

CASTE AND CLASS IN INDIA

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Indian social order is caste-based. Caste consideration permeates almost every aspect of social, religious, political and cultural life of an Indian. Even the economic system, particularly the predominantly rural and agricultural sectors is caste oriented. The urban centers, despite their claim to modernity and secular character are, in more than one way, conglomerates of caste based ghettos. In fact, there is considerable truth to the assertion that every child in India is born with a caste mark on his forehead. His social status is determined by his caste identity. His fate and fortunes are inextricably intertwined with the position of his caste in the hierarchial social order and his own personal status within his caste structure. He remains caste bound till his death.

It is conceded that the caste system has been a source of stability and unbroken continuity of socio-cultural tradition of the people. It has also proven to be deadly curse that caused the degradation and suffering of the millions of Indian people for untold centuries.

The Hindu society is structured along a hierarchy of four classes or the *VARNAS*. The concept of the *VARNAS Vyavastha* class structure developed its roots in India, over five thousand years ago, with the migration of the Indo-Asyan tribes from Central Asia into the sub-continent.

Originally based on color complex – a sort of color coding – the *Varna Vyavastha*, the class order or class structure, developed with the mingling of the Aryans with earlier inhabitants of the sub-continent, the Dravidians who were obviously dark in complex. Having been defeated and subdued the Dravidians and the aborigines were reduced by the Aryans to an inferior status of *DASAS* or the slaves. They were thus considered to be the property of the owner like other household animals.

Besides the *DASAS* – the other non-Aryans – (or Anaryan) were made to take up the menial occupations which the Aryans themselves considered as degrading and of low order. Thus at the beginning of the Indo-Aryan contact with the pre-Aryan inhabitants only two main social classes emerged: the Aryan – the dominant class – and the Sudras and the Dasas as the working class.

Both color and avocation distinguished one class from the other. Evidently the rigid rule of caste by birth was yet to come. Thus there was accessibility and mobility between the two main *varnas*. An Aryan could be

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reduced to the status of a Sudra or a Dasa if he was defeated in battle or if he took up an avocation which degraded him to that social status.

Of the four major class categories of the Varna Vyavastha, three were predominantly made up of Aryans – the Brahmins, the Kashatriyas and the Vaisyas. The fourth, the Sudras, were the An-aryan – the Pre-Aryan natives, aborigines and the Aryans who were degraded to the status of DASA or slaves.

The Brahmins were to be scholars, priests, teachers and royal advisors. The Kashatriyas were to be nobles, Kings, warriors and administrators. The Vaisyas who were more numerous than the other two higher Varnas were the farmers, the traders, the artisans and the financiers of society. The Sudras were the menial workers in the degraded occupations which the other three classes considered below their dignity to perform.

These four *Varnas* constituted the basic order of social structure a status hierarchy. They were meant to correspond to the four cardinal aspects of society – knowledge, defense, wealth and labor. As it developed through the centuries this comparatively simple four-fold class divisions was bifurcate, divided and sub-divided into thousands of castes and sub-sub-castes. What prevails in India today is this utterly complex phenomenon of the JATI Vyavastha – caste identification – based on birth, linked by marriage and lineage and sanctified by religious rituals and social norms. These castes are locally identifiable and are governed through their local groups peculiar to each caste. Normally a group of five village elders constitute the barrio caste council the *Panchayat* – which more often draws its members from different caste groups.

The Brahmin occupied the highest social status. After all, he himself devised the structure of society and drafted the rules of the games – the religious rituals and the social norms. These rules of conduct in daily life were integrated and interlinked that violation of one particular aspect of the social conduct meant a violation of all the others. The Brahmins, besides being the originator of social and religious norms, were also principal advisors and consulars to Kings and Rajas. These two upper castes often banded together and exercised almost totalitarian power of State over the other two lower classes.

In their productive economic activities, the Vaisyas exploited the Sudras who played a decisive role in maintaining the well-being of the three high castes. In brief, the Sudras together with the other lower sub-castes among the Vaisyas constituted the socially and economically disadvantaged and the most exploited sectors of the Hindu Society. They constituted the bulk of the productive labor force in society.

The Sudras

In any discussion of Hindu Caste System, the plight of the Sudras and

their interminable saga of suffering and degradation deserve serious consideration. Thus in this brief discourse on Class and Caste in India special attention is devoted to this ugly aspect of the *JATI VYAVASTHA*.

The Sudras occupy the lowest social status in Hindu Society. For ages they have been condemned to a perpetual status of degrading servitude unparalleled in human history. By birth the *Chandalas* or the Sudras were tied to the lowest and the most brutalizing occupations. The Sudras' men and women were declared, by the so-called sacred scriptures, to be without any prestige in society. They were denied the right to education, religious ceremonies, and even *Sanskar* the last rites of cremation.

The basic religious text that formalized and sanctified the *JATI Vyavastha* is the *Manu Smṛti* of sage Manu – the great law giver among the Vedic seers. In the *Manu Smṛti* the functions and the duties of the four *VARNAS* are described as follows:

The Brahmins have been assigned teaching and studying (the Veda), sacrificing for their own benefit and for others giving and accepting (of alms) [1.88]

The Kashatriyas are to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), and to abstain from attaching themselves to sensual pleasures. [1.89]

The Vaisyas to tend cattles, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), to trade, to lend money, and to cultivate land. [1.90]

One occupation only has been prescribed to the *SUDRA* to serve meekly even these (other) three *Varnas* [1.91]¹

The Sudras were denied the knowledge of the Vedas and right to education, Manu having declared it a heinous crime for anyone in any of the three upper castes to impart education and knowledge to the Sudras. *Manu Smṛti* says:²

For he who gives religious preaching (to a Sudra) or dictates to him a penance, will sink together with that (Sudra) into hell (called *ASAMVRITA*).

Let no one give to a Sudra advice, nor the remnants (of his meal), nor food offered to the gods; nor let him give the religious preaching (to such a man), nor impose (upon him) a penance.

. . . the dwellings of *Chandalas* and *Svapakas* shall be outside the village, they must be made *Apapatras* and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys. [10-51]

The status of the Sudra has thus been frozen in a limbo for ages to come. The injunction of Manu like a curse has kept a vast segment of humanity in bondage. This down-trodden segment of humanity has yet to find deliverance. If Buddha were born today after 2500 years of death, he will not find it difficult to recognize India as his motherland. Because the caste system has preserved the social norms of the ancient culture. He will

certainly be disappointed that his revolt against the Hindu social system had failed.

For instance, the Brahmins fortified this social and economic position which remained unchallenged up till the turn of the century. How he did it, is illustrated by one of the many injunctions in their favour in the MANU SMRTI.³

A twice born man who has merely threatened a BRAHMIN with the intention of (doing him) a cosposal injury, will wander about for a hundred years in the Tamisra hell (4,165)

This is how the caste became gradually a social cancer with the imposition of scripted injunctions such as the Manu Smrti and the Narada-Smrti. The hard and fast rules regarding occupation, food, conduct and marriage, and diversification of castes led to caste rigidity, caste antagonism and caste enmity. The growing tension led to the further brutalization of the weaker castes particularly the Sudras.

This ugly aspect of Hindu Society was brutally exposed by Gautama, the Buddha. Through his secular teachings, Buddha denied the divine origin of the Vedic literature and questioned the spiritual and ethical basis of caste and social structure. According to Buddha's teaching, man was the master of his own destiny. A man's status in society was not subject to a pre-ordained law such as the Manu Smrti nor was his social status determined by one's KARMA in a previous life. No one could claim to be Brahmin by birth without acquiring the knowledge and wisdom of a scholar and a teacher. Neither can one be condemned to the position of a Sudra by birth and thus denied the right and opportunity to education and learning. Buddha denied sacredness or divine origin of the Vedas and other scriptures which the Brahmins had foisted upon the people to legitimize the traditional basis of caste differentiation and the status hierarchy. The Brahmins and the other high castes relented and retreated temporarily from their privileged position under the onslaught of dynamic message of Buddha which spread far and wide throughout the country.

The Buddhist influence gradually varied as most of its principal teachings were assimilated into the Hindu way of life. As the Buddhist influence receded the Brahmins reemerged as the spiritual and religious guardians thus the dominant class in the Hindu social order. They redesigned and rewrote the old rules and produced a vast body of new literature to reassert and legitimize their authority to reestablish the traditional caste positions and the caste structure. It was during this period that the concept of pollution and untouchability became markedly pronounced as a common practice among the caste Hindus. The Sudra particularly suffered badly in the wake of Hindu resurgence.

More than a thousand years after its encounter with Buddhism, the

caste system was once again seriously challenged. The successful Muslim invasion of India was a terrible blow to Hindu social order. The Hindus were gradually defeated and reduced to a status of subservience. To the Muslim invaders, the panthean gods and goddesses of Hinduism qualified it for extinction. The most significant development was the equalizing impact of the Muslim conquest of India. For the first time, Brahmins and Sudras were placed on the same level. Islam, for instance, did not recognize the social caste among the conquered people as the legitimate basis of interaction among them.

The Muslim rulers of India finally recognized the caste factor as an important consideration in the cooptation of the native rulers and people into their services, although it militated against its basic doctrine of equality among all men. Finding it convenient and to their advantage to patronize the caste system, the Muslim rulers recognize the status of the former ruling classes, particularly the nobles and traditional rulers.

The egalitarian character of Islam greatly appealed to the Sudras and to the lower castes. The imposition of Zazia – the religious tax – also motivated many low caste Hindus to liberate themselves from the age-old bondage by becoming Muslims and thus avoid paying the Zazia. Among the early converts to Islam a great majority came from among the ranks of the lower castes. Ironically many of those who embraced Islam did so to escape the dead weight of caste. But gradually the caste syndrome began to infect the Muslims. The Indianization of Islam began with the intrusion of caste system. Widespread conversion of the Kashatriyas who had lost in battle of the landed aristocracy among the Vaisyas and of the Sudras brought into Islam the deep seated caste prejudices and biases of the converts. The Jati Vyavastha became the ZAT system among the Muslims. Ironically, all over India and along the path of the sacred river Ganges, west to east caste identification among the Muslim, the immigrant and the native converts have become a dominant social factor. It would seem that the helpless Hindus retaliated against the onslaught Islam by subverting its spirit from within.

Christianity came to India in the first century A.D. but it remained confined largely to a narrow strip, along the southwest coastline in the region now known as Kerala. This peaceful intrusion did not push northward to the heart land of Hindustan thus it remained largely confined to Southern India. Eventually, Christianity was introduced on a larger scale with the advent of the European colonialism. Like Islam, the second coming of Christianity to India was under the protective mantle of European colonial rulers. Interestingly Christian teaching appealed most to the untouchable. Caste factors infected Christianity as it has infected Islam earlier.

Like the Muslim rulers, the British in India found the caste system as its natural ally. They contrived ingenious techniques to patronize caste system. The British wittingly or unwittingly politicized the caste through the introduction of legal and administrative norms. In order to gain the confidence of the so-called scheduled classes, and to create a wedge between the castes among the Hindus, the British initiated the move to extend special privileges to the untouchables. Thus began caste politics. Simultaneously with the Hindu-Muslim differences, the continuing conflict between the caste Hindus and the untouchable characterized the nature and spirit of the politics of independence in India from the turn of the century up to the present.

The Separate Electorate

The British found it advisable to safeguard the interest of minority religious community in the apportionment of elected representatives. Thus at the demand of the Muslims, the principle of separate electorate was introduced. The nationalistic groups led by Mahatma Gandhi opposed it; but the British persisted and the Muslims would not accept less. However, when the principle was extended to cover the Sudras, Mahatma Gandhi objected. He had most of the Indian people behind him on the issue, that the British move would divide Hindu society permanently into high and lower castes. To him, despite the degradingly lower status of the Harijans – the children of God – the permanent division of the Hindu society was not the answer to the basic problem. He went on a fast unto death and finally won his main point. The separate electorate for the untouchables was replaced with reservation of seats in legislative and other elected bodies.

Gandhi considered upliftment of the untouchables as an essential precondition for a general upliftment of the country and the Indian people. In fact the welfare of the Harijans remained his main preoccupation for most part of his active political life.

When the constitution of independent India was formed, one of the first provisions to be unanimously adopted by the constitutional convention was to abolish the untouchability and to declare its practice a crime. It is interesting to note that the first Law Minister of independent India was an untouchable, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The passage of the provision on untouchability was a nullification of all the religious texts and the scriptures, including the Manu Smriti, which kept the Sudras in bondage for thousand years. It was a historic victory for all those, from Buddha to Mahatma Gandhi, who worked to smash the iron frame of the traditional caste system, more specifically, the rigid rules that condemned the Sudras to their degrading social status. Hindu Dharama had finally redeemed itself of the sin of untouchability.

The constitutional guarantee was supplemented by the promulgation

of laws extending a series of concessions, benefits and privileges to alleviate the miserable social and economic conditions of the depressed classes. The concessions and reservations of special privileges included, among others, specific number of seats and elective bodies, scholarships in schools and specific quotas of positions in government service. The implementing rules were made more liberal for the untouchables with regards to enhance qualifications for educational institutions and in government services. These requirements were uniformly lower for the Harijans than those for the caste Hindus and others.

Originally, these concessions and privileges were to last for a decade or so. However, the government has extended the period on several occasions to date. The reason advanced is that the social conditions of the untouchables has not improved much and it will take a longer time for them to catch up with other socially advanced classes in India. Thus the need to continue the grant of special privileges.

For the first time in history the sastras and the smrtis of the modern age – the constitution and the laws of the lands – are on the side of the untouchables. Seemingly, the ugly aspect of caste system has been sanitized and millions of hopeless Sudras have been given the much needed legal and moral support in their fight against traditional social biases and prejudices. Besides the centuries old biases and prejudices well entrenched class privileges are major obstacles to the progress of the untouchables. For instance the upper castes consider the recognition by the state of fundamental human, social and political rights of the untouchables a serious challenge to their economic power and socio-cultural dominance over the backward classes. Over the past four decades, the upper caste Hindus have made considerable concessions to the untouchables on legal and constitutional grounds. However, socially and politically, the situation has become even more difficult because of intensification of caste politics. The dominant sectors among the upper castes are demanding from the untouchables political subserviences in exchange for social and economic concessions. There have been widespread harassment of the weaker groups whenever they refuse to concede the demands of the caste Hindus. Physical violence and economic sanctions against the Sudras in the hands of the rich landlords in the rural areas have become a common place. Thus the constitutional and legal concessions granted to the untouchables have become meaningless in the face of organized and systematic resistance by the caste Hindus to accept peacefully the inevitability of the demise of the old caste structure.

In the past, higher caste status guaranteed educational opportunities, economic advantages, and under the British colonial rule administrative position in the government bureaucracy. For example, the children from

the higher castes among the caste Hindus were among the first who took English education. Their headstart in modern education has kept them in goodstead ever since. They still man the key positions in the civil service of India.

Similarly in business, the money lenders, traders and middlemen from a few castes among the Vaisyas trooped to the port cities and pre-empted the growing opportunities in trade, commerce, banking, manufacturing fields with the expansion of British rule in India.

The British rulers patronized the so-called traditional martial groups among the caste Hindus. They recruited men from these select-castes for the British Indian army, police and other security services. Since the army battalions were organized on the basis of caste religion, and regional considerations, they were named thus in order to perpetuate the old myths of the so-called warrior classes and caste. For instance it was rare that an untouchable was made an officer in the British Indian Army to avoid possibility of the upper castes cadets and men refusing to obey an officer because of his low caste status.

All this is breaking up now and there lies the main cause of the growing tension among the various castes. It is decidedly more pronounced where the rights of the untouchable directly conflict with vested interests and the privileges of the caste Hindus.

The nature of the growing caste conflict is well illustrated by the recent happenings in the state of Gujarat in Western India. The conflict there has grown so complex and its repercussions so deep and widespread that it has been named, for the first time in recent history, as the *Caste War in Gujarat*. An attachment to this paper provides a graphic account of the worsening situation.

The caste as a social sanctuary has outlived its usefulness. As a guardian of vested interests of the upper caste, it is decaying fast.

Modernization of transportation and communication and the spread of urbanization had a devastating impact on the traditional social structure in India. Population growth beyond all expectations added more to the pressure on the social system. These developments coupled with the politics of numbers have stretched to the limits the capacity of the caste, as a primary social group, to preserve and promote narrow and parochial interests. Caste politics has further shattered the caste barriers and blurred the caste boundaries. Majority of the rural folks still vote along the caste line in the absence of a more reliable criterion for evaluating a candidate's performance and politics. Despite all this, traditional caste isolation has been breached by electoral alliances and growing pressure from multi-party politics. For instance, in a multi-cornered electoral contest the small caste groups play a decisive role in the final outcome of election. This is where

the caste Hindus, when faced with a certain defeat in an election contest begin to apply traditional pressure through coercion, threats and even physical violence.

The caste factor in the politics of Bihar State illustrates this point in an attachment to this paper. A careful alignment of various caste votes resulted in the decisive victory for Mrs. Indira Gandhi's congress party.

It is most likely that the electoral processes may finally pull down the last vestiges of the traditional caste structure. Caste factor in politics has been denounced and decried as a reactionary development. However, contrary to popular notion, caste politics may be the beginning of eventual disintegration of caste as a status hierarchy and the traditional medium of oppression and exploitation of lower castes by the upper castes. Considerations of caste composition in an electoral district determines the selection of a political party nominee. Perceived strength of each caste component provides a basis of free bargain among the competing groups and an opportunity for open political pressure by interested groups. The status hierarchy this way is transformed into a dynamic process of electoral alliance building. It replaces the old feeling of alienation and turns it into a cooperative venture.

In summary, caste politics, despite its seemingly divisive tendency, is most likely to develop into a wider network of political aggruppations organized along economic interests and ideological orientation.

The one area where caste seems to persist and thrive is the marriage market. Despite its growing alienation from tradition and caste solidarity, ironically it is the urban educated elite that seems to glorify and romanticise the traditional glory of the caste. The selected matrimonial ads from a daily newspaper amply illustrates this point.

Appendix A

CASTE FACTOR IN MARRIAGE

Selected Matrimonial Announcement

Hindustan Times New Delhi – Sunday January 6, 1980

Grooms

SARASWAT Brahmin sisters
matches, slim, 22-20, studying
M.A.-B.A. Father Gazetted
Officer.

SUITABLE match for *Ramgariah*
Gursikh, M.Sc, B.Ed. girl, 27
years age.

FOR FAIR complexion, sharp
features, slim, East Punjab

Saraswat Brahmin girl, 26/158, convent school education. Early marriage. No caste bar.

MATCH for attractive, fair, slim, 158 cms. M.A., B.Ed., *Bisa Agarwal* girl, 29. Father senior officer. Lucknow based respectable family. Caste no bar. Decent marriage.

MATCH for Graduate *Sanadhya* Brahmin beautiful girl, 25 years.

MATCH for *Gaur Brahmin* M.A. girl, aged 25 years, fair, slim, 154 cms., of highly educated family. Decent early marriage. Write full details.

MATCH for *Bansal* girl, B.Sc., LL.B., Solicitor, 25 years, 155 cms., wheatish fair, slim, from respectable Calcutta family. No bar. Decent marriage.

MATCH for *Rajvanshi Agrawal* girl, 29, Goyal, double M.A., 160 cms., slim, fair, well-versed in household, strictly vegetarian.

WELL settled match for *Mahajan Manglik* 22 years, 162 cms., slim very fair, studying in B.A. Final. Father in Govt. service, own house in South Delhi.

SUITABLE doctor match for *Gupta (Varshney)* MBBS, slim, good looking, fair complexioned, 23 years, 153 cms. (interested in doing M.S.) girl of respectable family. Father senior class 1 officer in U.P. State service. Caste no bar.

MATCH for Graduate *Arora* Punjabi girl, 28. Early decent

marriage.

MATCH for Calcutta based beautiful, slim, *Ramgarhia* girl, M.A., 24, 157 cms., wheatish, wears specs. Highly qualified, well settled individual only need correspond.

WANTED Chartered Accountant, Doctor, Engineer for *Aggarwal* girl, 23 years, M.A. Early good marriage.

MATCH for a Central School employed Punjabi *Arora* girl, M.A., B.Ed., drawing Rs 650/-, aged 29 years. No dowry.

MATCH for *Kanyakubja* girl of M.P. Vatsa Gotra, 23 years, 164 cms., M.Sc., Home Science, B.Ed.

WELL settled *Kayastha* between 35-40 for good-looking, smart, girl, belonging to highly respectable family, earning 600/- and having bright prospects. Early decent marriage.

FOR GIRL 28, homely, Delhi based service class family. Bihar origin. Caste no bar. Early marriage.

MATCH for pretty *Agrawal Goyal* girl, 21, M.A. English, Father Class 1 Officer. Well placed Delhi family.

GAUR Brahmin, Graduate girl, 21 years, height 157 cms., fair colour belongs to a highly respectable businessman or well paid Officer preferred.

CHRISTIAN match preferably protestant for 22 years, Graduate, pretty, slim and

- homely girl, complexion wheatish, height 160 cms.
- MATCH for *Bisa Agarwal*, beautiful girl, 21, M.A. studying B.Ed., status family, very decent marriage.
- WELL-placed suitable Punjabi *Khatri* match preferably IAS etc. qualified company executive/professional or establish industrialist with excellent background for 24 years, fair, features, talented, 150 cms., tall graduate, self-employed girl from well-settled Delhi family. Early decent marriage.
- WELL settled boy for 23, 150, beautiful, M.A. homely girl, qualified cooking course.
- MANGLIK match for extremely beautiful, *Gaur Brahmin* girl, 21-1/2 years, 163 cms., B.A. B.Ed., doing M.Com.
- DECENT match for Punjabi *Jhatri* pretty, slim, fair complexioned girl, 26 years, 162 cms. Graduate Stenographer, Central Govt.
- MATCH for Punjabi *Arora*, homely girl, Undergraduate, 25, 160 cms., healthy, fair complexioned, respectable family.
- SUITABLE match for *Ramgarhia* educated girl, 27 years, height 152 cms., well-to-do family. Boy should be Graduate, Engineer or Doctor, willing to go USA preferred. Early and simple marriage.
- MATCH for beautiful, fair, homely, *Bisa Agarwal* Garg girl, M.A., 162 cms., 23 years. Father Engineer. No dowry.
- WANTED match for *Agarwal* M.A., fair, sharp-featured, slim girl, 23 years, 150 cms., 42 kg. Well established family. Early decent marriage.
- MATCH for Punjabi girl, fair, 26, 162, M.A. employed Central Govt.
- MATCH for *Bisa Agarwal* Garg beautiful, homely girl, M.Sc., 20.
- KAYASTHA match for trained post-graduate teachers, 33, wheatish, cultured. Decent marriage.
- SUITABLE match for a beautiful homely *virgin*, 37, M.A. (Part I) from a respectable Punjabi *Khatri* family settled South Delhi.
- MATCH for beautiful *Vaish Aggarwal Singhal Gotra*, M.A. girl, 23 years, 153 cms., only daughter. Decent marriage.
- MATCH for divorcee, attractive, beautiful Brahmin girl, 32, height 157, M.A., B.Ed., teacheress, 1300/-. *No bars*.
- SUITABLE match for M.A., B.Ed., *virgin*, 41 years, earning 1437 p.m or younger in age preferred. Status, education qualification immaterial. *C.D. no bar*.
- MATCH for *Aggarwal* slim, fair, beautiful girl, 24 years, 164 cms., B.A. (Hons.) employed

nationalised bank. Father class 1 officer.

SUITABLE match for *Gursikh*, M.A. girl, age 23, height 160 cms., daughter of an industrialist of U.P.

OFFICER match for pretty, Punjabi *Khatri* girl, 25, 159 cms., LL.B. of well connected officers family.

WELL settled suitable match for Punjabi girl, MA., 28, 156, only daughter of Army Officer, only brother Engineer.

MATCH for Punjabi, Govt. Staff Nurse girl, 29, getting 900/- P.M.

SUITABLE match, *settled UK, USA, Canada* for beautiful, *Khatri* girl, 21, educated, settled in London, now in Delhi.

WANTED a suitable match for a *Sikh*, smart, good looking girl, 23 years, 155 cms., M.Ed., B.Ed., B.Sc., Living in India, chances to go abroad. Preferably Doctor/Engineer, willing to go U.S.A. Decent marriage, *caste no bar*.

MANGLIK suitable match for *Arora* Graduate, slim, well-featured girl, 21, 157, belonging to family reputed businessmen.

MATCH for good looking *convent educated Gaur Brahmin* Graduate only daughter, 20, of senior class 1 officer.

WELL settled match for extremely beautiful (*Non-Agrawal*) *Vaish* girl, 24, 157 cms., M.A., B.Ed.

Caste no bar.

MATCH for Punjabi Graduate girl, 24, 155 cms., business family.

SUITABLE match for *Bisa Agarwal* girl, fair slim, 162 cms., 23 years, M.Sc., B.Ed.

MATCH for *Mahajan* girl, 26, 158 cms., Teacher, earning 750/-. No bar.

WANTED qualified handsome established boy reputed *Bisa Agrawal* family for good looking, fair coloured girl, graduation in English medium, 1st class carried. *Goyal gotra*, belonging M.P. very decent marriage.

SUITABLE match for *Saxena Dusre* girl, 32, 164 cms., M.A. Teacherees, good looking.

MATRIMONIAL negotiations invited from well placed *Gursikh* family for a smart, beautiful, M.A. (Economics), 21-1/2 years. Girl height 162 cms. Daughter of a Class 1 Officer in the Revenue Service.

WELL settled, Post-graduate of *high status* Punjabi family, preferably Medico for very beautiful, Punjabi, MBBS girl, 22. *Internee. Father reputed Eye Surgeon*.

WELL placed match in service, profession, business for high standing, *Saraswat Brahmin* family. *Convent educated*. Irwin B.Sc., daughter 25-3/4, height 160 cms.

HANDSOME match for *Vishwakarma Brahmin*. Teacheress, Graduate, 23, 158

- cms., extremely beautiful, fair and slim. *Father in Government service.*
- SUITABLE match for educated, slim, beautiful, 18-1/2 yrs. height 160 belongs to *Kapoor* Family. No bar. *Early and decent marriage.*
- MATCH for *Khatri Arora* girl, 18, homely, wheatish complexioned, height 150. *Decent marriage.* Correspond with full details in first instance.
- MUSLIM Class 1 *Sunni Officer*, Engineer, Doctor, Businessman for charming graduate homely 23 years, 148 cms., only daughter, businessman family.
- MATCH for a Delhi area, *Hindu Jat* girl, 21 years, M.A. Final.
- TALL match, Gazetted Officer, CA or Business Executive, around 35 for trained Post-Graduate, Music knowing, *Bhatnagar* sisters, elder English lecturer, 1400/- monthly, transferable in Uttar Pradesh, younger Research Scholar.
- WANTED Officer, Engineer, Doctor, Business Executive for a beautiful Graduate *Gaur Brahmin* girl of 25 yrs., height 150 cms. Caste no bar. Early decent marriage.
- MATCH for *Khanna, Khatri* girl. 23-1/2, B.A. Father doctor. Businessman preferred.
- WELL placed, handsome, tall match for extremely beautiful, Graduate, *Khatri* girl, 23 years, 165 cms., well versed in household wears specs.
- WANTED suitable match for *Mahalan* girl from Himachal Pradesh, 26 years, 165 cms., M.A., Basic Trained, wheatish complexion, slim, tall, well versed in household, middle class family, educated at Dehra Dun. Caste no bar. Full particulars first instance. Early decent marriage.
- MATCH for educated, pretty, Punjabi *Khatri* girl, 30 years. 152 cms., separated soon after marriage.
- SUITABLE match for post-graduate, 23 years, girl, height 155 cms., fair, well established *Arora* family. Caste no bar. Early marriage.
- MANGLIK match, suitable for Post-Graduate, slim, beautiful, homely, *Bisa Agarwal* girl, 23 years, 162 cms., respectable family.
- MATCH for *Bhatnagar* girl, 24, M.Sc. (Physics) Research Fellow, 155 cms., wheatish, slim, good looks.
- MATCH for Punjabi *Brahmin, Mohyal*, girl, fair, beautiful, 26 height 164. Graduate English Honours. Teacher Public School, Delhi.
- MATCH for *Arora*, slim, fair, graduate girl, 24, 152 cms., employed Central Government.
- BOY from good family and means for very fair B.Sc., 20 years, 152 cms., girl from respectable *Punjab Khatri* family. Decent early marriage.

WANTED a tall, Medico, Engineer, IAS, or Businessman for a convent educated, slim, sweet natured, fair complexion, pretty MBBS, Vaish girl, age 25, height 165 cms.

SUITABLE match for business family or drawing good four-figure for a divorcee *Khatri*, beautiful homely girl, 23 years, 154 cms. Daughter of a Contractor.

MATCH for highly connected Brahmin, Post-graduate, fair, slim, 153 cms., 26-1/2 years, girl Bank Officer, drawing 1700/-.

MANGLIK Gaur Brahmin for 21 years, 155 cms., Bank employed girl, Ht. 155 cms.

SUITABLE match for Saraswat Brahmin M.Sc., B.Ed., girl, 26 years 162 cms., slim, smart.

SUITABLE match for L.I.B., beautiful, slim, homely girl, 24 years, from respectable, *Bisa Agarwala* family. IPS, IAS, Executives preferred. Caste no bar.

MATCH for Punjabi *Khatri* girl, 24-1/2 years, 156 cms., slim, fair complexion, homely, M.A. diploma Textile Designing, Decent marriage.

WANTED well settled, educated *non-Tayal Agrawal* match for a homely, beautiful girl, 21, meritorious M.A. English, height 185 cms., family of status.

FOR A self made graduate *Khatri* girl of not very fair complexion

but otherwise very sweet and homely. Employed in an expanding export house drawing Rs700/- suitable match.

HIGHLY placed match around thirty for 28 years. Punjabi girl, tall, slim, Lecturer, Rajasthan.

MATCH for beautiful, smart, fair complexion Agarwal Garg girl, twenty-two, height 162 cms., Convent educated M.A. English. Early and decent marriage.

WELL SETTLED, tall, handsome match for *Arora*, accomplished, pretty, 24 slim, 154, graduate Delhi University. Daughter of businessman, middle class family. Early marriage.

MATCH for Punjabi *Brahmin* girl, 27, M.A. B.Ed., Delhi Admn., teacher.

WELL SETTLED, well educated match for *Punjabi Khatri* girl, good looking, 26, 160 cms., M.A. from local business family. Engineer, C.A., business preferred. Early marriage.

SUITABLE match for fair, beautiful *Arora* graduate girl, 23, 160 cms.

MATCH, earning around 2000, for Jain girl, 24-1/2, convented, graduate, beautiful, slim from millionaire family.

SUITABLE match for well placed Goyal M.Sc., girl, 27, 158 cms. 44 kg. salary 1200/-. Caste no bar.

MATCH for *Khatri Khukarain*, 25, 157 cm., fair, teacherees.

WANTED well placed *Maheswari* match preferably C.S. doctor,

- engineer or established industrialist for 21 years girl, white, beautiful, 150 cms. M.A. (Previous) from well reputed family of Aligarch. Early very decent marriage.
- ALLIANCE for 25 years, M.A., B.Ed., 155 cms. Punjabi girl from *Kamalia* family.
- GURSIKH local Medico match for M.D. girl working as Resident doctor, age 29 years, 152 cms., Early simple marriage.
- MBBS around 25, Punjab Hindu for good looking B.S. Chemical Engineer, USA girl, 22, 155 cms. Parents well settled in USA *Bhatia* preferred.
- SUITABLE status family match for tall, fair, beautiful *Bisa Agarwal Manglik* girl, 20 years, Convent educated doing M.A.
- MATCH for pretty Sikh girl, B.Sc., (24) from *Ramgarhia* family.
- WELL PLACED match of status for a fair complexioned B.Sc., 20 year Khanna girl employed in a Nationalized Bank, Local preferred.
- FOR GIRL of 34, fair, tall, *Syrian Christian* post-graduate, well connected well-employed.
- WANTED suitable match for pretty, slim, Punjabi Arora girl, B.A. age 22, height 155 cm., middle class business family. Respectable marriage.
- WELL established match, preferably qua smart, Punjabi *Arora* girl, 5 ft., 5 inches, (165 cms), M.Sc., from Industrial, family in Punjab.
- FOR AGARWAL graduate girl, 24, average features, 164 cm., homely. Engineers family, broadminded. Decent marriage.
- WANTED Engineer, Doctor, MBA, C.A., for pretty, fair *Sikh Arora* Advocate girl, 27 years, 158, M.A., LI.B. Divorce (a week marriage life), family of status. Non-Sikh Punjabi divorcee.
- MBBS, Engineer, local match for *Khatri* Medico girl, 26, height 158, slim, very fair, beautiful Govt. service, 1450, Early marriage.
- MATCH for *Punjabi Khatri*, slim, wheatish girl, 26, height 158, M.A. Govt. teacheress, Moradabad middle class family. Early marriage.
- SIKH match for 23, girl, 154, graduate, employed, 520/-.
- SUTABLE match for issueless, legally divorced Punjabi Arora girl, 28-1/2, fair, 163 cms., graduate, steno, drawing Rs 600/-.
- JAIN *Aggarwal* boy for *Digamber Jain Manglik* girl, 24, graduate, 157 cm., slim & fair belonging respectable family. Early decent marriage.
- GURSIKH for 27, fair, 157, M.A., B.Ed., teacheress, local Central School, homely, respectable family. Decent marriage.
- PROFESSIONAL, well settled matches for smart, homely, UP *Khatri* sisters 24/154, 22/151, graduate, secretarial diploma. Both employed Delhi. Caste no bar.

MATCH FOR BEAUTIFUL
Agarwal girl, 24, 158 cm. M.A.

SUITABLE Sikh match for B.Sc., beautiful serving girl, 25 years, drawing salary in four figures. Early marriage.

MATCH for beautiful, charming, slim, M.A. (Eco) girl, well versed in households, 26 yrs. 167 cms., from well-to-do respectable Punjabi Khatri family. Boys settled in USA preferred.

FOR BEAUTIFUL, postgraduate *Brahmin* girls of 22 and 23 years wanted well placed boys. Father Senior United Nations Official posted Japan.

KAYASTHA match for *Srivastava* girl, B.A., 21 years, 150 cm.

WELL EDUCATED match for really beautiful *Basal*, 25 years, 47 kg. slim, 161 cms. postgraduate qualified, US immigrant visa holder girl. Early decent marriage.

MATCH for *Khukhrain* graduate girl, slim, beautiful, 26 yrs., 160 cms., employed, Rs 850.

FOR PUNJABI *Brahmin* girl, 165 cm., fair, slim, sharp featured, 26 years, B.Sc., Home Science, post-graduate diploma in Nutrition and Tourism training in Painting, J.J. School of Arts, Bombay. Respectable family.

PROFESSIONALLY qualified, well settled Hindu match from cultured family settled in India or abroad for a beautiful Convent educated M.A. girl, 24 years, 162 cms, Father retired

Senior Executive in foreign concern.

WELL placed Gursikh match, pref, *Khatri Rajput Jat* for Art loving, homely girl, 22 'O' Level London University and her sister, 20, appearing in B.A. 1980.

MATCH with status desired for decent family Punjabi *Brahmin virgin*, 22, slim, smart, homely, cultured M.A. Ph.D. in process. No bar.

MATCH for beautiful Khatri girl, B.A. employed in External Affairs Ministry, Rupees 750/-, 24-1/2 years. 151 cm.

WANTED qualified match for USA immigrant Punjabi career girl, graduate, height 148 cms, age 29, visiting for short duration.

WELL SETTLED and qualified match for beautiful, slim, talented, Vaish (Rastogi) girl, M.Sc., B.Ed., 24, 157 cms, of family of Engineers and Professors.

MATCH for very beautiful, 160 cms, slim Punjabi girl, 25, M.Sc., Convent educated, USA immigrant leaving 15 Feb. Early marriage. Caste no bar. Only handsome tall, highly educated with high income.

SUITABLE match from good status family for a good looking Punjabi Khatri-Setch, homely, working graduate girl, salary in four figures, age 30 years, height 155 cm, father-brother in business. Early marriage.

WELL SETTLED Engineer, scientist, Executive, Defense Officer around 34-38 for beautiful, homely, 160 cms, Punjabi professional graduate girl, Central Govt. employee, drawing 1400/-. Issueless widower/divorce eligible.

WANTED match for 27 years Kayastha girl 155 cms, wheatish fair, Govt. employee in Delhi drawing 650.

MATCH for Khatri virgin, 30, 155 cm. fair complexion, higher secondary, BTC trained teacheress.

SUITABLE match for 27 years, beautiful, fair complexioned, homely girl, M.A. 157 cms, from respectable Brahmin family.

KAYASTHA matches for Manglik, M.A., B.Ed., 24, height 150 cms, wheatish girl, and for M.A. 22, height 155 cms, wheatish sister.

DECENT family, well placed, handsome around 27 for slim, pretty, good natured Punjabi Khatri girl, 21, height 158 Public School educated, B.Sc., Home Science doing B.Ed., Father Senior Executive leading concern well connected family.

SUITABLE match for 20 years, pretty *Marwari Aggarwal*, girl, 153 cms, undergraduate. *Jindal gotra*, Father reputed businessman at Haryana. Boy well settled in business or professionally qualified from high status family preferred.

MATHUR grooms, age about 30 and 27, decently settled from high status family for girls, M.A. and M.A. Part I, fair, slim, convent educated, highly talented from high placed family.

WELL EDUCATED and highly placed match for Khatri, beautiful, very fair, M.Sc., B.Sc., 160 cms, 26 years, girl studying did various courses in interior decoration and household jobs. Early marriage.

MATCH for Kayastha, beautiful, rich, teacheress, 25 govt. service.

MATCH for beautiful, rich Sikh Saini girl, 22.

WANTED match for fair, slim, Vaish girl, 22, double M.A. height 160 cms, no dowry.

WANTED a highly qualified boy preferably Medico for MBBS Punjabi girl, 25 years, 158 cm, from a respectable family of high status.

FOR VERY beautiful, slim, 23, Punjabi girl, graduate. Convent 152 cms, only child, decent marriage. Caste no bar. Only handsome, higher educated income above 2000.

MATCH for Punjabi graduate, Convent educated girl 29, 157 cms, fair and beautiful locally employed. No bar. Early simple marriage.

MATCH for Agarwal Garg girl, M.A., 24, Delhi family. Decent marriage.

M A T C H for beautiful,

post-graduate officer's daughter, 28 Delhi technical service.

WELL educated Jat Kikhm over 30, for 33 years, legally divorced girl, settled in Canada.

GURSIKH match for beautiful, 22, girl, 165, stenographer. Previous so-called marriage, legally annulled.

QUALIFIED match in business or service for accomplished MBA, Business Executive, slim, pretty girl, 30.

WANTED tall, suitable match for thirty-two years, beautiful, slim, fair, girl, height 167 cms. Business Executive Income four figures, widower or divorcee with good family background can also be considered.

GURSIKH match for homely, smart, slim, Khatri girl, 23 years, 152 cms., M.A. respectable Rawal Pindi family.

SUITABLE match for intelligent, pretty, Punjabi Khatri, M.A., B.Ed., 25, 160 cms, homely girl, respectable family.

WELL settled match, Engineer, Doctor, Executive, Businessman for pretty, fair, talented, M.A., B.Ed., 24 yrs. Punjabi girl of highly educated and well connected family. Father Doctor.

MANGLIK match for Aggarwal, B.S.; Ll.B. Taxation practicing girl, 23 years, 155 cms, slim body, wheatish complexion, very early decent marriage.

MEDICO MS/MD Rajput match for beautiful, MD girl, 30 years.

GURSIKH match for Graduate, Khatri girl, 30. Teacheress 800/- P.M.

MATCH for Arora girl, 28, Matric. 158, 800/- Bonus, Government Recognized Company, better prospects. Early marriage.

WANTED handsome, Agarwal, Medical Doctor only, willing to go America, for Agarwal girl, 22, slim, tall, exceptionally beautiful, educated, and settled in America. Girl and parents is in India for short stay. Early decent marriage.

SUITABLE match for Bisa Aggarwal, Mangal Gotra girl, 24 years, 160 cms., M.A. fair, smart, homely, early decent marriage.

GURSIKH match, well placed for 20 years, slim, pretty girl. Graduate, early decent marriage.

NON-GARG, Engineer, CA, IAS, suitable match for 21 years, slim. 155 cms, tall fair, intelligent, homely girl, studying Post-graduate talented in Painting, Driving and settled Delhi.

GURSIKH, Delhi based match for Arora girl, Graduate, homely, beautiful, religious, 26-1/2, 162 cms. Government service. Engineer/Medicos, non-drinkers preferred. Brother in America.

MATCH for Punjabi Khatri, good looking, convent educated, B.Sc. Home Science girl, 160, 23 yrs.

MATCH for Sikh Ramgarhia girl,
26, 160 cms, M.A., submitting
Ph.D. Thesis shortly, Lecturer,
getting 1400/- monthly.
MATCH for Convent educated,

tall, beautiful, Graduate, 170
cms, 21 yrs. old, Mahalan girl.
Father retired Senior Military
Officer Grade-I Central Service
Officer preferred. Caste no bar.

Appendix B

VOTE CASTING

Is it vote casting or caste voting? For, if the caste of the candidates is any criterion, then it is the latter which is to play a decisive role in the forthcoming mid-term poll. In the four northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab, caste considerations seem paramount in the selection of candidates. With 162 seats, these states account for a little less than one third of the total Lok Sabha membership.

Using the concentration of a particular caste in a constituency as the yardstick, the parties have chosen their candidates in various states. In Uttar Pradesh, the largest number of seats have gone to the Brahmins who account for 10 per cent of the state's 110 million people, the Congress (I) topping the list with 19 Brahmin nominees. Next in line is Janata with 15, Lok Dal four, Congress (U) seven and CPI which brings up the rear with one candidate. The Brahmin domination in Congress(I) is crystal clear.

Not to be left behind, the Janata Party and Lok Dal have their caste backings too. Every third candidate of the Lok Dal is either a Yadava or a Kurmi – backward classes – as against every third candidate of the Janata Party who is either a Thakur or a Rajput. Against Janata's 26 Thakurs, Lok Dal has four, Congress(I) 10 and Congress(U) eight. Both, Lok Dal and Congress(I) have scored over Janata as far as Muslim candidates in Uttar Pradesh are concerned. As against Janata's nine Muslims, Congress(I) has 15 and Lok Dal 14.

Backward Classes: Despite the inherent caste base of every political party in Uttar Pradesh, every fifth candidate from a total of 284 belongs to the backward classes and every sixth candidate is either a Brahmin, a Rajput, a Muslim or a Harijan.

The scene next door in Bihar is not very different with the Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs dominating the Congress(I) and Janata ranks. With six Brahmin candidates, Congress(I) is on top again, followed by Janata with four and Lok Dal with one. Similarly, Rajputs (9) and Bhumihars (6) account for the largest chunk of Janata's nominees, whereas Lok Dal has just two each. In Bihar, nearly half (15) of Lok Dal's candidates are from backward classes – its mainstay in that state. Five of CPI's 16 candidates in Bihar belong to the Rajput and Bhumihar communities. By pitting only

three Muslim candidates as against Congress(I)'s seven and Lok Dal's five in Bihar, the Janata Party makes it abundantly clear that its Muslim following is limited. In Bihar, the backward classes dominate the political arena where every fourth candidate belongs to them.

In Haryana and Punjab, the tune is much the same except that instead of the Brahmins and Rajputs, the Jats and Sikhs provide the new note. A little less than half of the candidates in Haryana are Jat landlords, though they account for only 30 per cent of the state's population. Similarly, 23 of the 37 candidates of national political parties in Punjab are drawn from the Sikh community.

CASTE FACTOR TO THE FORE IN BIHAR

Even on the eve of the Lok Sabha poll, the political scene in Bihar was in a low key.

The dullness of the political scene, however, may be ambiguous, or the society is almost vertically split with the so-called backward communities up in the arms against what they call the "domination of the upper castes." In fact, never before has the State witnessed such compartmentalization of sectarian interests.

If the present trend is an indication, the caste factor is going to be the most important "poll determinant" in this State where casteism has eclipsed all political "isms" and assumed the ominous dimensions of militant tribalism. In at least 40 "sensitive" constituencies, the battle of the ballot is like to turn bloody.

The Overseas HINDUSTAN TIMES,
Thursday, January 3, 1980

BIHAR SWINGS TO CONG. (I) AGAIN

PATNA, January 9 (UNI). The Congress (I) which drew a blank in Bihar in 1977, captured a bulk of the 53 Lok Sabha seats today, making short shrift of the Janata party and its breakaway Lok Dal.

The Janata Party and Lok Dal had captured all the 54 seats in 1977. Now they are left with eight and five respectively. The Congress (I) tally is 29. One result is yet to come.

Among the other parties, the CPI and the Congress (U) got four each and the Jharkhand Mukhi Morcha Marxist Co-ordination and Jharkhand (Horo group) one each.

The Congress (I) now appears to be itching for a change in the state set-up. One of its top leaders, Dr. Jagannath Mishra, a former chief minister, is already in New Delhi consulting the party's central leaders.

The Lok Dal's edifice strenuously build on the "consolidation of farming Hindu middle castes, the phenomenon described by its chief general secretary, Mr. Madhu Limaye, as the emergence of new classes," collapsed against Mrs. Indira Gandhi's appeal cutting across caste loyalties.

Not only Mr. Limaye lost badly in his Banka constituency, But Mr. Ramswadesh Singh, the ardent champion of "backward castes reservation in government jobs" also was vanquished.

White its rival continued to pander to the caste sentiments, the Congress (1) was quick to discern the people's disapproval of dragging casteism in politics."

The Congress (1) campaigners came out in a big way with posters decrying casteism, "Na jat par na pat pat, mohar lagegi hath par" (Not on caste nor on creed, the seal (vote) will be for the hand) was one of its most popular posters.

Mrs. Gandhi in her hectic poll campaigns made it a point to attack what she repeatedly called "Lod Dal's casteist approach," which yielded rich dividends.

HARIJANS HARASSED

by

Former Prime Minister Charan Singh's men

Harijam villagers of Barwala in Chaprauli related to newsmen at the Janata Party headquarters in the capital tales of their harassment by Lok Dal workers. Four Harijans described the night of December 15 when masked men carrying guns ransacked their huts and attacked men and women.

One of them said they had sent a representation to the government, the Election Commission and the Japanta Party seeking protection to cast their votes, in the nearby booths which fell within Caharan Singh's constituency. They said they had been prevented from voting in the past and urged the authorities to ensure foolproof arrangements for a fair poll. This timely warning, however, went unheeded.

According to them, an official visited the village for enquiries and the attack on them came soon after. One of those who was present while their grim experience was being related to reporters was a badly bruised woman.

Six Harijan's resisted attempts to force them to vote for a particular candidate and were brutally beaten up. Reports from Meerut also quoted the police saying that nearly 4,000 Harijans were taken 'prisoners' by caste Hindus to prevent them from voting. They were rescued by armed police. All these incidents took place on January 3, polling day.

DELHI Recorder - 14-28 January, 1980

CASTE WAR IN GUJARAT

What started as a limited protest by some medicos in Ahmedabad against reservation of seats in post-graduate medical courses about a month ago has turned into a major caste war that has engulfed practically the whole of Gujarat. With the agitation going out of the hands of the student community, town after town has been mocked by violence, arson and street battles as pro and anti-reservation mobs have been indulging in retaliatory raids against each other. The trouble has spread to as many as 18 of the 19 districts of the State, leading to the imposition of curfew by both the authorities and the agitationists in towns like Surat, Rajkot, Jammagar and Nadiad. Police firings and stray incidents of stabbing took the toll to 22 last week. With a section of the labour force also join the fray, more than 45 textile mills in Ahmedabad remained closed for over a week and industrial and commercial activity has been severely disrupted in almost major towns.

The destruction of both public and private property, particularly State transport buses, would run into millions of rupees and organized arson has left hundreds of people homeless. Though there was a kind of surface calm in Ahmedabad after the two-day eruption of violence last week, nobody was prepared to bet on its continuance as feelings have been inflamed so much, cutting across political and professional loyalties. But the successful strikes that the anti-reservationists managed to organize in several towns and cities would seem to show that the general sentiment was against the unfair deal that wholesale reservation of the present kind had come to symbolise for the vast majority. The situation has been further complicated by the tacit encouragement given to the anti-reservation camp by some Opposition parties as well as sections of the ruling party opposed to Chief Minister Madhawsinh Solanki.

The agitation took a disturbing turn last week as reports poured in of organised assaults against members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes even from the countryside that had remained generally free from the caste canker. Perhaps this was partly because of the State Government's unwise action in ordering the closure of all the five medical colleges in the State for a period of six months. A spokesman of the Gujarat Junior Doctors' Association disclosed that several doctors and medical students had fanned out in the rural areas to educate the villagers on the reservation issue and thus intensify the anti-reservation agitation. The counter-propaganda launched by the beneficiaries of reservation hand led to many armed conflicts in Mehsama, Kaira and Amand districts that were once noted for

the docile nature of its people.

In an attempt to defuse the tension, the State Government conceded the students' main demand for abolition of the carry-forward system in post-graduate reservations for backward classes. The Chief Minister also signalled his readiness to reserve seats in all educational institutions for economically weaker sections irrespective of caste. Another proposal under consideration is to extend financial assistance to meritorious students from the lower income groups so that the caste-based reservation already in force for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as 82 socially and economically backward communities did not affect the prospects of deserving general candidates too much.

But, the students now want nothing less than the abolition of reservation from all post-graduate medical courses. The Government has rejected this as well as the demand of a militant group to scrap reservation altogether. However, there appeared to be no unanimity among the students as to what exactly were their objectives, as the plethora of students' action committees seemed to be vying with each other in being more militant and radical.

The Ahmedabad Medical Association, which has been wholeheartedly supporting the agitation, has urged the students to shun violence and continue their struggle in a peaceful manner. But the prospects of an amicable settlement appeared somewhat dim last week as the prolonged closure of schools and colleges swelled the ranks of the agitating students, strengthening their resolve to fight for the total abolition of reservation. And after a great deal of vacillation, the State Government invoked the National Security Act and detained a total of 23 people under it, including three leaders of the Gujarat Anti-Reservation Committee, a Bharatiya Janata Party corporator from Ahmedabad and a Congress (1) worker, Mr. Jayanti Subodh. Mr. Subodh, incidentally, is the Secretary of the All-India Harijan Vikas Committee, of which the Union Minister of State for Home, Mr. Yogendra Makwana, is the President.

Troops were called out two weeks ago to assist the Border Security Force and the Central and State Reserve Police, which have been patrolling the affected areas to enforce night curfew and keep the warning mobs at bay during the day. Several industrial and commercial concerns, including textile mills and banks, needed special police protection as the vertical cleavage among their Harijan and non-Harijan workers posed a security problem. And heeding the request of the State Government, the Centre has rushed in additional battalions of para-military forces to be deployed in all potential trouble spots.

In this surcharged atmosphere, the only hopeful development last week was the qualified welcome given by a section of students to the offer

of a general referendum on reservation in educational institutions that the Health Minister, Mr. Manoharsinhji Hadeja, had made a forthright back.

A notable aspect of the situation is the ambivalent attitude of almost all political parties to the reservation issue. While their condemnation of the violence unleashed by the students has been unduly mild, individual politicians of all hues have been supporting the anti-reservationists, some even openly. Only the BIP has come out with a clear statement that it favoured the continuance of reservation in services and educational institutions for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other backward classes. But there is a widespread feeling in the State that the awakening caused by the agitation will persist unless the reservation "injustice" to the majority is removed. Indicative of the present mood is the general slogan "Abolish Reservation," which even Government servants have begun to support openly.

The question figured in Parliament last week, when Home Minister Zail Singh categorically told the Lok Sabha that the reservation issue was not negotiable. He blamed the violent incidents on some "political parties and disgruntled anti-social elements who whipped up the sentiments of misguided students." He said the State Government was prepared to consider all legitimate demands of the students, but the abolition of the principle of reservation was not negotiable "as it was part of our policy to further the educational interests of weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes."

He narrated the efforts made by the State Government to resolve the dispute, and said that a committee had been set up to consider other demands subsequently put forth by the students, like introduction of the residency system and expansion of hostel facilities in different medical colleges. But Mr. Zail Singh regretted that "some interested elements have been trying to exploit the situation to further their own designs."

The Home Minister's statement came in response to the Opposition's concerted demand for a discussion on the "civil war" situation obtaining in the State. The BIP leader, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, and some others attributed the trouble to the rift between the Chief Minister and Mr. Makwana, who hails from Gujarat. He drew the attention of the House to the suspension for a week of the entire Opposition by the Speaker of the Gujarat Assembly and the Opposition's decision, in retaliation, to hold a parallel session of the Assembly. The BIP leader accused the Gujarat Government of mishandling the agitation right from the beginning mainly because of the infighting between the two Congress (1) factions in the State.

The Overseas Hindustan Times
Thursday, March 5, 1981.

GUJARAT STIR – NO SIGN OF LET-UP

The month-long turmoil in Gujarat showed no sign of any let-up last week as violence sparked by the anti-reservation agitation spread to more and more mofussil areas of the State. Police firing ordered to separate warring mobs in the industrial centre of Ahmedabad and at least four places in Mehsana district as well as stabbing incidents took the overall toll to 29. Indefinite curfew, which was lifted from Ahmedabad a fortnight ago following some improvement in the situation, had to be clamped again in the wake of the renewed eruption of arson and stone-throwing at the Shapur locality as well as the Ranip suburb.

At Unjha in Mehsana district, one person was killed on the spot when the police had to open fire to disperse a violent mob bent on setting fire to a cluster of Harijan hutments. Similar trouble witnessed at Modasa town in Sabarkantha district caused the death of a boy while the seven rounds of firing the police resorted to in self-defense at Gojaria village in Mehsana district left two people killed and several others injured.

Medical services in Government and civil hospitals remained paralysed throughout last week as the active involvement of junior doctors in the agitation added a new dimension to the situation. Four of them received minor injuries when the police used lathis after bursting teargas shells to disperse a procession of about 700 doctors marching to the Navarangpura police station in Ahmedabad to seek the release of medicos arrested the previous day. This provoked the Ahmedabad Medical Association to issue a one-day token strike call to protest against "police atrocities." Some 160 doctors arrested during the anti-police demonstration were released later. The out-patient departments of most hospitals wore a deserted look as the skeleton staff manning the services were attending to only emergency cases.

Sporadic attacks on shop employees led to the closure of city markets and many commercial establishments for three days at a stretch in Ahmedabad.

The anti-reservationists proved their strength and the public sympathy they were able to evoke by organising a state-wide general strike, which was complete in Ahmedabad, with even banks heeding the call and all trade and business activities coming to a halt for a day. The response was quite good in several other towns like Surat, Baroda, Nadiad while in some other towns the strike was a partial success. Though the induction of a special task force of the para-military forces helped the re-opening of many closed textile mills after five days, many of them were yet to resume normal operations.

Meanwhile, the backlash against reservation brought in several sections of the urban middle class to make common cause with the

students for the abolition of preferential treatment to backward classes in matters of promotion. The issue has now become the wider one of the relevance of reservation and the double benefit it seemed to confer on some sections (at the time of entry to Government service as well as promotion) to the detriment of the vast majority.

The Gujarat State Gazetted Officer's Federation, associations of Cooperative Marketing Federations, the Housing Board Employees' Association and a dozen organisations of State Government employees have asked their constituents to go on mass casual leave in support of the agitation. The Government has warned its employees of departmental action if they pressed ahead with their protest plan. Simultaneously, the State unit of the Congress (1) decided to launch a propaganda offensive to counter the campaign of the anti-reservationists. And Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Yogendra Makwana, whose differences with the Chief Minister had been mentioned by the Opposition as one of the causative factors, not only attended the PCC-I meeting but pointedly said Government at the Centre. He appealed to the people of the State to restore peace and normalcy.

Mr. Makwana and Home Minister Zail Singh made much the same appeal to Opposition parties in Parliament to co-operate with the State Government in defusing the situation and direct their State units to desist from supporting the agitation. While Mr. Zail Singh reminded all parties of their commitment to the constitutional provision of reservation, Mr. Makwana gave facts and figures to support his claim that Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Gujarat never got any disproportionate share of the reservation cake as far as admission to medical courses or appointments in the faculty were concerned.

The Overseas Hindustan Times
Thursday, March 12, 1981

NOTES

¹Sunder Lal Sagar - *Hindu Culture and Caste System in India* (Delhi) 1975, p. 31.

²*Loc. cit.*

³*Loc. cit.*