6.1 Matang Community: A significance of study.

In Indian society Sindhu culture is considered to be the most ancient one and it was the ‘urban’ culture. However with the arrival of Aryans ‘Vaidik Culture’ came into being. With the passage of time different ‘Varnas’ such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra came into being and again these four ‘varnas’ further gave rise to several other castes and sub-castes. Among many castes that came out of ‘Shudra Varna’ the caste Mang is one of the major castes in Maharashtra.

Caste is one of the major factor in the Indian social system. In Maharashtra the castes like Maratha, Mali, Dhanagar, Vanjari, Mahar are the dominating in the social context. Compared to the above dominating caste the Mang caste though being large in number does not seem to be influencing.

There are 35 Districts and 354 Talukas and 323 Municipal corporations, 33 Districts and 27738 village panchayats in the state of Maharashtra. The state is divided into major six geographical divisions such as Kokan, Nashik, Pune, Aurangabad, Amaravati and Nagpur. The state came into existence on 1st May 1960 and according to the census of 2001 the population of the S. C. was 11.05%. Among the Dalit castes the Mahar, Mang and Chambhar are the most influencing castes. However while studying Dalit castes most of the scholars, researches have studied the caste of Mahar in general and these studies have been
considered as related to the Dalits. In a real sense this is illogical because in India all the castes, however small has its independent existence. Each castes has its own status because of which each of the caste needs to be studied separately. That’s why the caste of ‘Mang’ has been studied in this thesis.

6.2 Review of literature and Methodology of the study:-

While studying the Mang caste, it becomes obligatory to review the earlier study done by many scholars in this context. The ‘Shudra’ and ‘untouchable’ castes have been studied by V. R. Shinde, Shri. Ketakar and Dr. Ambedkar from the social point of view.

The ‘Mang’ caste has been studied by V. R. Shinde, Trimbak Narayan Atre, Alexander, Enthoven in the pre independent era. After the independence the scholars like Khadase, D. D. Kachole and Hanumant Misal too have studied the Mang caste independently from the social point of view. After this Dileep Arjune (economic perspective) and Laxman Avaghade (economic perspective) have studied the Matang community independently.

However in recent times, the Mang Community have considered Anna Bhau Sathe as their inspiration. Anna Bhau Sathe was a great auther in Marathi literature. He is considered the pioneer of Dalit literature. Anna Bhau Sathe was a Matang by caste that is why his works have been studied under this light. Among them the prominent names are Baburao Gurav (Marathi), Asha Dhavad (Marathi), Madhav Gadekar (Marathi), Pramod Gorawade (Marathi), Baburao Ambhore (Marathi), Sharad
Gaikwad (Marathi) who have studied the Anna Bhau Sathe’s works in the light of Mang Community.

Apart from this; Prabhakar Mande (Marathi) has studied the Matang Community and its sub castes from the social point and economic point of view. Manik Sonawane (Social work), Ram Abane (Education) too have studied the Matang community. Matang community, Anna Bhau Sathe and Matang literature, the Mang in the literature and the life of Mang in socio–economic, education, religious and cultural perspectives have also been studied substantially.

The present thesis focuses on the study of Mang community from the socio – political and literature point of view. The researcher has visited personally to about 990 villages and towns and had talked to many people. The researches has gone personally in the Konkan region, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada, Nasik, Amaravati, and Nagpur region. The study is based on authentic record and his observations.

6.3 **Historical Overview of Matang:**

While tracing the ancient and historical origin of Mangs the scholars assume that the word ‘Mang’ came in Marathi in the 13th century, but one finds the reference to ‘Matang’ in Pali language. In Ramayana too one find the word ‘Mang’ the makes one consider undoubtaly that the Mang community is an ancient one. Some thinkers consider Mang is brave, mighty and have a great valiant whereas some scholars consider Mang to the one who begs to fill his stomach, he is a tracer of criminals. But in a real sense ontologically Mang means Ma + Ang. Ma means mother and Ang
means body, one who is born from the body of mother. Mother means the Earth and the Soil, which further means ‘Bhumiputra’ i.e. son of the soil or the son of the earth.

Mang is a name after a ‘rishi’. The Mangs have originated from the rushi called Matang. Mangs could belong to Koli origin or then of Chandal origin. Even it is said that the Mangs could have been the ‘Kshatriya’. It is said that ‘Jambhuvant’ must have been the ancestor of Mangs, but one has to think that Koli is not a ‘Vansha’ but it is an occupation and ‘Chandal’ is not ‘Vansha’ but it is the name of country. This itself shows that Mangs are the ‘Kshatriya’. Dr. Ambedkar too had proved that the Shudras were the Kshatriyas. If the ancestor of Mangs is considered to be the ‘Vanar’ or Monkey they according to Darvin’s theory all the humanity has been evolved from monkeys. The meaning of above argument is that Mang is one of the most ancient communities.

Though Mangs are called ‘Matang’ in Maharashtra they are called ‘Chivang’ in Vidharbha. The Mang community is spread all over the country having existence in the states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Kashmir and Kerala. This means the Mang community is spread from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Gujarat to Assam. That’s why the Mang caste is a ‘Nation-wide Caste’. In the history, the Mangs had eight states that they ruled. The ‘Shakyakool’ of lord Buddha was the state under emperor Prasenjeet of Matang king have given patronage to the Buddhism. The Matang king Kashyapa has spread Buddhism outside India to China. The
relation between India and China has originated from the Matang king Kashyapa.

Like in Buddhism the Jain and Lingayat too have seen the Matang saints. The pioneer of Astrology was ‘Bhadali’ who was a Matang. A Brahmin by name Sahadeo was her disciple.

Mang is the original inhabitant of Maharashtra. He is the ‘Bhoomiputra’ that is son of the soil. The ancient colony in Maharashtra is that of Matangs. There are number of sub-castes of Mang and their number goes up to 24. But this is not true. There are only 12 sub–castes of Mangs they are Kakarya Mang, Dhaliya Mang, Rangit Mang, Telangi Mang, Desurya Mang, Balur Mang, Ped Mang, Ghatole Mang, Katavati Mang, Mang Garudi, Dukkalwar and Holar. Mangs have almost 200 surnames and the clans.

The existence and bravery of Matang Community could be traced back to ancient times. During the time of Buddha and Ramayana there were Mangs who were brave. At the time of Shivaji too the Mangs have played their important roles. They were the protectors of forts, they were the part of spying agencies. During the Peshawa period the Mang had to lead a very inferior kind of life as untouchable. They had to hang a earthen pot in their neck and tie a broom behind even though the beloved of Bajirao Peshwa, Mastani was given security by a Mang. They were assigned the duty to be in the security squad for her not only this but it is the Mangs who traced the conspiricy of the killing Mastani.
In the Indian social system the Mang was untouchable. The condition of Mang women was more pathetic, they were the victims not only of the existing social discrimination but even within the community too they were the victims of their own men. They were the ‘Slaves of slaves’.

It is during the reign of Shahu Maharaj, the Mangs led the life of self respect. Shahu Maharaj appointed them in his court. Some of them were given Sanad. Some of them were in police, Some became part of hunting group. Maharaj took one Mangs along with him. He gave his own surname Ghatage to the Mangs at Minache. Shahu Maharaj loved the Mangs.

During the reign of Nizam at Marathwada the Mangs were not enjoying respectful life. The organization named ‘Arundhati Mahasabha’ demanded 5 seats for Mangs and Madigas even then one finds that the Mangs in Nizam reign converting themselves to Islam and Christianity. All over the state the Mangs were opposing the movement against Nizam. During the ‘Hyderabad Mukti Sangram’ the Mangs from Nanded, Latur, Beed, Parabhami, Osmanabad, have shown remarkable feats and many have laid their lives for that sake.

Some thinkers have noted that the Mangs are not ‘Vatandar’ and even ‘Balutedar’. But right from the medival age Mang had been the ‘Vatandar’, Balutedar, and even ‘Vethbigar’. Some Mangs have turned to criminal acts because of poverty and pathetic economic conditions.

What is the origin of Mang? What is the race of Mang? What is the relation between Mang – Mahar? Many thinkers have put
forth their views in this regard. The Mangs were the followers of Buddhism quite before Mahars. Mangs belong to ‘Naagvansha’ on the basis of which basis the Mahars are considered ‘Naagvansha’ by applying the same criteria. The Mangs also can be proved to be belonging to ‘Naagvansha’.

In the democratic set up of a country the number of people i.e. population becomes important. But the population of Mang has been shown less in every census. In this concern, Dr. Ambedkar has shown how the influencing castes, increase their population by showing it falsely. ‘Lahuji Salve Matang Study Report’ submitted to the Government of Maharashtra shows that the population of Mangs is 20 lakhs. Among Dalits, with respect to population the percentage of Mahar is 35.12% of Mang it is 32.65% and of Chambhar it is 22.06%. Considering this, the population of Mangs should be more than 65 lakhs.

6.4 Dr. Ambedkar and Matang Community

It is generally said that the Matang Community was away from Ambedkar’s movement not only this but the community was opposing the Ambedkar’s movement which has resulted into widening the gap between these two communities but the reality is different.

Some of the Mang leaders were striving for a separate Matang movement this does not mean that they were opposing Ambedkar movement. This thought does not hold any logical base. Some of the oppositions of Ambedkar were not agreeable to some Mang leaders. They had a feeling that the Mangs were anti – Ambedkar. Even among Mahars all the people were not following
Ambedkar. The Mahar Gavai G. A. had opposed Dr. Amberakar on many issues.

An interesting thing is that, some people belonging to Chambhar community were in opposition to Ambedkar’s views but nobody talks about that on the contrary the relation between Mang – Mahar is always spoken about. It is a truth that Mang community was not opposing Dr. Ambedkar and saying that Ambedkar was thinking only of Mang and not of Mahar also does not sound proper.

In short it can be said that Ambedkar had a good and cordial relationship with Mang. The number is Mahar who supported Ambedkar was more than those who opposed him. Ambedkar had always tried to near Mangs in his journey from ‘Bahishkrut Hitakarni Sabha’ to his formation of SCF. Dr. Ambedkar was the leader of all Dalits consequently he was the leader of Mangs too.

6.5 Matang community: customs and Religious Practices

Indian society is a tradition loving society. The practice of traditions and rituals is largely seen being observed in Maharashtra. In the social system of Maharashtra the Mang is considered to be the pious that is ‘Shubh’. People from any caste or creed feel it necessary to begin any good work either with the suspicious harely of Mang or at least in his presence. There is a strong feeling that if a work is begun by the auspicious hands of Mang it reaches to good result. There is a popular and recurrent
idiom ‘Bhetala Mang, Phitala Pang’ meaning once a Mang is met no problems ahead.

In the tradition of Hindu religion the role of Mang in their festival such as Padawa, Bendur, Panchami, Dasara, Diwali (and many such other festivals) is very important. Whenever there is famine the Mang asks for ‘Dhondi’. It is believed that this act of Mang bright the rains. Whenever there is spread of some disease many lady carries the ‘Mariaai’ at the outskurts of village which curb the village of the disease is a popular belief. At the time of eclipse the Mangs roam in the village saying ‘De dann, sute giran’ meaning of you give me alms the eclipse is over. The eclipse is considered to be the omen sign on the village and the Mang helps to out shadow the village from such ills.

The delivery of an upper caste women is carried out by a Mang lady. The child born is first given in the lap of Mang lady which is considered a sign of good for the future of a child. At the times of sowing the seeds, harvesting Mang is called which assures the abundance in the fields.

In this way right from the birth of a child to the death of man the Mang becomes important. The coffin for the dead person is tied by the string that Mang has prepared. In other words one can say that from the birth to the death of a person a Mang is given ‘respect’. His presence is considered to be a good one. But Mang gets humiliation, He had to tolerale injustice done to him. He had to eat the grains mixed in the dung of animals at the thrushing field. Tragically this is considered to be the ‘right’ of Mang and above all Mang consider this as his ‘respect’.
Mangs worship many gods and goddesses. Among them Matangi, Mari aai, Dhrupada Aai, Inamai, Satwai, and Tai Aai are the major goddesses whereas the male gods are Khandoba, Mhasoba, Mangir baba, Jyotiba, Bhairoba and Vithoba. The Mangs could not afford to celebrate at the festivals or fairs of these gods and goddess because of their economic conditions, even then sometimes they take loans and does the rituals.

There used to be five day long marriage ceremony among Matang community. On the day of marriage the bride and their relatives (Varad) came to the house of groom. On the same day morning the ceremony to apply the turmeric powder to the body (Haladi) would take place. The marriage would take place in the evening by seeing the proper time (Goraj Muhurt). On the prior day of marriage, bride worships the god or goddess of the village. The groom to does the same. Before all this both the parties from bride and groom come together and purchase clothes for the bride and bridegroom the clothes are called ‘Basta’. The ceremony called ‘sakharpuda’ takes place at the place of bride and applying ‘Tila’ is done at the residence of groom. The marriage ceremony is marked by playing music band and enjoyment at full.

With the times changed, the marriage takes place at the halls. After the marriage is over the people dine and go away to their places. On the night of marriage the big procession called ‘Varat’ (Marriage Procession at night) takes place in the village in which bride and bridegroom take part.

These days, in the cities a difficulty to arrange the marriages of educated girls and boy is felt. That is way, the
marriages are arranged by ‘marriage beauro’. Some go for love marriage. Even inter caste and inter religion marriages too are taking place.

6.6 Matang Community :- Continuity and Change.

Matang Community is backward on the economic and social levels. According to Hindu scriptures this community is considered to be the ‘Shudra’ and untouchable. It has been kept outside the village. In daily life they have been made slaves. Though the religion has considered the Mang to be ‘pious’ or ‘Shubh’ in actual life he is a ‘worker’, ‘slave’ he is suppressed under the ‘Balutedari’ system. Consequently he has to work sometimes in the farm on daily wages and even go round the village asking for bread. He has been away from the basic needs such as food, clothes and shelter.

Economically suppressed Mang is further fortuned by the upper caste people. Todays Mang youth tries to get rid off all old traditions and rituals and welcome the changes. He is trying to be organized. He is coming on the street to voice against injustice done to him. He seems to deny the concept of Gavki and Mangki and wish, to live a respectful life. This new awakening among Matangs does not seem to be tolerated by the upper caste people that’s why the Mangs are attacked by the upper caste people on certain issues. They seem to deny the humanness of the Mangs.

In Vadange village in Kolhapur district a Matang colony was attacked and later on set on fire by upper caste people. All the culprits in this case were set free by the court. At Jalana
district, in Bhutegaon a young man Ramesh Shendage was burnt alive in presence of everybody under the broad sun light. Even in this case the accused people were set free, that’s why the Mang community seem to develop disbelief in the law and order and judiciary system. The Mangs those who oppose to go traditionally for gavki are beaten up in general. On the day of ‘holi’ it was customary to scold the Mangs at their doors the new generation of Mangs do not allow such a practice and they have tried to close it down, seeing this the upper caste people of the village, showed their unpleasant feelings about this. Even though the Mang is considered ‘pious’ or good according to Hindu religion, but he does not have entry in the Hindu temples. In the district of Kolhapur, Sangli and Solapur they got the entry in the temples only after a massive movement was raised against such ill practice by Dalit Mahasangh. At Hitani of Gadahinglaj taluka, Dist. Kolhapur a Matang youth was attacked by Hindu upper caste people when he was returning from temple. In Marathwada region even today a Matang bride groom is not allowed to enter the Hindu temple.

As Mang is considered pious or ‘shubh’ he was sacrificed while digging the well. This was a practice at Marathwada at certain places. A Matang boy who was studying for IAS was burnt alive by upper caste people, where as at Shelgaon (Pimpari) taluka Navgaon Dist.- Nanded an youth’s eyes were stabbed as he had got married in love with a upper caste girl. This young man’s name was Chandrakant Gaikwad. At Dhoki when a Matang girl was not responding for love the upper caste people set her on fire.
Because of these incidents the Matang community is gradually awakening and thus transforming the great social reformists like Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Maharshee Karve, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedker, Karmveer Bhaurao Patil and Panjabrao Deshmukh have given an opportunity to Mangs to lead a life with self respect because of which new generation of Mangs seem to take their education in modern times and became computer engineers, doctors, etc. but the number is not remarkable. In rural area Matangs are working on daily wages even today. As the percentage of Matangs in education is less leading to lesser opportunity in the service sector, that’s why the Mang today is not in the competitive world. In short one sees some change in social level but on the economical level even today the Mang is weak.

Because of the above facts even today the Mang is in animal trading, fixing a horse shoe to the oxes, making ropes, making brooms, selling meat, being the part of the music band, perform tamasha and pick-up rags. These were the traditional occupations of Mangs. The changed times have not changed their lot. This indulgence of Mangs is not a prestige for them. Mangs are involved in many occupations.

On religious level most of the Mangs are Hindus. All the rituals and traditions of Hindu religion they follow. He seem to worship their gods and goddesses in the fairs and festivals though he cannot afford to do so. Even today we find ‘Potaraj’ of Mariaai among Mangs. The ‘Devdasi’ and ‘Jogta’ of Matangi are the Mang. The ‘Waghya’ ‘Murali’ of the Khandoba are the Mangs. Mangs
even go on ‘Vari’ (pilgrimage) of Pandharpur. He even follows certain Muslim rituals like sacrificing goats and hen which is called ‘kanduri’ for Peer and Dargas.

But a Mang who believes and confirms to the new thought of Phule-Ambedkar and Anna Bhau Sathe is trying to get away from the traditional thought and welcome new one. He seems to deny and discard the ‘useless’ rituals of Hindu religion. He even does not feel like remaining in Hindu religion and so the Mang who have got influenced by the thoughts of Ambedkar are changing their religion to Buddhism. Those who have converted to Christianity during British period worship Jesus Christ. We find even some Muslim, Shikh, Mangs but they are exception. In short in the religious level most of the Mang today is a ‘Hindu’ by religion.

Like Mahars, even Mangs also seems to be unemployed but he has been suppressed more than Mahars in the social system. There seems to be a hand of Mahars in this suppression, the Mang originally is the son of soil of this land (Shinde V. R., 1976: 169).

On the 52 rights that the Mahars have got it has been always quoted that ‘in this Mang is not concerned’ this shows that the Mangs too could have had such rights prior to Mahars (Shinde V. R. 1976: 160). The first colony of Maharashtra is of Mang and Mahars but with the passage of the time Marathas must have achieved it by force there is a lot of chance to prove this (Shinde V. R., 1976: 23). The above examples show that the real ‘son of soil’ of Maharashtra is a Mang and they had the original colony in Maharashtra.
6.7 Matang Movement: Social, Political and Literary

While studying the Matang social movement, one can not go on without referring K. K. Sakat (Pune), Tatya Sadhu Vayadande (Pune). They began this movement; many other names can be added to it such as Baburao Vayadande, T.S. Gaikwad, Kalokhe, Botalaje, Tukaram Landage etc. Apart from this the contribution of Vithal Ramji Shinde, Shahu Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, S.M. Mate is also immense in the Matang movement. Devarao Kamble (Parabhani) was also one matang leader from Marathwada. These people have really contributed the Matang movement by their actions such as organizing meeting, giving memorandum to the government, to raise the voice against the ill practices-rituals and traditions. Further L. B. Bhingardeve too actively contributed in Matang movement with the blessings of the great reformist Karmveer Bhaurao Patil.

While thinking about Matang Community we find that the movement of Matangs had been supporting Ambedker and at the same time opposing him Ganeshacharya (Kolhapur), Sakate (Mumbai), Kalokhe, Botalaje (Mumbai), Sitaram Babaji Landage (Pune), R. G. Khandagale (Pune), Kerba Jadhav, Sarvade (Solapur), Shripati Shinde (Osmanabad) and many other such Matang leaders were pro-Ambedkar while other Matang leaders such as K.K. Sakat, Baburao Vayadande, were with S.M. Mate and were anti Ambedkar.

All these Matang leaders were willing to see the transformation of Mangs. There were many Matang who were
supporting the role of Ambedkar. In the Mahad sangram, Satyagraha of Kalaram temple and the conversion of Ambedkar to Buddhism, Mangs were the part of the movement of Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar had always tried to take Mang along with him.

There were mainly three Matang leaders who opposed Ambedkar. Among them the first was K. K. Sakat who was with S.M. Mate, second was Devrao Kamble who was with Congress and the third was Bhingardeve who being with Congress was associated with Karmveer Bhaurao Patil. Dr Ambedkar had alleged the Rayat Shikshan Sanstha and Karmaveer's work in education, he even alleged Masharshi Shinde, Mahatma Gandhi which distanced Karmaveer from Dr. Ambedkar. As Tatyasaheb Bhingardeve was with Karmaveer, naturally the gap between him and Ambedkar too widened. However he never disrespected Dr. Ambedkar. Deorao Kamble remained with Dr. Ambedkar in the parliament. K.K.Sakat always use to go for the programs of Dr. Ambedkar and use to occupy the front seat among the audience. Deorao Kamble and K. L. More became member and parliament and Tatyasaheb Bhigardeve became the first Matang MLA.

The Matang community which was with the Congress remained with it even after independence. But Matang community was not given any minister’s position. The Matang community had two M.P.s inspite of that, nobody was given ministership. When this fact was realised Matang leaders they came to know that these opportunities are denied to them because they were not organized. This fact brought the thought of uniting Matangs to the foregrand. At the places like Shirdi, Bhoom the
meeting to unite Matangs were held but the unity could not take place. The Congress leaders played politics in this and they did not allow Matang leaders to be united. Though this is reality, the selfishness of Matang leaders too could not bring them together. Consequently even today we find that the Matang community has not become united.

The Mahar community considered Dr. Ambedkar as their inspiration but Mangs accepted ‘Anna Bhau Sathe’ as their leader. Congress leaders conceptualized Financial Corporation in the name of Anna Bhau Sathe. When Mangs started taking the name of Anna Bhau Sathe. When Mang started taking the name of Lahuji Salve, the Congress formed ‘Lahuji Salve Matang Study Commission’. This means the Congress gave power to the Mangs in same form but they did not give the key to power. The first Mang Minister was Bharaskar, later on Pramanand Awale, then Laxumanrao Dhobale, Jayawantrao Awale and Ramesh Bagave too become ministers. During the BJP-Sena government Dileep Kamble and Uttam Prakash Khandare became ministers. But they were not given rights to work for Matang community. The established people gave Matangs only positions and not the rights to use these positions. During Rahul Gandhi’s visit to Mumbai, Ramesh Bagave a minister from Mang Community had lifted his shoes was highlighted by media which Mangs across Maharashtra did not like.

During the parliamentary and assembly elections – loyalty is the only criteria. The Mang who is clever and brilliant is always negated by the established castes in the society. The Matang
leaders who are enjoying second or third term in power have remained there only because they are ‘loyal’ to the established caste. One who has enjoyed ‘power’ most have remained there because he does not have self respect. This is the truth in Matang politics. While studying about the politics of Matang community, we have taken into consideration the constituencies like Vadagaon, Mangalweda, Solapur (N), Parvati (Pune) Mukhed, Her, Gangakhed, Tiroda and Maan. In the re-structured constituencies the Latur parliamentary constituency and Vadagaon, Udagir, Degalur, Cantonment (Pune) assembly constituencies have been taken into consideration.

In the social movement of Matangs, we have taken into consideration the Dalit Panther and the movement later on. Dalit Panther was backed by Mangs throughout the Maharashtra in the beginning, but when there arose conflict between Panther leaders and only one caste was given importance by that time the Mangs got away from the Dalit Panther and started organizing separately. We have even taken the review of such movements. Among them Maharashtra Yuvak Parishad (Aurangabad), Akhil Bharatiya Matang Sangh (Mumbai), Lahasena (Mumbai), Anna Bhau Sathe Sangharsh Samiti (Nanded), and Lahuji Salave Karmachari Kalyan Mahasangh (Latur), Matang Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (Nagpur), Dalit Swymsevak Sangh (Pune), Lahushakti (Amarawati, Akola) are few to name. The two important Matang movements have not been taken into consideration they are Dalit Mahasangh (Karad) and Manavi Hakk Abhiyan (Beed). The researcher himself is the founder
President of Dalit Mahasangh and Manavi Hakk Abhiyan is related to an N.G.O.

The social organizations of Matang community in Maharashtra are not less in number. Every district has almost more than 25 organizations but these organizations have been not considered in this study, only those organization that have existed at state level and having some basic common principle of thought have been taken into consideration.

The literary movement of Matang community is also one of the most important movement. Dalit literature shares a commendable place in Marathi literature which has been richly contributed by Matang writers. The pioneer of Dalit literature prior to independence is Mukta Salve who belongs to Matang community. If we consider that Dalit literature began in 1950, or at any point of time one has to agree that Anna Bhau Sathe becomes the pioneer of Dalit literature. In both the ways honour of pioneering the Dalit literature come to Mangs alone.

In order to enrich Dalit literature the contribution of Dalit writers, poets is immense. But later on when Dalit literature became a movement the castes became important. The different caste of writers became important and in this politics of caste – group. Mang writers did not last for a long time. The umbrella term of Dalit literature got split into several other terms and it was recognized by the names such as –Buddha literature, Ambedkar literature, Phule-Ambedkari literature, Satyashodhaki literature, Vidrohi literature, non-Brahmani literature and many such labels added later on. But in all this Mang was not at all
seen. In this background Machhindra Sakate took the initiative to organize a ‘Dalit Sahitya Sammelan’ at Karad in 1995. He conceptualised the idea of the ‘Krantiwadi Sahitya’ during this literary meet, which bloomed later on Mang started organizing such literary meets with this title. Some people started organizing literary meet in the name of Anna Bhau Sathe. On this background Machhindra Sakate said that ‘any revolution should initiate equality’ and ‘equality is an objective’. With this thought he organised’ Samatawadi Sahitya Sammelan’ at Kolhapur on 11th and 12th April 2008.

In short, even today Dalits have to take the support of the name of great men. Even Mangs have to get the support of Anna Bhau Sathe. But in a real sense the movement should firmly stand on the solid thoughts and not on the name of great people, that’s why it can be seen that ‘Samatawadi Sahitya Movement' will be a major literary movement of Matang community in future.

Today Matangs have created their own space and existence in the socio-political and literary context. They command a definite status in this respect. In many areas like poetry, prose, fiction, drama, biographies, the Matangs are enriching the literature with their contribution.

6.8 Social reality: Tensions and Contradictions

One of the important and major community of Maharashtra’s social life is the community of Mang. This is the most backward politically, economically, educationally and socially. This community was a 'slave' of socio-religious system
before independence and even in the post independence era their mentality of ‘slavery’ has not changed and even today this community is found in the clutches of slavery.

This community was one of the most brave community which was assigned the responsibility to protect forts during Martha and Peshwa period. But Britishers included the Mang community among the ‘criminal caste’ in 1871 and they were compelled to present in the nearby police station during night time also. They had no option left other than to listen to the upper caste people, else police will be after them. Thus the Mang community turned to ‘slavery’ once again. The villages and the upper caste people got one class for them to do injustice. Dr. Ambedkar had once said, “if a slave is made aware about his slavery he will then agitate” but this statement does not seem to hold true with Matang community. Many people in Mang community have strived hard for their awakening Lahuji Salve, Fakira, Savala, Balya Mang of Savalaj, Yashwant Mang of Satara who was executed at Genda Mal, Satara, Yadya- Mungya Mang of Marathwada showed their exceptional courage, many of them fought and even laid their live, but Mang as community never rose to fight against injustice done to them.

Mahars were lucky to get Dr. Ambedkar as their leader. It is said that Mang community does not have such a leader. Ambedkar and before that Shivram Kamble and Baba Valangakar were supported by Mahars, then though illiterate but in todays context Mangs don’t seem to have their leaders. They are under the influence of ‘Patil’ so much so, that nothing can be done
without his positive nod. Mangs go to fight against their injustice by seeking the permission of ‘Patil’ and if at all there is any talk of their unity at the Mangwada, they immediately inform the ‘Patil’ about this. This kind of mentality of ‘slavery’ is still found among Matangs. On the community level they don’t feel to get organized and fight against oppression they undergo by the hands of upper caste. If time come an illiterate Mang would raise voice against him but this is unfortunately unexpected as a literate Mang. Thus literate Mang is more under the pressure and is scared. This has led to not having a powerful leader and even organization that would wage war against the established castes.

Mangs don’t do anything on themselves and goes on criticising the Mahars. He always says that Mahar snatches his rights but he never comes forward to enjoy his rights. He does not stand in the competition and runs away from it. Those who fight the established caste never take note of them.

Today Mang has been successful to make his own existence through many Dalit Movements he is involved in. Even the upper caste people are taking note of the Mang leaders and their unity but unfortunately even today Mang organization and their leaders don’t get acceptance by the thinkers and media.

Mangs have helped and supported Ambedkar in his movement but they have not remained with the thought of Ambedkar. The new Buddhist Mang are very few in number but even among them we do not find unity. Those Mangs who had a proud feeling in accepting Buddhisms are involved in Dhamma
movement only to collect donations. Mahar (Neo Buddhist) officers seem not to help Mangs in their economic development.

Mangs have joined BSP because RPI leaders have put them aside but even in BSP they have failed to put their own mark on. There too Mahar is most influencing and after seeing this Mangs again have started quitting the BSP. They can not hold what they have and even can not create new, that's the pathetic condition of Mang today. The Mangs are in Congress right from the beginning but there too they can not come together. In Pune itself there are two Matang leaders, Ramesh Bagawe and Bhagwan Vairat, they are in Congress but both of them are not in good terms because their ‘Godfathers' in Congress are not in good terms. This is the picture one find with the Mangs in all political parties. ‘The politics of blessing’ is the reality of Mang politics. They have developed a mentality that whatever is given by established leaders to be accepted without a word. If not given any thing, to remain quiet is the principle of Matang community leaders. If the leaders themselves are dependent how can be followers dependent and lead a life of self respect. In 1962 there were eight MLAs of Matang community which went on decresing in later elections. Earlier Mang was in Congress but we find Mangs today in almost every party. Wherever a Mang gets an opportunity he goes there. As they remain there without any definite identity, the opportunity they get is not worth considering. This mean the Mangs have turned to be only the opportunists. (Gulal Tikade Changbhale).
In the economical sector Mangs have four spinning mills. These mills are of Vitthalrao Gaikwad (Parabhanī), Laxman Dhobale (Solapur), Jayawantrao Avale and Niwas Avaghade (Kolhapur). But the number of Matang workers in these mills is very less. Most of the Matang community is away from the benefits of ‘Khadi Gramodhyog’ and ‘Anna Bhau Sathe Finance Development Corporation’.

In India, the caste itself is the enemy of the caste. Many people have written on the relations of Mang-Mahar and the enemity between them. But this enemity is gradually becoming less while the Mang-Holar enemity is increasing. Ekanath Avad had alleged Dhobale that he is not a Mang but a Holar during the parliamentary elections at Osmanabad. Uttam Prakash Khandare, too alleged Dhobale in the assembly elections of Mohol. These allegations are the indication of the ‘war’ in Matang community. The real questions related to their living are being kept aside.

Matang community is demanding a separate reservation for their community but established politicians are not in support. In addition to this Mangs are divided with their internal conflicts, this all leads to not having their unity. As if it was less, there is a division between a urban Mang and a village Mang. On the regional level differences between ‘leadership’ could be seen in Western Maharashatra, Marathwada and Vidarbha.

On all this background the new generation of Mang should stand on firm ground with firm vision then only the Mang community could overcome their pathetic condition.
6.9 Conclusions:

1) Matang caste is one of the most influencing castes in Maharashtra like that of Maratha, Mali, and Mahar. However, it is not organised one and so has remained unattended.

2) Mang caste belongs to the group of the Scheduled Castes and is next to Mahars in population in Maharashtra. The Mahar caste got the Midas touch of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as a result it developed and progressed with his leadership. Mang caste did not had a scholarly, proud and valiant leadership like that of Dr. Ambedkar.

3) Mang is an ancient and independent caste. The meaning of Mang or Matang is ‘Son of Soil’ i.e. ‘Bhoomiputra’.

4) In the historical India the Mangs had their own kingdoms. The Mangs were the rulers and were –Kshatriya as per the ‘varna’ system. However, because of the religious system of Brahmins they were made untouchables and slaves.

5) Mangs were ‘Kshatriya’ and were belonging to Naga race. The people having the article ‘Nak’ in their name are considered to be belonging to the Naga race. There are innumerable Mangs having this article in their names in Maharashtra.

6) Mangs were belonging to ‘Naga’ race and had accepted Buddhism. However during the time of Buddha Mahar’s conversion to Buddhism gave rise to the conflict between these two castes.
7) The conflict between Mangs and Mahars is based on the status of their castes. It is found in ‘Varna’ system. However, this is not the only reason for the conflict.

8) Conversion to Buddhism is one of the reason for their conflict. The second reason is the overall pathetic condition of almost all the untouchables castes. The conflict is the outcome of their struggle to satisfy their hunger.

9) The conflict between these two castes was initially to ‘like’ and lateron it develoed in order to get the ‘more share.’ In this conflict the Mahars proved to be ‘smart’, ‘cautious’ and crafty as a result they reached out to the power and got the ‘more share’ for their own caste, and they made it even ‘lawful’

10) Mahars have always remained of compromising nature. They compromise with the power centres and get whatever they want. Mangs could not do this ‘compromise’ which has made them meet the present situation.

11) Mangs are jealous of Mahars as they get ‘more share’ as compared to them. Mangs hate Mahars and oppose them but they never try to get this ‘more share’ for themselves.

12) Mahars do organise, struggle and pressurise if needed, in order to get their rights. On the contrary, Mangs are not organised, they don’t struggle and pressurise, consequently remain away from getting their rights. They just voice out their anger and jealousy against Mahars and do nothing.

13) Because of their nature the Mahars are far ahead in the life as compared to Mangs who are backward. The Mangs held
Mahars responsible for their lot which is unreasonable. The fact is, the Mangs are not influencing is any area and they never even try for that.

14) Mangs and Mahars consider each other their rivals. Mangs feel that the Mahars would deceive them and Mahars are scared that the Mangs would become the shareholder in their ‘share’. Consequently, both of them avoid each other.

15) Initially, Mahar caste which turned to Buddhism was a ‘negative reference group’ to Mangs and vice versa.

16) The above picture is changing these days. To the Mangs initially the Mahars and later on Buddhists were the ‘negative reference group’ but these days it has become ‘comparative reference group.’ According to Mahars, the Mangs now are becoming ‘positive reference group.’

17) As Dr. Ambedkar belonged to the Mahars ‘negative refernce group’ some Mangs remained away from his movement.

18) The population of Mahars in Maharashtra, as per the census of 1961 was 30,75,754 and the population of Mang was 28,59,435.

19) The population of Mahars converted by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was about 4,00,000. At the most in the year 1956. Putting together the population of Mahars does not exceed 34,00,000. This means the claim Mahar scholars put that the Mahars exceed the population of Mangs by 8% proves to be false.
20) In order to have a clear picture of the castes, creeds and religion, the caste-creed religious based census is a necessary move.

21) According to the census, the population of Matang residing in rural area 1961 (84.42%), 1971 (82.42%), 1981 (75.14%). As the larger percentage of Matang community reside in rural area, it has added to their backwardness and atrocity.

22) The population growth between 1961 and 1971 is 24.53% whereas per year it is 2.45%. The growth in the year between 1971 and 1981 is 33.79% and per year it is 3.38% which means that the importance of family planning was not so much known to them. As the growth of population among Matangs is more, the poverty too is more.

23) In the literacy graph of Maharashtra the literacy rate of Matang males in the year 1961 was (9.87%), 1971 (17.51%), 1981 (19.83%), 1991 (19.83%) and in the year 2001 it was 23.83%. However, in the year 2001 only 1.45% of Matangs have reached to 10\textsuperscript{th} standard and only 0.36% have reached to graduation level. The percentage of Matangs reaching to post graduation is just 0.20%. The above figures itself speak about the educational status of Matangs in Maharashtra.

24) The percentage of Mang males in the year 2001 reaching up to 10\textsuperscript{th} standard is 5.10% up to graduation is 0.88% and up to post graduation is 0.57%. The ratio of females in the same year that is 2001 is 1.24%, 0.32% and 0.12% respectively. The above figures again state the pathetic picture of Matang community in the literacy scenario.
6.10 Suggestions:

1) A separate reservation should be given to Matang community in employment as well as educational, economic and industrial sector and this ratio should not be below 6.5%.

2) A separate package must be given for the development of Matang community.

3) Re - survey of Below poverty line (BPL) should be carried out and ‘honest’ list should be made.

4) The upper caste attacking Matang community should be brought under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes Act (MCOCA).

5) The artists (Tamasha and Shahiri) in Matang community should be given homes and pension.

6) The budget of ‘Anna Bhau Sathe Mahamandal’ should be increased up to Rs. 500 crores.

7) A separate hostels and residential schools should be opened for children of Matang community.

8) Anna Bhau Sathe and Lahuji Salve should be honoured by ‘Bharat Rana’

9) Kala Vidyapeeth (Art University) should be started in the name of Anna Bhau Sathe.

10) A distribution of forest and ‘Gayran’ lands should be made to Matang and its sub-caste communities.

11) The government should not accept ‘Lahuji Salve Matang Ayog’ (commission)
12) Matang community should accept the scientific attitude and should develop vision of equality.

13) Though Anna Bhau Sathe is their inspiration the Mang community should come together following him in the principle of thoughts.

14) Mang community should prepare themselves to fight against injustice independently they should not seek the advice of Patil-Deshmukh now and then.

15) Matang should not run after the established caste.

16) Matang should not just demand for their rights but fight for it.