CHAPTER - I

MATANG COMMUNITY: AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Matang (Mang) is one of the most important castes among all the untouchable castes in Maharashtra. Even today this caste holds an important place in the affairs of village. ‘Mang’ has an important place in the ‘Balutedar’ system of village. This caste is one of the most suppressed and neglected castes in the state. Its status is considered to be the lowest among all. Even so, the caste is immensely important from the cultural point of view (Somawanshi, B.C. 1989: 7).

This chapter attempts to have introductory information about the Matang community. The word ‘Mang’ or ‘Matang’ denotes a caste or creed or it attempts to denote the class or a concept has been made clear in this chapter. It also touches the Matang community at the time of Shivaji Maharaj, Peshwa period and British period. The chapter tries to establish identity of the Matang community during the period of Shahu Maharaj. In order to deal with the Matang community of Marathwada it takes into account the community that existed during the period of Nizam. It tries to establish a fact and searches in the quest to know who are the original inhabitants of Maharashtra. Matang community has been seen in the light of ‘Vethbigar’ Balutedar, and Vatandar system that prevailed in the society which means that the chapter tries to explore the Matang community through social and historical perspectives.
1.2 The Origin of Word ‘Mang’:

The word ‘Mang’ is prevalent since 13th century in the Marathi region. Before this, however, the caste was referred to as ‘Matang’ (Khadase, B.K., 1990: 25). The reference to the word ‘Matang’ is not made in respect to caste or creed but it is found as ‘Rishi naam’ (name of the Rishi). We get references to the term ‘Matang’ in Ramayan and Kathasaritsaagar which are the stories of ‘Rishis.’ During that period ‘Rishis’ were denoted and were belonging to the lower strata.

In a book titled ‘Soot Nippat’ in pali literature ‘Matang’ and ‘Chandal’ are the words synonymous with each other. The Marathi word ‘Mang’ is derived from the sanskrit word ‘Matang’ (Somawanshi, B.C, 1989: 27).

In sanskrit ‘Mang’ is even called an ‘swapach’ or ‘shwapak,’ however, ‘Matang’ is the culturelization. According to Maharshi V.R. Shinde the original word is ‘Mang’, ( मंग ), ‘Mang’ ( मांग ) or ‘Mang’ ( मांग ) (Shinde, V.R. 1976: 105).

1.3 The meaning of word Mang-Matang

The word ‘Matang’ is the sanskrit version of the word ‘Mang’. The scholars have used the word ‘Mang’ and have arrived at different meanings of the word-

Mat + atank means the great ones who show remarkable feats.

Mat +.Ang means those who possess the great strength (Khadase, B.K, 1990: 26).

Linguistically the meaning and origin of the word ‘Mang’ can be said to be ‘the one who creates terror without weapons’. Prabhakar Mande holds this view. Matang – the word Maat means
the one who has a strength and ang means body; the united meaning of these words may be –‘a person who has a power’ (Mande Prabhakar, 1983: 4). The word Matang means the one who traces out the way or the one who shows a way or it even means the one who feeds himself by begging for food.

In the earlier sense the word Mang means (the one who traces out the clues to crime and the criminal and in the later period it meant one who asks for food and lives on.) These are the various meanings of the word Matang according to Chavan Ramnath (Chavan Ramnath, 1989: 160).

In Sanskrit ‘Mang’ is called ‘shwapach’ or ‘shwapak’ the meaning of the word shwapak is ‘one who eats the meat of dog’. These creeds can be traced in Assam region even today.

The reference to ‘Mang’ is made four times as ‘Pratimaan’in the ‘Tukaram Gatha’. The meaning there is ‘the one who indulges into misdeeds’ (Khadase B.K., 1990: 25).

‘Matang’ is the sophisticated use of the original word Mang, ( मांग ) Maang ( माँग )and Mang( मांग ). This is the real word. This word ought to have been used, meaning ‘human’ or ‘brother’. As Mr. is prefixed before the name in English so in ‘Brahmi’ language the word ‘mang’ is used before the name. The suffix ‘gal’ is used in plural sense. It is a ‘Dravid’ word ‘Mangal’ that denotes a country. Mang also means monkey (Vanar) in Kannada and even Dravid word which is present even in English word ‘monkey.’ In Sanskrit and purana literature the word ‘Matang’ is used as a common name and ‘Rishiname’. We do not find reference to the word ‘Matang’ denoting the caste and if found it is a recent one (Khadase B.K., 1990: 25).
Many scholars have arrived at different meanings of the words ‘Mang’ or ‘Matang’. The whole episode seems to be like the description of the elephant by the blinds. The researcher would like to split the word ‘Mang’ like this:

Ma- means mother and Ang means body the mother earth is called Ma. Thus to the researcher word 'Matang' means the one who is the child of mother earth or son of soil.

Mata + Ang = Matang means the one who is born out of soil. Again the meaning comes to be, the one who is the son of earth i.e 'Bhoomiputra'.

The real meaning of the term Matang, according to researcher is the son of the earth – the one who is brave and powerful. However, with the passage of time the meaning is degraded and Mang is taken to be the one who indulges into unfair deeds and the one who asks for food.

1.4 Origin of Matang:

Vitthal Ramji Shinde has asserted that, orignally Matangs must have been belonging to the kol (Koli) origin. Whereas Gautam rishi has put forth his view that ‘Chandal’ i.e. Matang must have come into being with the union between a Brahmin lady and a Shudra Man.

A myth goes like this, when the lord Brahma started creating the universe, his work was hampered by the winged horses. Consequently the making of universe was impeded. By that time the Lord Mahadeo created the first ‘Mang.’ He was ‘Madhya’( मध्य ) after which the whole universe was created. In short, the Mangs have contributed in the creation of universe and he was created by
the Lord Mahadeo himself. Devotion to the Lord Mahadeo among the Mangs is well-known (Khadase B.K., 1990: 28).

Jambuwant is considered to be the foremost ancestor of monkeys and Matangs claim to be the descendants of Jambuwant (Somawanshi, B.C., 1989: 32).

Considering the foregoing discussion and the assertions it becomes difficult to make a firm statement about the origin of Matnags and even a concrete statement cannot be made about their race.

We have stated that ‘Chandal’ is not a race. Shinde considers the Matangs in Gujarat are in the occupation of fishing, perhaps this must have led Shinde to come to his conclusion.

Kathale Nanasaheb has made a reference to eight states of the Matangs (Wankhede Chandrakant, 2007: 145), which means, Matangs had established their own kingdoms and had riches by defeating others but because of the dominance of Brahmins they must have surrendered to Brahmins. (Mande Prabhakar, 1983: 4). This fact leads us to conclude that the Matangs must have been the kings, which means they must have been belonging to the ‘Kshatriya’ race. In this connection Dakkalwar says in his bani ‘Mangacha vital kheri vittal’ (the rituals of Mangs related to kshatriya Varna) even this highlights the thought of ‘Mangs’ being ‘Kshatriya.’

1.5 **What is the origin of Matang’s race?**

Russel and Hiralal (1975: 184) have assumed that the caste of Mang should have been originated form the adivasis. However they have agreed that it is very difficult to go for the origin of Mang caste.
Mande Prabhakar (1983: 2-3) asserts that when the tribal people gradually started settling and their transformation was taking place from adivasis to villagers, a set of a people who were originally adivasis but could not belong to both, wandered in search of work were declared by Britishers as the criminals and their creed was regarded as the Criminal creed and so the caste and creed like Banjara, Berad, Bhamta, Rajput, Bhil, Chaparband, Kaikadi, Katkari, Koli, Mang – Mang Garudi, Pardhi, Ramoshi, Vaghari, Vadar were declared as criminal caste and creeds. They were stamped as criminals right from their births, however some of these castes and creeds were gradually got entrance in the Gaon Gada. Even then they not assimilated into it completely. From the above list, the Mangs who were adivasis earlier and who lived a tribal life quite for sometime and who were settled at the outskirts of the villages were incorporated in the list of Scheduled Castes in 1961.

According to (Shinde V.R., 1933 : 125) Madig, Mang, Mangele were one and the same. He assumes that they must have been originally belonging to Kol (Koli) origin.

The study of above opinion brings forth three important points. 1) Mangs must have been originally the adivais. 2) They must have been living a tribal life for some time. 3) These days they have settled in their settlement at the outskirts of the villages.

Some of the important points that support the assertion that the Mangs must have been original the adivasis are:

1. We get a note that the Mangs had no concern with the 52 Rights of Mahars who were untouchables then. However, they were incorporated as the village workers in due course of time.
2. The settlement of Mang is at the outskirts of the village which separates them from other castes and creeds.

3. The traditional occupation of the Mangs is related with bamboo, preparing different articles from the leaves of trees, to prepare the strings and ropes and hunting etc. which asserts that they were related to the jungles.

4. Their interest in playing musical instruments (Dafade) and other instruments, their liking for the songs and dance shows their closeness to adivasi life.

5. The various practises and beliefs in deities, Bhagat, impact of magic, method of sacrifice, method of last rights after the death, all this goes very close to adivasi life style.

6. Among the Mangs the worship of Mari Aai is given a top priority and hence we find the temples of Mari Aai in and around their settlements. The deity Mari Amma is a slang of Mari Aai this shows that the Mangs should have been belonged to Andhra and Karnataka form where they spread over to the different parts of Maharashtra.

7. The Dakkalwars of Mangs speak Telgu language; they know “parsi” which is the secret language of Mangs.

The thinkers quoted above have opined that, the Mangs must have been the ‘adivasis’. All the castes and creeds in India must have been the ‘adivasis’ at a particular point of time. This is the truth in the social life of human civilization. This means that, the castes like Maratha, Mali, Dhanagar, Vanjari, Mahar, Chambhar etc. must have been adivasis some time ago. The first ever settlements have been established, in the jungles which itself proves that all the human life was never around the city. It is in the jungles that the initial settlements have been established,
which itself proves that all the human beings were the adivasis initially. As the time passed they moved out of jungles and became villagers and lateron the city people. With the invention of agriculture, originally the tribal man, settled. The farming itself has developed gradually but the man settled in a real sense when the oxes were used for farming. The Mangs were the first one to use the oxes. Today the work of taming the oxen by putting the string through their nose, castrating the oxen and such work is done by the Mangs that has come to them traditionally.

In the Indian social context the importance of oxen is undeniable. Even today the festival of Bendur or Bailpola is celebrated in almost all the parts of Maharashtra, which marks the importance of oxen. During Sindhu culture oxen were regarded as the holy animal. ‘Baliraja’ was the great and the brave king in Sindhu culture and the Indian society shows a great respect to this king. The saying like- ‘Ida pida talu de – Balirajacha Rajya yeu de’ meaning, let all the evils expell and good time of ‘Baliraja come, is very much prevalent in all the parts of Maharashtra. In the cultural life of Maharashtra, the Mangs in dawn hours on Diwali go to the house of the village head (Patil) and pray with the above words. This tradition is on even today in western Maharashtra.

The importance of ox in the Indian social life is undeniable right from the Sindhu culture, the pray that Mangs do in the name of Baliraja talks as lot about the relationship between them and the Baliraja. Sindhu culture was an agrarian society and the foundation of this culture was laid down by the Mangs. By taming the animal like ox, Mangs have pioneered the morden agriculture. This act of Mang has made Baliraja happy and that is why Mang must be a pious to them.
There is a saying “Bhetla Mang, Phitla Pang” (When the Mang is met, happiness is ahead) which is prevalent in all over Maharashtra. The reason for this is that, the contribution of Mang in the Indian agriculture is immense that is why we find the settlements of Mangs nearby the villages and all other untouchable castes settlements are found beyond that.

In short, their profession is not of adivasis whereas their occupation is very close to the agricultural social structure. In the balutedari system of Indian society the Mang are considered as balutedar’s of the first lane, this itself endorses the importance of Mangs in the Indian social structure. The villages were established by Bali who was helped in a great deal by the Mang is a social truth. So the points Khadse B. K. had made about the origin of Mangs prove to be unsupportive.

1. Khadse says that there is no relation of Mangs to the 52 rights of Mahars. The effort have been made to suppress the Mang by the Mahars [Shinde], the Badshah of Bidar and Brahmin Pandits of Paithan have helped the Mahars in this context.

2. It is not only the habitats of Mangs alone, are at the outskirts of the village but along with them the castes like Mahar, Chambhar, Holar too have settled at the outskirts of the village.

3. The interest of playing Dafade and other musical instrument is not only found among the Mangs but it is seen even among Mahar and Holar.

4. The features of adivasi life style such as worship of various deities, bhagat, the impact of black Magic, the method of
sacrifice, method of last rights are even found among the other castes like Maratha, Mali, Mahar and Dhangar etc.

5. The worship of Mari Aai is given a top priority by the Mangs. It is true that the alters of this deity are found in and around the Matang settlement. However, the Mahars too worship Mari Aai, not only this, the priest of Mari Aai who is called Potraj is even found among Mahar, Holar etc.

Thus, Mang is a brave, mighty, honest and intelligent caste. It always hold up its image. In the word Mang itself all the characteristics of the caste are hidden. Mang is a pure native group. Mang is a Bhoomiputra. The original inhabitants of Maharashtra are Mangs but in power politics, the Mahars have always tried to suppress them. Mangs had colonies in Maharashtra prior to Mahars. It is said and believed that Mahars are of elders house (Thoralya Gharache) meaning they were here before kunabi but Mangs were residing here before Mahars means that they were to be called as ‘Mhoralya Gharache’. There should not be any problem to accept Mangs as the original inhabitants of Maharashtra.

Mangs were belonging to ‘Naag’ race because they worship ‘Naag’ (Cobra). The word Naak of Naag that is prefixed to their name itself talks about their belonging to ‘Naag’ race. The god of Naag – is Lord Shankar or Mahadeo and Mangs perform the pooja of Lord Shankar.

Mangs were Buddhists too. “The soldiers of Mahars were ready to oppose Buddha at the time of his enlightenment. These soldiers of ‘Maar’ could be Mahars” (Ganaveer Ratnakar, 1991: 6). This proves that the Mahars were opposing Buddha while Mangs were his followers. But Buddha transformed the mind of Maar’s or
Mahars with his teaching and thus ‘maar’s’ or Mahars became the first followers of Buddha (Ganaveer p.6). But in reality, Mangs were the followers of Buddha before Mahars became his followers. When Mahars embraced Boudha religion the Mangs turned back to it and entered the Hindu religion. The enmity of Mang-Mahar is on since ancient times.

H. L. Kosare had written a thesis entitled ‘Prachin Bharatatil Naag.’ He has been written about the relation between Mahar and Mang in Maharashtra by S. V. Ketakar, John Wilson, Karmaveer V. R. Shinde, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Kosare has cited the references from these books. Apart from this, he has used the references from Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, C. V. Vaidh, V. K. Rajwade Alexander Robertson, R. C. Dhere, Irawati Karve, Dharmanand Kosambi; V. T. Jadhav. There could be differences between the scholars about conclusions but he had tried to find the origin of Mang caste.

According to Kosare, Mahars were the ancient people. The Mahar Naags developed their ‘Maharashtra’ culture by 1000 B.C. The people belonging to ‘Mahashma’ culture and those who developed the ‘Lohayug’ were the same. Those were the Naags and ancient Naags too were Naags. The Mahar Naags of ‘Mahashma’ culture did settle initially in the regions of Nagpur-Vidharbha. Making their centre at Nagpur they spread all over Maharashtra and expanded the ‘Nag’ culture and established their supremacy. Initially the society was dominated by matriarchy and the pioneers of culture of Maharashtra were Mahar Naag (Kosare H. L., 1992: 247). The pioneers of Maharashtiran culture were the Mahar and Bhoj to Satvahan state. ‘Maharathi’ and ‘Mahabhoj’ were the part of the Satvahan dynasty. Acoording to their constitution Mahar
and Maratha that is Maharathi and Bhoj were considered to be the equal and having brotherhood among them. There was no casteism among them, they all belonged to the same caste, same origin of Naag, same culture and tradition (Kosare H. L., 1992: 249). Kosare has further said that “the Naag culture has given birth to the great men like Parshwanath and Buddha”. The principles of equality in the culture of Naag and their social structure based on these principles are one and the same like that of Buddha’s propagation of religious based on equality. The basic principles of Naag culture governed by principles of equality are apt to establish an ideal society were considered by Buddha as Buddhism was favourite to Naagas. (Kosare H. L., 1992: 269). The Mahar of Maharashtra was a part of this Naag culture (Kosare H. L., 1992: 267).

Kosare comes to conclusion that the Maharashtrian culture is the product of Mahars and Marathas. However we did not find objectivity in his thesis neither we find comprehensiveness. The whole study seems to be one sided and of ‘one caste’, even so his pride about his caste, is worth appreciating.

Kosare has not only related his caste that is Mahar to Buddha but he has assimilated Buddha and Mahaveer in his caste. He makes a statement ‘Mahars’ were Naags, he further says that, the Naag culture has given birth to the great men like Parshwanath, Mahaveer and Buddha. If we replace the word Mahar in place of Naag, we can make a statement that the Mahar culture has given birth to the great men like Parshwanath Mahaveer and Buddha. Such a statement in the research is bold and even comical.

Kosare, while doing his research study has even tried to prove Dr. Ambedkar a mean minded person. In reality, Dr.
Ambedkar has always taken a comprehensive stand in all the issues he has dealt with. Through his speeches and movements, he did not think only of his own caste but thought of betterment of overall Dalits. In every stand he took, he had a ‘Nationalistic’ and broad perspective, while writing he did it with a responsibility especially in his writing ‘Who were the Shudras’ and ‘The untouchables’, one can experience the above facts. Both these works are the best examples of sociological studies. Through these book, he has done the scientific analysis of overall untouchables and the Shudras. However Kosare has related the statements and conclusions of Dr. Ambedkar only to the Mahar community and demanded him. For example Dr. Ambedkar calls Mahar caste as ‘Broken men.’ In a real sense Dr. Ambedkar has used this word for all the untouchables which includes Mang, Chambhar and many other untouchable castes along with the Mahars. This means that Mahars alone were not only the ‘Broken men’ but all the untouchables were ‘Broken men’. Dr. Ambedkar has proved that ‘Once upon a time whole of the country was following Buddhism however under the growing influence of Buddhism, the separated gave up the Buddhism. The untouchables did not give up the Buddhism and remained into it till last and were left alone. As they remained clinged to Buddhism till last they became the ‘Broken men.’ It means those who remained untouchables were once upon a time were Buddists and as they were Buddist, they remained untouchables. In short in the concept of ‘Broken man’ Dr. Ambedkar has used for all the untouchables. However, Kosare has delimited it to the Mahars alone. In a real sense the Mangs also remain to be ‘Broken men’ like those of Mahars.
Kosare tried his best to prove that Mahars were of the Naags origin. He has somehow managed to prove that ‘the Mahars’ were the Naagas.’ In a real sense, scientifically no race in the world has remained of pure blood or pure origin. Even then when we try to search about the origin of castes and subcastes we cannot say that only the Mahars were of Naag origin. Overall all the untouchable community of India was of Naag origin is a reality.

Kosare states that ‘there were many ‘Kuls’ of Naag’s. such as Rathi and Bhoj which were dissimilated in Mahars. The group of these two castes was referred on ‘Mahargan’ became ‘gan means state’ and that is why the state of Mahars is nothing but ‘Maharashtra’ (Kosare H. L., 1992: 249).

### 1.6 Who are the Chandals?

The caste Chandal is considered to be the lowest and untouchable. There is no unanimity about the origin and the exact meaning of the word ‘Chandal.’ In ‘Manusmruti’ three kinds of ‘Chandals’ are described, however in the ‘Scriptures’ they are taken to be of five kinds (Somawanshi B.C. 1989: 27).

1) The offsprings of ‘Shudra’ father and ‘Brahmin’ mother are Chandal.
2) The child born to unmarried lady is Chandal.
3) The child born to the blood related couple is Chandal.
4) The children born to the one who initially accepted ascetic way of life and then entered into the ‘Grahasthashram’ is Chandal.
5) The child born to a Barber father and Brahmin mother is Chandal.
Apart from the above five origins of ‘Chandal’ in ‘Shudra Kamalakar’ vaidaesh man and ‘Ambashta’ lady produce Chandal.

Out of the five origins of ‘Chandal’ Gautam, Vashistna, Boddhayan and Manu have agreed upon the first kind.

If one has to peep into this question of, who is Chandal, one has to take into account the above points that have been suggested in the ‘Smritis’ and religious scriptures because at many places, the ‘Matangs’ have been called ‘Chandals.’ ‘Shambuk’ in Ramayana was a ‘Chandal’ and a ‘Matang.’ Lord Krishna had married ‘Jambavati’ who was a non-aryan lady, not only this but she was a ‘Chandal’ too. We find a reference that the ‘Matangs’ were born in ‘chandal’ ‘kul’ (clan).

In ancient country ‘Kishkindha’ was on the bank of river ‘Tungbhadra’ where Mangs, use to inhabit. In Ramayana those are counted among the monkies because the word Mang means monkey in Kannada. This leads one to think that the ‘Mangs’ were belonging to ‘Chandal’ clan.

In a Sootnipat pali literature the word ‘Chandal’ and ‘Matang’ have been used as alternate to each other. According to B.C. Somawanshi ‘Chandal’ is ‘Matang’. However, the real meaning of ‘Chandal’ remains unravelled. Whether it refers to illicit children, caste, race or country?

If we believe in the origin of the word ‘Chandal’ as per the religious scriptures and ‘Manusmriti,’ then Sant Gyaneshwar, Sant Sopan, Sant Muktabai, Sant Nivruti all of them would be ‘Chandals,’ however, they were not the Matangs. If we believe in the second ‘Karna’ in Mahabharata becomes ‘Chandal’ but he was not a Matang which means according to ‘Smriti’ a person or the whole family can be a ‘Chandal’. How can a ethnic group or a caste
be a ‘Chandal’? Manu has mentioned that the ‘Chandals’ should live on the outskirts of village or town. They are not supposed to be the part of village or town, however, we see the other castes like Mahar, Chambhar, Dhor, Bhangi etc. too live on the outskirts of the village or town, even the nomadic tribes also live in the same fashion, then the question arises as to why is it then the word ‘Chandal’ used for Matangs alone? Are the houses of the ‘Chandals’ defined by ‘Dharmashastra’ on the outskirts of the village or town?

It is unbelievable that all the ethnic groups who lived on the outskirts of village were called Chandals. It does not make clear sense whether ‘chandal’ is a caste, occupation or race? The question remains ‘who are the Chandals?’

Vitthal Ramji Shinde’s assertion is that, the ‘Chandal’ was an ancient nation seem to be more appropriate. Chand, Mund and Gond were the Monghal countries. The word ‘Aal’ was suffixed to it and chand became ‘Chandal’, Maung became Maungal. ‘Aal’ is a Dravid word which meant ‘country’ or nation (Shinde V. R., 1976: 112). In sanskrit ‘Chand’ (चंड) means an act of great courage. Even we find similar kind of words like ‘Chand’, Chundi, ‘chamundi’ for deities in ‘purana.’ Even that asserts chandal, mundal must be the very ancient countries but in course of time due to political turmoil these countries must have been vanished (Shinde V. R., 1976: 113). Apart from this in Krishna Yajurveda, Kshatriya, Brahmin Third Kand the reference to the countries of chandal and poulkas is made.

This means Chandal is not the name of any one caste, creed or race but it is the country. In Ramayana, Shambuk is Matang chandal which means he belonged to Chandal country. Lord Krishna’s beloved wife Jambuwati was not of chandal caste but of
that country. The people of ‘Kishkindha’ city on the banks of river Tungbhadra were not of chandal race but, they all belonged to the Chandal country. In short the word chandal refers to the country, the country of brave people that is the Mangs. They had many provinces and the name ‘Chandal’ is one of the name of their provinces.

1.7 Matang Community in Ancient Period

Matang community has a very glorious history. Although Hindu religious scriptures have stated the Matang as untouchables, they were the rulers and kings once upon a time. They had their own kingdoms. There are numerous references about the Matang community in the ancient scriptures that this community was the ruling community. The history of Matangs is the history of braveness and might. Matangs are called Chandals which has the connotation of nationality.

1) The Chandal king ‘Trishanku’ of ‘Ishwaku’ origin was Matang. He had a serious conflict with the supporters of Brahminism and discrimination system since ancient times.

2) Rahu and Ketu were the two brave Matang king. The kings belonging to sun and the moon origin too faded before them. Such Matang kings are truly the original inhabitants of this country. They were the protectors of the people here. However, these kings were called the Rakshasa and Danava. The aggressors defeated and made them untouchables.

3) In Pre-Mourya period, i.e. in 6th century B.C. India had 16 states and the states of Kosal, Ang, Avanti, Vatsa, Magadh were the most powerful. Most of these states were ruled by Matangs. Region of today’s Madhya-malva was the Avanti-
state then. This state was one of the most powerful states of that period. The capital of the state was Ujjain. Maha Sen, Chand, Pradhyota were ruling the state. Maha Sen was a Matang. His daughter Vasavdatta was married to the Vatsa king, Udayan. His daughter Shoor Sena was married to Subahu the Matang king.

Chand pradhyota, the Matang king was a contemporary of Lord Buddha. He had a great reverence for Lord Buddha, out of this respect he accepted Buddhism. Avanti was the centre of Buddhism at that time. The king of state Vatsa and the son-in-law of the king Chanda pradhyot, Udayan had followed his footsteps and declared Buddhism as the state religion of Vatsa.

The region of today’s Lucknow and Faizabad was the state of Kosal then. Shrawasti was the capital city of the state. Alongwith Shrawasti, Saket was another important city in the state of Kosal. Saket city is today’s ‘Ayodhya.’ The state of Kosal was ruled by king Prasenjeet who was a Matang.

‘Prasenjeet’ is even called ‘Pasenadi’. He was learned, highly educated in the most popular university of Takshasheela then. He was a great statesman and a general. He had won the state of Kashi during this period.

1.7.1 The State of Magadh:

Initially the state of Magadh was a small but powerful state. It was about one eighth of the state of Kosal state of Prasenjeet. Rajgraaha was the capital of Magadh. The state of Magadh was spread over today’s Bihar, Patna and Gaya.

The throne of the state of Magadh was ascended by Bimbisar before 544 B.C. He was well versed with the political philosophy
and was brave in nature. Prasenjeet had arranged the marriage of his sister Kosaladevi to him and had presented Kashi to Bimbisar.

Ajatshatru was the son of a Matang lady ‘Kosaladevi’ who, ascended the throne of Magadh after Bimbisar.

After the death of Ajatshatru, Shishunag became the king of Magadh and he expanded his state. However, Shishunag’s son Kakvarna who was killed by his own wife by 423 B.C. proved to be the end of Shishunags dynasty after which the state of Magadh was ascended by ‘Nand Family’.

1.7.2 The State of Chandal:
Matang had one more state near Avanti city. The name of that state is not known but the said state was ruled by a king called Chandapak. Owing to the name of the king the state must have been called Chandal. Sage Matang Shambuk and Krishna’s wife Jambavati might have been belonging to the same state.

Vidhyadhan ruled in the Chakravati nagari and he was a Matang.

1.7.3 The State of Kishkindha:
The king of these states were well versed in Vedas, even the women folk of the states use to learn Vedas. They had four varnas but no colour discrimination. The men like Hanuman, Jambuvant, Vali, Sugriv and Angad were the brave men in that society. The Mang community today consider Jambuvant as their real ancester.

The region that was ruled by Chalukya initially were the states of Mangs. Chalukya took over these states. The first king of Chalukya vansha was king Jayasingh. After Jaysingh king Ranraag came into power but in real sense, the king who
established the Chalukya kingdom was the first Pulkeshi. He came in power in 547 B.C.

The capital city of his kingdom was vatapi in Bijapur district which is today's Badami city.

He died in 567 B.C. (Tripathi Ram Shankar, 1977: 9) Then came Mangalish in power because the period between 567–610 B.C. is recorded as his period.

All these references lead us to think doubtlessly that there were Matang states in ancient times.

1.8 The First Power on Maharashtra is a Matang:

Almost all the scholars and researchers agree upon the fact that the Mahars share a lot in the establishment of the state of Maharashtra. There was a state of Mahars in the western Indian region and the name Maharashtra is derived from it is what Bedan Powell says.

The western scholars Molehus and John Wilson opine that, the name Maharashtra is derived from the ‘Mahar’ caste. They cite a proverb ‘Gao Tethe Maharwada’ (in every village there is Mahar settlement). Mahars are the original inhabitants of this country. The people of northern part won over them and gave them their name to this country is what Jadhav V.T. states. However, it seems doubtful that the name of the loosers could be given to the country.

The first settlement in Maharashtra happens to be of ‘Mahars.’ The later could be of ‘Bhoi’. Perhaps there had not been any other caste other than Mahars, spread all over Maharashtra in ancient times. Mahars then would have been calling themselves as Halik and not the Kunabi. The Janpad class of that period was of Mahars is believed upon.
Mahars have Marathi as their language. One cannot perhaps trace firmly when this language originated. However, a popular belief goes that Marathi language must have originated by the time of Chalukya dynasty (Jadhav V.T. 1980: 16).

Gastrold Apart has related the word ‘Mahar’ and ‘malla’ (मल्ल). Maharashtra was called as ‘Mallarashtra’ once upon a time. ‘Mall’ (मल्ल) and ‘Mara’ is one and the same. ‘Mara’ gradually became Mahar. Both the words ‘Mallarashtra’ and ‘Maharashtra’ were used earlier. However, with the passage of time the first word remained unused to the next one. The Mahars were defeated. The state of Mall’s and Mahars mean Maharashtra.

Jadhav disagrees the contention of Gustav Apart. Kane states that there is no proof to the statement that ‘malls’ were in Maharashtra. Even if Kane and Jadhav disagree with the opinion of Apart, one cannot ignore the reference that, Maharashtra was called as ‘Mallarashtra’ once upon a time. Another fact is also important that Marathi language was known to Mahars and it came into being after the ‘Chalukya’ dynasty. If the above facts can be proved it can be easily believed that the original inhabitants of Maharashtra were the ‘Mahars.’

Jadhav V.T. has a contention that, there must not have been other castes than Mahars in ancient Maharashtra. Moreover all the Janpad of that period must have been the Mahars. The another meaning of Jadhav V.T. contention is that, there were Mahars in Maharashtra and they were not present outside Maharashtra. However, there are many evidences that, in ancient time Mang community was existing in the north, south and central India. However, they had different names at different places. There were Mangs in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya
Pradesh. Even today they exist in all these states. Then how it could be said that they were not present in Maharashtra?

Mangs consider Jambuwant to be their ancestor. Jambuwant and Hanuman were experts in the art of wrestling. The Mangs had been very sharp in sports like dandpatta, sword fighting, wrestling etc. Since ancient time; even today this art could be seen among Mangs. In 19th century a man called Lahuji Salve was an expert in the art of wrestling. He was a vastad (master) in the area because of which it can be said that the art of wrestling specifically happens to be their art, in which they had achieved mastery.

Mangs have been called Madig in Karnataka. Even they are called Mallelu which could lead us to think that Mangs were expert in the art of wrestling. The country inhabited by Mallellu was the Mallarashtra.

The language of Mahars is Marathi but it was adopted after Chalukya’s. It has been a proved fact that there were Matang states existing in Chalukya dynasty. Though Gastav Apart has found relation between the ‘Malla’ and ‘Maara’, they are not one and the same. Maar means Mahar but Mall means Matang. Earlier Maharashtra state was a Mallarashtra which became Maharashtra lateron.

1.9 Matang Community during Chhatrapati Shivaji's Period:

“Historians so far have consciously sided with the great men of Matang comumunity and the histroy has been written without their reference, whatever wars have been fought for this country among all those wars the contribution of Matang valients is immense. They were great warriors and wise people. The Guru of
Shivajiraje who taught him the gorila war a Matang guru” says Uttam Bandu Tupe, a well known novelist and philosopher.

Chh. Shivaji Maharaj appointed Baji Pasalkar as the first Sarsenapati of Swaraj. By that time the most trusted companion of Baji Pasalkar was Yelya Mang. Yelya Mang was active like a Chitah. Baji Pasalkar had a female horse called ‘Yashwanti’. The two soldiers named Sonu Dalavi and Marakatrao had planned and decided to steal away ‘Yashwanti’ and give her away to the Badshah of Bijapur but Yelya Mang undid their plan and killed Sonu Dalvi.

Shivaji Maharaj took oath of establishing swaraj in the temple of ‘Rohideshwar’ and tied ‘toran’ to the temple. The ceremony of tying of this ‘toran’ was done by two Matangs named Yelya Mang and senior Lahuji Raut Mang. (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 7) This throws light on the place of Mang community among the trusted men of Shivaji Maharaj.

Purandar fort was captured by Adilshah and he had appointed a Sardar called ‘Niloji’ to take care of the fort. When Baji Pasalkar marched to take back the fort of Purandar he was assisted by 150 Mangs. Among them senior Lahuji and Yellya Mang were prominent. Both of them along with other men helped ‘Niloji’ to capture the fort of Purandar and then the responsibility to take care of Puranadar fort was given to senior Lahuji by Shivaji Maharaj himself (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 8).

By seeing the brave nature of Mangs, Shivaji Maharaj had given the responsibility of defence of the forts of Rohideshwar, Torana, Kondhana and Purandar to the Mang warriors. The Mang fighters used to keep watch on these forts (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 8).
Many Mang people have contributed to the establishment of Swaraj; among them, senior Lahuji Mang had given lessons of ‘Dandpatta’ to the Shivaji Maharaj (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 13).

Babaji Krishnaji Mang fought for about a year with the sardars of Aurnagzeb, Shahabuddin Khan and Kasim Khan Kiramani and protected the Ramshej fort. The people who took Shivaji Maharaj in the ‘Palkhi’ in the Panhalagad seize were Mangs. Among them Sadhu Bapu Ballal was the chief Mang. The man who laid his life at Pawankhind along with Baji Prabhu was a Mang named Tanga Dulari More. Apart from this there are a number of unknown Mangs who have lost lives for the sake of swaraj and have become immortal in history.

One of the most trusted sardars of Lakuhi Jadhav who was the father of Shivaji’s mother ‘Jijau’ had come to Shahajiraje along with Jijau. This sardar Gomaji Naik was a Hawaldar of Pune in the year 1646. The chief of detective bureau of Shivaji Maharaj was Bahirji Naik who according to Grant Duff was a Mang Ramoshi (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 15). There were many Matangs who used to work as detectives at Shivaji Maharaj’s time (Tadakane Shankar, 2006: 9).

On August 9, 1648 at Belsar there was a great battle between Mughal Sardar Fattekhan and Maratha Sardar Baji Pasalkar. In this battle Baji Pasalkar lost his life while fighting. In this battle the man who had cut off the head of Raj Sawant who was fighting from Fattehkhan side was Yelya Mang. He was the body guard of Baji Pasalkar. Yelya Mang too lost his life and became a martyr in this battle.

Lahuji and Yellya Mang were the most trusted men of Shivaji Maharaj. By seeing their bravery and trustworthiness
Shivaji Maharaj had appointed Lahuji as ‘Rakhwaldar’ of the fort Purandar. Raghoji Rauji Raut who was the grandson of senior Lahuji had a son who was named as Lahuji. Junior Lahuji became ‘Vastad’ who is considered to be the great inspiration of Matang community.

Raghoji Raoji Raut was a man of massive stature and was a brave man. He had fought with a tiger in the jungles of Purandar and had caught it alive. When the Peshawa of Pune came to know about this great feat of Raghoji he was appointed in the Shikarkhana. The man who caught the tiger was given the responsibility to look after the horses. On November 15, 1817 Raghoji Mang became a myrter while fighting with British in the battle of Khadaki.

Lahuji Mang was the great grandson of senior Lahuji and he was the son of Raghoji Mang. Lahuji II was also a mighty person. He had a hobby of wrestling from his childhood. He used to practice horse riding, running for miles, climb a wall with his back, to play with Talwar, Dandpatta, Browhe, Waghnakhya, Khanjir etc. He used to dance by holding an ox on his shoulder. He used to play with sword weighing about 40 kg. for hours together at the festival of Khandoba-Jejuri. To climb a fort at a stretch was a passion of Lahuji (II). In wrestling at Phaltan (Dist-Satara) he had won over well known Afgan wrestler, pleased with this the Maharaja of Phaltan had presented him with a golden bracelet and gold ‘Moharas’ (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 16).

After the death of his father Raghoji, Lahuji had organised and planned movement against the Britishers. He had opened a Vyayam Shala (gymnasium) at Raste mansion in Pune in 1821 with an intention that, the youth should come forward and expert
themselves is the art of war and weapons. In a real sense it was not a ‘Vyayam Shala’ but it was a ‘Kranti Shala’ (School of revolution) (Tadakhe Shankar, 2006: 29). The youth of Mang and Ramoshi community used to take training regarding the war and weapons. In 1826 Lahuji Vastad supplied the trained youth from his centre to Umaji Naik to fight against the Britishers. There were number of Mangs with Umaji Naik.

Mahatma Jotiba Phule too took the training of the art of weapons in the same school. The first ever girls school started by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule in 1848 used to assemble at the ‘Talim’ of Lahuji at Ganjpeth, Pune. There were 8 girls in the beginning of the school. The grand daughter of Lahuji Mukta Salve too was one of them. The Brahmins used to throw dung on Savitribai Phule and trouble her a lot. By that time, the Mangs from the Talim of Lahuji used to give her protection.

1.10 Matang Community in Peshawa Period:

There are certain castes in Hindu religion, the birth in that caste itself is considered as untouchable, the person whose mere touch makes the Hindu impious. Untouchability is an old and ancient tradition. The meaning of the word untouchable is improper or unfair to touch. The Mang community falls into this category of untouchables and their settlement used to be on the outskirts of village. Mangs were Shudras in the Indian social system. They were untouchables and the slaves. There was much injustice done to the community during the Peshwa period.

The first ever serious thinking about untouchable and shudra community was done by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Maharshi Vitthal Ramaji Shinde and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedker.
Till the recent days many scholars and thinkers have studied about Dalits and Shudras. They have analysed the reasons causing their slavey. Among all of them Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde’s contribution is immense. “Mangs are the original inhabitants of Maharashtra. However, they have been oppressed by many and Mahars too are the part of that” is what he thinks and had tried to justify it by many evidences. He had tried to study about them in original and pursued their questions from the root, at the same time he has maintained a dignified objectivity in his study. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has also done the basic and original analysis of the problems related to untouchables in his book ‘Who were the Shudras and the untouchables?’ Of course, while doing so he has taken into consideration only the Mahar community, being the largest in terms of population among the untouchables (Gavali, P.A. 1990: 51). That’s why, one finds limitations while studying about the Mang community as a specific community. Even then Dr. Ambedkar’s study would certainly help for the study of Mang community.

V.K. Rajwade, Shankarrao Kharat also have thought over the questions related to untouchables. We find the analysis of untouchables in post-independent era in the books of Kharat’s ‘Asprushyancha Muktisangram’ and Dr. Ambedkar’s ‘Dharmantar.’ The untouchability in Maharashtra is related with the castes like, Mang, Mahar and Chambhar. Naturally the study about the topic has taken into consideration the Mahar community primarily. Though Mangs cover the larger section of population among untouchables, they have remained out of focus of the study about the untouchability.
Mang, Mahar and Chambhar are the major untouchable castes. Among these three the Mangs and the Mahars are the traditional neighbours living on the outskirts of the villages. In many references the Mangs and Mahars are referred together. These two communities have continued to lead their life as Shudras and untouchables. However, whenever the study about the untouchability was done in the light of their state, history and future, the Mahars were given prominence, so the study about the issues related to untouchability has outfocussed the Mang community. In other words, no independent, original and serious study about the Mang community has been undertaken so far. It is a historical truth that the Mang community has been depressed more than the Mahar community. There are many glaring examples one can find about the depression and injustice done to Mangs during the Peshawa period which have been recorded in Peshawe diary.

1.11 Matang Women in Peshwa Period:

Many ancient practices were regenerated during the Peshwa period, one of such was the practice of slavery. Women who were seized during the war time would be usually turned into the slaves. Those women or the girls would be turned into the Kunabinis or Batiks or Rakhelis. Apart from this the women would be mortgged to the money lenders to come out of the debt. The transaction of the slaves was much in vogue during the famine. During this period the immoral women were made slaves. One finds women slaves in abundance during the Pashwai was one of the main reasons that helped the growth of women slaves. The number of young women
slaves from the lower castes was more than those of the women slaves of higher castes.

The number of women from the other castes such as Prabhu, Maratha, Koli, Jain, Lingayat, Gujrathi, Muslim, Sonar, Dhanagar, Parit, Sutar, Mali, Lohar, Rajput are noted as the proportion of the ‘Kunabi’ women from these castes is more. Sometimes the Shudra women would be made ‘Batik’ because of poverty. Bajirao Moreshwar used to stay in the ‘vada’ of (mansion) Anandram Gopal Joshi. The Kunbin of Bhave was belonging to Chambhar community this came to be known after four months. During these four months the intereaction that should not have taken place had already taken place (Gavali P. A. 1990: 85), such incidents had happened during Peshwa period. As Mang women were untouchables they were usually not kept as Batik. However, certain examples could be found as exception where Mang or Mahar women were kept as Batik. Such kind of record is found in Peshwe diary. If this had happened during Peshwai, no wonder the women folk which is considered as untouchable had to face the pathetic, hateful life during the period.

Mang women would prefer to join the ‘Tamasha’ instead of leading their life as Kunabi. There are reference found about the immoral misdeeds that have taken place with the untouchable women during Peshawa period. At two places the reference is about Mahar women and at one place the reference to Mang woman could be seen. In general the untouchable women were considered impious, whose touch would make the Brahmins impure however, the same Brahmins would have these women to satisfy their sexual desires throws light on the hypocrisy of the Brahmin class. While the wolves of lust would run through their nerves they would forget
about the untouchability speaks a lot by itself. (Gavali P. V. 1990: 137-138)

In the days of elder Madhavrao Peshawe, the sardar of Zanshi, Parolkar had a scholar in Veda called Narayanshastri. Both of them had seduced a young lady belonging to Bhangi community by offering her money and they both had an immoral relation with her. When the matter had become talk of the town sardar Parolkar questioned Narayanshastri about it, on which Narayanshastri boldly replied….. “I am not the only man to have immoral relation with lady. There are several Brahmins in this court…..see these sacred threads of their….. The Bhangi lady had asked for the sacred thread from each of her lovers as present. All these are sacred threads. Your honour you can give any punishment you want to give” (Gavali P. A., 1990: 138).

This incident alone could throw light on the condition of women during Peshwai, though she belonged to the lowest caste among untouchables.

1.11.1 Mang – A Vatandar

The social system that was predominating in the social life besides the caste system that was prevalent in middle age Maharashtra was ‘Vatanadari’. The word ‘Vatan’ originates from which means Country. Molsworth defines the word ‘Vatan’ in his encyclopedia as ‘Vatandar’ which means the holder of ‘Vatan’. There are four types of ‘Vatandars’-

1) Paragane Vatandar
2) Gaon Vatandar
3) Patache Vatandar
4) Other Vatandar

‘Patil’ is the most important Vatandar among the gaon Vatandar. The honour and the rights of Patil in ‘Gaoki’ happens to be the most important one. The detailed references are found in the diary of Peshawa according to which Mang is the most important and major ‘Vatandar’ in the village, who has the honour of tying ‘toran’ and to take the procession at holi festival.

The reference can be found in the ‘Peshwa’ diary (Gavali P. A. 1990: 52). The rights of ‘12 Vatandar’ are kept reserved. In short it can be said that the ‘Mangs’ have been registered as Vatandars.

Sangram Mahadu Tadlapurkar, Tal. Udgir, Dist. Latur was famous by the name of ‘Kallewala Sangram’. This Mang had a ‘Vatan’ of twelve villages.

1.11.2 Mang- A Balutedar

The ‘Balutedar’ system was prevalent during Maratha period. In Indian social system and economic system of villages, balutedar hold an important place. The whole system was existing with 12 Balutedar and 18 Alutedars, in which 12 Balutedars were to contribute to the development of villages. Among these 12 Balutedars Mangs take a primary position as per their importance.

Atre Trymbak Narayan has noted in his book ‘Gaon Gada’ that, Mang is not a balutedar, which is wrong, because most of the scholars and thinkers have approved Mang as a balutedar and they are equally important like those of Mahars. Sen S.N. has called the Mangs as rope makers and agreed on the fact. Grant Duff has also referred Mang as Balutedar. Oturkar R.V. had noted them as Balutedar not only this but all the Balutedars do not have the equal status. He has classified the Balutedars in three categories depending upon their importance in the villages. According to
Oturkar, R. V., Sutar, Chambhar, Mahar and Mang are the class one Balutedars. Kumbhar, Nhavi, Parit, Lohar, pot makers, barber, washerman, Iron smith are second class Balutedars and their contribution is Rs. 5 each. Joshi, Gurav, Sonar and Mulla are the third category Balutedars with their share of Rs.2.5 each. Patil and Kulkarni don’t fall into this category as they are the administrators of the village (Gavali P. A. 1990: 68).

Kulkarni A.R. has classified Balutedars in three kinds, 1) Gaon Karagir (Village artisans), 2) Ordinary sevaks, 3) Primary vidhi karar sevakvarga. He has included Mang into the second, that is ordinary sevak category. (Gavali P. A., 1990: 69). Mang is one such a Balutedar who is a ‘Sevak’ as well as Karagir. However, Mahar works only as sevak

Chitnis P.N. has also agreed on Mang as Balutedar. Molsworth has studied on the Balutedars and has agreed upon Mang as Balutedar.

However, in Indapur Paragana and Pandharpur region, Mangs have been pushed into the second class Balutedars. Taking into consideration the views of all these scholars. Gavali P. A. says that, Mahars and Mangs come under the class one category of Balutedar and vattandar. They happen to be the first class Balutedars in the system. However, the same castes, were considered at the lowest strata of the society in the contemporary social system. Their touch was considered impious, even their shadows were avoided thinking that it would make upper class impure (Gavali P. A., 1990: 3). Gavali has raised a question about the services rendered by Balutedars like those of Mahar, Mang and Chambhar, whose services were availed by the whole village but was their service made available for other Balutedars? Do the
barbar dress the hair of untouchables? Was the Gurav performing pooja of gods of untouchables? Would the Koli fetch water for the houses of untouchables? The answer to all the above questions is negative. By referring to all these facts Gavali has pointed out that, being the very important component in the Balutedari system, how the Mangs and Mahars were placed on the lowest strata of the society?

The study of thinkers and scholars in the area leave us no doubt, to consider that Mangs were not only balutedar but the class one balutedars in the social system. Kulkarni A.R. views that Mang was one of the Balutedar like those of Mahars who fall into the category of Sarvasadharan Sevak but Mang apart from being the sevak was belonging to Gaon karagir category too.

Hindu society celebrates various festivals according to their traditions and customs. Balutedars have been allotted a fixed duty at the time. The honour given to them was also conventional. The details of such conventions are as follows –

1.11.3 Mang-A Vethbigar-

‘Vethbigar’ is an ancient practice which was in vogue in Medieval ages and is on even today. In general terms, the work without salary is called ‘Vishti.’ ‘Vishti’ is a sanskrit word. The person who uses to do the ‘vethbigar’ is called as ‘Bigar’. According to Molswarth ‘Vethbigar’ means the person who is compelled to do the work.

Of course wherever there is compulsion there is oppression. Mangs were balutedars as well as ‘Vethbigars’, as a consequence, the Mang community is the most exploited community in the Indian social system, as a balutedar and Vethbiger in the middle
age Maharashtra. There were three caste system doing ‘Vethbigari’. They were: 1) Shudra Balutedar and Alutedar class. 2) Ati Shudra Balutedar class. 3) Other class.

The Mang community belong to the second that is ‘Ati shudra balutedar class.’ This system of Vethbigari seems to be existing in middle age Maharashtra from the Muslim to peshwa period (Gavali P. A., 1991: 95). There were Vethbigars prior to Peshwa period (Gavali P. A., p.96). There were Mangs working as Vethbigars like those of Mahars. Many evidence of this kind can be cited out, for example Mahars had to do Vethbigari in the private as well as Govt. offices. Along with them the Chambhar and Mangs too had to present themselves in Hujar pag.

It can be said that, in the middle ages as well as pre-Peshwa period Mang was Vatandar, Balutedar and even Vethbigar. This means that the Mang community was exploited and supressed from all the sides. The Mang community had fallen pray to the social, economical and physical exploitation.

1.12 Mangs in Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Period:

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj has laid his unique impressions in various fields such as arts, sports, co-operative movement, agriculture, education etc.

Apart from this, Shahu Maharaja’s real contribution happens to be in the educational, social and religious fields. In all these areas impact of religion had been there for ages. No Maharaja is out of the influence of religion. Mostly the impact happens to be of the Vedik or Hindu religion. Obvioubly enough Shahu Maharaj too had a lot of such influence of Vedik Hindu religion.
When he had been to the banks of river Panchaganga for bath he came to know that the hymns chanted by a purohit (priest) while he was taking bath were from puranas on which he was shocked. He came to know that, according to Hindu religion even the kings are Shudras. Shahu Maharaj became restless to know this and realised that Brahmins consider all other people except them as Shudras in order to maintain their supremacy. This incident gave a new direction to the work of Shahu Maharaj. He got inspired the Satyashodhak movement pioneered by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and he replaced the position of Shankaracharya Brahmins to that of Jagatguru for other than Brahmins.

The Vedant incident on the banks of river Panchaganga gave a new direction to the social work of Shahu Maharaj. In the year 1902 he kept 50% seats reserved for Dalits. He started the separate hostels for the students belonging to different creeds and religion and opened an opportunity for them in the field of education. He invited Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for the first Dalit conference held in his sansthan and declared Dr. Ambedkar the leader of Dalits.

He suggested Dr. Ambedkar to begin a newspaper in order to awaken the society and supported it financially. He started a hostel in the name of Miss clerk for all Dalits students. He called Dr. Ambedkar at Nagpur and organised Dalit conference there. In short Shahu Maharaj was the only king in India, who strove hard for the emancipation of Dalits with his futuristic perspective and progressive thoughts in the social movement.

There is no difference of opinion that Shahu Maharaj has done a great work for the untouchables, along with that he has worked specifically for the Matang community. That is why it becomes necessary to refer to the work done by him for this
community. In order to cast away the caste system he had helped a man called Gangaram Kamble to open a restaurant. Shahu Maharaj himself along with his sardars use to have a tea there, because of which the people from other upper community also had to go for tea in that hotel. He had perhaps loved more the Matang community which is the Dalit among the Dalits. There are many examples to prove the belief that Matang community is an auspicious community from the social point of view however, it is one of the most neglected one. Shahu Maharaj put in special efforts and opened those opportunities for their development. He helped them to get stability and honour. Shahu Maharaj had realised the Matang community so he always took them along with him.

There was no specific land for the Matangs in Kolhapur for their settlement. The original Mangwada was near ‘Mirajkar Tikati’. As the city started growing, the Mangwada was shifted for the first time from Mirajkar Tikati to Shivaji Market and then to today’s CPR hospital, after that it went on to Mule Vihir. When the ‘Gulachi Peth’ (Jaggery market) was opened in Shahupuri it was further shifted. The continuous desettlement and shifting of Matangs was thought over by Rajashree and he decided to give a permanent and the rightful place, so he helped to settle the Mangwada in Shahupuri and offered sanad of 10 acre 36 guntha land. Not only this but when he erected Shahu Mill he consciously selected its place near Mangwada, so that the Mangs would get an opportuniunity to work in the mill. The purpose behind this was to see that the Mang’s financial status would improve. In short, Shahu Maharaj had done a great work giving Matangs a security.

Shahu Maharaj was passionate about hunting. He was a great hunter. In order to persue his hobby he was always in need of
daring, active and strong people. Shahu Maharaj had noted these traits among the people of Matang community in general, and took them on his hunting expedition. Whenever he would go to Laxmi Mountain (near Kagal) for hunting the people who shout to search out the hunt were mostly the Mangs. He had appointed a Matang man by name Dudhappa Awale as the chief of these people. Shahu Maharaj had appointed the Satyappa Awale as the havaldar and jail police in his Karvir Sansthan. Shahu Maharaj was fond of the sport of tussle of male buffalows and for which the mighty beasts are to be handled, for such a task he had given responsibility to Satyappa Awale. Even the most challenging task of play of elephant in darbar was also given to Satyappa Mang (An Interview of Dalitmitra Shankarrao Awale).

Satyappa Awale belonged to a place called Karmar in Kagal taluka. Because of this man Shahu Maharaj had trusted the Matang community, the same trust was continued in Mangs by Rajaram Maharaj. At the time of Rajaram, Shivram Daji Kawale, a Matang was looking after the royal race horses, as the guard. He was a very sharp and active man who used to mount on the running horse. He use to tame any kind of horse. Shivram Kawale who used to massage the horses lateron became member of Legislative Assembly by the name K. Ghatage, who was regarded as ‘Matang Guru.’

Dattu Satappa Awale was the main hunter at the time of Rajaram Maharaj and his brother Shankar Satappa Awale was a first class wrestler and Shivaji Satappa Awale was a driver to the horse cart.

These three brothers Dattu, Shivaji and Shankar were the sons of Satappa Awale.
Kolhapur is an important historical place. Many palaces, buildings were built with the initiation of Shau Maharaj. The overall development of Kolhapur took place because of Shahu Maharaj.

The supervisor who supervised the construction of this infrastructure was from Matang community. His name was Ramchandra Laxman More. He was belonging to a place called Rendal near Hupari and was educated upto IX Standard. Shahu Maharaj made this man supervisor of the construction dept. Ramchandra’s younger brother, Krishna use to be with him while doing his job. Shahu Maharaj inquired about him, and on knowing that he was Ramchandra’s brother admitted him in Arya Samaj Hostel. Krishna educated himself upto L.L.B. and was elected as the first M.P. of Matang community in the general elections of 1952. The same person is well known to Maharashtra with the name K.L.More. The Mang community which was branded as criminal by British officers were recruited in Police force by Shahu Maharaj.

Sattappa Awale was a police officer. Parshu Mang and Nana Lokhande from Herle were holding important position in police force. When Shahu Maharaj came to know that a man called Nana Lokhande had education till 4th std, he himself took him in his car, brought him to Sonathal and educated him to XII std.

One more example can be cited showing how Shahu Maharaj trusted and loved Matang community. When Shahu Maharaj had a halted at Minache village, the Mangs came to Shahu Maharaj with their problems. ‘Who are you?’ Shahu asked them on which they told him that they were Mangs. Shahu said – ‘Don’t you have any surname?’ to this Mangs replied in negative. In a moment Shahu
Maharaj gave them his own surname Ghatage, not only this but he issued an order stating it. In this way the Mangs of Minache village became Ghatages.

British government had declared Mang community as criminal and had compelled them to report ‘Hajeri’ to police station every day. Mangs used to go to police patil of the village in the morning, afternoon and in the evening. The life of Mangs had become a difficult one. People who tried to revolt against Britishers were suppressed. But in this issue too, Shahu Maharaj came forward and this inhuman tradition of attending police station was stopped by him. In short, Shahu Maharaj worked relentlessly in order to give education, jobs, financial assistance and status to Matang community.

Shahu Maharaj loved Mangs so much so that he had given them licence to fetch water from the special well at his palace (Shinde, V.R. 1976: 243).

1.13 Matang Community during the Nizam Period:

The 19th century India was a country of many provinces / sansthaps and emperors. There were about 699 sansthaps. One of these was the sansthan of Hyderabad which was a vast one geographically (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 1).

In the Hyderabad state then, todays Marathwada region was included. There was the practise of untouchability prevalent in India in those days and Marathwada region was not an exception to it. The practise of untochability was so severe that even if a untouchable person by chance touched the earthen piece used to throw away the human waste of Patil, Deshmukh or Bramhin, the earthen piece was needed to be washed away by cow’s urin in
order to make it pious, else it was thrown away (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 2).

In short, there was the practise of untouchability in Hyderabad state. The hotels, temples, public wells, schools, factories were closed for the untouchables. Their entry in such places was punishable. In Nizam’s regime Jahagirdar, Vatandar, land lord were his slaves and Dalits were the slaves of the slaves (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 8).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar held the first Dalit conference on 30/12/1938 at Makaranpur. Tal-Chalisgaon Dist-East Khandesh. This was his first Dalit conference in the Nizam state. He organised second conference called ‘Vatandar-Mahar Mang Conference’ on 23/2/1941 at Tadawale, Dist. Solapur. (Now in Taluka Kalamb, Dist. Osmanabad) There were number of Mangs who have participated along with Mahars in this conference.

There were many organisation active in order to create general awareness about the untouchability in the state of Hyderabad. Among them Karnataka, Telangana and Maharashtra Parishad have tried to bring different political currents together and these organisations have formed ‘Hyderabad Subjective League’ in 1934 (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 47).

Apart from these organisations there were many other organisations like, Scheduled Castes Federation, Dalit Varga Parishad, Pasta Akham, Hindu Social Service league, Adi Hindu independent league, Independent Scheduled Caste Federation. There was an organisation called ‘Arundhatiya Mahasabha’ which thought exclusively of Matang community. On April 23, 1946 Nizam consented for the development plan for all the classes. Many organisations demanded political representation for different
classes. By that time ‘Arundhatiya Mahasabha’ asked for 5 seats for Madiga or Matang and gave conditional consent to Nizams developmental plan (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 52). In short the Matangs had active participation in the socio-political movement in Hyderabad state.

In the religious matters too, Mangs were always active. Mang and Mahar communities were the neighbouring communities but in case of religious transformation in those days, the Mangs would prefer Christianity and Mahars the Islam (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 65). Of course the Mahars too have become Christians. B. Shyamsundar has given information in Karnataka legislative assembly on 15th June 1957 that, only in the district of Bidar about 22 thousand untouchables have embarrassed Christianity (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 65). Though Mangs had inclined to accept Christianity there are examples where they have transformed to Islam too. At Laghul, Tal-Latur, Dist-Osmanabad, Mangs have accepted Islam (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 61). Even though we have several such examples of untouchables accepting other religions, one cannot deny the fact that their religious transformation was out of their economic needs and sometimes out of threat. Many people have converted to other religion because of atrocity and feeling of insecurity from the Hindus (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 74).

The Razakar movement led by Razakkar organisation in Hyderabad state happens to be an important one. Razakar organisation was established at Hyderabad in 1940. Raz means small dust particle and the word Razakar means the person who lifts up those fallen down in the dust. Sayyed Mohd. Eshass was the first officer of this organisation who wrote the constitution
The organization had an intense desire to see that the state of Nizam remains an independent one. Because of which, activist belonging to this organization use to torture those who would support Indian government and upheld the assimilation of Nizam state in the republic of India. They use to attack them, loot their property and even rape the women but the Dalits possessing the green card of this organization were given protection by them.

The Hyderabad struggle is one such a struggle that gave a completeness to Indian solidarity. The Hyderabad freedom struggle was motivated to give India a national unity. In the last phase the freedom struggle took violent turn because of Nizam's military and Razakar organisation. However the struggle has become pious with the blood of Mang myrters (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 91). The role played by Matangs in this struggle is noteworthy.

One of the striking action in Hyderabad freedom struggle was Umari Bank operation. Umari, Tal-Bhokar, Dist-Nanded had a branch of State Bank of Hyderabad. The action was to give a massive blow to the Nizam regime. Police had arrested about 40 Mang-Mahar youth from Nanded and Hadgaon in this action. All the youths were belonging to Nanded district. All these youths agreed to their charges because of the use of third grade degree method by police. They were charged of murders and decoity. At many places untouchables faced the Razakars. They bravely fought against Razakars. Among them Mangs fought against the Razakars.

In this freedom struggle Gangya Mang of village Apashinge Tal-Tuljapur played an important role. Among the 15 brave soldiers who tried to seize the police station of Nizam at Bardapur
Tal-Ambajogai, Sukhdeo Dhule, Bhagawan Dhule, Rambhau Mang were ahead. The Sathe’s at Bhoom (Dist-Osmanabad) had actively participated in the struggle the Nizam by that time Vishya Vitha Khandare of Malhari Tal-Kalamnoori, Dist- Parbhani was caught by the police while spying and was shot dead on 26/4/1948 (Gaikwad Narendra, 1990: 121). Apart from these, Ganpati Jalaba Mang, of Tiruka, Tal-Udgir and Chanda Saganath Mang of the same village became myrter. Among the border fighting camp Gena Sakharam Mang of Sarola was a soldier and Shankarrao Jogdand was a soldier on Beed camp.

Hanumant Vishwasrao Landage (Mang) had been actively involved in the Satyagraha on 24 Dec. 1938. Baburao Sitaram Landage had participated in the Satyagraha of 1938. Keshav Nivruti Landage (Osmanabad), Dhondiba Pandurang Kawale (Beed), Rama Nagoba Khilare (Beed) and many Mangs have actively participated in the Hyderabad freedom struggle.
References:
