

GANDHIJI'S HARIJAN TOUR IN TAMIL NADU

The decade of nineteen thirties was known for various vital landmarks in the history of freedom movement in India. The Civil Disobedience Movement (1930), the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931), the Three Round Table Conferences (1930-1932), the Poona Pact (1932), the General Elections under the Government of India Act of 1935, the formation of Congress Ministries (1937) were the major political events which took place in that particular period.¹ Moreover, in the meanwhile, Gandhiji emerged as an unquestionable leader of the Indian National Movement. His principles of Satyagraha and Non-violence had widely influenced the people and this led to the emergence of thousands of leaders throughout the country, even at the village level.²

As a part of the Non Co-operation Movement, the Congress had continuously boycotted all the elections to the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils held under the Indian

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1. Saroja Sundararajan, March To Freedom in Madras Presidency, 1916-1947 (Madras : Lalitha Publications, 1989), pp.460-470.
 2. J.B. Kripalani, Gandhi, His Life and Thought (New Delhi : Government Publications, 1970), pp.382-384.

Councils Act of 1919.³ As a result, the Swarajist Party became an alternative to the Congress at the national level and certain regional parties at the Provincial level. The Justice Party became an alternative in the Madras Presidency. While Gandhiji launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Justice Party was in power in the Madras Presidency. Despite that, the Congress played a commendable role in successfully conducting the Salt Satyagraha under the leadership of **C.Rajagopalachari**, President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.⁴ On the ground of conducting Civil Disobedience Movement, all the Congress leaders including Gandhiji were arrested and imprisoned. However, the Civil Disobedience Movement developed the image of Gandhiji as well as the Congress Party throughout the nation. In Tamil Nadu the people enmasse, even lived in rural areas also came under the grip of the Congress Movement. It was visible during the General Elections held in 1937 in which the Justice Party was routed out.⁵

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3. Gilbert Slater, Southern India - Its Political and Economic Problems (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1936), pp.312-315.
 4. B.S. Baliga, Madras in the Struggle for Freedom (Madras : Government Press, 1957), pp.16-19.
 5. B.S. Chandrababu, Social Protest and its Impact on Tamil Nadu (Madras : Emerald Publishers, 1993), pp.88-90.

When Gandhiji was in jail, the Indian National Congress boycotted the **First Round Table Conference** which was held at **London** from 12th November 1930 to 19th January 1931 to resolve the conflicts between the ruler and the ruled. However, after signing the **Gandhi-Irwin Pact** on 5th March 1931 Gandhiji participated in the Second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress.⁶ The conference was also attended by **B.R. Ambedkar** who represented the Depressed class people. In the meeting of the Minorities Committee which was formed among the 107 delegates of the Conference, Ambedkar demanded '**separate electorate**' for the Depressed classes in the Central and Provincial Legislatures.⁷ But Gandhiji declined to accept the demand of Ambedkar. However, the British who wanted to fish in the troubled waters, announced the '**Communal Award**' which gave what Ambedkar demanded.⁸ Gandhiji criticised the announcement and described the award as a plot to divide the

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6. S.N. Busi, Mahatma Gandhi and Babasaheb Ambedkar Crusaders Against Caste and Untouchability (Hydrabad : Saroja Publications, 1998), p.170.
 7. Vasant Moon, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : Writings and Speeches (Bombay : Government of Maharashtra Publications, 1992), Vol.II, pp.655-659.
 8. The Depressed Classes : A Chronological Documentation, Compiled by Jesuits in Kurseang, pp.1-2.

Depressed classes from the Hindu folk. In protest against the award, he started **fast unto death** on 20th September 1932.⁹ In order to save the life of Gandhiji, the leaders of the caste-Hindus under **Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya** conducted wide range of discussions with **B.R.Ambedkar** and other Depressed class leaders. As a result, Ambedkar agreed to give up his demand of separate electorate and signed the historic **Poona Pact** on 24th September 1932 with the leaders of the caste - Hindus and enabled Gandhiji to break his fast.¹⁰

Immediately after signing the Poona Pact, the caste-Hindus convened an All India Conference consisted of the caste-Hindus and Depressed classes at Bombay on 25th September 1932. It was resolved in the Conference that from that time onwards no one should be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth; they should be permitted to use public wells, roads, schools and other public institutions.¹¹

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9. U.N. Pyarelal, The Epic Fast (Ahmedabad : Mohaulal Maganlal Bhatt, 1932), p.20.
 10. Thomas Pantham & Kenneth L. Deutsch (ed.), Political Thought in Modern India (New Delhi : Sage Publications, 1986), pp.164-165.
 11. D.K. Dutta, Social Moral and Religious Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi A Critical Analysis (New Delhi : Intellectual Book Corner, 1980), p.90.

As the first step to carry on the propaganda for the abolition of untouchability, the caste-Hindus inaugurated an **All India Anti-Untouchability League** in Bombay on 30th September 1932 with the blessings of Gandhiji. That League was subsequently named as **Harijan Sevak Sangh**, having the headquarters at Delhi.¹² At the time of the inauguration of the League, Gandhiji was in jail. With true love and affection he named the Depressed classes as **Harijans** - the sons of God.¹³ He also arranged for the publication of a weekly paper '**Harijan**'. It appeared in English, Gujarathi and Hindi. Even from jail he wrote a number of columns in Harijan for the abolition of untouchability and for the upliftment of Harijans. He was released on 22nd August 1933.

On the day of his release, Gandhiji declared that "Harijan service would always be after his heart and would be the very breath of life for him, most precious than his daily bread". He further told that he could not live without Harijan service for one single minute.¹⁴

12. M.B. Verma, History of the Harijan Sevak Sangh 1932-1968 (Delhi : Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1971), p.53.

13. Harijan, Vol.II, 15th February 1913, p.6.

14. H.S.L. Polak, H.N. Brailsford & Lord Pathick Lawrence, Mahatma Gandhi (London : Odhams Press Ltd., 1948), pp.198-208.

After the formation of the Harijan Sevak Sangh at the national level with **Seth Ghanshyandas Birla**, a prominent Gandhian follower as its President, its branches were opened in the Provinces within a short span of time. The Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh under the leadership of **T.S.S. Rajan** was also immediately formed in 1932 with headquarters at **Trichi**.¹⁵ Being the President of the Sangh, T.S.S. Rajan worked hard for the abolition of untouchability in Tamil Nadu. By exhibiting his extraordinary ability and talents, he organised the Harijan workers, mostly Congress leaders and established branches of the Provincial Sangh at district, taluk and even village level to carry out the Harijan services.¹⁶ In that circumstances, Gandhiji wanted to collect a fund for the Harijan Sevak Sangh by conducting a country wide tour for the Harijan causes.¹⁷ Normally the planning and execution of Gandhiji's tour programme was purely left to the president of the particular

15. M. Muthukrishnan, Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh (Madras : Thacker Baba Vidyalaya, 1980), pp.2-3.

16. Stephen Fuchs, Rebellious Prophets : A Study of Messianic Movements in Indian Religions (London : Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.15.

17. Harijan, Vol. III, 22nd March 1935, p.44.

Provincial Sangh concerned.¹⁸ Even at the beginning of the tour programme, the Government of India strictly instructed the provincial administrations not to allow its officials and employees to co-operate or support Gandhiji's fund raising tour.¹⁹ Accordingly, the Provincial administrations issued notices to the District Collectors and their subordinates not to permit the employees and the public to participate or to help Gandhiji's programme.²⁰ Unmindful of the Government's warning, the public extended warm welcome and generously donated their contributions to Gandhiji at all places.²¹

Gandhiji began his country-wide Harijan Tour at **Wardha** on 7th November 1933. Subsequently he continued the tour in the Central Province, Andhra and Kerala. When he was touring in Andhra, Gandhiji paid a three days visit to the

18. T.S.S. Rajan, Tamil Nattil Gandhi (Tamil) (Madras : Kalaimagal Karyalayam, 1954), p.2.

19. The Confidential Letter No. D.8051/33 from the Secretary, Government of India to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 1st December 1933.

20. The Confidential Memorandum No.625-S, Public Department, Government of Madras to the District Collectors, dated 5th December 1933.

21. Raghavan Iyer (ed.), The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi (Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1991), p.429.

Madras city from 20th December to 22nd December 1933. The addresses of welcome and the purses for the Harijan cause were presented to Gandhiji by the Madras Corporation, the South Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Madras Women's Associations, the Servants of India Society, the Madras Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha, the Madras District Harijan Sevak Sangh, the Servants of Untouchable Society and by the public at various public meetings.²² After his brief visit to Madras, Gandhiji continued his tour in Andhra. On 5th January 1934, he entered the Mysore State and then came to Kerala on 10th January 1934.

GANDHIJI IN THE SOUTHERN TAMIL NADU

It was on 23rd January 1934 Gandhiji started his Harijan Tour in Tamil Nadu from the point of the southern most end of the sub continent, **Kanyakumari** which was under the jurisdiction of the then Travancore Princely State.²³

22. The Confidential Report of the Commissioner of Police, Madras to the Chief Secretary Government of Madras, dated 23rd December, 1933.

23. S. Padmanabhan, The Forgotten History of the Land's End (Nagercoil : Kumaran Pathippagam, 1971), pp.11-14.

Gandhiji's Harijan's Tour in Tamil Nadu covered all the regions or areas where the people spoke Tamil as their mother tongue.

Even well before the arrival of Gandhiji, **T.S.S.Rajan**, President of Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh as well as Co-ordinator of Gandhiji's tour programme in Tamil Nadu, came to Kanyakumari to accord a warm welcome and to achieve Gandhiji's tour programme a successful one. Earlier, when Gandhiji was in South Africa, he had a close association with local Tamil speaking people. Some of them became his close associates and participated in his Satyagraha movements.²⁴ With that pleasant memories, Gandhiji landed in Tamil Nadu.²⁵ He started his Harijan tour in Tamil Nadu in the evening of 23rd January 1934 from Kanyakumari,²⁶ where he was accompanied by a team of twenty members including

24. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma - Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (New Delhi : Government of India Publications, 1988), Vol.I, p.117.

25. Gandhiji's Letter to Kasthurba Gandhi from Kanyakumari dated 22nd January 1934. This Letter has been published in the "Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi", Vol. LVII, p.35.

26. The Confidential Report of the Tinnevely District Collector on Gandhiji's visit to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 27th January 1934, pp.2-4.

T.S.S.Rajan, A.V. Thacker Baba, Jamnalal Bajaj,²⁷ etc. Before his departure, Gandhiji gave an interview to the leaders of the Self-Respect Movement. Questions related with the necessity of the Harijan tour, the removal of untouchability, Harijan upliftment, temple entry etc. were placed before Gandhiji. With a smiling face, Gandhiji responded all the questions positively. Finally both parties asserted their commitments to work for the removal of untouchability and for the over all development of Harijans.²⁸

Before inaugurating his scheduled tour programme Gandhiji had a prayer meeting with his associates. After that at 6.30 p.m. he left for Tirunelveli. On the way to Tirunelveli, a gathering of about 500 people stopped him at **Valliyoor** and presented a purse. Gandhiji received the purse and made no speech.²⁹ At **Nanguneri** Gandhiji was received by one thousand men and was given an address and a purse. In the same programme two more purses were also presented on behalf of

27. T.S.S. Rajan, op.cit., pp.2-3.

28. Puratchi (Self -Respecter's Weekly) Erode, dated 4th February 1934, pp.7-8.

29. A. Ramasamy, Tamil Nattil Gandhi (Tamil) (Madurai : Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, 1969), p.670.

the people of **Tisayanvilai**, a near by village. Since the gathering was very noisy, Gandhiji did not deliver any talk.³⁰ Gandhiji and his team reached **Tirunelveli** at 9 p.m. on the same day and proceeded to the residence of one **Kuthapillai Nayanar**³¹ where they stayed in the night.

Gandhiji was with busy programme on 24th January in Tirunelveli. In the early morning he visited and spent a few minutes at a local **Khadar Museum**. Then Gandhiji left for Pettai where he was presented a purse. From Pettai, he proceeded to the residential quarters of the sweepers of Tirunelveli Municipality.³² Next he went to the Municipal market ground where a crowd of 20,000 people had gathered for a public meeting. A number of addresses and purses were presented by Chairmen, Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai Municipal Councils, by the President of the District Congress Committee, by the Anti-untouchability Committee and by the District

30. The Confidential Report of the Tinnevely District Collector, op.cit., p.2.

31. Kuthapillai Nayanar, a close associate of Gandhiji and the President of the Tirunelveli District Harijan Sevak Sangh.

32. S. Mahadevan, Mahatma Gandhi's Warning and Flashes in Harijan Tour (Madras : The Journalist Publishing House, 1936), pp.108-109.

Harijan Sevak Sangh. In addition to these, the public of Tirunelveli, Nagarathars of **Palayamkottai**, the public of **Mukkudal** presented purses to Gandhiji.³³ The Management of a National School at **Kallidaikuruchi** gave four gold rings.

A woman requested Gandhiji for his autograph. Gandhiji demanded Rs.5/- for that. After getting Rs.5/- he wrote '**Truth is God**' and put his signature in the autograph book. Then he told with smile that from Tirunelveli onwards he could increase the amount for his autograph.³⁴ Before starting his speech, Gandhiji auctioned all the addresses and presents given to him.³⁵ He attributed the catastrophe to divine displeasure on account of the attitude of the people generally towards the depressed classes. Gandhiji further interpreted it as a 'visitation' - a scourge sent by God as a punishment for the sin of untouchability. He mentioned about the significance of his Harijan Movement and promised to spend contributions entirely towards the campaign for the removal of untouchability.³⁶

33. S. Ganapathi Raman, Pongi Ealuntha Porunai (Tamil) (Tirunelveli : Tirumagal Noolagam, 1998), pp.146-149.

34. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.9.

35. B.N. Ganguli, Gandhiji's Social Philosophy Perspective and Relevance (Delhi : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1973), pp.109-110.

36. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.44-46.

After the meeting Gandhiji left for Tenkasi by road. At the **Tenkasi** meeting, there were more ladies than gents. The addresses, books, silver plates, a silver model of a parrot, a book stand etc. were presented to Gandhiji. The addresses and presents fetched handsome money in the auction. Gandhiji then spoke in the same strain as at Tirunelveli.³⁷ After that he left for **Courtalam** to enjoy the water falls. When his friends requested him to take bath, Gandhiji asked them to know whether the Harijans were permitted to take bath into the falls or not. On hearing the negative answer, Gandhiji declined to enter into the falls and further told that until or unless the Harijans were allowed into the falls, he should not do so.³⁸

In the afternoon of the same day, Gandhiji left for Tuticorin via Tirunelveli, Palayamkottai and Srivaikuntam. At Tirunelveli junction on the way, some students of the M.D.T. Hindu College handed over Gandhiji a purse.³⁹ After receiving the purse, Gandhiji made no speech and continued his tour. Gandhiji reached **Tuticorin** in the evening and after taking a

37. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.110.

38. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., pp.667-668.

39. M.D.T. Hindu College, Tirunelveli Annual Magazine for the year 1933-1934, pp.2-5.

little relax at the residence of **A.P.C. Veerabahu**,⁴⁰ a veteran local Congress leader, straight away went to the public meeting. The public meeting was held on the sea-shore and about 30,000 people were present. Electric lights and loud speakers were especially installed for the occasion. It was sharply at 7 O'clock, Gandhiji appeared on the platform. After the presentation of an address from the Tuticorin Anti-Untouchability Committee, purses were received from the general public of Tuticorin, from hardware merchants, and from the local women's Association. He thanked the general public for their generosity in presenting the purses for the Harijan cause.⁴¹ After the meeting, Gandhiji was driven to the residence of **A.P.C. Veerabahu** where he spent the night.

On 25th morning, Gandhiji visited a Harijan Colony,⁴² and spent a few minutes with its inhabitants. Then he departed enroute to **Rajapalayam**. On the way to Rajapalayam, Gandhiji

40. S.N. Somayajulu, History of Freedom Movement in Tirunelveli District (Tirunelveli : Hilal Press, 1976), pp.138-142.

41. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.46-47.

42. Unto Tahtinen, The Core of Gandhiji's Philosophy (New Delhi : Abinav Publications, 1979), pp.64-67

was stopped for a few minutes at **Ettayapuram** and was presented with addresses and purses. He thanked the people and made no speech. The next stop was at **Kovilpatti** where the local Anti-Untouchability Committee, the local Panchayat Union Board, and the college students presented addresses and purses. A silver charka, a silver cup and a brass plate were also presented. Thousands of people lined on both sides of the road and welcomed Gandhiji. However, Gandhiji made no speech and rushed to **Kalugumalai**.

The next stop was at **Sankarankoil** where Gandhiji stood up in his car and spoke to about thousand persons for few minutes to thank them for their purses and gifts and asked for the abolition of untouchability.⁴³ As Gandhiji was moving fast to **Rajapalayam**, he did not stop at **Karivalamvandanallur** and not received any purse and presentation. The tour in Tirunelveli was generally a hurried one.⁴⁴ The public was

43. R.R. Diwahaar, Gandhiji's Basic Ideals and Some Modern Problems (Bombay : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963), pp.36-38.

44. Aranthai Narayanan, Viduthalai Poratta Kala Padalkal (New Delhi : National Book Trust, 1998), pp.20-23.

interested in presenting addressess and purses for the cause of the Harijans.

Gandhiji's team arrived **Rajapalayam** at 11.30 a.m. They were received by **P.S. Kumaraswamy Raja**⁴⁵ and other Congress leaders of the town. A meeting at a garden was attended by over ten thousand people including hundreds of women and Harijans. Gandhiji received six addresses, three walking sticks, one silver plate, one silver medal and one gold idol. Copies of the addresses presented by the Taluk Board and by the local Reception Committee expressed zeal on behalf of the Harijan movement.⁴⁶ Gandhiji spoke about Harijan upliftment and opinioned that untouchability must be removed root and branch.⁴⁷ After the function at the garden, Gandhiji went to the local Bhupathi Raja Bank where a gathering of ladies presented an address and a purse. He then

45. P.S. Kumaraswamy Raja was the Premier of Madras Presidency from 1948-1951 and also was the Governor of Orissa from 1954-1956.

46. The Confidential Report of the Ramnad District Magistrate on Gandhiji's visit to Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 26th January 1934, pp.1-3.

47. M.M. Verma, Gandhiji's Technique of Mass Mobilization (New Delhi : R.K. Gupta & Co., 1990), pp.119-121.

took little rest at the residence of P.S. Kumaraswami Raja and left by car for Sivakasi at about 3 p.m.⁴⁸

A young Congressman from **Virudhunagar K. Kamaraj**⁴⁹ already came to Rajapalayam to bring Gandhiji to his town. After arriving at **Sivakasi**, Gandhiji directly went to a local high school where a crowd of about 5000 people gathered. A purse and a number of addresses were presented. But the stormy weather conditions and the crowd combined to render Gandhiji's words barely audible to his listeners. The audience included a number of women and Harijans.⁵⁰ Gandhiji then left for **Virudhunagar** by road. Since there was a heavy crowd at Virudhunagar, Gandhiji halted at **Sulakkari** for some time.⁵¹ After dispersing the crowd, the organisers gave green signal to Gandhiji to proceed to Madurai through Virudhunagar. When Gandhiji was passing through Virudhunagar, his car was

48. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.685.

49. Eugene F. Irschich, Tamil Revivalism in the 1930s (Madras : Cre-A Publications, 1986), p.153.

50. T.S.S. Rajan, Ninaivu Alaikal (Tamil) (Madras : Kalaimakal Kariyalayam, 1947), p.274.

51. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., pp.688-689.

stopped by the public for a few minutes. Gandhiji received a purse and addressed the crowd of about 1000 persons. Simultaneously a small party of Self-Respectors appeared with the black flags denouncing Gandhiji's Harijan movement.⁵² However there was no disturbance and everything was quiet.

On his way to Madurai, Gandhi arrived at **Kalligudi** where a crowd of about 1500 people assembled to meet him, inspite of heavy rain. Brief addresses were read and presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the public and on behalf of the local women's association. Gandhiji said a few words about the need for Harijan upliftment and eradication of untouchability⁵³ and then proceeded to **Tirumangalam**, where he arrived at 9.30 p.m. There was a crowd waiting for a long time to have a darshan of Gandhiji. After a few words on the subject Harijan upliftment,⁵⁴ Gandhiji departed for Madurai and had a stopping for a few minutes on the way at **Tirupparankundram** where he received a small purse.

52. B.S. Chandrababu, op.cit., pp.77-87.

53. B.R. Nanda, Mahatma Gandhi A Biography (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), pp.355-357.

54. Bipan Chandra, Amalek Tripathi & Barun De, Freedom Struggle (New Delhi : National Book Trust, 1972), p.180.

Gandhiji was expected to arrive at Madurai in the afternoon of the 25th and the arrangements had been made for him to speak at various places in the evening. Due to heavy rain, Gandhiji did not arrive in time and also the crowd gradually dispersed. As a result of this, **A. Vaidynanatha Iyer**, Chairman of the local Reception Committee, **N.M.R. Subbaraman** the Madurai Municipal Chairman had proceeded by car to Tirumangalam and brought Gandhiji with them to Madurai at midnight.⁵⁵ Gandhiji was driven to the residence of **N.M.R. Subbaraman** where he stayed in the night.⁵⁶ Even in the midnight a few people had stayed in the compound of the residence and refused to move without the darshan of Gandhiji.⁵⁷

Gandhiji had full programmes in Madurai on 26th, beginning with the reception which took place in the Victoria Edward Hall, was arranged by the Madurai-Ramnad Chamber of

55. V. Kandasamy, Madurai in Indian National Movement (Madurai : Sarvodaya Ilakkiya Pannai, 1993), p.112.

56. P.C. Chandra Prabu, Madurai Gandhi (Madurai : Gandhi Literary Society, 1986), p.95.

57. The Confidential Report of the Madurai District Magistrate on Gandhiji's visit, to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 29th January 1934, p.2.

Commerce and the Bombay Hindu Merchants of Madurai. Purses and various articles were presented and the articles were later auctioned. In his speech, Gandhiji told that there was no place for untouchability in Hindu Shastras⁵⁸ and asked the participants to give up the practice of untouchability. He further appealed for generous contributions for the Harijan cause. After the meeting, Gandhiji visited three Harijan colonies and spent some time with the inhabitants. Then he rushed up to a meeting held at the West Masi Street which was attended by more than five thousand women. Purses and addresses of welcome were presented by various local women's organisations. Gandhiji in his speech told that untouchability was the greatest of the sins.⁵⁹ He asked the participants to show their love and affection to Harijan brethren by giving jewels and money. As a result a number of women raised from their seats and donated their jewels.⁶⁰

58. T.S. Devadoss, Sarvodaya and the Problem of Political Sovereignty (Madras : University of Madras, 1974), p.39.

59. P. Mason (ed.), India and Ceylon : Unity and Diversity (London : Oxford University Press, 1960), pp.160-164.

60. CWMG, Vol. LVII, op.cit., p.52.

Gandhiji's next programme was at Madurai Municipal Office where he was presented with a Municipal address. Replying to the address, he told that the Municipality was yet to do lot to the people who were living in Cheries where he visited in the morning. He then visited the Setupathi High School where he received two addresses from the students and purses collected from various local school and colleges of the city. Gandhiji exhorted the students to treat the Harijans as brothers.⁶¹ Gandhiji then left for the Hindi convocation organised by the local Hindi Prachar Sabha at the Victoria Edward Hall. There was a small audience of about 200 people. Gandhiji gave away the prizes and certificates to the meritorious students who completed their Hindi studies.

Gandhiji then left for a public meeting where about 20,000 people including 4000 women were present. Gandhiji in his speech insisted that there was no person who could be regarded as an untouchable by birth.⁶² He further addressed

61. Harold R. Issacs, India's Ex-Untouchables (New York : The John Day Company, 1965), pp.39-40.

62. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma (Ahmedabad : Navjivan Publishing House, 1950), pp.340-342.

that in the universe there was no person high and no person low.⁶³ They all were the children of God. He also appealed to the public to purchase and wear Khadar which was generally produced by thousands of women including the Harijans.⁶⁴ The last function of the day was the meeting of the labourers organised by the **Madurai Mill Labour Union** in the compound of the mill school. Over 5000 labourers attended the meeting. Gandhiji in his speech asked the labourers to maintain unity among themselves and to work for the removal of untouchability in the working places.⁶⁵

Gandhiji's Harijan tour in Madurai created great enthusiasm among the people. Gandhiji spoke in English which was translated by Vaidyanatha Iyer into Tamil. The only subject touched at all the meetings was the Harijan upliftment.⁶⁶ Just before the visit of Gandhiji, the

63. M.K. Gandhi, None High : None Low (Bombay : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), pp.92-99.

64. V.T. Patil (ed.), New Dimensions and Perspectives in Gandhism (New Delhi : Inter-India Publications, 1989), pp.427-441.

65. Horace Alexander, Gandhi Through Western Eyes (Philadelphia : New Society Publishers, 1984), pp.44-45.

66. Rameshwari Nehru, Gandhi is my Star (Patna: Pustakbhandar, 1950), pp.108-109.

Sankarachariar of the Puri Sankara Matt was in Madurai for more than ten days and was speaking at daily meetings opposing temple entry of Harijans and condemning Gandhiji's Harijan Uplift Movement. Despite that, there was no problem between the Sanathanists and Gandhiji's followers at the time of Gandhiji's visit. According to the original programme, Gandhiji was to visit the Cumbum Valley after Madurai. But because of the prevalence of Plague in that area, the organisers of the tour cancelled the original programme and asked Gandhiji to proceed to Chettinad.

Gandhiji left Madurai by car on 27th for **Chettinad**. On the way he was stopped at **Melur** and received addresses and purses from the public. Gandhiji arrived at **Amaravathipudur**⁶⁷ in the afternoon and collected purses from the local people. Gandhiji reached **Karaikudi** in the evening and attended the Karaikudi Municipal Council meeting. In the meeting, addresses of welcome and purses were presented to him. One rich gentleman directly presented ten thousand

67. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.114.

rupees in cash to Gandhiji. After receiving all these things, Gandhiji made a short speech. In his speech, Gandhiji earnestly appealed the Council and its members to work for the Harijan upliftment and for the eradication of untouchability. He then thanked the council members and the gentleman who has contributed Rs.10,000/- for the upliftment of Harijans.⁶⁸

Gandhiji then drove to Muharamnonbu Pottal of the Karaikudi town where a massive public meeting was organised. A special platform had been erected with loud speaker and electric lights. Nearly 15,000 persons were present, a large number of them being women with their children. Gandhiji received addresses from the local Tagore Public Library and Yuva Bharath Sangam.⁶⁹ Gandhiji spoke in English which was translated into Tamil by T.S.S. Rajan. Gandhiji spoke about the Harijan upliftment and relief for the earthquake affected people in Bihar.⁷⁰ He appealed to the Hindus to give up

68. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.58-59.

69. The Confidential Report of the Ramnad District Magistrate on Gandhiji's visit, to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 30th January 1934, p.1.

70. Krishna Kripalani, Gandhi : A Life (New Delhi : National Book Trust, 1982), pp. 140-141.

untouchability by saying that there was no support for such a practice in the Sastras.⁷¹ Gandhiji left Karaikudi and reached **Devakottai** at 9 p.m. Immediately after his arrival, he went out to a public meeting which was attended by over 16,000 people. An address along with a purse was presented to him by the local public. Replying to the address, he appealed for liberal contribution to the Harijan cause and to the earthquake stricken Bihar.⁷² At the end of the meeting, the addresses and the presents which included gold and silver articles were auctioned. Then Gandhiji went to the residence of **Rengasamy Ayyangar**, a popular lawyer and spent the night there. On 28th morning, Gandhiji visited Ramnagar, a place two miles from Devakottai and laid the foundation stone for a school for Harijans.⁷³ Then he visited a Harijan colony at Chithanoor. The Harijans of that village made a submission, stating their grievances and disabilities. Gandhiji told them that their disabilities would soon be disappeared.⁷⁴ Just before leaving

71. S.C. Biswas (ed.), Gandhi Theory and Practice Social Impact and Contemporary Relevance (Shimla : Indian Institute of Advanced Study Publications, 1969), pp.428-430.

72. CWMG, Vol. LVII, p.61.

73. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., pp.115-117.

74. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.64-65.

Devakottai, Gandhiji granted an interview to the representatives of Nattars in connection with the Nattar-Harijan trouble. There was a lengthy discussion and Gandhiji appealed the Nattars to do justice to the Harijans and treat them kindly as brothers.⁷⁵ Immediately after his speech, Gandhiji replied to a question asked by a press reporter that he was hopeful that his conversation with the Nattars⁷⁶ would produce the desired effect.

In the afternoon, Gandhiji went to **Tirupattur** by road where he received small purses in a meeting. In the meeting Gandhiji was presented by a group of Europeans a beautiful wooden shield on which an embossed figure of Gandhiji in silver was pinned. As usual, Gandhiji declared the shield for auction. Since nobody was ready for bidding, the auction was withdrawn. However, the shield was sold to a youngman for Rs.100 in a meeting at **Paganeri**, a small town on the way to Sivaganga.⁷⁷ Gandhiji reached **Sivaganga** in the

75. S. Blackburn, The Kallars : A Tamil Criminal Tribe Reconsidered (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1978), pp.38-51.

76. Nattar - a subsect of the Kallar community.

77. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.117.

evening and collected purses from the public. But he was reluctant to talk a few words due to noisy crowd. Then Gandhiji proceeded to **Manamadurai**. A mammoth meeting was organised at Manamadurai by **Krishnaswamy Iyengar** popularly known as '**Harijana Iyengar**'.⁷⁸ In his key note address, Gandhiji told that "the ongoing Harijan Movement has created an awareness among the general public regarding the upliftment of Harijans and the necessity for the eradication of untouchability from the society."⁷⁹

GANDHIJI IN THE KONKUNADU

Manamadurai meeting was the last one in the Chettinad region and immediately Gandhiji left for Coonoor by train at 8 p.m.⁸⁰ When the train was crossing Dindigul station, Gandhiji was in deep sleep. When the train reached **Pollachi** in the early morning of 29th January 1934, the crowd on the platform shouted the slogan Gandhiji-ki-Jai and presented

78. D. Sampantham, Harijana Iyengar (Madras : Ganesan Publications, 1983), pp.10-30.

79. Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), The Penguin Gandhi Reader (New Delhi : Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., 1993), pp.207-233.

80. T.S.S. Rajan, op.cit., pp.56-57.

purses to Gandhiji. As it was a day of silence, Gandhiji did not leave the compartment and did not speak to any one.⁸¹ According to the scheduled programme, Gandhiji was to alight at **Podanur** railway station where **T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiar**⁸² was already waiting with a car to bring Gandhiji to Coonoor. But in order to avoid the crowd at Podanur station, it was decided to alight from the train at the level crossing gate at Chettipalayam. This message was sent to the station master and subsequently conveyed to T.S.Avinashilingam Chettiar. When Gandhiji and his team alighted at the level crossing gate at Chettipalayam, they all were well received by T.S.Avinashilingam Chettiar and then Gandhiji proceeded to Coonoor.

81. The Confidential Report of the Coimbatore District Magistrate on Gandhiji's visit to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 31st January 1934, p.1.

82. T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiar, one of the close associates of Gandhiji actively participated in the Freedom Movement and suffered imprisonment. He was in-charge of Coimbatore District for collecting fund for the Harijans. He was the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore. He became the Minister for Education in the Madras Presidency in 1946 in the Ministry of P.S. Kumarasamy Raja.

Gandhiji arrived at **Coonoor** at mid day and stayed as a guest at **Nageswara Rao's "Ramashram"** on **Mount Pleasant**.⁸³ Although Gandhiji was expected to take complete rest for one week, he was busy with writings to Harijan and granting interviews to the visitors from India and Abroad.⁸⁴ On the day of his arrival, Gandhiji granted no interviews because it was the day of silence to him. However, he appeared for a minute in the evening to satisfy some villagers who had been waiting to greet him and refused to leave without seeing him. The week passed at Coonoor was the first break in the continuous tour. Having morning walk with his associates, meeting the visitors, visiting Harijan Colonies, attending the public meetings in the towns of hills, conducting evening prayer meeting were the daily routine programme of Gandhiji.⁸⁵ The first three days (30th, 31st January and 1st February) Gandhiji had no public meetings. However, in addition to meeting the visitors and granting

83. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.117.

84. T.S.S. Rajan, op.cit., pp.61-62.

85. Robert Payne, The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi (London : The Bodley Head Ltd., 1969), pp.77-90.

interviews to Harijans and Harijan workers, he conducted prayer meetings daily in the evening in which hundreds of people from the town and surroundings were participated and donated purses.⁸⁶ On 1st February 1934, a deputation consisted of 12 members on behalf of Adi-Dravida Jansabha, Coonoor met Gandhiji and had a discussion about the various aspects related to Harijan unemployment, eradication of untouchability, techniques to be adopted for the overall Harijan upliftment, etc.⁸⁷ On 2nd February 1934 there was a public meeting at **Kotagiri**, attended by about six thousand people mostly **Badagas**, a hill tribe.⁸⁸ In his address, Gandhiji appreciated that the Badagas were neither Harijans nor Harijan oppressors and contented himself with generalisations of the equality of all men. He further appealed the people to give up the habit of drinking intoxicated liquors which would perish the body and soul.⁸⁹ After the meeting he interviewed two Harijans and then rushed to Coonoor.⁹⁰ In the

86. Alexander Hoarce, op.cit., pp.185-202.

87. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.83-85.

88. Ibid., p.99.

89. M.K. Gandhi, Constructive Programme its Meaning and Place (Reprint) (Ahmedabad : Navajivan Publishing House, 1991), pp.10-11.

90. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., pp.14-16.

next day morning, Gandhiji visited a Harijan Cheri at Ottupatrai. About two hundred inhabitants of the Cheri accorded him a warm welcome. Gandhiji, in his short speech told about the importance of clean life and cleanliness both internally and externally, giving up carrion, beef and liquor. He further appealed to stop the animal sacrifice in the name of God.⁹¹ Gandhiji also visited another Harijan settlement ie. Thandakaran Cheri. Here the inhabitants were mostly municipal scavengers and about three hundred of them had gathered to hear Gandhiji. He told them that the scavenging was one of the most honourable among the occupations of the mankind as a mother to child and doctor to a patient.⁹² He exhorted that after the working hours, all should be clean and should wear clean clothes. He further asked them to give up the habit of beef-eating and consuming liquor.

Gandhiji then visited **Ooty** and a mammoth meeting was organised on 4th February 1934 which was attended by about 10,000 people. A good number of Anglo-Indians and

91. CWMG, Vol.LVII, p.106.

92. M.K. Gandhi, The Removal of Untouchability (Ahmedabad : Navajivan Publishing House, 1954), pp.161-162.

Europeans were also present there. The Harijans, the Jains and the public of Ooty presented addresses of welcome to Gandhiji.⁹³ They requested that the members of that community may be represented to the Harijan Money Disbursement Committee.⁹⁴ Gandhiji in his reply told that only a small portion of the money would be spent in the province or district, but the bulk of it would be used for constructive purposes for the upliftment of Harijans.⁹⁵ Replying to the address given by the Jains, Gandhiji explained that he believed in the truth of all religions in the world. He further told that he made persistent effort to understand the truth of all religions from the days of his youth.⁹⁶ As a result, Gandhiji admitted that the Faith that he professed was the guiding spirit to start a campaign against untouchability. In his concluding remarks, Gandhiji invited the co-operation of all the people living in India and even outside by the means of money and

93. Harijan, 5th February 1934.

94. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.120.

95. Thomas Pantham & Kenneth L. Deutsch (ed.), op.cit., pp.161-175.

96. M.K. Gandhi, The Story of My Experiments with Truth (Ahmedabad : Navajivan Publishing House, 1927), pp.27-30.

materials for the eradication of untouchability and the upliftment of Harijans.⁹⁷ By hearing that wider appeal, a Scottish Doctor walked upto the platform and putting a ten rupee note into Gandhiji's hand, and said that it was his humble contribution to the Harijan cause.⁹⁸ After the public meeting, Gandhiji was taken round the local Om Prakash Mutt which was maintained for the Harijans. A report on the working of the Mutt and the inspection note were read out to Gandhiji. After that Gandhiji registered his pleasure with the inmates on maintaining the Mutt with extraordinary neatness and cleanliness.⁹⁹ Then he visited one **Dakshinamoorthi Ashram** founded by a Harijan Saint as a home service mainly for the Harijans. A small temple was founded inside the Ashram for all castes.¹⁰⁰ The next day, 5th of February 1934, was the day of silence to him and there was no observable activity except writing letters. One of the letters was addressed to **Kasturba Gandhi**.¹⁰¹

97. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.109-111.

98. Harijan, 5th February 1934.

99. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.111-112.

100. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., pp.720-721.

101. CWMG, Vol.LVII, pp.118-119.

After taking seven days rest, Gandhiji and his party left Coonoor by road on 6th February 1934 at 7 a.m. for Tiruppur. In the enroute, at **Mettupalayam** Gandhiji spoke a few words about the eradication of untouchability and the upliftment of Harijans. The next stopping was at **Chokkampalayam** where the public meeting was attended by about 4000 men and women. In his address, Gandhiji thanked the people for the purses and addresses presented for the cause of Harijans. He insisted the audience to establish brotherhood among all people by driving out untouchability altogether. Gandhiji then reached **Tiruppur** at mid-day. Rajaji, who was released from Coimbatore jail in that very morning, straight away came to Tiruppur to meet Gandhiji.¹⁰² **Miss. Muriel Lester** of Kingsly Hall, Gandhiji's hostess during his visit to London to participate the Second Round Table Conference was also waiting to see Gandhiji. Gandhiji felt pleasure on seeing both Rajaji and Miss. Muriel Lester. After having a few words with them, Gandhiji rushed upto a public meeting which was attended by thousands of people. A number of purses and addresses were presented to him on behalf of the Tiruppur Municipal Council and the

102. Narana Duraikannan, Rajaji (Madras : Alliance Company Publications, 1950), pp.74-94.

local Khadi workers.¹⁰³ After receiving all these things, Gandhiji spoke against the fraudulent way in which mill cloth was being palmed off as Khadi and warned the public against purchasing any cloth as Khadi that did not bear the hall-mark of the **AISA**.¹⁰⁴ He added that the Harijans, the suppressed classes were the hardest hit when the sale of Khadi declined. So he requested the people to purchase genuine Khadi so that the money spend in buying Khadi should directly go into the pockets of the poor people.¹⁰⁵

Gandhiji arrived at **Coimbatore** in the evening of 6th February 1934 and attended a Women's meeting held at YMCA building. A lady garlanded him with Khadi yarn and saluted him. But Gandhiji pointed at her jewels and asked one for the Harijan cause. The lady immediately took an ornament from her neck and gave it to him.¹⁰⁶ Gandhiji then paid a visit to the local Harijan hostel and made enquiries as to whether

103. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.122.

104. AISA - All India Spinner's Association.

105. Harijan, 27th April 1934.

106. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.121.

the inmates were properly looked after or not.¹⁰⁷ In the same evening, Gandhiji addressed a public meeting at the Gandhi-Irwin Stadium, which was attended by about thirty thousand people. Gandhiji in his address remarked that "if they were to live, they must abolish the virus of untouchability;¹⁰⁸ the presence of thousands of people coupled with their copper and silver pieces were, to his mind, an unmistakable sign that the people were ready for the great reform that he had placed before them; if untouchability was not removed root and branch, it would not be fault on the masses, but it would entirely due to the fault of the workers and the leaders who were leading the movement; so the co-workers and the leaders have to realise the significance of the movement and rededicate themselves for the removal of untouchability and the upliftment of Harijans."¹⁰⁹ After that public meeting, Gandhiji went to an Industrial Institute at **Peelamedu**, a sub-urban area, where purses were presented to him. The next programme in his

107. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.728.

108. S.R. Bakshi (ed.), C.F. Andrews, The Gandhian Thought (Delhi : Akashdeep Publishing House, 1990), pp.336-340.

109. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.124-126.

agenda was to visit a theatre to see a drama. On the basis of an oral agreement with the owner of the theatre to donate all the amount to be collected from the particular show to the Harijan cause, Gandhiji did so. When Gandhiji was in the theatre, he was presented with an address and a purse by the owner. Gandhiji spent half an hour in the theatre instead of the promised time five minutes.¹¹⁰ Then Gandhiji left for **Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya** for his stay at night as a guest of **T.S.Avinashilingam Chettiar**.¹¹¹ On the way to the Vidyalaya, Gandhiji's car crashed into the level crossing gate but no one was hurt.¹¹² Gandhiji had a tight schedule of programme on 7th February. In the morning, he laid the foundation stone for the new building in Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya. Then he left for Pollachi by train from near by Podanur railway station. In the enroute, the train was stopped at **Kinatrakadavu** and **Nallatipalayam** stations where Gandhiji was presented with purses by the local people.

110. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., pp.124-125.

111. T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiar, Naan Kanda Mahatma (Tamil) (Coimbatore : Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Publications, 1978), pp.31-32.

112. The Confidential Report of the Coimbatore District Magistrate on Gandhiji's visit, to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, dated 8th February, 1934, p.2.

Gandhiji arrived at **Pollachi** in the forenoon and went by a car to the public meeting, which was attended by about thousand people. Gandhiji in his speech told that untouchability was prevailing in almost all communities and that defect should be removed from our land. He also suggested that they should forget the feeling of high and low and consider that they were all sons of one God.¹¹³

After the Pollachi meeting, Gandhiji left by car for **Udumalaipettai** and reached there at mid day. At the public meeting, Gandhiji was given purses and addresses and as usual spoke a few words about the importance of his tour. In the afternoon of 7th February, on his way to Palani, Gandhiji visited a village namely Vannivalasu. Immediately on seeing the spot, he described the village as a model Harijan village. He proudly told that he was happy to know that the inhabitants of that village had given up many of the old evil habits and were trying to reform their lives on the basis of purity. After spending a few minutes in the village, Gandhiji proceeded to Palani as the final phase of his tour in the

113. CWMG, Vol. LVII, p.127.

Kongu region. He reached **Palani** in the evening and went to the public meeting held near the Hill temple, which was attended by thousands of people. In reply to the addresses and numerous presents, Gandhiji told that they were under the shadow of the sacred hill of Palani and knew that the temple of the sacred hill was not opened to the Harijans.¹¹⁴ So he opinioned that the God could not reside in a temple which prohibits the entry of the Harijans. He also appealed to the audience to work for opening all the Hindu temples to the Harijans at the earliest.¹¹⁵ There was large collection of money for Harijan cause in the Kongu region because of the able leadership of T.S.Avinashilingam Chettiar and his team of workers. In the total collection, Coimbatore stood first in Tamil Nadu.¹¹⁶ Gandhiji's journey to Dindigul from Palani marked the end of his Konku region visit and the beginning of the Cumbum valley visit as well.

114. S.N. Busi, op.cit., p.478.

115. CWMG, Vol. LVII, p.128.

116. T.S.S. Rajan, op.cit., pp.57-58.

GANDHIJI IN THE CUMBUM VALLEY

On 7th February 1934, Gandhiji entered into **Dindigul** from Palani by car symbolised the beginning of his tour in the **Cumbum Valley**. Gandhiji was in jubilant mood in Cumbam Valley, the ever green area surrounded by Western Ghats, situated in the western part of Madurai District. In a letter to his friend from Cumbum, he admitted that his body health was in excellent condition and gave good service.¹¹⁷ Immediately after his arrival to Dindigul, Gandhiji attended a public meeting held at Rock Fort Maidan. It was witnessed by more than 20,000 people. Not only the Hindus, but also Christians and Muslims took pride in according warm reception and in giving purses to the august visitor. In his speech, Gandhiji told that God had not designed any persons to be untouchables. Then why, he asked the distinction between man and man and regard some as untouchables by birth and deny them chances of improvement. Further he appealed to the attendees of the meeting to work for the removal of untouchability, opening of temples to the Harijans and for the

117. Gandhiji's Letter to Chaganlal Joshi from Cumbum, dated 9th February 1934. This letter is published in the CWMG, Vol.LVII, pp.136-138.

overall upliftment of Harijans.¹¹⁸ On 8th February Gandhiji left for **Periyakulam** and purses were presented by the people at some places on the way. At **Ottupatti** near **Batlagundu** the Harijans under the leadership of a Brahmin presented addresses and purses to Gandhiji. At **Vadugapatti**, Gandhiji was presented with one hand-written address by the Harijans of the village. After receiving the address, Gandhiji told that the hand-written address was good than the printed one because of the printing which was very expensive. At Periyakulam, Gandhiji appreciated the untiring efforts of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Hindi Prachar Sabha for the upliftment of the cause of the Harijans. At **Theni** Gandhiji was presented with purses by the **Zamindar of Kandarva Nayackanoor**. Then on the way to **Chinnamanur**, the people of Chettipatti, Veerapandi villages presented addresses to Gandhiji. When Gandhiji reached **Uttamapalayam**, a ceremonial reception was accorded by the Hindu Harijans and Christian Harijans. Gandhiji, in a public meeting attended by about 8000 people, regretted that there was also the custom of practising untouchability among the

118. Pushpa Joshi, Gandhi on Women (Ahmedabad : Navajivan Publishing House, 1988), pp.181-183.

Christians. Gandhiji appealed the Christians to remove untouchability and work for the well being of the Harijans.¹¹⁹

On 9th February morning Gandhiji left for Kombai. At **Kombai**, a cardamom trader presented a bag full of cardamom to Gandhiji. The Muslims of the town also presented a hand-written address and a purse. In the hand written address, the Muslims congratulated Gandhiji for his movement to establish equality among all the people. Gandhiji also reciprocated them by saying that the purse given by them was a big help for his movement.¹²⁰ Gandhiji, then arrived **Thevaram** at noon, was presented with addresses and purses by the local people, the students of one Vivekananda School and by the Harijans. After receiving the addresses in his speech, Gandhiji expressed his happiness in visiting the town. He further indicated that some volunteers had worked hard for days together to make the road between Kombai and Thevaram passable for the cars. He appreciated the work done by the

119. J. Michael Mahar (ed.), The Untouchables in Contemporary India (Arizona : The University of Arizona Press, 1972), pp.XI to XXXIII.

120. V. Kandasamy, op.cit., pp.109-113.

volunteers. He further suggested that without expecting any monetary help from the Taluk Board and the District Board, the road could be maintained by the volunteers of the village. In his address, Gandhiji remarked that some villages of the valley were not kept in perfect sanitary and hygienic condition. So it was a must to keep the villages clean by extending voluntary services by the village volunteers without much expenses. However, he concluded in his talk by saying that the voluntary services could not yield expected results if untouchability was practised in the society.¹²¹ After the public meeting, Gandhiji went to a local women's meeting. The women presented an address of welcome and jewels to Gandhiji. Gandhiji briefed them to give up the practice of untouchability. Then he moved for lunch as a guest at the residence of one **Gurusamy Pillai**.

The next place of visit was **Bodinayakanoor**. Since this town was in the grip of plague, it was removed from the tour programme. However, the people were determined to see Gandhiji and so that they came to a place called **Bodivilakku**,

121. CWMSG, Vol. LVII, pp.139-140.

eight miles away from their town, where Gandhiji spoke to them. A large number of people had come there in double-bullock carts and motor buses. Many people brought bundles of sugarcane to eat in order to quench their thirst in the hot sun.¹²² Then Gandhiji proceeded to Theni where he took the train to **Chekkannurani**. On his way he collected purses from the people at **Andipatti**, **Thotappa Nayackanoor** and **Usilampatti** Railway Stations.¹²³ At Chekkannurani Gandhiji left the train and motored to **Sholavandan** where he reached about 8 p.m. In a crowded public meeting, Gandhiji expressed his great concern for the existence of untouchability and pleaded the people to work for the removal of untouchability.

GANDHIJI IN THE CAUVERY BASIN

After the Sholavandan meeting, Gandhiji entrained for Trichi at 11.30 p.m. and reached there on 10th February 1934. Gandhiji was accompanied by **T.S.S. Rajan, Rajaji** and others. Gandhiji's tour programme of this region had some significances because the starting point of the tour was **Trichi** which was

122. S. Mahadevan, op.cit., p.127.

123. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.745.

the native place of T.S.S. Rajan and the closing point was Salem which was the home town to Rajaji who had maintained an Ashram at Tiruchengodu. Besides, along with Gandhiji both T.S.S.Rajan and Rajaji were the guests to many hosts in the previous tour programmes. But then, it was the turn of these two to play as hosts of Gandhiji while he was visiting this region. In addition to this, Trichi, the strong hold of **Sanathanists** as well as the **Self-Respecters**, was the headquarters of Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Gandhiji arrived at Trichi by train in the early morning on 10th February 1934. There was a heavy crowd in the Railway Station to accord a warm reception to Gandhiji. Gandhiji detrained and accepted the reception. Then he proceeded to the residence of T.S.S. Rajan. After the break-fast Gandhiji attended a meeting at a local Bank. In that meeting Gandhiji was presented with purses by the local **Gujarathies**, **Marwaries**, **Jains** and **Sindhies**. Then Gandhiji went to **Srirangam** for a public meeting. When Gandhiji's car was moving on the road, the public lined on both sides and greeted him. But in some places, a group of Self-Respectors were standing with

black flags and placards inscribed "**Go back Gandhiji**" in their hands.¹²⁴ In his key-note address at the Srirangam public meeting, Gandhiji emphasised that he had no wish at all that there should be any force or compulsion used against the public opinion to enforce temple-entry for the Harijans. He said that in his opinion the Sastras do not prohibit temple-entry by the Harijans and therefore it was the duty of the Hindus to admit them into the temples.¹²⁵ He further said that he had no doubt that the sophisticated caste Hindus must recognise the right of Harijans to enter temple and to enjoy all the other previlages that caste- Hindus enjoy.¹²⁶ He concluded in his talk with thanks to the Sanathanists for their peaceful protests during his visit to Srirangam with black flags and placards.¹²⁷ After the meeting at Srirangam, on the way to **Manachanallur**, the Sanathanists in a car which was overtaking Gandhiji's car distributed bit notices criticising Gandhiji's Harijan tour for temple entry. Then Gandhiji

124. Nagara Thoodan, 18th February 1934.

125. Mahadeva Desai, The Epic of Travancore (Ahmedabad : Navjeevan Karyalaya, 1937), pp.3-6.

126. Harijan, 23rd February 1934.

127. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.141-143.

proceeded to **Samayapuram** where he received an address and a purse. There was an audience of about 2000 in which Gandhiji made a short speech and some articles were auctioned.¹²⁸ Gandhiji then returned to Trichi by motor car and inspected Chintamani Cheri, the largest Cheri in the town. An address was presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the inhabitants of the Cheri. In return, Gandhiji gave them Khadar dresses including 25 dhothis, 16 shirts, 8 sarees, 18 towels. Gandhiji's next stop was at the Headquarters of Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh, where he discussed with the Sevaks about the on going Harijan upliftment works in Tamil Nadu.¹²⁹

In the afternoon Gandhiji granted interview to the Harijan delegates. The delegates, at first, submitted a petition stating that they disliked the word 'Harijan' which was conferred on the depressed people by Gandhiji.¹³⁰ After studying the petition, he replied that he named the

128. Nagara Thoodhan, 18th February 1934.

129. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.750.

130. K. Surinder Gupta, The Scheduled Castes in Modern Indian Politics : Their Emergence as a Political Power, (New Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985), p.5-11.

untouchables as Harijans, the Sons of God, but the choice of accepting that name or not was left to the willingness of the people. Replying to another question that 98 percent of the staff of Harijan Sevak Sangh were Brahmins, Gandhiji told that the Sangh was a debtor's association and it was not possible to have 50 percent Harijans as members for the simple reason that the Harijans were not debtors but creditors.¹³¹ Further he informed the delegates that the money collected in the name of Harijans should be spent with care on the sanction of the central Board. He also added that the Sevaks were not paid for the services rendered to the Harijans through the Sangh. Finally Gandhiji concluded that if untouchability, was abolished, then automatically the caste system should be eliminated from the society.¹³² The Sanatanists, who already obtained an appointment to meet Gandhiji, had a friendly discussion with him for a short while. The Temple Entry of Harijans was the main subject in the discussion. Next Gandhiji attended a meeting at the National College, Trichi. Gandhiji in his speech, suggested the students

131. Puratchi, 18th February 1934.

132. B.R. Ambedkar, Castes in India : Their Mechanisms, Genesis and Development (Jalandhar : Bheem Patrika Publication, 1977), pp.29-33.

to visit the Harijan Colonies to take care of their children and treat them as brothers and sisters. He further told the students to give them education particularly the lessons of hygiene.¹³³ In the evening at about 6.30 p.m. Gandhiji addressed a public meeting held at **Puthur Maidan**, was attended by about 30,000 people. Addresses were presented by the local South Indian Railway Worker's Union, the Harijans, the Trichi Municipality, District Board, Trichi and Social Service League, Trichi. Gandhiji's speech was translated by T.S.S. Rajan. Gandhiji said that untouchability totally affected the whole public life and that if Hindus did not destroy it, it would devour Hinduism.¹³⁴ He also referred to the refusal of the Caste Hindus in Melarasur village in Lalgudi taluk to allow Harijans to draw water from a public tank and said that no religious sophistries could justify such conduct. He concluded with an appeal for more contributions for the Harijan upliftment works.¹³⁵

133. CWMG, Vol. LVII, p.145.

134. Bhikhu Parekh, Gandhiji's Political Philosophy A Critical Examination (London : Mac Millan Publications, 1991), pp.210-213.

135. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.147-148.

In the next morning, on 11th February 1934, Gandhiji paid a brief visit to Varaganeri Cheri¹³⁶ and then left by train to **Karur**. In the enroute to Karur, a number of addresses and purses were presented to Gandhiji at **Mutharasanallur, Kulitalai, Mayanur** and after travelling 45 miles, Gandhiji reached Karur at noon. At the Railway Station, Gandhiji was accorded a warm reception by a crowd of about 400 people headed by the local Municipal Chairman. In the evening a meeting was held at Karur Municipal High School Ground, which was attended by 10,000 people. In his speech, Gandhiji urged the claims of Harijans to enter into the Hindu temples. He advised them that no Harijan should enter into Hindu temples against the wishes of Sanathanists unless there was a consensus of opinion in favour of temple-entry.¹³⁷ At the end of the meeting, the addresses and other articles including one gold tumbler presented by a popular stage artist and singer **K.B. Sundarambal** were auctioned.¹³⁸ Gandhiji left

136. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.752.

137. Sheshrao Chavan, Gandhi and Ambedkar : Saviours of Untouchables (Bombay : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2001), pp.2-12.

138. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.754.

for **Erode** by car in the same evening. There was a public meeting at **Kodumudi** which was attended by around 5000 people and Gandhiji was presented with addresses of welcome and purses. He spoke a few words about the need for the abolition of untouchability and then proceeded to Erode. At Erode, Gandhiji was accorded a rousing welcome by people belongs to different walks of life. Just before the arrival of Gandhiji, a group of Self-Respectors had a procession with black-flags but the police managed to keep them away while he was there. Gandhiji in his speech told that he was happy to know of the Harijan work done by the local Municipal Council and asked them not to be satisfied with the work already done but to continue their work till untouchability was routed out. He further elaborated that in the eyes of God, there was no difference between man and man and it was the sin to hold any differences. He believed that the removal of untouchability would certainly avert the danger posed to the Hindu religion. Gandhiji then proceeded to **Bhavani** where he was presented with addresses and purses. On the way to Thiruchengodu, Gandhiji was stopped at **Kumarapalayam** for a few minutes and he addressed a public meeting which was attended by about 5000 people. Gandhiji remarked that untouchability was man-made

and if Hinduism and Hindus were to live, untouchability should be unmade. Then Gandhiji reached **Rajaji's Pudupalayam Ashram**¹³⁹ at 11 p.m. and started observing his day of silence. As a result, there was no public meeting and interview on 12th February. However Gandhiji walked around the neighbouring villages and some **Cheries** in the evening. On the 13th February, Gandhiji delivered a speech at the Ashram, was attended by about 4000 people consisting of mostly villagers. Gandhiji started his speech by saying that he had come there to see what services the Ashram had been rendering to the people. However, he admitted that there was a set of servants of the people in the Ashram, who were free from the taint of untouchability and they were pledged to regard Harijans as their brothers and sisters. He further asked the gathering to get rid of untouchability altogether.¹⁴⁰

Leaving the Ashram in the early morning of 14th February, Gandhiji arrived at **Namakkal** at 8 a.m, where

139. The Pudupalayam Ashram was started in 1926 for the constructive workers. Removal of untouchability was one of its objectives.

140. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.152-153.

15,000 people had gathered. Gandhiji in his speech in the meeting told that he regarded their monetary offerings as a token of whole hearted support for the **Harijan Movement**. He instructed the audience not to cease their efforts until the Harijans¹⁴¹ attained perfect equality with the caste - Hindus. Gandhiji was presented with a purse at **Sendamangalam** on the way to Salem. Then Gandhiji reached **Rasipuram** in the forenoon. Gandhiji addressed the gathering on the subject of removal of untouchability and Harijan upliftment and left for **Salem**. Gandhiji arrived at Salem at 11 a.m. and went to the residence of **Natesa Pandaram** for little relax. In the afternoon, he attended a women's meeting and visited some **Harijan Cheries**. The most important programme in Salem was a public meeting attended by more than 50,000 people. Gandhiji, after receiving addresses and purses, made a short speech referring to the evils of untouchability and the eradication of social inequalities. In his concluding remarks, Gandhiji told them that if they were to get God's blessings, they must elevate the Harijans.¹⁴² Then Gandhiji entrained in a third

141. Horace Alexander, op.cit., pp.45-55.

142. Dagfinn Sivertsen, When Caste Barriers Fall? A Study of Social and Economic Change in a South Indian Village (Oslo : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963), pp.23-27.

class compartment for Tanjore at 7 p.m. Accompanied by Rajaji, T.S.S. Rajan and others, Gandhiji arrived at **Tanjore** at 6.30 a.m. on 15th February 1934. Warmly received by the people, Gandhiji attended a public meeting in the **Tanjore Municipal Council Ground**. The meeting was held in the dawn just as the sun was raising on. So Gandhiji in his speech told that he had always liked early morning meetings. He further told that there was no more auspicious hour than early morning and that could be selected for meetings in connection with a movement of self-purification. He added that as he watched the sun was slowly rising over the temple and said that the sun would shine for both Harijans and non-Harijans but the temple was opened with reservations. Hence he appealed to the public to learn from the sun that temples should open their doors to Harijans or if refuse to learn the lesson it will kill **Hinduism** in the darkness of the sin of untouchability.¹⁴³ He concluded that the **Sanathanists** should realise the truth and open the temples for Harijans.¹⁴⁴

143. N. Lakshmanan (ed.), India The Fountain of Peace (Coimbatore : By the Author, 1937), pp.97-110.

144. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.160-161.

Gandhiji's emotional speech was translated into Tamil by T.S.S. Rajan. Next Gandhiji proceeded to **Kumbakonam**. But in the enroute, Gandhiji was presented with addresses and purses at **Ayyampettai, Mangudi, Sundaraperumal Koil** and finally reached Kumbakonam at about 9 a.m.¹⁴⁵ The Sanathanists hoisted black flags on the mandapa of a temple tank and also on the gopuram of one of the temples. About 50 Sanathanists went on a procession carrying black flags but there was no disturbance. Posters with Tamil slogans '**Gandhiji Go Back**' were posted on the walls along the route. Gandhiji enjoyed all the scenes and reached the local Municipal Office where he was presented with an address and a purse by its Chairman. Gandhiji in his reply told that he was doing absolutely nothing more than cultivating public opinion in favour of justice to the Harijans and their legitimate **right of temple-entry**.¹⁴⁶ In his concluding remarks, Gandhiji observed that the energy of all the caste - Hindus should be brought on the same platform to save Hinduism from the sin of untouchability.

145. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.765.

146. Harijan, Vol.II, 1934, pp.10-11.

In the afternoon, Gandhiji proceeded by car to **Nagapatinam**. On the way he was presented with addresses and purses at **Nachiyarkoil, Tirucharai, Kodavasal, Koradacheri** and reached **Tiruvarur** in the same evening. Gandhiji was given a rousing reception at Tiruvarur. In a public meeting, which was attended by more than 10,000 people Gandhiji told that India could not reach the top among the world countries if it retained the sin of untouchability.¹⁴⁷ Gandhiji reached Nagapatinam at 8 p.m. in the evening. Addresses and purses were presented by the Nagapatinam Harijan Sevak Sangh to Gandhiji. In a public meeting attended by 10,000 people, Gandhiji insisted the dire responsibility of the caste-Hindus to work for the upliftment of the Harijans. Before the arrival of Gandhiji to Nagapatinam, there was a peaceful procession conducted by the **Self-Respectors** by holding black flags in their hands in order to register their protest against the Harijan tour of Gandhiji.¹⁴⁸ Gandhiji stayed in the night at Nagapatinam and left for **Karaikal** in the early morning of 16th February. On the way at **Nagore**, the holy

147. D.K. Dutta, op.cit., pp.88-94.

148. Puratchi, 25th February 1934.

pilgrim centre of the Muslims, an address and a purse were presented to him. At Karaikal Gandhiji declared that there was no warrant for untouchability in the Hindu Shastras.¹⁴⁹ He further told that he was very glad to see the crowd of men and women and the purses and gifts they had offered, testified to the fact that they did not believe in untouchability. After the meeting, Gandhiji proceeded to **Tranquebar**, where he was presented with addresses and purses. Then Gandhiji arrived at **Mayavaram** at about 10 a.m. and attended a public meeting. Sharply by noon, Gandhiji reached **Sirkali** and spoke in a public meeting which was attended by about 5000 people. Gandhiji congratulated the **Self-Respectors** also for their co-operation to the Harijan Movement.

GANDHIJI IN THE ARCOT REGION

Next Gandhiji proceeded to **Chidambaram** on 16th February 1934. It was because of the request of **Swami Sahajananda**¹⁵⁰ (1890-1959) that Gandhiji visited Chidambaram

149. Young India, 6th October 1921.

150. Swami Sahajananda was popularly known as "Kaliyuka Nandanar", who run a Nandanar Mutt, an educational institution imparting education to Harijan students in Chidambaram.

and was accorded a warm reception. Gandhiji along with **T.S.S. Rajan, Rajaji, Thacker Baba** and some other foreign friends were received by **Swami Shajananda** and other local prominent personalities. He was taken in a car from Railway Station to the **Nandanar Mutt**, an educational institution that sprung up at the spot where Nandanar, a Harijan Saint was believed to have stayed during his pilgrimage to Chidambaram.¹⁵¹ On the way to the Mutt, a number of addresses and purses were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the local public. One of the addresses requested Gandhiji to hand over all the collection of the town to the Mutt, run by Swami Sahajananda. In reply to the address, Gandhiji said that the amount collected through the ongoing campaign, from the public for the Harijan cause should be distributed to the provincial Sevak Sanghs which should take care of the Mutt also.¹⁵² Before reaching the Mutt, Gandhiji visited the **All India Spinners Association** and **Khadar Depot**. Then he spent a few minutes by visiting **Ramalinga Swami Night School** in a Harijan Cheri. Finally Gandhiji

151. T.S.S. Rajan, op.cit., pp.115-117.

152. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.779.

arrived at the Nandanar School which was under the management of Swami Sahajananda.¹⁵³ He was taken round the classes as well as the hostel. There was a crowd of about 300 students mostly Harijans. From there Gandhiji went to the **Nandanar Mutt** for evening diffin and also for little rest. In the same evening, after attending a public meeting at Chidambaram, Gandhiji rushed to **Annamalai University**, where he was received by its **Vice Chancellor Prof. S.E. Renganathan**. There was a meeting at the University playground, attended by large number of Professors and students. Gandhiji in his speech congratulated the students who were conducting a night school for the Harijans. He further explained that from his critical study of the Vedas, he was not able to find any sanction for untouchability. He had discussed about the concept of untouchability with Hindu Pandits who also agreed with his view.¹⁵⁴ After that Gandhiji proceeded to **Cuddalore** and reached there at 9 p.m. was accorded a ceremonial reception. After attending a public meeting in Cuddalore, Gandhiji reached

153. Harijan, Vol.II, 1934, p.16.

154. Binudhar Pradhan, The Socialist Thought of Mahatma Gandhi, (Delhi : GDK Publications, 1980), Vol.I, pp.165-168.

Pondicherry, the capital of the French in India in the early hours of 17th February. Gandhiji in his speech at Pondicherry, told that the removal of untouchability was primarily meant to realise the brotherhood of man in the place of suppression and subjection in the name of religion by caste Hindus. He also mentioned about the success in establishing **equality and brotherhood in France** by its people. After the meeting, Gandhiji proceeded by car to **Tiruvannainallur**. On his way, Gandhiji was stopped at **Panruti** where purses were presented. Next in the public meeting at Tiruvannainallur, Gandhiji spoke about the responsibility of the caste-Hindus to work hard for the upliftment of the Harijans. Then he visited a Cheri called **Gandhikuppam**, where he spent some time.

Gandhiji had taken his lunch at **Kripa Asram** managed by one Harijan worker in **Tiruvannainallur**. After receiving purses and addresses, Gandhiji delivered a talk from the open terrace of Kripa Asram to the people gathered in the street. Gandhiji requested the people to give as much money as they could for the **Harijan Fund**. Then Gandhiji left for **Tiruvannamalai**. On the way, Gandhiji was accorded with a warm welcome at **Tirukkoilur**. When Gandhiji reached

Tiruvannamalai at 4.30 p.m., he was received by **Rengaswamy Reddiar, M.L.C.**, and other local leaders. Immediately after his arrival, Gandhiji went to the public meeting which was attended by 30,000 people. When Gandhiji was receiving purses and addresses, there was a uproar in the crowd. Gandhiji repeatedly requested the audience to keep silence. But his efforts ended in failure. As a result, he deserted the platform and left for the local railway station to proceed to Vellore by train.¹⁵⁵ Gandhiji arrived at **Vellore** at about 9.30 p.m. having travelled in a third class compartment and slept most of the way. There was a crowd of about 10,000 people at the Vellore Railway Station to welcome Gandhiji.

From Railway Station, Gandhiji was driven to the residence of **Ramasamy Mudaliar**, where he stayed in the night. In the early morning of the 18th February, Gandhiji headed a public prayer meeting and visited a local **Harijan Cheri**. Next Gandhiji attended a public meeting and received a number of addresses and purses. On the way to Tiruputtur by car, Gandhiji visited a number of places - **Gudiyatham, Ambur**,

155. A. Ramasamy, op.cit., p.787.

Periyankuppam, Vaniyambadi, Nattarampalli. Finally he arrived at **Tiruputtur** at about 5.30 p.m. Immediately after his arrival to this town, Gandhiji went to a public meeting attended by more than 15,000 people. In his address, Gandhiji insisted the need for the removal of untouchability. Since the crowd was noisy and continuously unruly, Gandhiji stopped his speech, and left for **Christukula Ashram** which was jointly managed with dedication by an **European Dr. Patch** and a **Tamilian Dr. Jesudasan**.¹⁵⁶ In a meeting at the Christukula Ashram, Gandhiji told that he was happy to visit the Ashram. In his message, Gandhiji told that untouchability was the greatest sin that the Hindus had committed against God and Man.¹⁵⁷ After the meeting at Christukula Ashram, Gandhiji left for **Madras** by train at 9 p.m. In the early morning of the 19th February, Gandhiji and his party detrained at **Perambur** Railway Station and then proceeded by car to **Kodampakkam** where he took complete rest at the residence of a businessman.¹⁵⁸ Next Gandhiji

156. Harijan, Vol. II, 1934, p.21.

157. Ela Sen, Gandhi A Biographical Study (Calcutta : Susil Gupta Publishers, 1945), pp.87-97.

158. A. Ramaamy, op.cit., p.795.

attended a meeting organised by a group of Gujarathies in Madras. While addressing the gathering Gandhiji said, "*You people go to far off lands, exploiting people and assuming wealth. I am now going to exploit you.*"¹⁵⁹ In the morning of 20th February, there was a public meeting near the Kodambakkam Tank. Gandhiji in his short speech stressed the importance of establishing brotherhood among the people irrespective of colour and creed. He visited some Cheries and the Provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh in the evening. In the morning of the 21st February, Gandhiji left for **Kanchipuram** by train via Chingleput. Gandhiji was received at the Kanchipuram Railway Station by a big crowd. On the way to the public meeting, a group of **Self-Respectors** with black flags were standing on either side of the road. As a precautionary measure, the **Sanathanists** also closed all the gates of local temples to avoid any problem of temple entry by the Harijans, utilising the chance of Gandhiji's visit. Gandhiji in his speech told that **Kanchipuram** was the seat of Sanskrit learning with great temples. But the gates of the temples were still closed to the

159. The Hindu, 20th February 1934.

Harijans. He further added that the God of Truth and Justice could not reside in a temple where access was denied to the Harijans. He told with hope that the people of **Kanchipuram** should make every effort to establish that town as a centre of activity for Harijan upliftment.¹⁶⁰ In the afternoon of the 21st February, Gandhiji left for **Arakkonam** by car via **Wallajahpet, Ranipet, Arcot** and **Arani**. In the enroute, Gandhiji was presented by the people with purses and addresses. In all the meetings, Gandhiji exhorted the people to regard all Harijans as their own brothers and sisters. He admitted that they all were the children of one and the same God. Gandhiji arrived at Arakkonam at 7.30 p.m. Immediately after his arrival, he went to a public meeting where purses were presented by the local people, and the Marwaris. Arakkonam was the last destination, where Gandhiji completed his **Harijan Tour**. In his concluding speech towards the close of his Harijan Tour, Gandhiji thanked the police officials and the Railway administration, for their meticulous help in making the Harijan Tour a grand success. He also thanked the volunteers who had done their duty in all

160. CWMG, Vol. LVII, pp.191-192.

parts of Tamil Nadu to enable his tour a success. Finally Gandhiji concluded his talk with an appeal to the people to get rid of the sin of untouchability not only for themselves but also for the whole world. After the public meeting, Gandhiji left for **Coorg** by train.

Gandhiji's Harijan Tour was organised mainly to disarm all orthodox Hindu beliefs. It had a number of remarkable significances. Gandhiji travelled by car or by train in the third-class compartment and travelled about 2000 miles in Tamil Nadu.¹⁶¹ During his Harijan Tour, Gandhiji met thousands of people and addressed in a number of public meetings. He never failed to visit the Harijan Cherais whenever he got the time. The main subjects of his speech in all the meetings were the **Upliftment of Harijans, Eradication of Untouchability** and **Opening of temples to the Harijans**. It was understood that the total amount of the collection during the Harijan Tour was **Rs.1,20,000**. Gandhiji clearly stated in many meetings that after the conclusion of the tour, there will

161. For more details on Gandhiji's Harijan Tour in Tamil Nadu, please see Appendix II.

be a conference of the leaders of all provinces and after discussion, the total collection will be distributed to each province according to its needs. Thus Gandhiji's Harijan Tour had created a public opinion in favour of temple-entry of the Harijans. **The Indian National Congress** also included the right of temple-entry in its agenda and it sphereheaded the movement. Thus Gandhiji's **Harijan Tour** served as an instinct factor for the opening of temples to the Harijans.