



HARIJAN TOUR

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ABSTRACT:

Mahatma Gandhi undertook India wide tour for awakening the masses against the practice of untouchability. It is popularly known as ‘Harijan Tour’. He moved from place to place where he addressed meetings and meet volunteers who had been working for the eradication of untouchability. His distinguished co-workers in this endeavor were – ThakkarBapu, KakasahebBarve, and K.V.Date etc.

During the ‘Harijan Tour’ in the North and South India, the orthodox Hindus staged demonstrations at different places.

During ‘Harijan Tour’ he tried to bring in fundamental change in the attitude of the caste Hindus. Thus, the sole object of the ‘Harijan Tour’ was to place the reformer’s view point before the sanatana Hindus who were saturated with the notion of the untouchability, believing it to be desirable part of Hinduism.

Key Words:-Harijan, Untouchability, Untouchables, Harijan Tour, Mahatma Gandhi.

INTRODUCTION:

Immediately, after Poona Pact, Gandhiji embarked upon an anti-untouchability campaign. In 1934, he undertook the great anti-untouchability India-wide tour for awakening the masses against untouchability, it is popularly known as ‘Harijan Tour.’ In the words of Muriel Lester, “For months, we went from place to place. He held seven open air meetings in one day. After the long speeches, there would be a collection and then, a long procession of people. Who brought gifts, often taking off their jewellery to offer him. Then, he became an auctioneer, nothing was too insignificant to have his attention and to fetch its price.”¹

It is very significant to note that, Gandhiji never wished to embark upon a revolutionary programme for the untouchables. That would have hurt the sentiments of Hindus, resulting cracks in the ‘congress’.

Here, it is essential to understand, the psychology of Gandhiji in ushering, an all-India programme for the uplift of the untouchables. He, therefore, believed that public opinion should be carefully cultivated and the majority should be

concerted before the reform could be successfully carried out. In this connection, he stressed on the doctrine of change of heart.

Consequently, Mahatma Gandhi had commenced his famous, 'Harijan Tour' on November 7, 1933 with a visit to Ram Mandir at Wardha, which was thrown open to the Harijan during his purificationaryyajna. On the same day, Gandhiji declared open a private temple of 'Ramdeoji', a Marwari merchant, to the Harijans. In a speech at this function, Gandhiji, further, said, "I hold it a blasphemy to say that, the creator resides in a temple from which, a particular classes of his devotees sharing the faith in it, are excluded. This will be true temple only from this day, when it is declared open to Harijans."²

In a meeting in 'Nagpur' on November 8, 1933, Gandhiji observed andbefore, a huge assembly of students at 'Nagpur' on November 9, 1933 that, he was not confined to Hinduism and if the untouchability was removed from the Hindu heart, he expected a great change in Indian society. ³ The barrier of untouchability, he said, was a great hindrance towards achievement of any kind of unity. He was, however, not sure, if his dream about the removal of untouchability would for achieved during his life.⁴

Thus, as soon as Gandhiji was released from Jail, he undertook an 'All India Harijan Tour' commencing from Wardha, on November 7, 1933 and ending in Banaras towards the end of July 1934. It was, indeed, an arduous nine month 'Harijan Tour'. It is very significant to note that, this lengthy tour had created an infinite urge among the people that untouchability must go.

Gandhiji had to rest content with his own propaganda against the caste system and untouchability through his mouth piece 'Harijan Weekly' and innumerable speeches made by him at various places that, he visited during the Harijan tour.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF HARIJAN TOUR:

Aims and objectives of Harijan Tour, undertaken by Gandhiji firstly, explain as "This tour aimed at to place the position of me as a reformer before the public, which is mentioned at an earlier.

Secondly, it aimed at to project activities of the 'Servants of the Untouchables society' (HarijanSevakSangh). In other words, the Sangh's activities became known to all the public.

Thirdly, to collect funds for Sangh, for the upliftment of Harijans.

It is true that Harijan tour undertaken by Gandhiji aimed at removing of the untouchability and upliftment of untouchables."⁵

Mahatma Gandhi directed his time and energy exclusively for the eradication of untouchability. In September 1933, he moved to Wardha and announced his intention to gift the Sabarmati Ashram to the 'HarijanSevakSangh.' On November 7, 1933, he commenced his 'Harijan Tour' to promote the Harijan cause. During the nine months of the Harijan tour,

Gandhiji covered over 12,650 miles penetrating into some of the remotest parts of the country, he also travelled on foot in some part of Orissa and Bihar. He also collected eight lakhs of rupees. This amount was utilized for the educational and welfare activities of untouchables.⁶

Throughout his tour, Gandhiji called on caste Hindus to purge themselves of the prejudice against the untouchables. Similarly, he also urged the Harijans to shake off their old habit and the vices which came in their headway for the absorption into the Hindu fold.⁷

Gandhiji was of firm belief that, if untouchables were permitted to enter the temples. The blot of untouchability would vanish. It was this belief which promoted Gandhiji to incorporate Harijan tour as a part of his Anti-untouchability campaign.

Consequently, he made fervent appeals to the orthodox and sanatana caste Hindus to open up their hearts and treat untouchables as their brothers and sisters.

During 'Harijan Tour,' from November 1933 to August 1934, he had addressed the people at 161 places and covered a distance of 12,650 miles. He had also collected the amount which was utilized for the welfare of the untouchables. His distinguished co-workers in his tour were A.V. ThakkarBapa, Kaka SahebBarve and K. V. Date etc.

CRITICISM AND HARIJAN TOUR:

Mahatma Gandhi was very much criticised during the 'Harijan Tour'. Some people criticized Gandhiji that, he was devoted himself in the problems of untouchables only. On the other hand, he was likely to ignore the civil disobedience movement. The country's attention had been diverted to this issue and many congress workers had turned to the untouchables cause. For Gandhiji, Harijan movement was more important than civil disobedience movement.

Therefore, Gandhiji had to face stiff resistance from the orthodox and sanatana caste Hindus, who strongly opposed the Anti-untouchabilityprogramme. They went to accuse Gandhiji that, he was out to destroy Hinduism. Most of the congressmen, who were orthodox Hindus, could not accept this line of action for the upliftment of Harijans.

It is significant to note that PanditMadan Mohan Malaviya, who was one of the signatory to Poona-Pact of September 25, 1932, had opposed the 'Harijan Tour,' on the ground that, the declaration did not envisage the temple-entry movement.

Gandhiji was criticized on the ground that, he had devoted his energy and time to Harijan work after the Poona Pact. Therefore, orthodox Hindus stated that, "Most of us disliked it and we know that it would give a heavy blow to the remains of civil disobedience movement."⁸

The orthodox Hindus observed the activities of Gandhiji with anger, dismay and even hatred. They organized black flag demonstrations against him. Moreover, the orthodox and sanatana Hindus had disturbed his meetings. Controversies were raised in the newspapers. They had deliberately put hindrance in the Harijan tour. They thought that Gandhiji's Harijan work is against Hinduism.

Gandhiji was firm in his line of action. Gandhiji had declared in May 1934 that, he would cover the rest of his journey on foot, thus, fully exposing himself to the attacks of his opponents and he did so.⁹

Gandhiji went to Poona to commence his tour in Maharashtra on June 25, 1934. While he and his party were on the way to the 'Municipal Hall,' a bomb was thrown at him. He was escaped miraculously, but some members of his party were injured. He, therefore, expressed his deep pity for the bomb thrown and said:

*"I am not aching for martyrdom, but if it comes in my way in the prosecution of what, I consider being the supreme duty on defense of the faith, I hold, in common with millions of Hindus, I shall have well earned it."*¹⁰

Pandit Lal Nath, a sanatana leader and his young associates from the north came to Deoli on 11th November 1933. They threatened to oppose the temple entry by Harijans, by lying prostrate in front of the temple. They were shouting slogans in order to disturb the public meeting.

They made abortive attempts at 'Damangaon' and 'Amraoti' to hold up Gandhiji's car on the way by lying prostrate before it. They also obstructed the way of Gandhiji on November 18, 1933 at Akola.¹¹

However, they had, an hour before the time of the public meeting, put themselves at the gate, of guest house where Gandhiji had put up with a view to obstructing his way. Lal Nath told Gandhiji that he wanted him to give up his 'Harijan Tour,' he further asked Gandhiji to give up talking about temple entry for Harijans. Therefore, he was offering Satyagraha and paying him back in his own coin.¹²

Obstruction lodged by the orthodoxy minds with mala-field intention could not deter Gandhiji from his 'Harijan Tour'. He was firm in his determination that the problem of untouchables was mostly religious and the way of their uplift was the changed of the hearts of the caste Hindus, sanatanas and orthodox minds.

During, 'Harijan Tour' in the north and south India, the orthodox and sanatanas Hindus had staged demonstrations at different places against his programme for the eradication of untouchability.¹³ This explains Gandhiji's contention. His aim was to unite the people in the struggle against the British. He feared that any radical programme for the eradication of untouchability would alienate the majority and push them away from the cause. Therefore, this

empty exemplified Gandhiji's cautious approach to the problem of the untouchables, after the Poona-Pact. Gandhiji held that the down-trodden, who constituted there in India, could not go astray. In this connection, Gandhiji realized that, Harijan movement was only the first step in his programme of eradicating the feeling of discrimination that had unfortunately taken deep roots in the minds of the orthodox caste Hindus.¹⁴ Therefore, they opposed his programme and staged demonstration against Harijan tour.

As regards the Harijan tour, Gandhiji and the reformers had faced black flag demonstrations at Akola¹⁵, Palghat,¹⁶ Ajmeer,¹⁷ Kanpur,¹⁸ and Arrah.¹⁹

There was an incident of egg-throwing at a meeting in Nagpur.²⁰ At Jashidih, Gandhiji had providential escape when the demonstrators had attacked his car and smashed the hood of the car to pieces.²¹

It is to be noted that, as Gandhiji's campaign for removal of untouchability and the temple-entry for untouchables was marching towards the progress, the orthodox and sanatana caste Hindus became restless. Therefore, as the result of this, they had intensified their resentment. At Guravayur, just before start of the meeting on January 11, 1934, there was a scuffle between the volunteers and two sanataniists, namely, RadhaswaraSastri and Kalpanathji, representatives of all 'India VarnashramSwarajSangh,' resulting in serious injury to both.²²

At Ajmeer, unpleasant event took place. There was the scuffle between the volunteers and the orthodox sanataniists, which led to physical assault of PanditLalnath. It is relevant to mention that PanditLalnath, had burnt the portrait of Gandhiji. Therefore, Gandhiji had done penance by this incident for remaining on fast for a week from August, 7, 1934.²³

Gandhiji undertook this 'Harijan Tour' at the risk of his life. Fortunately, he escaped from the bomb attack by the sanataniists. Therefore, the more the opposition from orthodox, the more the response, Gandhiji received from the people.²⁴

In fact, Gandhiji had one mission before him the eradication of untouchability.

While explaining the significance of the Harijan movement at a meeting at Mysore city, Gandhiji observed:

*"Untouchability is going. But, we reform and purify ourselves, history will record that, our act, as a supreme act of purification on the part of the Hindus, if we fail in this trail, Hinduism and Hindus will perish."*²⁵

On 4th January 1934, Gandhiji said during 'Harijan Tour.'

"My mission covers a much wider theme than the economic welfare of the Harijans. We are bound to jealously, guard their economic and educational welfare. But this is not enough, if, we are to do reparation to the Harijans for the untold hardships to which, we have subjected them for centuries past. They are entitled to precisely the same rights and privileges as any other citizens and as a Hindus, they are entitled to the same social amenities and religious privileges

that any other Hindu is entitled to my mission, therefore, it is to invite savarna Hindus to wash themselves clean of the guilt of untouchability..... ..if this change comes in savarna Hindu hearts, the economic, social and religious progress of Harijans must follow. It will then his sign and seal of this change of heart as these purses, you have been kind enough to give me, I consider as an earnest of your determination to make that change of heart.”²⁶

To the women, Gandhiji made a fervent appeal to shed untouchability. He humbly asked them that, they considered Harijans and untouchables as impure, because they performed sanitary service, he further asked them what mother had not done such service for her children. It was the height of injustice to consider Harijans who were the most useful servants of society as untouchables and outcastes. Therefore, Gandhiji had undertaken this tour to awaken the minds of Hindu sisters to a sense of this sin.²⁷

Thus, Gandhiji gave them the essence of Hinduism. In Delhi alone, he collected Rs.90, 000/- during his tour. As a result of this, critics condemned his practice of appealing to women for the gift of their ornaments and his auctioning things given as donations. He, therefore, replied the critics that he was making collections for the Harijan cause, which he regarded as a mission of penance and purification.²⁸

To answer the critics, Gandhiji had assured them that he claimed to be a true sanatanist because he made the greatest efforts to maintain the truth as he saw it. There was certain diversity in the world but it meant neither inequality nor untouchability. Therefore, there could, not be room for distinctions of ‘high and low.’ In this way, he never gave a place to untouchability in his long cherished Hinduism since his childhood. While addressing the meeting, he said:

“Forget, altogether that some are touchables and some are untouchables, some are high and low. I know that, you all believe in God as I do. And God can not be so cruel and so unjust, as to make the distinctions of high and low between man and man, women and women. If untouchability lives, Hinduism dies, I have no hesitation in saying that even God’s patience can be exhausted and he will no longer be patient towards atrocity that man has been doing to man in Hindu India.”²⁹

Everywhere, Gandhiji went on sounding the note of warning to the caste Hindus as well as the untouchables too.

He said at another meeting, “I do not want to create dissension, I assure those who oppose me that, I shall not do a single thing which, I know may be contrary to truth and love.”³⁰

He further, added that this ‘Harijan Tour’ had created a hope in the hearts of Harijans. Therefore, they had begun to feel that they were going to be freed from serfdom. As the matter of the fact, it is said in all religions of the world that if the poor’s were deceived, if the hopes given to them were not fulfilled, it would

be a curse. In this regard, he said, "I have no doubt that if we play false, the curse of these poor people is bound to descend on us and we shall perish."³¹

To the Harijans Gandhiji gave his usual advice of self-improvement.

Thus, he said:

"You should wash your children every day and so should you wash yourselves. In the morning, the first thing you should do on getting up is to take 'Rama Nam' and pray to God that you should pass the day in sacredness, so that no wrong word may pass your lips and no wrong at may be done by you."³²

He further, asked them to give up eating beef and taking wine, this coloured water made them so mad that they forgot the distinction between mother, wife and sister. Gandhiji was told by Harijans that, the drink was prescribed for them on occasions of marriage and death. In this connection, Gandhiji said, "I can tell you, without fear of contradiction, that, this is the suggestion of the devil."³³

Gandhiji's 'Harijan Tour' had its effect on his health. When he reached Jabalpur on December 8, 1933, Dr. Ansari found that, the continuous strain had caused a rise in his blood pressure. Therefore, Dr. Ansari advised him not to strain himself for more than four hours a day.³⁴

In an important meeting with the members of the 'Central Board of the Servants of Untouchable Society' at Delhi, Gandhiji explained them how to carry on propaganda for two bills in the Assembly which were still under discussion. Therefore, during his tour at Delhi, He said that he was sure that, public opinion must be consolidated and it was the bounden duty of the board to secure the passage of the bills. But the members of the board must not rub the sanatanists in the wrong way.

Here, it is surprisingly to mention that, the members of Central Board of the Sangha were not interested in the problem of the untouchables, unfortunately their opinion was neither intelligent nor consolidated. They did not take much pain to study the problem, but they provoked in a state of anger and wanted to exercise under compulsion. It is true that they could not produce sound legal opinion in favor of the anti-untouchability bills. Therefore, it was held that this was an outcome of the orthodox and sanatanists Hindu minds under such circumstances. Gandhiji was looking forward with a great deal of pleasure for a stiff fight during his tour. In fact, Gandhiji had expected stiff opposition for this noble cause of Harijans.

Besides the strong opposition, Gandhiji could not move from his mission of the eradication of untouchability.

During the Harijan tour, he called a meeting of Harijan workers and gave them a talk on anti-untouchability campaign. Moreover, Gandhiji realized that, under such critical condition, anti-untouchability workers ought to work carefully.

Therefore, he urged the Harijan workers, "To make the purest of sacrifices for the sake of this cause which is essentially religious and is calculated to bring about a transformation in the millions of hearts."³⁵

Similarly, Gandhiji advised the Harijan workers not to harbor anger or ill-will towards the opponents, he further had made an appeal to the workers that the opponents were to be won over by love and considerable passion and not hatred and anger.

In answering to the question as to how to deal with the opposition of the orthodox and sanatanists Hindus, Gandhiji, therefore, had clarified his position in the following extract which is reproduced below:

On April 10, 1934, Gandhiji entered Assam and addressed a meeting at Rupsi. During his two weeks tour at Assam, he collected over Rs.17,000/- Here, undoubtedly his farewell speech was very touching. He said that, he did not set much store by money as such. It was, therefore, he had reputation of being an expert beggar, he wanted money only if he could carry with it the hearts of the donors.

Here, it is very important to mention that, Gandhiji would have collected the largest Harijan fund from the richest persons, businessmen and landlords, but he wanted money from the caste Hindus in order to involve them to his anti-untouchability campaign. In this connection, he further said, "If a single donor gave him one crore of rupees, he could not abolish untouchability, but he could undertake the task without single pie. If he could carry with him the hearts of one core of caste Hindus, let them know what he meant by the removal of untouchability."³⁶

On April 25, 1934, Gandhiji had commenced his 'Harijan Tour' in South Bihar. He faced the strong opposition from orthodox and sanathanists caste Hindus, who had greeted him with black flags. They shouted loudly and gave slogans against him. They broke the rear glass pane of his car. As the result of this, Gandhiji got down and walked alone a distance of one mile in heat through crowd of Sanatanists. Thus, Gandhiji believed that the orthodox caste Hindus had intensified their opposition because they discovered that the public opinion was fast changing and the untouchability was on its last lap. The Harijan tour had inspired the masses in converting their opinion towards untouchability.

Some critics had leveled the charges against Gandhiji that the Harijan tour had been undertaken for the sole purpose of collecting funds.

In this connection, Gandhiji acknowledged that, even the fewest, who were to be counted on one finger, had demonstrated the violent opposition to this movement. It is true that anti-untouchability movement was essentially religious in conception and execution. He desired the involvement of the masses with active participation in right direction. The amount collected during the Harijan tour had to be spent for the welfare of the untouchables.

In Orissa, Mahatma Gandhi undertook the Harijan tour on foot. He had commenced his walking tour from 'JagannathPuri,' where all Hindus received the prasad of lord of the universe on a footing of perfect equality. Therefore, the walking tour emphasized the spiritual nature of the Harijan movement. Gandhiji himself had described it as a 'walking pilgrimage.'³⁷

On May 10, 1934 Gandhiji and his party marched at Virpurshottampur.

Addressing himself especially to Brahmins, he said:

"A True Brahmins should be the very image of humility and not be proud of his knowledge or wisdom. A Brahmin would cease to be a Brahmin, if he thought himself superior to others, as it was his duty to instruct the people to look upon a Brahmin and a Bhangi with an equal eye."³⁸

He further, advised them to accord all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the rest of the Hindus. It would be painful to them, if they would say that, sinful people could not be allowed to enter temples. According to him, temples were like spiritual hospitals and the sinful, which were spirituality diseased, had the first right to be ministered unto by them. Temples were for the sinners, not for the saints. And, who was to judge, where, no man was without sin.³⁹

It is very interesting to mention that, throughout Gandhiji's Harijan tour, the sanatanists staged a black-flag demonstration on the route. While the Harijans showered flowers and welcomed Gandhiji with conch shells. Thus, Gandhiji's march continued and the Harijans began to appreciate the tour more and more. They not only met Gandhiji and his party but very often led them with a playing and dancing band.

In this way, Gandhiji's nine months Harijan tour closed at Banaras on July 29, 1934. All over the country, the day was observed as a day of 'Thanks giving for the successful termination of the Tour.'⁴⁰

It is surprisingly to note that, Mahatma Gandhi received a warrant on behalf of 'Lord of Kashi,' for breach of 'Sanatana Dharma.' In fact, it was, indeed, a last attempt of demonstration, staged by PanditLalnath. The Sanatanists publicly burnt Gandhiji's portrait as the protest.⁴¹

During his nine months 'Harijan Tour,' Gandhiji had promoted the Harijan cause. He also called on caste Hindus to make clean themselves of prejudice against the Harijans and at the same time, he asked the Harijans to give up the evil customs which blocked them for the absorption into the Hindu fold. He further made a humble appeal to caste Hindus to contribute their mite to the Harijan fund, which had no other end but the amelioration of the lot of Harijans.

Consequently, the caste Hindus, the men and women and even children had responded Gandhiji's, passionate and soul stirring appeals for the poor Harijan's welfare. They had contributed with donations in the form of money and jewellery and valuable articles. Gandhiji raised the Harijan fund by way of

auctioning with jewellery and articles. Therefore he collected funds for the welfare activities of the Harijan.

Here, it is very important to note that Gandhiji was asked what the amount was spent for the upliftment of Harijan till then. Since when he was interested himself with the Harijan cause. In this connection, Gandhiji replied to the critics that, "He began the Harijan uplift work in this country in 1920, when he brought the resolution to remove untouchability before the congress, he, further, stated that he began it first in South Africa and continued to work at Sabarmati in 1915. As the member of Indian National Congress, he made it a part of the constructive programme of the congress.

So far as the upliftment of Harijans are concerned, He replied that near about Rs.20,00,000/- had been spent for the removal of untouchability and upliftment of Harijans. Gandhiji personally had spent nearly five lakhs of rupees. A considerable portion of the Swaraj fund was spent for this purpose.⁴²

In regard to the Harijan fund, it has been observed that, Gandhiji, as an undisputed politician and a well reputed social reformer, who dominated the Indian political scene, had desired to raise the Harijan fund, he could have done so by appealing to a few wealthy men. But he preferred to collect donations from the Hindu caste public for the reason by that method alone he could achieve involvement of the caste Hindus in this noble cause and ensure change of their hearts.⁴³ However, Gandhiji had been charged that there was political motive behind his Harijan Tour.

To answer this, Gandhiji advocated that there was no political motive behind the Harijan tour. As the Poona-Pact, acknowledged freeing the untouchables from the evil of the untouchability, Gandhiji had undertaken the anti-untouchability movement, it is true that the Poona-Pact recognized untouchables claim for political safeguard, but socially, they were social lepers, segregated from the Hindu society on the principle of pollution. Therefore, Gandhiji thought over the problem of untouchability and its eradication from the Hindu society. According to him, the removal of untouchability would elevate the status of the Depressed Classes. Hence, after Poona-Pact, Gandhiji had devoted to the Harijan work.

Thus, commenting on this charge, he therefore, clarified in the following words:

"I would ask you to trust me. When, I say that, there was no political motive behind my Harijan work. The political consequences of the removal of untouchability have no attraction for me. Indeed, I believe that, if we approached this question with any political motive, we should fail to serve Harijans and we should damage Hinduism. The real removal of untouchability will have political consequences is true enough. A duty, religiously, performed carries with it several other important consequences."⁴⁴

Thus, it has been observed that, the orthodox and sanatani caste Hindus mounted a virulent attack on Gandhiji's anti-untouchability campaign and temple-entry movement. As a result of this, Gandhiji made it clear to the sanatani that he had no intention to destroy Hinduism, he politely appealed to them to get rid of untouchability which, according to him, had no support of the 'Shastras.'

So far as the temple-entry for untouchables was concerned he would not like a single temple thrown open to Harijans, if majority of the temple-goers opposed it. He further, made it clear that, the temples opened by him during his entire 'Harijan Tour' had the approval of the majority of the temple-goers. He also made it clear that he disliked the use of force in such a matter. He hated violence.

Thus, Gandhiji was not in favour of violence, he opined, "Violence is impatience and non-violence is patience. Great reform cannot be introduced without great patience, in violence lays the germ of failure."⁴⁵ Therefore, he was a firm believer in the idea that, "A change of heart is possible only in a free atmosphere."⁴⁶ In his view, "History is replete with instances of men who by dying with courage and compassion on their lips converted the hearts of the violent opponents."⁴⁷

Gandhiji, therefore, repeatedly advised the Harijan workers to shun violence and touch the hearts of the caste Hindus by their love, good-will and brotherhood. He had great faith in his mission as he was on "irresistible optimist."⁴⁸

Thus, Gandhiji ended his Harijan tour with an optimist note that, "untouchability is on its last legs, whatever happens, untouchability cannot survive for many years"⁴⁹

The Gandhiji visited many places and deliver many speeches during the Harijan tour.

Mahatma Gandhi had summarized his impression of the 'Harijan Tour' in the press interview. The extract of the said interview is reproduced below:

"The impression left on my mind is that untouchability is on its last leg. I am quite sure that, the message has appealed to the reason of the masses. I consider it to be a tremendous gain that the masses have begun to believe in the truth of the message. It makes the task of workers easier than before, it shows how heartily the masses have taken part in the movement. During the nine months of the Harijan tour, I covered over 12,650 miles and collected eight lakhs of rupees. I should mention that the eight lakhs rupees collected during the past nine months represent contributions from the poorest.

The third thing I should like to say about the tour is that, a demonstrable awakening on a large scale has taken place among the Harijans. Many of them have made unsolicited statements before me that the position had considerably

advanced and that they had confidence that untouchability would be a thing of the past in the near future. I share their confidence.

I would, of course, hope that Savarna Hindus will realize the wickedness of untouchability as it is practiced today and get rid of it themselves rather than that they should be compelled to do so by circumstances beyond their control. Whatever happens untouchability cannot survive for many years.”⁵⁰

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43. Government of India:-The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. LVII, p.470.
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49. Ibid.,vol. 3, p. 287.
50. Ibid., vol. 3, pp 344-345