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SCHEDULED CASTES SETTLEMENT BE MADE AT PAR WITH BANTUS

"*Hyderabad (Deccan),* April 22, 1946 : The view that the demand of the Scheduled Castes for separate villages was not an encroachment on the rights of any party, was expressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India, in an interview.

Dr. Ambedkar said that there were large areas of cultivable waste land lying untenanted in the country which could be set apart for the settlement of Scheduled Castes. Government could form a trust to give effect, to the proposal.

Objection, he thought, would come only from those who had been accustomed to using the Scheduled Castes as a source of labour which was available to do all the unclean jobs and who could be forced to work at the cheapest wage-rate. They would like to perpetuate this slavery. Because of intolerable condition under which the Scheduled Castes lived in Provinces like Bombay and Madras, it was necessary to have separate villages for them.

Dr. Ambedkar explained that the village being a social and not an economic unit of society, there was no need to fear an economic strangulation of these separate villages. The product of these areas would be sent to places where it would be welcomed.

Asked if the demand applied to the Pakistan areas, Dr. Ambedkar said that it did. At present there was nothing concrete about Pakistan. The question of setting up separate villages would arise when it took concrete shape.

The position of the Scheduled Castes, he said, was analogous to that of the *Bantu* and other tribes of South Africa. He did not see why provision should not be made in the future Indian Constitution to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes in the same way as was done in the South African Constitution in the case of the *Bantus*.—A.P. I."[1]

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[1] : The Times of India : dated 23rd April 1946.