parties are necessary to keep Government from being a despotic. A democratic government can remain democratic only if it is worked by two parties - a party in power and a party in opposition. As Jennings puts it, "If there is no opposition, there is no democracy". His Majesty's Opposition is no ideal phrase. His Majesty needs an Opposition as well as Government".

Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism on 14th October 1956. Thereafter he attended the Fourth Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists met at Khatmandu on November 15, 1956. On November 20, Dr. Ambedkar was requested to make a speech on "Buddha and Karl Marx". He stated that the goal of Buddha and of Karl Marx was the same. Marx said that private property was the root cause of sorrow. It resulted in exploitation, suffering and enslavement. Buddha also wanted to abolish Dukkha (sorrow) and

the expression sorrow was used in the Buddhist literature in the sense of property. According to Buddha everything was impermanent, and so there was no struggle for property. So, Buddha would not stand in the path of abolition of private property, if the principle of the denial of private property was applied to society.⁵³

But Buddhism, he continued, and communist violently differed from each other in their means to achieve their goal. Communist adopted violent methods to abolish private property. Buddhism adopted non-violent means to achieve the goal. Marx's method gave quick results. Buddha's method, though tedious, was non-violent, yet it was the surest way. The world could not be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of man and the mind of the world. There was no trouble once the mind was converted; the achievement became permanent.⁵⁴

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