CASTE AND THE CITIZEN*

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This article discusses two contrasting ways of representing India. The first is its representation as a society of castes and communities, and the second as a nation of citizens. When the British established their rule in the country, they were much struck by the distinctive features of Indian society, and particularly its division into castes and communities. Through their censuses and ethnographic surveys, they sought to map the social landscape of India and, in that process, heightened, to some extent, the social divisions that existed among the people. They maintained that democracy could not work in India because it was not a nation of citizens but a society of castes and communities. But, as the nationalist movement gathered strength in the 20th century, progressive Indians pointed to the many changes taking place in Indian society, and set themselves to the task of making it into a nation of citizens.

I will discuss here the distinctive features of Indian society and the ways in which those features may be represented. The first is the representation of India as a society of castes and communities, and the second as a nation of citizens. Each representation corresponds to significant aspects of the past and present reality, the first to an order sanctioned by immemorial tradition and the second to an order expressing the aspirations of India’s political leaders at the time of independence.

The systematic study of human societies began with the recognition that each society has a distinct morphological structure and that different societies have different structures. In this early phase of enquiry and analysis sociologists and social anthropologists were inclined to use the organic analogy widely and somewhat loosely. In the nineteenth century, the organic analogy was used extensively by the great English sociologist Herbert Spencer. It was also used widely in France by August Comte who was Spencer’s senior contemporary and by Émile Durkheim who was his junior contemporary and the leading French sociologist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Durkheim1 used the organic analogy to construct a typology of human societies or, at least, to formulate rules for the classification of social types.

The social anthropologist A R Radcliffe-Brown who was Durkheim’s follower in Britain extended the use of the analogy. Apart from the analogy between the individual organism and the structure of a society, Radcliffe-Brown2 noted that certain animal species, particularly among insects, are governed by a kind of division of labour from which something might be learnt about the organization of social life among human beings. Radcliffe-Brown realized of course that the analogy between humans and other animals could at best be used as a starting point for the study of human societies and that the organic analogy had to be used with great caution in view of the complexity, the fluidity and the dynamism of human society and culture.

While sociologists in general seek to identify structures or patterns in collective life and to study them systematically and comparatively, they do not all favour the use of the organic analogy. The opponents of that analogy would say that in studying animals we study behavior whereas in studying human beings we study meaningful action. If ants and bees assign meanings to their conduct, we cannot find out what those meanings

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are whereas meanings are important components of human action.

In dealing with human social arrangements, as against social arrangements among other animals, we have to deal with what Edward Shils has called the 'self-contemplation of society'. Human beings everywhere carry an image of a map of their own society and often of other societies as well. Such a social map is not always coherent and is rarely free from inconsistencies, not to say contradictions. As societies grow larger and more complex, the 'self-contemplation of society' becomes more clearly articulated. This happens partly through the emergence of intellectual specialists whose task it is to rationalize, systematize and articulate society's consciousness of itself. It gives rise at the same time to divergent representations of the same society and to disputes regarding their respective merits.

It is unlikely that all individuals carry the same map of the society of which they are members. As a society expands in scale and becomes more differentiated, the images and representations become more diverse. Men and women, privileged and disadvantaged classes and members of different religious communities are likely to view from somewhat different angles the same society of which they are all members. With the passage of time the divisions and subdivisions in a society change. Old divisions become effaced and new ones emerge. With these changes in the contours of society, the ways in which people view their society also undergo change. Despite all the variation and change, certain representations become established over time and acquire a kind of objective presence. These may be called the dominant representations of a society, and it is on these dominant representations that I will focus my attention.

I now turn to a discussion of two representations of society that vie with each other for pre-eminence in contemporary India. The first is the representation of India as a society of castes and communities, and the second its representation as a nation of citizens. The first has its roots in immemorial tradition and derives its legitimacy from it. The second is of more recent provenance and derives its legitimacy from the Constitution of India and the political ideals that gave shape to it.

The traditional social order had a hierarchical design. It was based on the primacy of kinship, caste and community, and the individual as a citizen had only a small place in it. While a great deal of diversity of customs and practices between the castes and communities was tolerated or even encouraged, the individual was bound by the customs and practices of the group of which he was a member by birth. Many commentators, including Nehru (1961), had pointed out that it was the group and not the individual that counted in the traditional social order. The individual could of course follow his own inner voice and renounce the world in order to become a wandering mendicant or a sannyasi. But there is a world of difference between the individual as sannyasi and the individual as citizen.

British rule initiated a process of churning in life and thought in nineteenth-century India. It opened up the prospect and the possibility of a new kind of social order that would be quite different from what had prevailed for centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century reflective Indians began to take an increasing interest in the ideas of citizenship, nationhood and democracy which the British brought with them as a part of their intellectual capital to India. The British themselves were not always happy when they thought of the political uses to which their Indian subjects might put the ideas to which they were being increasingly exposed. Their view by and large was that the Indians were subjects and not citizens and that they should be kept content in their subjecthood. But the genie had been released from the bottle, and it was not going to be easy to put it back there again.

New institutions, associations and professions began to emerge and to extend their influence in the country. Again, these were often established at the initiative of the British, but Indians soon began to make themselves at home in them, and sometimes to wrest the initiative in their establishment and maintenance from their colonial masters. The universities, the legal and medical professions, the civic bodies and, after 1885, the Congress party provided Indians with the kind of experience that would enable them before long to give shape and substance to the ideals of citizenship and nationhood.

The part played by open and secular institutions in the process of nation building cannot be too strongly emphasized. The first modern universities in India were set up in 1857 in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. They were from the start open and secular institutions which brought together persons belonging to different castes and communities and established new social practices and relationships. They also enabled men and women to interact with each other and created a new sense of the possibilities of individual achievement. Whereas in the west, and particularly in England, the universities had lagged behind in the movement from hierarchy to equality, in India they were in the forefront of that movement. They, along with their colleges, became the workshops in which ideas for a new kind of social order were forged and tested.
The new professions too played a part in developing the ideals of citizenship and nationhood. Indians entered the law colleges established in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and elsewhere, and some of them went to London for further qualification. They joined the bar and the bench in India where they worked alongside English lawyers and judges. It is remarkable how quickly they mastered the principles of the new jurisprudence. They soon learned through hard experience that if they were to claim parity with English lawyers and judges, they would have to concede parity to their fellow Indians without consideration of caste and community.

It is remarkable how many lawyers – Gandhi, Nehru and Patel, to name only the most eminent – joined the nationalist movement and took charge of its leadership. It is equally remarkable how many of them, notably B R Ambedkar, became members of the Constituent Assembly and gave shape to India's republican constitution. Their commitment to freedom from colonial rule made it inevitable for them to favour the image of India as a nation of citizens as against a society of castes and communities.

The divisions of caste and community did not disappear simply because the leaders of the nationalist movement were uneasy about those divisions which many of them regarded as obstacles to nationhood and citizenship. They remain as important features of the social landscape of India to this day. Some of the energy that was invested in the process of nation building before independence became gradually dissipated after independence. Politics took many unforeseen turns, and large numbers of people have become inured to the politics of caste and community even when they feel uneasy about them. It is this ambivalence about what kind of society India is and ought to be that gives to Indian democracy a character of its own.

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As the British settled down to the administration of India, they undertook to survey the land and its people methodically and systematically. Settlement and survey became important components of colonial rule by the middle of the nineteenth century. The British had entered a new and unfamiliar social world, and their curiosity was aroused by it. But they also had to bring the land and its people under their grasp in the interest of firm and effective administration.

From the middle of the 19th century onwards, after the administration of the country came directly under the crown, a new breed of civil servants began to arrive in India. Many of the young men who came – there were no women – had been educated in the best universities in Britain, and some of them had a genuine interest in science and scholarship and aspired to make their own contribution to knowledge. No doubt they came out to rule, but they also came to observe, record, describe, analyse and even construct theories about the new world they had come to inhabit. We will fail to make a just assessment of the vast body of work they produced if we ignore the intellectual ambitions of the men who ruled India.

The English intellectual tradition, in which the new breed of civil servants was reared, had a marked empiricist bias. The observation and description of facts had the pride of place in it. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the British were the best ethnographers in the world. No doubt they were helped by the fact that they also had a vast and far-flung empire. But the ethnography itself cannot be treated simply as an instrument of imperial policy.

The Indian intellectual tradition was very different in its orientation and, in any case, it had remained relatively stagnant for a long time. Its bias was for formal disciplines such as mathematics, grammar, logic and metaphysics, and not empirical ones such as history, geography and ethnography. The new science of ethnography was brought into India by the British. It is doubtful that Indians would on their own have created such a science for themselves in the 19th century.

The civil servants were not the sole creators of the ethnography of India. Missionaries, and even explorers and travellers, contributed something to its creation. The encouragement and support of the government enabled the ethnographic surveys to be organized on a scale that no private scholar could match. Indian assistants were used from the start, and from the beginning of the 20th century they were publishing ethnographic accounts jointly with their British seniors, and then independently. Soon Indian ethnographers were making their own contributions to the study of tribal and other communities. The first postgraduate department of anthropology was started in the University of Calcutta in 1920, and the first professional journal, *Man in India*, was established in 1921 under the editorship of the doyen of Indian ethnography, S C Roy and with financial support from the colonial government.

The decennial census was harnessed for listing all individuals according to tribe, caste, sect, religion and language. This was an ambitious exercise which sought to pigeonhole individuals into categories that were not always clear-cut or well-defined. But the enumeration of caste as a part of the census had become an established practice.
The actual ranking of castes was never as rigid or inflexible as the schemes devised by the census authorities presumed. Once the process of drawing up a ranking of castes began, claims and counterclaims began to be presented to the authorities on behalf of a variety of castes. Their leaders often argued that the authorities had assigned ranks to them that did not do justice to their current or their traditional social standing. No doubt the authorities took some pleasure in being sought out as arbiters in such delicate and yet vital matters relating to social distinction. They felt that they could act both knowledgeably and impartially. Their confidence in the importance of their work became reinforced.

The ranking of castes became an obsession with many ethnographers. They were often misled by their own theoretical preconceptions. They failed by and large to see the fundamental distinction between caste as varna and caste as jati, treating the latter as simple subdivisions of the former. Varna represents a conceptual scheme, the 'thought-out' order, so to say, as against the 'lived-in' reality of jati. Because the varnas could be arranged in a simple linear order of ranks from the highest to the lowest, they believed that, with time and patience, they would be able to arrange all the jatis in such an order of ranks. This was a delusion which merely intensified the competition for claims of superior rank and, with it, the consciousness of caste.

The hierarchy of caste was no doubt more rigid than the social hierarchy in Britain and elsewhere in the west in the middle of the 19th century. It is understandable that the British ethnographers exaggerated the rigidity of caste hierarchy when they first came face to face with it. It is ironical nevertheless that a growing section of the Indian intelligentsia was soon to adopt a critical attitude toward the hierarchy of caste which they saw as antithetical to the democratic ideals of equality and liberty to which they were being increasingly attracted.

The divisions and rivalries between castes brought to the fore by the continuing preoccupation with their classification and ranking had political implications that did not remain hidden for long. As Indians became more aware of the British interest in caste, many caste leaders approached the authorities and said that their community had been unjustly treated by society and that the government should do something to ensure that their just interests were protected and promoted. The British were not above playing one community against another and thus securing their own hold over the country through a policy of 'divide and rule'.

These various moves and countermoves have led to what Louis Dumont has called the 'substantialization of caste'. In other words, each caste became conscious of its distinctive identity and different castes began to compete with each other for status and, even more, for power.
The enlarged role of caste in the political process was viewed with increasing misgiving by the leaders of the nationalist movement. What they wanted above all was to leave the divisions of caste and community behind and to lead the country into a new future which would be governed by the principles of liberal democracy. Both sides believed that caste and democracy were incompatible. The nationalists believed that they could break free from the fetters of caste by which Indian society had been held back for centuries. The British were on the whole skeptical even when they made increasing room for democratic practices and institutions.

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Some of the policies and actions of the colonial government served to give a new lease of life to caste. Whether they were intended to do so or not is a different matter, but that was sometimes their consequence. There were other policies and actions, however, which had the opposite effect and served to undermine the social order based on caste. We must not condemn the British for doing things that reinforced caste and withhold credit from them for releasing forces that not only weakened the existing social order but brought into view the prospect of a new kind of society.

British rule introduced new ideas and institutions and also laid the foundations of a new middle class based on education and occupation. The middle class was still relatively small when the country became independent in 1947, but it has grown significantly in size since then. Its growth required some relaxation of the restrictions of caste, but its members have not always been shy to use the resources of caste to promote their own interests even against their proclaimed ideals and values.

The modernization of Indian society witnessed the emergence from the middle of the 19th century onward of a variety of open and secular institutions such as schools, colleges, banks, law courts and civic bodies that were different in their composition and character from the traditional institutions based on kinship, caste and community. They were open in the sense that membership in them could be acquired, at least in principle, without consideration of birth, and they were secular in the sense that they were not regulated by religious rules or religious authorities. These institutions were sponsored initially by the British, but Indians soon began to take a large part in their operation and management. The new institutions gave increasing scope to individual initiative and ambition, and became, in course of time, workshops for the training in citizenship.

Even while the colonial ethnographers were elaborating and refining their representation of Indian society as an inflexible and immutable order of castes and communities, that society was beginning to change. We must not exaggerate the extent and scope of the change, but we cannot deny that it was taking place and slowly undermining, if not the operation of caste, at least its legitimacy. Even Mahatma Gandhi, who had begun as a champion of varnshramadharma, had to tone down and then abandon his defence of caste.

Even while the ethnographers were continuing to accumulate evidence of caste customs and practices, many progressive Indians had begun to believe, somewhat optimistically, that caste was on its way out. The evidence, as we look back, appears somewhat mixed. There is evidence of the weakening of caste as well as of its increasing strength.

I would like to begin with the ritual opposition of purity and pollution which, when ethnographic studies began in the middle of the 19th century, was a central feature of the social order of caste. Some of the ethnographers of that time were acquainted with the classical literature of India including the Dharmashastra. They were struck by the correspondence between what they read in the texts and what they saw in the field, although the correspondence was far from perfect. It was, however, close enough, at least in their view, to lead them to believe that they were in the face of a unique social world that had remained unchanged for centuries if not millennia.

The ritual rules that received the most attention in the ethnographic literature were those relating to the exchange of food and water. The rules were not only very stringent, they were also very elaborate. Restrictions on the acceptance of food were indicative of the separation as well as the hierarchy of castes: Castes of equal or roughly equal rank accepted food from each other. Superior castes gave cooked food to inferior ones but did not accept it from them. Restrictions did not stop with food but applied also to the acceptance of water. Not everyone could offer drinking water to members of the superior castes. In many parts of the country the superior castes denied access to their wells to the lowest castes, causing considerable privation and hardship to them.

Ritual restrictions on the interchange of food and water have weakened all around and the decline appears to be irreversible. Many of the practices observed two or three generations ago have not only become obsolete, but now appear anachronistic and some seem hardly credible.
If caste was mainly a matter of ritual then there was good reason for believing at the time of independence that the system had been discredited and was on its way out. Indians who were working for freedom from colonial rule did not wish to be reminded of the peculiar practices of their forefathers.

Traditional economic activities had been so organized in the past as to be able to accommodate the ritual practices of caste without too much strain. The cycle of agricultural activities and the annual ritual cycle had become adjusted with each other through long usage. The new institutions and organizations that began to emerge from the middle of the nineteenth century established routines of work that were quite different from those of the past. It became increasingly difficult to undertake elaborate daily rituals without disrupting work in the new institutional setting. Adjustments were no doubt made at first as a result of which both the work and the ritual suffered. In course of time, the ritual practices came to be squeezed out as the new open and secular institutions gained ground.

A close association between caste and occupation had played an important part in the maintenance of caste identities. In the past the caste system provided the social basis for an elaborate division of labour in the economy of land had grain. Each caste, and sometimes each subcaste was, at least in principle, associated with a certain occupation which was regarded as the traditional occupation of its members even though they might not all actually practice it.

The association between caste and occupation was never rigid, although the principle on which it was based was widely acknowledged. Today the principle itself is disregarded and even rejected. A new occupational system has gradually displaced the old one, and this is one of the most significant changes taking place in India today. Particularly in the more dynamic sectors of the economy there is a predominance of what may be called 'caste-free occupations'. There is no caste or subcaste that has any special claims on occupations such as software engineer or management consultant as there were for those of the potter or the barber.

With the gradual, and it would appear inevitable, displacement of the old occupational system by a new one, the loyalty to traditional crafts and services has become weakened. In the past a person took pride in his ancestral occupation, no matter how lowly it was, and hoped to prepare his offspring for induction in it. This is no longer the case. Even temple priests now want to their sons to learn English and hope they will become engineers, or managers or civil servants.

Pride in the ancestral craft has been undermined by the aspiration for occupational mobility. It is not that there was no mobility in the past, but mobility in the caste system which has been studied extensively by sociologists was significantly different from occupational mobility in an expanding economy. Caste mobility took place in slow motion, as it were, whereas occupational mobility is rapid in its pace. But there is a more important difference. The unit of mobility in the old system was the group – a subcaste or a group of lineages – whereas the unit of mobility in the new system is the individual or the household.

The inevitable consequence of increasing individual mobility is that it leads to the differentiation of each caste and even subcaste in terms of income, occupation and education. Even in the past there might be internal differentiation within the caste, but the nature of mobility was such that it led the caste to be split in the long run into two or more subcastes. This does not happen under conditions of rapid individual mobility, and the caste simply becomes internally more and more differentiated without the formation of new subcastes as in the past. Paradoxically this continues to happen even as the leaders of the caste strive to give its members a keener sense of their own political identity.

As individual mobility increases with the expansion of the middle class, the individual finds it increasingly difficult to carry his caste or even his extended kin group along with him as he moves from one social level to another. Differences of income, occupation and education become more important in social life than the distinctions of caste at least at the upper levels of the middle class in metropolitan cities. The old rules of marriage become relaxed, at least to some extent. Even where caste remains a consideration in marriage, it is the family rather than the subcaste that takes over the responsibility for the regulation of marriage. There are sensational reports in the press about the role of khaps in the regulation of marriage in some rural areas, but such panchayats are becoming an anachronism.

In ritual matters, in the choice of occupations and in matrimonial arrangements the role of caste has weakened progressively. It has weakened but not disappeared. Caste in not just a matter of social arrangement, it is also a matter of consciousness. The consciousness of caste as a basis for social identity remains even among people whose lives are no longer strictly regulated by the rules of caste. Similarly, the consciousness of membership in a particular religious community might remain very acute among persons who do not abide by any of the beliefs and practices prescribed by that religion.
There is an ebb and flow in the consciousness of caste and community that does not follow exactly the same pattern as changes in education and employment. While the evidence points to the decline of caste in many fields of economic and social life, there is one domain, that of politics, in which caste has increased its hold. It would not be too much to say that democratic politics has given a new lease of life to caste. It is this, no less than poverty and economic inequality, that challenges the prospect of making India into a nation of citizens.

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India stood at the crossroads when independence came to the country in 1947. It was a time of great expectation and euphoria. The mood of the time was nicely captured by Nehru's 'tryst with destiny' speech in which he had said, 'A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance'. This sense that they were making history gave to India's leaders at that time the confidence and the determination to rise to the challenge of creating a new nation of free and equal citizens unconstrained by the ties of caste and community.

It can hardly be denied that the leaders of the nation at that time were men of exceptional ability and imagination. They had gone through a long and arduous struggle in which they had been sustained by the vision of a new life for their people. Did they forget all about the obstacles that lay in their way?

There were pragmatists as well as visionaries among the early leaders of independent India. They could not write a new constitution without keeping practical considerations in mind. Moreover, independence had been preceded by the trauma of partition, and some of them had experienced the force of the Non-Brahmin movement in peninsular India. As such, they were not blind to the challenges that the resurgence of caste and community could pose to the process of nation-building in independent India.

The anxiety that troubled some of the leaders even at that time was well expressed in the Constituent Assembly by Govind Ballabh Pant, a prominent member of the Congress party, later to become the home minister of India. He had said, 'The individual citizen who is really the backbone of the State ... has been lost here in that indiscriminate body known as the community. We have even forgotten that a citizen exists as such. There is the unwholesome, and to some extent a degrading habit of thinking always in terms of communities and never in terms of citizens' (Constituent Assembly Debates 1989 : I-VI, 332). Pant was cheered as he spoke but that did not mean that people were going to give up thinking in terms of communities and to think only in terms of citizens.

The same spirit was expressed only a few years later by Kaka Kalelkar, the chairman of the first Backward Classes Commission in the letter he wrote to the President of India while forwarding the report of his commission to him. His letter went against the majority recommendation to introduce caste-based quotas in employment. In it he maintained that the individual and the nation should stand above everything else and that 'nothing should be allowed to organize itself between these two ends to the detriment of the freedom of the individual and the solidarity of the nation's.

The confidence of people like Nehru in the prospects for India as a nation of citizens was sustained by the convenient belief that the fractious divisions of caste and community had been fostered if not created by the British. As always the realist who did not hesitate to speak his mind, Dr Ambedkar took pains to remain the members of the Constituent Assembly of the responsibilities they would have to shoulder in order to make the new constitution work. He said in his closing speech to the Assembly, 'But let us not forget that this independence has thrown on us great responsibilities. By independence we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame except ourselves'.

More than sixty years have elapsed since the country became independent, but the jury is still out on whether we will become a nation of citizens or remain a society of castes and communities. With the advantage of hindsight one can see that it would have been impossible to exclude altogether the operation of caste in the political arena. But the extent to which it has penetrated that arena and become a consideration in all political calculations is unsettling. The British had their own reasons for using caste in their political manoeuvres. But the sustained and relentless use for political gains made by today's leaders make those manoeuvres look like the work of amateurs.

I believe that Indians have become inured to the fact that their political leaders today are of a lesser breed than the ones who brought freedom to the country and created its republican constitution. They no longer look to their politicians for the regeneration of Indian society. It was perhaps natural to look to the politicians for the regeneration of India at the time of independence. But
there is no reason to assume that the failure of the political leadership at a certain turn in the country's history must stand for the failure of the country as a whole.

When a country with a population as large and diverse as India's begins to change, its different sectors do not all change at the same pace or even in the same direction. It is worth noting that while politics and governance became increasingly fractious and ineffective in the last two decades, the same period witnessed steady and commendable advances in the economy. The economy is now no longer tied down to what used to be called 'the Hindu rate of growth'. The Indian economy is beginning to be regarded as a powerhouse all over the world. A considerable amount of initiative and energy is now also invested in voluntary associations which operate in the social sector which is distinct from both government and business.

Science, technology, business, enterprise and voluntary action draw individuals into fields of activity in which the claims of caste and community, on which our vote banks thrive, cannot be easily accommodated. As he enters into new relationships in all these fields, the individual becomes increasingly aware of his rights as a citizen. But the awareness of rights does not create automatically or at once the awareness of responsibilities. Yet the individual becomes a citizen in the full sense only when the obligations of citizenship become ingrained in him in the way in which obligations to caste and community were ingrained in earlier generations of people.

Citizenship is not just a matter of rights, it is also a matter of attitudes and values. Those attitudes take time to become established in the hearts and mind of people. Nothing is easier than to inscribe new rights in a constitution, and nothing more difficult than to change the habits of the heart.

The habits of citizenship are not a gift of nature; they are a product of history. They grow and mature slowly, under particular social and political conditions. We must not assume that those conditions are present everywhere and at all times. In India today some of the prevalent conditions are favorable to the growth of citizenship while others are adverse. We must not focus our attention on only those conditions that favour its growth and take our eyes away from the ones that hinder it.

The Indian social tradition, as I have already said, favored the group over the individual. This was true to some extent of all pre-modern societies, but it was particularly true of India. The citizen is, above all, an individual, and his rights and responsibilities exist without consideration of his or her membership of any caste or community. An individual may not belong to any caste or community but still be a citizen, whereas until 1850, at least among the Hindus, expulsion from caste amounted to civil death.

Even in Britain, where the institutions of constitutional democracy became established early, the advance of citizenship from the eighteenth to the twentieth century and beyond was a slow and uneven process. In India, the roadblocks against the advance of citizenship are more numerous and more obdurate. Both government and opposition have in the last few decades used these roadblocks for their own political gains instead of attempting to clear them. For this reason the future remains uncertain. What is certain in that we can no longer depend solely or even mainly on our political leadership to clear the way for building a nation of citizens. We were exceptionally lucky in the political leaders we had at the time of independence: Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar and many others. It was a mistake to have thought that our luck would last for ever. It has now run out, and we have to look beyond our fractious and self-serving political leadership if the endeavor to build a nation of citizens that was begun at the time of independence is to continue and advance.

References