

3. To appoint officers for supervising over prosecutions for the contravention of the provisions of this act.
4. To set up of special courts for the trial of offences under this act.
5. To set up Committees at appropriate levels as the State Government may think fit in implementing the measures and to support the State Government.
6. To do periodic survey of the working of the provisions of this Act and suggest measures for the better implementation of the provisions of this act.
7. To identify the areas where persons are under any disability arising out of "untouchability" and adopt such measures as required to remove disability from such areas.

Duties of Central Government: To take such appropriate actions as may be required for Coordinating with the actions taken by the State Government.

## UNTOUCHABILITY IN PRESENT SCENARIO

In our society there still exist feeling of superiority of caste and birth. We can experience the practice of Untouchability in everyday life around us, especially in rural and semi-urban areas of the country. Also, in big metro cities, the inhuman practice of manual scavenging is still existant. According to a news report of Press Trust of India (PTI), on 3rd January, 2014, four tea shop vendors were arrested by the Police in Karnataka for practicing untouchability while selling tea - they were serving tea in different types of cups to caste Hindus and SC/STs. The incidence shows that the evil practice is so deep rooted in Hindu society that even after 70 years of independence, it is continuing in one form or other.

However, it can be said that things are slowly changing; with the change of the mind set of modern generation. Today's youth with modern education and globalized outlook are viewing the social order from different perspective of equality and impartiality

and not from the religious or traditional point of view.

Hopefully, the wicked practice of untouchability would be removed from the society sooner rather than later and our country would usher into a new era of social equality and brotherhood which will reflect the true India of Gandhi and Ambedkar.

The SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 with stringent provisions (which extends to whole of India except the State of Jammu & Kashmir) was enacted on 9 September 1989. Section 23(1) of the act authorises the Central Government to frame rules for carrying out the purpose of the Act. Drawing power from this section, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules of 1995 were framed. The rules for the Act were notified on 31st March, 1995. The purpose of the Act was to help the social inclusion of Dalits into the Indian society, but the Act has failed to live up to its expectations as admitted by the Union Minister for Home Affairs in Parliament on 30th August, 2010.

The cure is part of the cause; as members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs), also known as Dalits, avail themselves of the advantages of reservation, and awareness of rights increases, the status quo of inter-caste relations in villages faces sever challenges. Increased reporting of incidents of violence is a natural product.

In 1989, the Government of India passed the prevention of Atrocities Act (POA), which delineates specific crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as atrocities, and describes strategies and prescribes punishments to counter these acts. The Act attempts to curb and punish violence against Dalits through three broad means. Firstly, it identifies which acts constitute "atrocities." Secondly, the Act creates provisions for States to declare areas with high levels of caste violence to be "atrocitiy-prone" and to appoint qualified officers to monitor and maintain law and order.

Unlike its predecessor, the 1955 Civil Rights Act, which only concerned itself with superficial humiliations such as verbal abuse of the lower castes, the POA is a tacit acknowledgement by the government that caste relations are defined by violence, both incidental and systemic. The POA gives Dalits vital ammunition in the form of legal redress for this violence.

Although the POA is a powerful and precise weapon on paper, in practice the Act has suffered from a near-complete failure in implementation. Ironically, the primary obstacles to implementation are intended to be the primary enforcers of the Act: the lowest rungs of the police and bureaucracy that form the primary node of interaction between state and society in the rural areas. Police have displayed a consistent unwillingness to register offences under the Act.

In 1989, the Government of India enacted the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in order to prevent atrocities against SC/STs. The purpose of the Act was to prevent atrocities and help in social inclusion of Dalits into the society, but the Act has failed to live up to its expectations.

The Act came into force with effect from January 1990. This legislation aims at preventing commission of offences by persons other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Act provides for punishment for offences of atrocities committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Comprehensive Rules under the Act were notified in the year 1995, which inter-alia provides norms for relief and rehabilitation. The Act extends to the whole of India except Jammu & Kashmir. The Act is implemented by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, which are provided due central assistance under the Centrally sponsored Scheme for effective implementation of the provision of the act.

[Article 243-D(4)].

12. One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women [Article 243-T(3)].

13. The offices of chairpersons in the Municipalities shall be reserved for women in such manner as the State Legislature may provide [Article 243-T(4)].

## UNTOUCHABILITY IN INDIA

*"God never made man that he may consider another man as untouchable."*

Mahatma Gandhi

*"Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindus from co-mingling and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion; it is a state of the mind"*

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Untouchability is a menace and social evil associated with traditional Hindu society. It is being practiced since times immemorial and despite various efforts made by social reformers such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar; and despite there being provision on abolition of Untouchability in our Constitution under Article 17, the evil is still in practice in our country.

## CONCEPT OF UNTOUCHABILITY

India's Constitution abolished "untouchability" way back in 1950 by which the dominant castes could no longer legally compel Dalits to perform any "polluting" occupation. Yet sweeping, scavenging, leather work and other degrading activities still remain the monopoly of the scheduled castes and the members of such castes are threatened with physical abuse and social boycotts for refusing to perform the humiliating tasks. Migration, reservation in the government jobs and services, obscurity of the urban environment has in some cases resulted in upward professional mobility among Dalits. But still the majority