The Tripura branch of Harijan Sevak Sangh has done yeoman’s service to the so-called untouchables under the leadership of the author. He presents in this brief account a picture of the activities of the Sangh.

The Harijan Sevak Sangh is a voluntary social welfare organisation run by the people who pledged to work for the eradication of untouchability from the Hindu society. The workers of the Sangh are also pledged to free the so-called untouchabilities from the evils and disabilities suffered by them. These efforts have to be conducted through truthful and non-violent means. Mahatma Gandhi described them as Harijan and they are listed as Scheduled Castes as per the provision of Indian Constitution.

Mahatma Gandhi founded this organisation after his epic fast in 1932 with its Headquarters in Delhi. He himself drafted the constitution of the Sangh, which is registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 in Delhi in the year 1932.

The work for the social and educational uplift of the Harijans (particularly among the Bhangis and Cobblers) started in Tripura from 1945 under the guidance of Sri Kshirode Ch. Sen, a veteran freedom fighter. To work among the Bhangis and the Cobblers of Agartala under his guidance an organisation in the name of “Tripura Harijan Sevak Sangh” was organised in 1950 with Sri Bholan Basfore, a grand old man of the Bhangi Community as President and Sri Chitta Ranjan Dev, a young volunteer of the freedom movement and a constructive worker as Honorary Secretary. The All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, actually started working in Tripura from August, 1955 by appointing Sri Chitta Ranjan Dev as its representative for Tripura. Then as per Article 10 of the Constitution of AI Harijan Sevak Sangh a State Board was constituted in February, 1956 with Sri Sachindra Lal Singh, a veteran freedom fighter and the then Advisor to the Govt. of Tripura as president and Sri Chitta Ranjan Dev as secretary. Shri Dev was also appointed as secretary of the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh in October 1980 and continued till 1982. After his return from Delhi Shri Dev was appointed as president of Tripura State Board in August, 1983 and he is continuing as president till date.

On the 31st March, 2005, the Sangh has completed 50 years of its activities in Tripura for the welfare of the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and other backward communities. A brief report of works done during the period from April, 2002 to March, 2003 has been described in this write-up.

The Sangh is running a Home for orphan and destitute girls in the name of “Jawaharlal Nehru Balika Niwas” at Sinaihani. This Home was established in February, 1976 with financial aid of the Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India. Right from its inception the Sangh is receiving grant-in-aid from the Union Ministry through the Social Welfare Dept. of the Govt. of Tripura. Suddenly, the Govt. of Tripura discontinued grant-in-aid from April, 96 without stating any reason, while there were 55 girls in the above mentioned home for the orphans and the destitute. Since then this home is running with the sponsorship contribution mostly received from the benevolent donors of Kolkata, New Delhi and other places in the rest of India. During the period under report there are 20 girls in the home.

The Sangh is conducting 5 women & Child Welfare Centres at (1) Shahid Bhagat Singh Colony. (2) Bhati-Abhoynagar Hrishipalli, (3) Barjala Village, (4) 79-Tilla Sweepers Colony and (5) Gandhigram (Saha Tilla) of Sadar Sub-Division for the benefit of the people belonging to Mehtar (Bhangis), Muchi, Kaibarta and such other communities of the Scheduled Castes, with the financial aid from the Department of Welfare for Scheduled Castes & OBC. Govt. of Tripura.
The seeker of truth should be humble than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet but the seeker after truth should be so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not until then will we have a glimpse of truth.

*Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, Pg.43*