

UNTOUCHABLE WORKERS OF BOMBAY CITY

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With a Foreword by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc., Bar-at-Law, J.P.

FOREWORD

This treatise is a thesis which the author wrote in fulfilment of the requirements prescribed by the University of Bombay for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts. That was as accepted by the University, should constitute sufficient recommendation in favour of its merits and no such thing as a Foreword from me should have been thought necessary by the Author. I do not know why the Author feels the necessity of a word from me. Probably, that I do from the community whose life has been the subject-matter of this investigation is the reason which has led him to call upon me to write a Foreword and I gladly respond to his invitation.

The author has studied the life of the Untouchables in the City of Bombay under various heads and thus gives quantitative idea of the extent of the overcrowding, the earnings, employment, debts, etc. that prevails among the Untouchables. He has collected data which is certainly valuable. In any statistical investigation the question that arises is whether the cases studied are typical or not. The average to be normal, the cases investigated must be typical. There is no reason to suppose that his cases are not typical. It may, therefore, be taken that the picture of the life of the Untouchables he has given, is a true picture.

This study would have been of greater value if it had been a comparative study contrasting the social condition of the Untouchables with that of the Caste-Hindus. But that it is not. Such a study was all the more necessary in view of the opinion on the one hand and caste Hindus on the other, if it is proved that the Untouchable does not suffer by reason of his Untouchability. But if on comparison it is found that the Untouchable suffers in his earning, in his employment and in other respects in a competitive

society as against a caste Hindu and if this disadvantage is attributable to no factor other than Untouchability, then it will have to be admitted that the case for conversion was strong. But all that must await as comparative study. Such a study will have to be undertaken some day either by the author of this book or by someone else if the present study is to be a useful guide for understanding why the conclusions drawn by the author are what they are; and whether the differences if any in the condition of the touchables and Untouchables is due to any such social factor as Untouchability. As a preliminary to such an effort the booklet must be welcomed.

Rajgrih, Dadar

B. R. Ambedkar¹

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