CHAPTER - III
MATANG COMMUNITY : A PROFILE

3.1 Introduction:

The deprived communities – the Scheduled Castes (S.C.), the Scheduled Tribe (S.T.), the backward castes and the minorities constitute almost seventy percent of Indian population.

According to the 1981 Census, the number of ST and SC people in India are 51 million and 104 million respectively. The together constitute 23.51 percentage (7.76%) S.T. and 15.75% (S.C.) of the total population of India. The SC and ST are administrative terms to identify the ex-untouchable or Harijans and the tribals or Adivasis respectively. The term ‘scheduled castes’ appeared for the first time in the Government of India Act, 1935. For the tribes, the Act used the term ‘Backward Tribes’. Prior to this, both the communities were generally known as ‘Depressed Classes’. The Indian Constitution, 1950, has retained the terminologies of the 1935 Acts, with a slight alternation in the caste of the tribes. Instead of ‘Backward Caste’, they are called ‘Scheduled Tribes’. Under Articles 341 and 342 of the Indian constitution, the president has specified certain groups as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (Joshi Ram, Hebsur, R.K. 1987: 122).

The caste Mang was included in the list of criminal castes by the British Government. But way back in 1952 the Matang community was liberated from the criminal law. Eventually, as Mang caste is treated as untouchable in 1961 it is included in Scheduled Caste.

In this present chapter location of Matang, Status of Matang in History, Sub-caste and Ethnic groups, Surnames and Deities
amount Matangs, Population of Matangs, Customer of Matangs, Religious Practices of Matangs, God and Godesses of Matangs has been studied. As well as Marriage, Occupation and Educational Status of Matang communities is studies.

3.2 The Locations of Matang:

‘Mang’ or ‘Matang’ in Maharashtra are called ‘Madar’ or ‘Madiga’ in Karnataka and Madiga in Andra Pradesh and ‘Mangele’ in Gujarat. ‘Chivang’ in Vidharbha and 'Ambuj' in all over Maharashtra in their on day-to-day language.

This caste is generally found in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. ‘Madigas’ are found in Karnataka and Andra Pradesh as well. Just as we come across ‘Mahars’ along with ‘Mangs’ in Maharashtra so also in Andhra Pradesh there are Mala’s along with ‘Madigas’ (Shinde V. R., 1976: 104).

In Kashmir there is a caste ‘Mangi’ which is a foreseer and predicts future. Even today the caste is leading a nomadic life.

Thus, ‘Mang’ is spread over in different parts of India and is known by various names. This caste is found in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Kashmir. It also found in Gao and Kerala also.

The deity of ‘Mariaai’ is the symbol of mother earth. This could be possibly proved by comparative study of all these which mean the Mangs of Maharashtra and ‘Naamshudra’ of Bengal have their same deity. If Mangs are called chandal till recent times, even the Naamshudra’s were also called ‘chandals. Mangs have a sub-caste called ‘Holiya’ and Naamshudras too have a sub-caste called ‘Haaliya.’ One sub caste of Naamshudra ‘Jaliya’ has an occupation
of fishry, whereas in Gujarat Mangela too have the same occupation. Thus, Mangs in Maharashtra and Naamshudra from Bengal must have been originally the one ethnic group. A research is necessary in this respect.

It is said that the origin of Matang Community is found on the banks of Tungabhadra river in southern India. However, The reign of Matang Community had spread from Maharashtra to Tungabhadra valley. From the region itself Matang Community must have spread all over India.

3.3 The Status of Matangs in the Indian History:

Baliraja was helped immensely by Jambhuwant, a mighty Matang. The oxen have been used for the first time by the Matangs. The fable regarding this is Matang is the first architect of agricultural revolution who tamed wild oxes for the agricultural purpose. (Babar, Weekly Yashwant Nayak, Thane, Mumbai)

3.3.1 Myths of Matang:

1) Matang rishi was born in Chandal kul (clan) on the outskirts of Varanashi town. (Chandal is not a kul but it is a country). This Matang rishi from Chandal country got married to a young lady called Mangalika. He got a son named ‘Mandavya.’ Lateron, Matang rishi was killed by the people of ‘Mlencha’ country.

The name Matang is derived from the name of ‘Matang rishi.’ This is not the name of a caste. Matang is a group and not a ‘caste’ (Mande, 1983: 6).

2) In order to escape from ‘Brahmadeo’, ‘Saraswati’ tried to seek the help of Gods. However, because of the fear of Brahmadeo the Gods did not give her shelter. Finally, she went to the
house of a Mang. When Lord Brahmadeo went there, he ran away after seeing a heavy rod in the hand of Mang (Khadase, B. K., 1990: 29-30).

3) Rahu and Ketu are ‘Mang’ by caste and they trouble the sun. It is believed that they engulf the sun and the moon which makes the eclipse (Somawanshi B. C. 1989: 60).

Rahu and Ketu were the great, brave and courageous Matang kings. Even the sun, the moon and other kings faded before their bravery. These kings were the original inhabitants of this country and they were the protectors of this society. These great and brave kings were called after the names of ‘Raksasa’ and ‘Danav’ by the society and their people were made to beg by calling ‘De Daan Sute Girhan (Give alms, edipes is being concluded).’ The aggressors defeated them and made them untouchables (Babar, Weekly Yashwant Nayak, Thane, Mumbai).

4) The creator of epic Mahabharat ‘Vyasmuni’ is the son of ‘Parashar’ rishi’s union with a ‘Mang’ lady.

5) There was a state ‘Kishkindha’ on the banks of river ‘Tungghadra’ in ‘Dandakaranya.’ The ‘markandye’ rushi was born to a Matang.

6) Rushi Shailendra was born to a Matang (Mulstambh).

7) ‘Sandipani’ rushi, Guru of Lord Krishna was a Matang. Lord Krishna had an art of throwing, however, he had no art to take it back. Sandipani Matang had this art of taking back which he taught to Lord Krishna.

8) Kapildhara was a great devotee of Lord Shankara and he was a Matang.
9) There was a sage by name ‘Matang’ at the time of Ramayana. He stood hundred years on one foot in order to get the ‘Brahmnya.’ Inspite of this he did not get it. He had his Ashram on the shore of lake ‘Pampa.’ This lake Pampa is today found in Bellari district in Karnataka. The river Pumpa runs close to it. The great celibate women of that period like Shabari, Janaki, Siddha, Tapasi were the disciples of sage Matang. They were educated from the Matang sage and so ‘Ramayana’ has discarded them. Among them Shabari belong to ‘Bhill’ community and Tapasi to the Matang community.

10) There were many small states of Matangs on the bank of river ‘Tungbhadra’, however, in Ramayana these states were called as monkey’s or ‘Vanar’s’ states (Gaikwad R.D., Magazine Sugava, Pune).

In the stories narrated in Ramayana-Mahabharat and Puran, the creeds like-Asur, Daitya, Rakshasa, Vanar were perhaps ansestors of todays Munda, Kol, Shabar, Gond and Katakari aadivasis. They were called ‘aadidravid’ (Somawanshi B. C., 1989: 31).

There were Matang states on the bank of river Tungbhadra. Wali and Sugriv were the Vanar kings (Gaikwad R.D., Magazine Sugava, Pune). The creed of Wali, Sugriv and Angand was very cultured creed. Vanars were Kshatriya. They were well versed with knowledge of ‘Vedas.’ Even their women also were aware of this knowledge of ‘Veda’ but they were not performing the rights of ‘Yadnya.’ The Vanars were classified into four types, but there was no
colour discrimination. The transaction in terms of ‘Roti-Beti’ use to take place among all the Vanars.

The great worrier ‘Jatayu’ who told Lord Rama about Sita’s abduction was a Matang (Gaikwad R.D., Magazine Sugava, Pune).

11) ‘Sopak’ alias ‘Shwapak’ was one among the Bhikkusangh at the time of Buddha. In his ‘Ther gatha’ there are seven pali gathas alongwith that, there are three gathas related to ‘Chandal’ youth in ‘Sut Nippat’ in Pali literature. He had become an illustrated person due to this. He has achieved a commendable and a rare success by his time. Many Brahmins were at his service. It was believed that he had got the ‘Bramhalok’. His caste or creed never was an impedement in his success.

12) Renuka was the wife of Sage Jamadagni. She was believed to be indulged in some misdeed. So her husband Jamadagni asked his son Parashuram to cut off the head of his mother that is Renuka which was done by Parshuram. Pleased with this act of the son, sage Jamadagni asked him to ask for a boon, on which ‘Parshuram’ asked his father to make his mother alive, Jamadagni asked Parashuram to join the cut off head of Renuka to her body but, Parshuram did not find the cut off head by that time Parshuram asked the head of ‘Matangi’ and joined it to Renuka’s body and thus she was made alive. Lateron, Renuka who had her own body and a Matangs head was worshipped as a deity. Thus ‘Matangi’ became the deity of Matangs. Parshuram did this earth nikshatriya twenty one times. During this battle who faught back to him were originally Matangs. They did not surrender
to Parshuram. They retreated back to the forests, so we do not find original Matang in Konkan.’ This emphasises that, Matang community is the one which struggles for its identity (Babar, Weekly Yashwant Nayak, Thane, Mumbai).

13) There was scholar named Kashyap at Buddha’s time, who was believed to have a debate with Lord Gautam Buddha himself. The period of 6 and 7 century B.C. was one of the most intellectual period in the history of India. During this period the thoughts to challenge the ‘Yadnya Sanstha’ of the period came up. During this period itself, the intellectual Kashyapa put forth his theory of ‘Akriyawad’ (ism) however, this Matang scholar Kashyap became the disciple of Lord Buddha.

Kashyap is the first and the foremost Bouddh Pandit in India. He was the one to carry the flag of Buddhism in China. He had translated Indian Philosophical books in China. The international relations of Indo-China which began with Kashyap remained till 10th and 11th century. Today China is regarded as a Buddhist country, the credit of this undoubtly goes to the Matang scholar Kashyap which he had initiated in 6-7 century B.C. (Joshi Laxmanshastri, 1982: 956-959).

14) There are very illustrated Matang ‘Bhikkus’ even in Jainism like those in Buddhism. One of them was Harikeshbal. He has a debate with Brahmins on the topic like kind of sacrifice and of Karma. In Jain sutra of Uttaradhyyan, we find this dialogue; in which one can see that, this Matang Harikeshbal has became more influencing than Brahmins (Somawanshi B. C. 1998: 21).
Among the Jains, one of the Yaksha was a Matang. He was the servant of Suparshwanath. He is blue in colour, mounted on the elephant and has four arms. He holds fruit of Bel and pash in his right hands and Nakul and Ankush in his left hands. According to ‘Digambar’ culture, Matang Yaksha is mounted on a lion holding ‘Dand’ ‘Shul’, ‘Swastik’ and a ‘Dhwaj’ (flag).

15) Among ‘Lingayat’ culture, there were two great scholars called Neelchandaya and Veda (mad) Limbayya. They were the Matangs (Basavapurna). Once there was a religious conference. Many scholars had attended it. The issue of declaring the most ‘superior scholars’ had come up and some scholars claimed that, those who have ‘linga’ in their neck could be called the ‘superior.’ By this time Neelchandaya showed his ‘Saling’ (instrument of Mang) and proved his greatness.

16) In the first century B.C. at Gulbarga, Karnataka, a Matang Jangam called Narayan Kalyan was very famous. He was belonging to ‘Jangam origin.’

17) An illustrated astrologer Bhadali was a Matang lady. She was bestowed with the knowledge of all time. She was the foreseer in the past, present and future. A man called Sahadeo belonging to Brahmin community was her disciple (Dhere R. C. 1971: 33).

18) Ramanujacharya the founder of ‘Vishistha Dwet Culture’ reached ‘Tiruwali’ guiding the people, where he had a discussion with a Matang lady after which he offered her his followership praising her that, she was more pious and
superior to him, not only this but he established her idol in a
temple. Even today devotees worship her.

3.4 Matang - Sub-castes and ethnic groups:
The Matang community has been divided into sub-castes. There is a sense of superiority and inferiority even among these sub-castes which seems to be directly influenced by the Hindu caste, colour discrimination. The ‘Roti-beti’ transaction is not effected in these sub-castes.

3.4.1 Enthoven has observed 24 sub-castes of Mangs, they are:
1) Assal, Gasti, or Maratha Mang  
2) Bale  
3) Burud Mang  
4) Chapalsande  
5) Dakhalar  
6) Desur Mang  
7) Dhakal war, Dakhalwar, Dakkalwar or Vajantri Mang  
8) Dhor Mang  
9) Ghadashi Mang  
10) Holage-Holar  
11) Jingar  
12) Jirait  
13) Kakar  
14) Kokalwar  
15) Manbhav  
16) Mang-garudi – Mhaisa bhadare  
17) Nade-Nudar-Khotra  
18) Mochi  
19) Ped or PedMang  
20) Parit  
21) Shivat, Shevate, Valar or Pathtanas  
22) Telangi  
23) Tokarphode  
24) Zare

3.4.2 T. K. Ketakar has further classified the sub-castes of Mangs, they are :-
1) Dakkhane  
2) Khandeshi  
3) Vharade  
4) Ghodaye etc.
Apart from these there are Dafale, Uchale, Pendehari, Holar, Garudi and Kakargathe

3.4.3 The Buldhana district Gazette

It has registered 12 ½ sub castes among Mangs. Inta Dharma Ankushi a Mang-garudi from Beed has given the sub-castes of Mangs and they are:

1) Kakarya Mang or Mang
2) Dhalya Mang
3) Rangeet Mang
4) Telangya Mang
5) Desurya Mang
6) Balur Mang
7) Ped Mang (Mande Prabhkar)

In the Ramoshi caste too there is one sub caste called ‘Mangramoshi’ (Ethnoven, 1928: 249).

Ramoshi and Mang had some relations out of which perhaps such kind of assertion must have been given.

3.4.4 Mate Sripad Mahadeo:


3.4.5 Shinde Vitthal Ramji:

According to Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde, because of inferior work they undertake and because of the superiority of
Brahminism the Mangs today have been divided into such sub-castes. (Shinde V.R, 1976: 78)

1) The sub-castes of Mang because of the inferior kind of work are: Tumbayaza, Dom, Chandal, Yajagi, Vajantri, Paraiyya (Dhol Beaters)

2) The castes those were free in ancient times were overpowered lateron are Mang, Madig, Matang etc.

3) Bouddh and other Naamshudra

In short, one can see many sub-castes of Mangs. All those castes are made according to their religion, creed, language, region, division, profession, superiority; crime and Bhatgiri.

1) **The sub-castes** that have been called on the basis of region. Kanadi Mang, Gujarati Mang, Telangi Mang, Ghatole Mang and Satmale Mang.

2) **On the basis of religious –cult –language:** Musalmaan Mang, Maanbhav Mang and Marathi Mang

3) **On the basis of geographical Division:** Varhadi Mang, Khandeshi Mang, Dahkhani Mang, Ghatole Mang and Satmale Mang.

4) **On the basis of profession:** Vajantri Mang, Pungiwale Mang, Dafade Mang, Tokarphode Mang, Mochi Mang, Mhaisabhadre Mang, Ghodake, Burud, Nade, Bhavari, Radhe Mang, Madiga, Jirait, Dhor, Ghadashi, Devakar, Desur, Shelke, Jingar, Holar, Kakrya, Dhalya, Rangeet Mang and Kakarkate.

5) **On the basis of crime:** Uchale, Pendhari and Mang Garudi

6) **On the basis of Bhatgiri:** Dakkalwar- they are the ‘Bhat’ or ‘magate’ of Mangs (Khadase B.K, 1990: 34).
How many ethnic groups can be included in the Mang community can not be exactly said. There is a confusion of many castes and groups. Due to the lack of knowledge about the caste, the people have referred them as per their profession, even the people belonging to the same profession have been divided into other sub-caste such as:

Daphade Mang, Tokar phode Mang, Vajantri Mang, Bandawale Mang etc.

Due to the lack of true knowledge of the castes, the number of castes has increased (Khadase, B.K., 1990: 15).

In short, owing to the confusion in the sub-castes of Mangs it becomes difficult to state the exact number of sub-castes of Mangs. However, the important sub-castes and their professions are as follows:

1) **Kakarya Mang:**

The profession these Mangs undertake is preparing threshing field for the farmers, preparing the brooms and selling them, preparing ropes, strings, they undertake the works of *Jagala*. Mangs indulged into these activities are called, Assal, Gasti or Maratha Mang.

2) **Dhalya Mang:**

The Banjara Mangs are called the ‘Dhalya Mang’ 1). These Mangs live in the temporary settlement of ‘Banjara’ or ‘Lamani’. Laman’s are even called Banjara. Banjara Mang means Dhalya Mang. Perhaps, this may not be the sub-caste of Mangs but it could be the sub-caste of Banjara-Vanjara or laman. They play on the musical instrument called *Halagi* and are in that profession like
that of Mangs. The women folk of this Dhalya caste too wear Sari-blouse and glass bangles like those of the other Mang-women.

3) Rangeet Mang:
   These Mangs do the profession of colouring the leather. Their work is like those of ‘Dhor’ that is why they are called as ‘Dhor Mang.’

4) Telangi Mang:
   These people are indulged into the works related to Dakkalwar.

5) Desurya Mang:
   These Mangs wander in the villages and ask for alms.

6) Balur Mang:
   They are of criminal nature.

7) Ped Mang:
   They prepare the threshing field for the farmers. The artists working in Tamasha (folk-art) can be categorised in this type. The origin of the Tamasha art happens to be among the Mangs. The artists who performed first Tamasha were belonging to the village called Ped in Khanapur Tahsil, Dist-Sangli and these Mangs are called after the name of that village as ‘Ped Mang.’

8) Ghatole Mang:
   They are the people in invigilance.
9) **Katvati Mang:**

These Mangs of Jath taluka in Sangli district are indulged preparing ‘Katavati’ a broad based vessel to knead the flour. (to mix flour and water into dough)

10) **Mang Garudi:**

This is one of the prominent sub-castes of Mangs. Originally the nomadic people, but found settled these days. However, their lot of being nomadic still continues. These people are found in Konkan and Marathwada region in large numbers.

These people are found in cattle rearing especially the buffaloes and along with it even they are in the job of shaving the buffaloes that’s why they are called ‘Mhaisa Bhadare’.

Though the Mangs are their brothers they often use the saying : “Adhi Mang mag, Mang Garudi.” (First Mang and then Mang Garudi)

We find a separate caste Panchayat for Mang garudi. The judges in the Panchayat have a great importance. The Mangs in the Mang-garudi are respected a lot. Not a single religious, cultural and social activity would be complete without their presence. Among the Mang caste, the Mangs holding the surname ‘Sakat’ or ‘Sakate’ are revered greatly by the Mang garudi. They have a great reverence for the ‘Sakat kool’ (Sakat lineage) because, they think that the Mangs belonging to sakat origin are their ‘masters’ in that sense Sakats are the *Patils* (chief) for them. Without the presence of Sakat the marriage ceremony of the Mang garudi would not take place.

A social activist from Latur Shri. Malhari Buwa Kale has organised these people. They hold separate meetings, gatherings as
a sense of unity. Malhari Buwa Kale has been honoured by ‘Dalit Mitra’ award by the Government of Maharashtra.

11) Dakkalwar:

In the Hindu social structure there exist a caste that lives on by asking for alms (begging.) They are called magate. These magates happen to be the Bhaat (bard) of a particular caste. Actually the characteristics of Bhaat suits best to the rulers. The Mangs had been the rulers once upon a time, that is why they have Bhaat or magate. Dakkalwar are the Bhaats of Mangs.

The other Bhaat castes get anything from anybody but the Dakkalwars ask for their needs only from the Matangs. They even don’t ask for water from anybody other than Mangs. They don’t even eat anything given by other than Mangs. They say either we take from the God or else from the Mangs.

Originally Mangs were the kings, they were the brave community is what the ‘Dakkalwars’ believe in, and hence they consider themselves to be their Bhaats. They take pride in calling themselves as the Bhaats of Mangs. They have their mother tongue ‘Telgu’. That’s why they are even called as Telangi Mang.

The Dakkalwar in Maharashtra became ‘Dakkal’ in Gujarat, says Ashok G. Paranjape Director, INT and a noted scholar on Tamasha Art. Edgar Thurston says that, Dakkal or Dakal is a creed of beggers who beg to the ‘Mangela’s (Gujarathi Mang) of Gujarat (Mande,1983: 32).

Dakkalwar along with kingari’s present Basavpuran before Matangs. This Basavpuran is even called Matang puran. The Baad (Sheets of papers on which text is written) of Dakkalwar happens to be unique having the width of two and half hands and length of
fifteen to twenty hands. The Dakkalwars narrate the Basav puran by referring to the pictures in it. They have a great respect for their Baad and the Basavpuran.’ We find the Mool khab of Mangs in that Baad from where one can see the origin of all the castes of Mangs. Baad is every thing for them and the image of peacock on Kingari is their symbol. Kingari is a string instrument made out of goard and bamboo stick and three strings.

12) Holar:

This is one of the sub-castes of Mangs. They are even called ‘Holiya’ or ‘Vhaler.’ This is one of the sub-castes of Mangs. The fable narrated by Shri. Baba Dada Patole aged 84 of Shenwadi, Tal Maan, Dist – Satara about the origin of the Holar caste is as follows:

There used to be a Mang widow who lived at her natal. She was a young widow and got in immoral relationship with a Matang man, as a result of which she got conceived. As this ‘matter’ came to be known among the community the discussion about her immoral relations erupted and as a result the Jaat Panchayat excommunicated her.

This expected mother started wandering from place to place and finally got a refuge with a shepherd man. She delivered a baby boy there. As the boy grew up the shepherd took the boy along with him to tend the sheep. However, the boy did not find interest in it. He used to trouble the shepherd a lot. In order to be out of it, the shepherd got the leather from ‘Dhor’ and ‘rapi’ from Chambhar’ and made an instrument called ‘Dimadi’ and also started tending the sheep while playing on it.
As the child grew up into a man and came of age, it was decided to marry him, however, nobody agreed to give him a girl in marriage. Finally he was married to a girl from Matang community. Lateron the Matangs gave him shelter near them and even gave him their traditional profession. The offsprings of this man came to be known as Holar community.

The Matang community in Karnataka state is in the tanning occupation. They are in the business of chappals (shoo making) but the Chambhars consider them inferior to them. Vajantri is one of the important occupations of Mangs in Maharashtra. Holars also play on the music. At some villages the honour of tying toran is given to Holars by Mangs. At many places both the Mangs and Holars stay as neighbourers. The surnames like Awale, Aiwale, Kengar, Bhingardive are found only among the Mangs and the Holars. In Karnataka one of the origin (clan) is Matangs is called ‘Kengargalu.’ The Mangs call Holars as “Shivate Mang” and not as Holars.

The Holars in the area of Jath, Kavatemahankal, Dist. Sangli and Ichalakaranji, Dist. Kolhapur are identified as Mang. In most part of western Maharashtra Holars call themselves as Mangs. Some scholars, consider Holar to be the sub-caste of Mahars, however, there is not a single Holar who calls himself a Mahar.

Inspite of the fact that, in view of the Government of Maharashtra Holar caste belongs to S.C. category, it is not a sub caste of Mang. It means Mang and and Holar are indendent scheduled castes. But from the social point of view Holar is one of the sub-castes of Mang. However, today we see that this caste is organising independently but they are not free from their traditional occupation even today.
3.5 Surnames, origins and deites:


There are four surnames of Bhise among the Matangs they are: Hole Bhise, Kolhe Bhise, Dhan Bhise, Ranbhise. The trees like Amba (Mango), Umbar, Soundad are regarded as the kool daivat (deities) of Matangs. These trees are worshipped at the time of marriage ceremony.

3.6 Population of Matang Community:

According to Census of India (year - 1961) the population of scheduled caste are as follows:
Population of Scheduled castes in Maharashtra:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population of Scheduled Caste</th>
<th>Mahar</th>
<th>Mang</th>
<th>Chambhar</th>
<th>Other scheduled castes</th>
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<td>2859435.4 (32.65)</td>
<td>1931979.1 (22.06)</td>
<td>890672.53 (10.17)</td>
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Population of Matang community in Maharashtra:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Rate of decade</th>
<th>Rate of year</th>
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<td>727006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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The Mang community is referred as one of the most important community among the untouchables. This community being untouchable in the social system of India, is listed as Scheduled Castes. There are about 59 different castes that have been considered and put into the list of Scheduled Castes. Some of them are Mang, Mahar, Chambhar, Dhor, Holar etc. While
undertaking the scientific study of Matangs, it is difficult to point out, the exact population of Matang community in India as the caste, religion and its population has received an enormous importance in the politics of this country. Leaders of every community tell that their population is more than that of others, however, these boastful claims about their population doesn’t hold any reality. Even in case of Matangs the same problem arises and so it is difficult to quote the exact population of Matang community.

One of the strong reasons leading to this problem is that, today there is no system existing to collect the information based on castes. Earlier, during the census, caste based information was being collected however, since 1901 collecting information based on sub-caste has been discontinued and after 1931 even caste based information has not been collected. So during these 90 years, information based on sub-caste and for the last 60 years information based on caste has not been collected. In such a scenario there are serious reservations among thinkers in this area. Kakasaheb Kalekar commission has suggested 2329 castes. However, Bindeshwari Prasad commission consented upon 3376 castes in scheduled category. There are serious differences even among scholars about the population of various castes and sub castes, as a result exact population of untouchables is not available.

As a consequence of the above said fact, it is difficult to decide upon the exact population of Matang community. Even then, one can form a hypothesis about its population. The base for such a hypothesis could be the census of 1931. In 1931 census, the earlier Maharashtra was divided into four regions namely Mumbai region, Central part, Varhad and Hyderabad province. In the report made then, the percentage of today’s Maharashtra is as such Mahar-
9.48%, Dhed-1.91%, Matang-2.5%, Madig-1.21%. This clearly notifies that the total percentage of Mahar and Dhed was 11.69 and that of Mang and Madig was 3.71%.

D. D. Kachole opines that the number of scheduled castes in Maharashtra is 58. It includes Mahar 35%, Mang 32.65% and Chambhar or Mochi 22.6%. All these three castes in total go on to 89.93%. Other scheduled castes have the percentage of just 11.7% (Kachole, D.D., 1995: 43).

According to B.K. Khadase in Maharashtra the Matags have the percentage of 32.65% among the population of Scheduled Castes referring the census of 1961 (Khadase, B.K., 1990: 39).

If we take into account the above figures related to Matangs, one can say that the population of Matangs is more than those of Mahars. As the Mahars have got converted to Buddhism, the Mangs will definitely exceed in population to the other Hindu Scheduled Castes (Kachole D.D, 1995: 43).

Even if one cannot make a statement about the exact population of Mangs, one can say that it certainly exceeds the Chambhars. The caste system and religion influences the politics in Maharashtra. People who think politics in term of caste system take up the issues related to the castes like Mali, Dhanagar and Vanjari but they don’t take into account the Mangs. The castes like Mali, Dhanagar, Vanjari are given importance by all political parties. But in a real sense the population of these castes is meagre, In Maharashtra Mali community is upto 3.55%, Dhanagar 2.55% and Mang 3.71%. Mang community is more than those of Dhanagar and Mali. However, they are not taken into account on a social and political level.
According to this study the population of Matang in Maharashtra is not less than 65 lakhs.

3.7 **Dr. Ambedkar on Population Problem:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had realised the importance of religion and caste population in the Indian political arena and that is why in the December 1942, at Pacific Conference held at Canada, he had read a thesis on the conditions of Dalit in post war India. The referred thesis was published with the title ‘Mr. Gandhi and emancipation of the untouchables’. In the present thesis Dr. Ambedkar had put forth his views, on the population of Dalits. He says, “the ten year census in Hindustan was a significant thing once upon a time. Nobody would pay attention to it then, but in today’s context it has became one of the most important thing from everyone’s perspective, not only to the politician but even to the commoners it has became a thing of great importance because, the Indian politics has become a population politics” (Dr. Ambedkar B. R., 1981: 2).

Dr. Ambedkar says “One caste can dominate over the other by its population and that is why to get the benefit of population the figures in census are managed. The main cooks in the kitchen are the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs. The untouchable and the Christian do not have a hand into this census because they don’t have a place in the department that carries out census (Dr. Ambedkar B. R., 1981: 6).

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar has lodged a serious allegation on the Sikhs by giving reference to, how the Sikhs minimised the population of untouchables by the injustice done to them. Even Hindus, like Sikhs try to see that the untouchables do not register
their caste at the time of census. On the contrary, they write only Hindus before the name of untouchable without making reference to their caste. As a result the population of untouchables go on diminishing and that of Hindus go on increasing. That is why the figure quoted in census of British India is not trust worthy (Dr. Ambedkar B. R., 1981: 10). Overall the method adopted in carrying out the census is doubtful, that is what Dr. Ambedkar has proved by giving reference to the census of 1940.

He has thrown light on the efforts that were made to diminish the population of untouchables, as the population plays a dominant role in politics. Such efforts were not only the part of British India, even today, the same efforts are being made in post independent India and that is why one cannot figure out exactly the population of untouchables. Counting of untouchables with their castes and sub castes has been stopped. Not to count the population of untouchables has become a political game. This is a conspiracy in politics to see that, the untouchables do not know their population. Really speaking the main castes among untouchables are the Mahar, Mang and Chambhar. Mang thinks that their population is less than that of Mahars and exceeds the Chambhars, but no one can tell what is the exact population of all these communities. The scholars among the Mahars say that population of Mahars is enormous. However, one can feel about their boasting. Even though the Mahars are more in population to those of the Mangs, there would not be much difference between them. One thing is clear that the upper castes manipulate the figures of population of the untouchables and this is done consciously so as to suppress them. In the states of A. P. and Karnataka, the Mangs are called as ‘Madig’ and their population is
more among all the untouchables. That is why in Maharashtra they may be less in number, does not hold any ground. In Maharashtra the population of Mangs could be equal to those of Mahars. Possibly it could be more, even if it happens to be less, it would certainly not be remarkably less.

3.8 Customs of Matang Community:

Matang community holds an important place in the folk life of Maharashtra. Mang community is considered to be an auspicious in the affairs of village life. If upper caste set out for some good job and if they face a Mang to begin with, it is also, taken as a good sign and the completion of that work is almost guaranteed. This belief of interaction of person from Mang community has found association of Mangs in the auspicious deeds of upper caste, at the time of marriage ceremony Mang has to perform the ceremony of tying the Bashing. To please the Vastu God a Mang has to tie Toran to the main door of the house. Digging of a new well is also by the hands of Mang, which is considered to be an auspicious sign.

This belief about Mang being associated to make upper caste people to see purposefully, that a Mang crosses them while they set out for some good deed. At the time of election held in India, a Mang voter is privileged to caste his vote first, which assures candidate’s victory. These and many practises endorse the belief that, a Mang community is considered as an auspicious community. In Maharashtra even a proverb ‘Bhetel Mang, phitel pang’ has been recurrently used.

India has a rich cultural heritage and Maharastra is no exception to it. Many festivals, practises are seen in this state. Mang has been given a special place in such cultural and
traditional practices. Gregorian year begins from the month of January and ends in December. So the month of January is considered as the beginning of the year, but Bharatiya solar year spreads between the month of Chaitra and Falgun. The first festival that comes at the beginning of the year in the month of Chaitra is ‘Padawa’.

3.8.1 Padwa as a special festival:

‘Padawa’ being the special festival, is celebrated all over Maharashtra with a great enthusiasm. People begin their new business, purchase of a vehicle, etc. is being done on this auspicious day. A Mang community has to tie the Toran at the houses. A Mang is given money or a present sometimes in the form of saree and blouse.

3.8.2 Bendur - beginning of Gaoki or Mangki:

Monsoon begins from late summer or early June. The farmers keep their fields ready by this time for cultivation and as the monsoon approaches, they immediately finish up their toiling and sowing activities. Bendur is the festival where oxes are worshipped by Indian farmers. This festival arrives after Padwa a festival that marks the beginning of the new year according to Hindu Calendar. The festival Bendur is equally important for the Mang community as it begins their Gaoki.

Bendur is one of the important festivals in the cultural heritage of Maharashtra. This is the first festival in new year because of which it is even called the ‘Mul’ (primary) festival. The Mang community sets on work and gets itself busy for about fortnight for this festival.
The festival of *Bendur* is celebrated in two days. The oxes get
tired by doing the various works in the field before monsoon. So the
first day of *Bendur* is called ‘*Khande malani*’ means to relieve the
pains of their necks by applying a 'massage' to it. Second day is an
important day when the oxes are washed by giving a bath, their
horns are coloured, attractive colour paper is tied to it, new ropes
are tied, and they are processed to the worshiping place of the
village.

The upper caste people get new ropes for their animals. These
ropes are prepared from a material called ‘*Vakh*.’ The Mangs get
ready with enormous *Vakh* as they have to make these ropes ready
for the animals of upper caste. The Mangs have to process hard to
prepare *Vakh*.

On the day of festival the Mangs are given the things like.
Wheat grains, Jowar, Bajra, Maize, oil, chilli powder and even salt.
Sometimes they are given the ‘*Puran poli*’. Of course ‘puran poli’
given to Mang is not the one prepared for themselves. They are
prepared oil less. All the Mangs bring this food and other things or
what is called *Bera* or *Baluta*. This *Baluta* is then distributed
among the community in equal shares.

These days Mangs do not follow the earlier practice of
distributing the collected items, instead they distribute the houses
of the upper caste people. Accordingly each Mang has to render the
above services to their own respective houses that is ‘*Kul*.’ Many a
times quarrels take place if someone tries to change these kuls
because for Mangs it is not the question of right they have but the
question of their belly.
By the evening hours these decorated animals are taken in a procession to the worshipping place of the village, Mangs have to play music before such procession.

Mangs have to give a material called ‘Geru’ which is used to colour the horns of the animals. While in western Maharashtra a colour called ‘kav’ is given by Mangs.

As the festival Bendur is considered to be the beginning festival of the year, everyone feels that no untoward incident should happen. There are strong beliefs that if certain untoward thing happen, it will continue throughout the year. Owing to this strong belief the Mangs commend a great respect.

‘Bendur’ is a festival of oxes and even of Mangs. Only the difference is that by this time the oxes relax while the Mangs work.

3.8.3 To Give ‘Sada’ and to Burn Torch:

The festival that comes after bendur is the festival of ‘Panchami.’ On the day of panchami, the newly married brides arrive from their husband’s house to their parent’s home. Swings are tied in the villages on the occasion of panchami and everyone including these newly married brides, swing and enjoy. The ropes to tie these swings are supplied by the Mangs. The kites are flown in the sky. Modern kites were called earlier ‘vavadya.’ Todays kite festival is the new version of the old practice. The threads used for these kites or ‘vavadya’ are called sada. These strings were also provided by the Mangs. The god called ‘Shiraloba’ is worshipped on the occasion of Panchami.

3.8.4 Udgar :

The festival of ‘Navratra’ (Nine-nights) comes after panchami and before Dasara. The upper caste people put the 'Ghatas' on the
first day of this nine day festival. This method of establishing the 'Ghatas' is interesting. Five stems of Jawar plant are erected in a conical shape and a heap of soil is kept at the centre of it. The grains of *Jowar*, bajara, wheat, *udid*, *mung* etc. are mixed into it and an earthen pot is kept on this heap. This pot is half buried in the heap and it is filled with water. A nut and some coins are kept in the earthen pot. A coconut is placed on the mouth of the pot and the leaves of chewing pan (Nagvel) are arranged below the coconut in such a way that they give a look of lotus leaves. This process is called 'Ghat', which is then worshipped by offering turmeric powder and Kumkum. The ‘Ghat’ is offered the beads chain. Because of the water percolation in the earthen pot the seeds germinate and during these nine days they sprout. This kind of Ghat is being worshipped for nine days.

Through these nine days festival of Navaratri, a Mang woman takes a plate and asks for ‘udgar.’ The Mang woman would go to her *kuls* house and ask for ‘udgar.’ While asking for it, she should say ‘Uda…..Bhala…Uda..’ The Mang woman is then given roti and curry. In a region like Vidarbha of Maharashtra the Mang woman would sing while asking for *Udar*.

“Mother O Mother, Tulja Devi Mother,

Offering the Gondhal for thou” (Kamble, N.C., 1993: 35).

after singing this song, she would appeal with the words ..... “Navaratra .... De mai” then upper caste ladies would come ahead and give her the grains, food items etc.

3.8.5 Patravali :

The last day of Navaratri festival is ‘Dasara.’ On this day Mang women prepares the ‘Patraval’ (a plate made from the tree
leaves). The Mang women comes at the door of the upper caste house and plasters the floor with dung. She keeps a lamp on it. She offers a pooja and then the upper caste women follows it. After the pooja by upper caste woman, a Mang woman keeps the Patravali before the lamp and keeps whatsoever grains the upper caste women had brought. These food grains which are kept on patravali is called ‘Shidha’ and after the pooja a Mang woman takes home this Sidha (Kamble N.C., 1993: 36). This ritual of Patravali is performed with a strong belief that it would caste away all the ills of the upper caste family. All the activities in this ritual is related to fertility.

After such rituals the Mangs get the offerings on the Patraval apart from the usual food items they get on such occasion. This activity is called to take ‘Pooja of Navaratri.’

On the same day an another activity is done in the village that is called, ‘Sone Lootane’. This activity is dominated by the males. The Mahars bring and keep the leaves of Apata plant at the gates of village, the whole village assemble to perform pooja of this heap of Apata plant which symbolically stands for ‘gold.’ The Palakhi of village god is taken in procession to the place. This Palakhi is carried by the upper caste people and the Mangs play music before the procession by playing the instruments like ‘Halagi and Dimade.’ After the ritual of looting Apata leaves is over, all the people come back to the village. This ‘looted gold’ is then distributed to the people with the words, ‘Sona ghya ani sonya sarakhe raha’, (Take gold and be like gold). At the places like Davaleshwar, Tal – Khanapur, Dist – Sangli, the villagers perform ‘Arati’ of the gods in the village and the men from Mang community offer their services as ‘Musicians’ (Vajantri).
3.8.6 Deepawali:

At the time of diwali festival Hindus worship the broom as goddess Laxmi and it is a fact that the Mangs make the brooms and distributes at the houses of upper caste people. One of the most important and a long duration festival of Hindu's is ‘Deepawali’. This festival is of great profit to Mangs. This festival is celebrated five days. On the first day of this festival (the first bath) the Mangs go to the mansions of Patils and Deshmukhs at the early dawn hours and play Halagi and Dafade (musical instruments of leather). Mang say ‘Ida Peda Talude, Baliche Raj Yeu de’. After this saying upper caste people distribute the sweets like ‘Ladu and Karanj’. 

3.8.7 Demanding Grahan:

The Hindu month ‘Poush’ is in winter. On the full moon night of this month, Mang would not sleep although the whole village enjoy the sleep, because on this night the moon gets the eclipse. The moon eclipse is an occasion for Mangs where they go for ‘Grahan magane,’ (asking alms on the occarsion of eclipse). The Mangs have to prepare well in advance for this occarsion. They are ready with the things like – pots, pans and ghamela. Once the eclipse starts the Mangs including children, women go around the village and say “De daan sute Giran” (Kamble N.C., 1993: 55). for this appeal of Mangs the upper caste people respond by giving the clothes, cash, cereals etc. The Mangs go round the village singing this song. This practise goes on till midnight hours when the moon eclipse is on. The upper caste people donate good and bad things. Sometimes many untowards things take place e.g. even Mang women go on asking for donation during midnight hours which
sometimes leads to take disadvantage of that woman by upper caste man. He may try to molest her. Sometimes an abnormal upper caste man may give away bunch of his public hair in donations to Mang. The upper caste people tease Mangs in such ways and as an answer to this even Mangs tease upper caste people in their own dialect, which an upper caste would not understand. Even today, in Kolhapur, Yevatmal the Mangs follow the ritual of asking for alms at the time of eclipse.

3.8.8 To Ask for Dhondi:

‘Famine’ is not a new thing to the state of Maharashtra. The state suffers from famine every year at some or other place. At such drought period not only the farmers become worried but as the life of Mang depends on the farmers he too gets affected.

There are certain rituals carried out in Maharashtra while it doesn’t rain. These rituals are born out of superstitious mind of the people but they are carried out extensively in the villages at such worried hours. Certain rituals are observed such as: organising a mass lunch for the village; to burn the lamp in the temple for the whole night, to immerse the icon of village god in the water, to dip the village god in the milk. In this ritual all the village folk gather at the alter of god ‘Mahadeo’ and pour the milk in the alter till the idol of the god is immersed in the milk. The people believe that such a ritual would bring them rains. However, by doing all these efforts or appeal if the water from the sky doesn’t shower, the Mangs are called for help by asking for ‘Dhondi’. It is ritual carried out by Mangs as a supplication to the rain god.

In ‘Dhondi’ ritual, a young Matang boy of about 10-12 years old is made necked and the tender branches of Neem leaves are tied
like a girdle around his waist. Alive frog is tied to the ‘musal’. This frog tied to ‘musal’ is called ‘Dhondi’. The necked boy is supposed to carry these two things resting on his shoulder in the entire village. The boy is to stop at upper caste man’s house while the water is poured on the boy. Many Matang boys and elderly people go round, along with that boy. All of them sing a song at this time.

‘Dhondi Dhondi give us water, musal and frog let be wet.

Dhondi come running running, Sky broke through the sky

Water poured heavily, heavily, Land fields watered by rains’
(Kamble N.C. 1993: 81).

There is another belief in Dhondi practise. A boy is supposed to be the image of god himself. Frogs go on croaking during the rainy season and the village folk suppose that because of its croaking the rain will come. The musal indicates that the rain should be as big as that. Even today, in Vidharbha and north Maharashtra the tradition of asking for ‘Dhondi’ is on.

3.8.9 To Offer Hel:

One of the another way of ‘Gaoki’of Mang is to offer Hel’ or to ask for Gudi. The practise of ‘Hel’ is carried out by Matang woman while that of ‘Gudi’ by the Matang man. Through this practise, the Mangs receive many things like clothes, utensils, cereal etc.

The practise of Hel is carried out by a Matang woman. Whenever a woman from upper caste family especially of Deshmukh or Patil delivers, the new born baby is taken as an auspicious happening and it is placed in a Matang woman’s lap. When a Matang woman goes to such a house where an upper caste woman has given birth to the child she takes the clothes, girdle the new piece of blouse. Baby is then kept in the lap of Matang woman;
this practise is known as Hel. Such a practise of ‘Hel’ is continued at every ‘Diwali’. Usually the ‘Hel’ practise is carried out on the naming ceremony of the child. A Matang woman is given Jowar if the child is girl and she is given wheat if the child is boy.

3.8.10 To Raise Gudi :

The practise of Gudi is also carried out after a upper caste woman delivers a baby. In this practise the Mang men go and play on the musical instruments like Halagi and Dafade. In return to this musical service done by Mangs, they are given clothes, cereals, utensils etc. Occasionally an animal like cow is also donated to them after which the Mangs go to place of her parents (maher) and play on the same instruments and thus the news of the arrival of the baby spreads in the village. In such case also Mangs are given the clothes, utensils etc. Sometimes the villager's of the concerned woman give lunch to the Mangs. This practise of is called Gudi. The Mangs distribute among themselves the things they received on such occasion. The Mangs auction the things they get and distribute the money among themselves.

3.8.11 Right of Gavhan :

The Matang ask for ‘Gavhan’ when the farmers harvest their crop. It is not expected to tie to ‘muske’ (mask) to the oxens while reaping wheat crop however, at the time of reaping the Jowar, Bajara, crop to tie the oxens is must as they go on eating corn. The wheat crop being usually throny the oxens do not eat. However if sometimes the oxes eat up even that, and letter on undigested grains are sit out through the dung of those animals. The wheat that is collected after drying dung and washed and dried at lateron is called ‘Gavhan’. The Mangs ask the farmers this kind of wheat
that is mixed in dung. This practise is carried out at village, Devkhindi, Tal – Khanapur, Dist – Sangli even today.

3.8.12 Right of Matere :
Matere is a corn remained after the harvesting is done. The Mangs ask for this corn from the farmers. This “matere” is then washed off in the water and is used by the Mangs. Before the harvesting a farmer prepares thrushing field and Mang plasters it with dung. In return to this, the Mangs can ask for the ‘matere.’ The term ‘khale karne’ is also used in western Maharashtra.

3.9 Religious Practices of Matang Community:
God and Goddesses of Matang :
3.9.1 Matangi :
Matangi is a special deity of Mangs. The priests of this deity are also of Mang community. The Mangs in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are the worshippers of this deity. The maidens of the community are the devotees like the Murali of Khandoba and Bhavini of Jotiba. There is a ritual practised while these maiden become the worshippers of this goddess.

In this ritual all the maidens willing to be the worshippers of this deity assemble before the temple and they go on singing the songs of the deity to the music played on drums and Tashe. When these spinsters get mesmerized by the music and start, they are allowed to sit on the ‘rangoli’ drawn. The pots containing curd are placed near the rangoli drawn. Strings are tied to those pots and all these strings then are tied to the huts and shacks. Thus the girl is allowed to sit and move within those strings and pots without touching any of these. The one who could pass this ordeal is selected to be the worshipper of this deity. The successful girl is
given a *Nagkasht* a bunch of neem leaves and a string woven of shells or conches.

At some other places the rituals like this is practised. Before confirming this ordain maiden is made to sit in a pit dug out of an anthill a ‘jug’ (basket) is placed on her head with upside down. Old worshippers sing the song of deity, by this time the girl goes on with some occult power. After some time when she comes out of that pit she is given ‘Nagkasht’

Conches is considered to be an auspicious thing for the Matangi goddess. Apart from this, in the universal culture, it is understood as a symbol of female genital organ and thus is a symbol of fertility. Conches is the begetter and symbol of ‘Soubhagya’. Hence conches holds an important place in the worship of Matangi.

Matangi is known as ‘Lajjagouri’ the word which is derived from the original Sanskrit word ‘Lajja; or ‘Lajjika’ which means a whore or ‘Devdasi.’ Lajjo is the idols of goddess and is naked and slept exposing the Vagina and breasts. This goddess is worshipped by womenhood for fertility.

The goddess ‘Renuka’ has a head of a Matang woman because of which a Brahmin woman would not cover their head with the end of saree. Even today this practise is observed by Brahmin ladies.

**3.9.2 Mother Laxmi (Laxmiaai):**

Goddess worship holds an important place among Matangs and they worship Laxmiaai or goddess Laxmi as they also worship goddess Matangi. Laxmiaai is even named as Mariaai or Lakhaai. Usually the temple of Laxmiaai happens to be near the village (in
the vicinity of the village) or close to Matangs dwelling place (Basti). Her dwelling place is at the habitation of Matangs or Mahars. Mahars used to worship Laxmiaai before their conversion however, Matangs have continued to worship Laxmiaai to this date.

Mande Prabhakar speculates that Laxmiaai is a Laxmi or Jestha and with the passage of time its impiousness must have been sidelined, ignored and today the Goddess has been made pious. Mande cites ‘Padmapuran’ and says that at the time of ‘Samudra Manthan’ churning of the sea, ‘Kalkuta’ that is ‘a-laxmi’ came out of it and after which Laxmi came up. ‘Shamichi Aadi’ also came up the sea and she is considered as the elder sister of Laxmi. In the ‘Brahmakhand’ of ‘Padmapuran’ we find her description, that her face is dark, eyes red, hair brownish red and she is perceived as old” she asked the God ‘where should I stay’ on which God replied ‘you be in coal, hair, dandruff’ later she got married to ‘Udalka’ who disappeared later. At the time of worship both ‘Jeshtha’ and ‘Kanishtha’ (elder and younger) are worshipped. At this time Jeshtha is in ‘Owalyat’ and Kanishta is in ‘Sowalyat’. Jeshtha is alaxmi and Kanistha is Laxmi. In the month of ‘Ashadh’ Jeshtha has her ‘fera’ and in ‘Bhadrapada’ she is accompanied by Kanistha.

Matang prepare the brooms (Kersuni) and this broom is considered as Laxmi. In Diwali festival the ‘kersuni’ is worshipped as Laxmi. After the ‘Kersuni’ is bought it is worshipped by applying Halad and Kunku. As we find the kersuni is always in the dust, it is perceived as ‘alaxmi.’ Hence to worship Alaxmi is to worship ‘kersuni.’ Laxmiaai or alaxmiaai is the deity of Mangs and ‘potaraj’ is her priest. Neem leaves are important in its pooja.
The pilgrimage or holy place of Laxmiaai is at Varkhed on the banks of river Godavari in Ahamadnagar District. This place is worshipped mainly by the Mangs along with Mang Garudi. The maternal place of this Laxmiaai is Paithan (Dist. Aurangabad) and her dwelling place Paithan is at the rear of saint Eknath’s Samadhi. Here Laxmiaai is worshipped by Brahmins. A religious fair takes place at Varkhed. The police Patil of Paithan does pooja of the ‘Palakhi’ of laxmiaai, good number of Mang and Mang Garudi devotees come for this fair. The number of ‘Potraj’ exceeds 25 thousand which is an astonishing figure. One notable fact is that originally the devotees of Laxmiaai were Mang and Mang garudi however, at Varkhed there are separate dwelling places of the deity for both communities. Recently Mang Garudi have started to construct a big temple of laxmiaai for their own community.

3.9.3 Dhrupada Aai:

The another deity of Matangs especially the Matangs from Vidarbha region worship with fond love is Dhrupada Aai or Dhrupadamaya. This deity's main dwelling place is at Chandrapur in Vidarbha region. That is why she is even called as ‘Gadchandyachi Dhrupadamaya.’ Since ancient times the Matang Community is a matriarchal society and the worship of the female deity is at large. According to Mande “in India Shiv and Shakti is a godly couple among this ‘Shakti’ is the originator of the universe (Vishwajanani) that is Parvati.” (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 48-51).

Dhrupadamai and Mariaai are similar to each other in a way Dhrupadamai is a Mariaai of Vidarbha. One thing is clear that Mariaai and Dhrupadamai have a great influence on Matang community. Mariaai / Laxmiaai had a great impact on the Mangs of
western Maharashtra and Dhrupadaai on that of Vidarbha. However the difference between these two deities is that Mariaai is a ‘non-vegetarian deity’ and Dhrupada Aai is a ‘vegetarian’ deity. Mariaaai is given the sacrifice of an animal and Dhrupada Aai is worshipped by offerings of curd and cooked rice. The priest of both the deity is ‘Potraj’ who is male in character. ‘Potraj’ has a long woman like hair. They apply kumkum (Malwat) to their forehead and wrap a piece of saari or khan (blouse piece).

The devotees worshipping the village deity ‘Tamas’ are ‘tamoguni’ is hinted by the saints in Maharashtra. Those who worship the devils will enter the devil deity is what they say ever then the Mangs have been worshipping the village deity and kept it alive. They even beg in the name of this deity and lead their life.

3.9.4 Inamai:

The deity at Anjangaon and Suraji in Amravati district, Akot in Vidarbha region which is at large worshipped by Matangs is Inamai. This deity has been worshipped by the Mang-Mahar community of western vidarbha since long. As Mahars have got converted into Buddhism, they no more worship this deity, however Matang still continue to worship and organize fairs in honour of Inamai.

Generally a couple of days before the festival of ‘Dashahara’, the Inamai is established. Although the whole village participate in the fair of Inamai, the main reins are hold by the Mang community, when Inamai is established it is seen that she faces towards east. At this time an elephant is prepared from the bamboo sticks and the skelton is plastered with clay a small cart is also prepared by the bamboo sticks and a human idol is made to stand in it. The idol
is called ‘Ithadya.’ Ithadya is one who spreads fragrant smoke. The elephant that will be vehicle of Inamai is decorated with colourful papers. She herself is then decorated and then her pooja is performed by offering Halad and Kunkum. At this time a lemon is on Inamai to keep her away from evil sights.

On the eve of the ‘Dasara’ festival, women from Matang community sing the holy songs in praise of Inamai. All the women folk of the village perform her pooja with great devotion on the day of Dasara. The songs describe the strength of the deity these songs are even listened by the upper caste women. While singing these songs of Inamai, the women become so much one with its emotion that even they weep at such occasion. By the night on Dasara Inamai is bid adieu by observing certain rites. The Apata leaves are exchanged as a symbol of gold. The Matang women perform a particular ritual which is called ‘Bhar utarane’. Before 1956 the Mahars also use to worship Inamai along with Mangs however, these days only Mangs continue to worship Inamai. While ritualising the idol of Inamai man’s statue is prepared which is horizontal. This horizontal idol has great importance. This idol is called ‘Khara’. This idol is marked by one long male genitel organ. The soil from the river is brought in procession on the eve of ‘Dasara’ in order to prepare this ‘khara.’ The Matang women sing songs by this time.

Inamai is most widely worshipped deity among the Matangs. In the Vidarbha region Inamai is established with great devotion even today. Inamai is also a deity like that of Laxmiaai and Mariaai earlier, a male buffalo was to be sacrified to this deity however recently this practise has been stopped instead a ‘Kanava’
or ‘kohak’ is sacrificed. This ‘Kanawa’ is taken to the head of village, the Patil and then it is scarificed to Inamai.

3.9.5 Satwai:

Satwai has an unique place in the rural life of India. Usually she is perceived as the ‘mother of infant child’ and she is worshipped. There is a ritual practised after the birth of a child. On the fifth day which is called ‘Pachavi,’ pooja of satwai is performed. Among the Matang society too, this deity is worshipped with great devotion.

The place where worship of this deity done is either near the bathroom (Nahanî) or a bit away from the village. Five to seven stones are placed and Halad and kumkum is offered to those stones and thus worship is performed. At Bahe, Tal. Walawa, Dist. Sangli, the worship of Satwai has its own feature. When a first male child is born it is obligatory for them to sacrifice a black female goat on the fifth day. If the family could not do this for some reason, the first hair of the child are not cut unless and until the sacrifice is done. Occasionally one finds that the first hair is cut but a bunch of the hair ‘shendi’ (Lock of hair) is not cut unless the sacrifice of the black female goat is done. The task of removing the first hair is done by the Mama (maternal brother) of the child.

At Nimbalkalak, Tal-Tasgaon, Dist – Sangli while a Matang bride is being sent to her husband after marriage, the sacrifice of black female goat is given. The expenses of such a sacrifice are met by the bride's family. Many a times a black female goat is given away in the daughter's marriage. In Alate Tal. Hatkanangale, Dist. Kolhapur there is a Godess Santubai worshiped by Mangs and they follow this practice.
3.9.6 Tai Aai:

Dhrupadamai and Inamai are the two important Matang female dieties, but their centre of piligrimage are in vidharbha. The Taimai is one of the major deities that is worshipped by most of Mags in Western Maharashtra. The existence of Tai Aai is accepted just like that of Mari Aai. Mari Aai is the important daiety of Mang and Mahars while Tai Aai is the important daiely of the Matangs of western Maharashtra. The temple of this deities is found in the Mangwada. It is called a temple in a real sense it is a open space under some tree where some stones are arranged, this is called the temple of Tai Aai.

The fair of Tai Aai is one of the most inhuman kind marked with macabre kind of atmosphere. This fair is even called ‘Aath khuri’. ‘Khur’ means the leg of an animal, Aath means eight. Thus eight legs means the legs of the animal to be sacrificed and its unborn young one. Even today at many places the fair of Tai Aai is celebrated.

The goddess that protects the Matang families, the idol of Tai Mai is nothing but a big stone which is offered by ‘Halad and Kunku’. The appearance of Tai Aai is fearful because of the application of ‘Halad and Kunku’ to the idol that the children are scared to go near it. The method of worshipping the daiety too is serious.

The ‘pooja’ of Tai Aai is carried out in the month of ‘ashad’. The fair that is organized at such a time is called ‘Akad Jatra’ or ‘Akadi’. This fair of Tai Aai is overall a horrifying and a frightening affair in Indian society. She is given a sacrifice of an animal. The main animal of Tai Aai fair is carried out at the midnight. The offering to the Tai Aai is in form of sacrifice is pregnant goat or
ship. Mangs kill such animal before Tai aai in the midnight hour. The ritual goes like this. They cut the stomach of pregnant animal first and take out the young one and bury it in a pit before Tai Aai. Then the skin of the animal sacrificed is taken off and the meat is cut into several pieces and then they prepare the ‘Kalvan’ (curry) of it and keep it before Tai Aai as offering and then later on all the Matangs eat it as ‘Prasad’.

It is a belief that the ‘Prasad’ of ‘Tai Aai’ that is the curry prepared has not to be kept behind. It is to be eaten up completely. All the preparation had to be eaten up through the night. After great effort too if the ‘Prasad’ remains uneaten, then it is to be buried in the nearby pit. But under any circumstances this ‘prasad’ is not to be kept uneaten. An important feature of this fair is that the Matang women are not allowed to enter, they are not even supposed to come till this fair (ritual) goes on. Even small children are also not allowed in this fair.

3.9.7 Maragubai:

Maragubai or Maraguaai is one of the major daities of Matang community. Mariaai in Mahar community and Maragubai in Matang community are traditionally the two important daities of the respective communities. The temple of Maragubai is found in the settlement / colony of Matang community. Earlier, the stones placed at a particular place was considered to be the seat of Maragubai. However is recent times there places have been raised over by the temple of Maragubai that’s why one can find the temples of Margubai at those places. Tasagaon is Sangli district and Kurundwad in Kolhapur district have been considered the famous place for the temples of Maragubai and the fairs at these
places have been taken as important one. The fair of Margubai takes place at the colony of Matangs, in which all the Matang community takes part.

The fair of Maragubai is even called as ‘Rede Yatra’. This daitety is considered to be a non-vegetarian because of which she is offered the sacrifice of young male buffalo, rooster or a male goat. In the earlier time sacrifice of young male buffalo was a common practice. In Tasagaon, Sangli district a young male buffalo is sacrificed by all the Matang community. The Mangs call this offering as ‘Tonaga’ Sometimes even some Mangs offer this sacrifice on personal level. On the day of fair the young male buffaloes are take in the city in a procession. All the Mang community assembles at the main temple on Siddheshwar at Tasagaon. In the campus of this temple there is stone which is traditionally called as goddess Maragubai. All the Mangs do the Pooja of that goddess. After that the male buffelloe is taken to have five rounds (Pradakshina) around the temple of Siddheshwar, again this male buffelloe is taken in procession to the colony of Mangs. Men and women from Matang community participate is the procession. Aged and young ones too participate mostly the young ones are found drunk. They dance to the beats of drums around the young male buffello.

In the colony of Mangs, people eagerly await the arrival of such a procession. All the rituals of doing pooja of Maragubai are done. By the time this procession reaches the Mang colony, the spirit is at its zenith. Mangs carry sharp knieves and assemble in the area, where goddess Maragubai is considered to be. The priest of Maragubai who is called ‘Potraj’ also participates is the procession. The special ‘priviledge’ of sacrificing the offering is already given traditionally to some one in the Mang community
such a man comes before the goddess Maragubai. The young male buffalo too is brought near the goddess. The whole atmosphere becomes jubiliart. All the devotses rush near the offering, they yell out, make shrill voices Potaraj comes forward and does the pooja of the male buffello. As soon as Pooja is done, the male buffello is made to fall down within no time when this beast doesnot fall instantly, the Potraj comes, forward and chews the nose of the beast because of which it final difficult to breathe. Thus already scared animal falls down and submits to the crowd. The man with a special privilege takes the charge and runs his sharp knife on the neck of the animal. The assembled gathering cries out in the name of Maragubai. They hail the goddess. A ‘possessed’ Mang lady, who has gone wild comes, forward and drinks the blood from the neck of the animal. The people, devotees dance, yell out in the name of Godness saying ‘Maragubaichya Navan Changabhaal’. The man with special Priviledge seperates the head of the animal from its body. He cuts the fore leg of the animal from its ankle. Thus cut leg piece is placed in the mouth of the head and this head is then kept before the goddess Maragubai. An oil lamp is ligheted keeping it on the cut head. When such common sacrifice is given, people get away from the place and then the turn to sacrifice such animals on personal level take place. Sometimes it includes young male buffellos goates and cut roosters. About 65 such beasts, 125 male goats and innumerable roosters were given as sacrifice to goddess Maragubai at Tasagaon in the fair that took place is May 2010.

3.9.8 Masai:

One of the most respected deity of Matang community is Masaai. The fair of this deity takes place at the places like
Manerajuri (Tasagaon), Alasand (Khanapur) and Dahiwadi (Satara). The fair that falls in the Hindu Month of Ashadh and Vaishakh at Manerajuri is seen as the most pious and is celebrated by the Matang community with utmost devotion. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian prasad (offering) is prepared on this occasion.

Five to seven women (Suvasini) from Matang community prepare this offering for Masaai. A woman going through Manstural cycle is considered unfit to prepare such a kind of offering. Obviously such a lady is not allowed to take part in any religious rituals. The ‘Sweet’ offering which includes sweet roti (Poli), rice, curry etc. this (purun poli) sweet offering is offered to the goddess in the morning. These women (Suvasini) eat this offering and later on even the men also eat these things on ‘Prasad’ (offering).

Usually there is another daity (male) found near Masaai. At Manerajuri this is called ‘Buva’. But actually it is a deity called ‘Mhasoba’. This was told to the researcher by an old man aged 81, Nayaku Shama Awale. It was told that unless the Pooja of this male deity is done, the offering to Masaai cannot be given. At Manerajri this practice is on.

On a real sense the fair of Masaai begins in the afternoon. The priest of Masaai is called ‘Potaraj’. These ‘Potaraj’ gather at the time of fair. Maragabai is given the sacrifice of young male buffello, Taiaai is given the sacrifice of pregnant sheep (Aath Khuri). However at Manerajuri, Masaai is given the sacrifice of pregnant sheep, young male buffello, goat, black hen, etc.

In the afternoon male buffello to be sacrificed is talkens through the city/village in a procession. The potaraj goes on singing the songs of Masaai, male female devotees participate in the
procession. Then this procession comes in Matang colony and all people assemble is the area of Masaai.

In the morning, Masaai is offered the ‘sweet’ offering in the afternoon the offering of ‘Ambil’ is given and in the evening the non-vegetarian offering is given.

When the procession of male buffello comes before the goddess, first of all a pregnant sheep (Aath Khuri) is sacrificed before Masaai. First of all, stomach of the sheep is cut open and a young one is taken out of it. The sheep is slashed in the neck. The young one is buried before the Masaai and the body of sheep is taken aside. After this sacrifice a male buffello is given. The left leg as the animal is cut in the ankle and is then kept in the mouth of the head which is already cut off from the body and then this head with a leg in the mouth is kept before the goddess. lateron other sacrifices of goat, hen and roosters are given to the goddess.

While the ritual is on potaraj, i.e. the priests of goddess Massi go on singing, dancing wildly. Many Matang women get ‘possessed’ while other keep themselves engaged is preparing the food from the meat of sacrificed animal.

During the fair, the traditional rights and privileges become very important in Mang settlements. The right to do the offering of Ambil and that of he buffello and goat is divided. Any problem in this regard lead to major fights and quarrel. At Manerajuri the fair of Masaai takes place on the largescale that is why to meal the expense of the grand fair all the Matang community came together. People those who don’t have good financial condition don’t sacrifice individually, on the contrary at Tasagaon, in the fair of Maragubai, individual sacrifices are given on large scale because of their good
financial condition. Even today the Mang community by and large is under the threat of these gods and goddesses.

3.9.9 Khandoba:

Khandoba is one of the most important deity for common people in Maharashtra. Khandoba is considered to be the ‘Kulswami’ meanings the first god of Matang. There are number of places where the fair of Khandoba takes place. Among them Jejuri (Pune), Pali (Satara), Peth Naka (Sangli), Mangsuli (Belgaum), Watambare and Bale (Solapur) are the important pilgrimage of Khandoba. In the fair of Khandoba the Mangs play ‘Sticks’ and spread the ‘Bhandara’ (turmeric powder), Yelli out collectively ‘Sadanandacha Yelkot Ghe’ (be happy and be together) and ‘Yelkot... Yelkot...Jai Malhar’ (Let us be together and chant the name of god Malhari or Khandoba).

Mangs worship Khandoba. In the marriage ritual among the Mang’s is that they have to do ‘Jagaran’ after the marriage. This ‘Jagaran’ ritual is in honour of Khandoba and it is done by ‘Waghya and Murali’. Unless the bride and groom worship Khandoba after their marriage, they can not enter in to marital relationship. Most of the people from Western Maharashtra had Khandoba as their first deity. There are many devotees in Matang Community even today who are possessed by the god Khandoba.

The Mangs in Kapuskhed Tal. Walawa in Sangli district has their first god of 'Jyotiba' of Kolhapur and Wategaon Mangs Tal. Walawa Dist. Sangli have their first god of Bhairoba (Karad).

3.9.10 Mangirbaba:

Mangirbaba is the important deity of Mangs of Marathwada. The fair of Mangirbaba at Shendre, Dist. Aurangabad. It is the
most popular one and visited by Mangs in large numbers hailing from Marathwada and North Maharashtra. Mangs believe firmly that Mangirbaba pleases the urge of his worshiper. It is said that Lalya Mang from Aurangabad district was blessed with this luck (Mande, 2000: 258). Mangirbaba is one of the most brave person but the established people had sacrificed him, such a sacrificed Mang, is called ‘Mang Vir’. There are many practices at the fairs. At Shendre there is a ritual practice of sacrificing goat. The men, women pierce the rod which is called ‘gal’ in their bodies but surprisingly enough not a single drop of blood comes out with such a piercing (Mande, 1999: 247).

Gavanjibaba at Mangarul too is a ‘Mangir’ god. Mangvir is the most respectable among the Mangs and while Mang women grind the grains on grinding wheel, they sing the song in praise of Mangvir (Mande, 1999: 243). There are number of piligramage centres of Mangirbaba in Marathwada and Maharashtra. There are temples of Mangoba at Babulagaon, Tal - Erandol, Dist. Jalagaon, Parvati (Pune), Malegaon (Nashik), Golegaon (Aurangabad), Bori Savargaon, Paithan, Hol, Ladegaon (Beed) and Mhaswad (Satara). There is a seat goddess Kalubai at Wai Tal. Dist. Satara. where a large fair takes place annually. Near the temple of Kalubai there are temples of Gavanjibaba and Mangirbaba. The devotees worship at these temples too.

In order to make the forts sturdy, there was of ritual to sacrifice Mangs at the base of the construction. The temple of Mangirbaba is at the forts and castles and these are nothing but memorials of Mang heros. At the enterence of fort at Amalner (Dist. Jalagaon), there is image of Mangairbaba (Mande, 1999: 239). It is said that the husband, wife and son were sacrificed at the temple of
Mangveer at Mangarool Tal. Sillod. At Shendra the sacrifice of brother and sister is talked about (Mande, 1999: 247).

In short Mangirbaba means memorial to sacrificed Mang. This shows that Mangs had been the victim of religions system. But Mangs worship at these places with devotion, sacrifice the goat and rooster expect a good and peaceful life in future.

3.10 Marriage System of Matang:

Generally a Hindu marriage system is followed among the Mangs. However some districts in Maharashtra have their own practises with a difference. Boys and girls with the same surnames won't get married. Cousins like mama's daughter and father's sister daughter can be married to a boy but Mausi's daughter cannot be married to. In a district like Kolhapur a girl can get married to her mama (mother's brother). The decision taken by the elders is a final word even today. Boys and girls are free to have their own choices in terms of their spouses, however girls usually consent to the choice of their parents. Before 1960 the practise of giving dowry to a girl from the boy was in existence. However, as the times changed the dowry system was shifted to the girls to give dowry to the boys. Child marriage was a common practise earlier, even to this date the Matang girls are married before they reach the marriageable age sanctioned by the law i.e. 18 years but these child marriages are done secretly. The marriage system follows some of the following ways.

3.10.1 To See a girl:

Among Matangs the boy goes to the house of the girl to see her. When they see a girl at that time they fill the ‘oti’ of the girl i.e. she is given a coconut, green blouse-piece, bananas, rice grains and
then Halad, Kunkum is applied to her forehead. If the boy likes the girl, an invitation to the parents of the girl is extended by the boy’s parents. If such invitation is not given by the boy, it is taken for granted that the boy did not liked her as bride. If both the parties like each other, then the girl’s parents visit the boy’s house and fix the date of engagement after the mutual agreement.

3.10.2 Engagement (Sakhar Puda):

On the day of engagement the people from groom's side arrive at the house of the girl. The presence of girls mama (girl’s maternal brother) is a must for this programme. He sits at the back side of the girl. People from boy’s side bring a green saree for the girl which the girl wears and sits on the ‘paat’. By this time an elderly person in the Matang society or ‘Jangam’ fills the oti of the girl. The married women apply kunkum to the girl. While doing so, the girl’s mama is also applied with the kunkum. A coin of one rupees is kept before the girl by the hands of boy. The coin is kept in the plate after touching it to her forehead along with the kumkum. This one rupee coin is kept separately after the engagement. Delicious lunch is served to the people those who have attended this function. The expenses of this lunch is borne by the girl’s side. A girl is presented with the anklets (Painjan) by the boy’s side. Sometime precious gift like a golden ornament such as a ring or necklace or a wristwatch is given to the girl if the boy’s side can afford it. The engagement ceremony is also called ‘Kunku lawane’ (applying Kunkum).

3.10.3 Basta Bandhane:

The next step is to go for shopping the clothes for bride and bridegroom. This occasion is called ‘Basta Bandhane’ or ‘Jatta Bandhane.’ This happens to be an important step in the process of
actual marriage. The convenient place is decided in consultation with both the parties. The groom accompanies the people on this occasion however the bride is not allowed. Usually the groom party purchases the clothes for bride and vice-versa. The clothes or attire includes marriage saree which is called ‘Shalu’; yellow saree that is ‘Haladichi Sadee’ used at the time of applying turmeric before actual marriage ceremony, an another saree is also purchased along with the allied clothes like three blouse pieces, three petticoats, a shawl, etc.

Apart from this an attire for the bride’s brother also clothes are purchased which is called ‘Kanpichaki’ a saree for brides grandmother, dress for bride’s parents called as ‘Pot Zakani’ uncle and aunt’s dress which is called ‘Dhar Ghalanycha dress.’ Sometimes the ceremony of ‘Dhar’ is carried out by the bride’s maternal uncle. All these clothes or attire along with the footwear for the bride is purchased by the groom’s side.

For the groom two pieces of attire, that is a dress for ‘Haladi’, for marriage, a piece of clothes which is called ‘uparane’, shoes, chappals, etc, grooms parents dress and a dress for groom’s sister that is called ‘Karavalichi sadee’ is purchased.

3.10.4 A Day before marriage at brides place:

In Matang community the marriage ceremony takes place through five days. Usually the ceremony takes place at groom’s place. A day prior to marriage, a person carries ‘Duradi’ (a basket) wherein puran poli, coconut, bananas, chewing leaves, betel nut is filled, to the bride’s house to invite them, that is ‘varad’ for the marriage. The person who is sent for this purpose is called ‘murali.’ Married women i.e. ‘Suvasini’ are called to unfasten the basket and
the things inside it are distributed in the village or clan. The basket is offered turmeric and kumkum which is later on applied to each other by the ‘Suvasinis.’

On the earlier day of marriage the women from the bride’s family and the close ones in the relations put on the bangles, this ceremony is called ‘Chuda Bharane.’ The bangle seller (kasar) is given one rupee coin which the groom’s party has given to the bride at the time of engagement. The bangle seller usually belongs to the Muslim community. After the ‘Chuda’ is put on, the bride is taken to receive the blessings of village god. Each god is offered coconut. In Maharasthra, untouchables are not allowed to enter temple, however in recent times only the bride is allowed to enter and perform pooja in the temple.

At the place like Shenawadi, Tal. Man, Dist. Satara women are not allowed to enter the temple of god ‘Yetalba’ however, a bride can enter the temple a day before the marriage and offer her offerings in the form of coconut. To this date, Dalits are deprived of entering many temples in Maharashthra. After putting on ‘Chuda’ bride is not supposed to touch ‘Ranjan’ (a big earthen pot to store drinking water) and hearth (Chul).

3.10.5 On to Marriage :

On the day of marriage, bride party prepares to leave for marriage ceremony. In the morning branches mango leaves, are tied to the right side of the door frame. The ‘suvasini’ perform pooja of that frame by offering turmeric powder and kumkum. They tie five knots to a long cloth and coins, beetlement, dried pieces of turmeric powder and kumkum are tied in these knots and the cloth with these five knots is tied to the mango leaf branch. Such knotted
clothes are tied even to the Ranjan and grinding wheel (*Jata*). After this Suvasinis sing songs of marriage.

3.10.6 Leaving of ‘Varhad’ for marriage:

While the people from the bride's side set out for the marriage, they may cross borders of many villages. This party (Varhad), while crossing such borders of the village (Ves) have to break the coconut and both the pieces are to be thrown to the two sides of the road. A lemon is cut into two pieces and it is touched to the eyes of the bride and then thrown to the two sides of the road; by doing this it is believed that the bride would not be affected by any evil forces. The bride is supposed to possess a lemon with her so as to cast away such evil spirits when she is going to the groom’s place for marriage.

3.10.7 A Day before marriage at groom’s Place:

A day before marriage a ‘mandap’ (Pendol) is erected at an auspicious time. A branch of mango or umbar is tied to one of the posts and its pooja is performed. ‘Ranjan’ and grinding wheel Pooja is also done and Suvasini’s grind the turmeric in the grinding wheel. The groom goes to the various gods of the village and offers pooja; by this time the boy is taken into procession with music and dancing. Earlier the groom used to ride to this kind of pooja on horse or bullock or he buffalo. Many a times there used to be fights, quarrels between Matang and Mahars on the issue of prestige. The people who cannot afford horse take the groom for this pooja on foot.
3.10.8 Day of Marriage :

On the day of marriage when party ‘Varhad’ comes at the border of the village, it is made to wait, ‘Murali’ gives the message of the arrival of ‘varhad’. The people from the groom then carry pot of water, coconut, Haladi, kunkum, sugar, to receive the ‘varhad.’ On the border of the village five elderly people from both the sides meet each other. Water from the pitch is poured on the feet of guests and halad, kunkum is applied to the forehead, pinch a sugar is fed to each other, then this varad is brought to the pendol (mandap) in a procession. A temporary arrangement to stay is made at some house for these people, that house is called ‘Janvas Ghar.’ At this ‘Janvas Ghar’ all the guests are given breakfast and then they are served lunch in the Pendol (mandap) which usually includes ‘bhakari and pithala’ (zunka). Both the groom’s parents observe fast on this day so they are served with ‘Khichadi’

3.10.9 Devak :

The next step that takes place is to offer ‘Aher’, (to give presents / gifts) to their respective guests. Parties from both the side take care of their own people. This ‘Aher’ usually include the presents in the form of clothes such as saree, blouse piece, towel and cap. All the kinsmen are included into this ceremony. After this programme is over, a married couple is taken to temple of ‘Maruti.’ The couple going to the temple of Maruti walk, under the shadow that is made by holding a piece of cloth high above their head by its four ends. A Mango branch and an axe is also held high at this time. Simultaneously two other men tie the clothes of bride and bride groom to a stick and walk parallel to the couple. This is called
‘Devak.’ They all offer pooja at Maruti temple and then return to the ‘Mandap’.

Once this ‘Aher’ and ‘Devak’ ceremony is over, the groom is taken to the temple of Maruti. In the earlier days, the groom would ride on bullock or he buffalo or horse to the temple but in present days, he may drive in vehicle or may ride a bicycle. The groom sits before the idol of god Maruti and he weaves the ‘Mangalsutra’ of his bride. He holds the string in his right hand and puts black beads in the string. He then is brought back to the mandap. This is called ‘Shree Vandan’ or ‘Paranya’.

After the groom returns from ‘Paranya’ he is given a public bath. Parents of the groom, uncle and aunt, grand parents are also given such bath along with him. The barber gives him ‘malish’ by applying oil to his head and body. The groom’s sister also join this and once such a bath is over the groom enters the ‘mandap.’

3.10.10 Veer:

There is a custom to ‘take out’ veer in the marriage ritual. This veer is taken out sometime before the important ritual where the people assembled for marriage to throw the coloured rice (Akshata) on the groom and the bride groom. In this ritual, a middle aged person is made to sit on a small wooden platform (paat). He is being offered the Halad and kunkum (turmeric powder and red powder) and a coconut is broken before him. While this sort of pooja goes on the man gets ‘possessed’ by some unknown force that is god or goddess. In this ‘possessed’ conditions, he becomes a mighty person full of energy. He gets up from the wooden platform he had sat and he is given a long stick in his hand. A cloth piece like towel or Lungi is tied to his waist and a strong man hold him
by the end of his cloth. Before this man, there are other three to five strong people holding the stick. This ‘Veer’ goes on hitting his stick on the stick of those people, while the man behind him tries to control him. It looks like a sword fight is going on. Earlier this custom was carried out when the ‘Veer’ and ‘others’ would have had the actual ‘Swords’ in their hands but with the changing times the swords have been replaced by the sticks.

This procession goes on with the drum beats and music to the entrance of village which is called ‘ves’ (Border of villages). A pooja is performed there and again he is brought back to the pendol of marriage. The ‘Veer’ being a possessed person is almost weirded. When he enters the marriage pendol a male goat is sacrificed. The moment the goat cut off in its neck, this veer keeps his mouth on the bloody neck of the sacrificed goat and puts a blood ‘tilak’ on his forehead. After sometime this Veer calms down, by the time this happens one can see his face, mouth red and coloured with blood of the sacrificed animal.

In a place called Savarde from Tasagaon Taluka this custom of Veer is even today on. This ‘Veer’ is Bhavani Devi. It is said that there was a conflict between the two towns, Savarde and Manerajuri on to decide the place for the temple of ‘Bhavani’. In this conflict a certain Mang had laid his life and became a victim. This ‘Victim Mang’ is considered as ‘Veer’ in this locality. Since then this custom of taking out Veer in the marriage of Mang is prevalent. In Tasagaon taluka places like Visapur, Balagavade etc. are known for this custom. In short this custom of veer is an integrated part of Matang marriage. The whole custom has a traditional value of belief among Matang community.
3.10.11 Akshata:

A Brahmin makes all the preparations as the time for ‘Akshata’ or ‘Tandool’ comes closer. The groom sits on one of the ‘paat’ that is placed between a square. Prior to this the marriage attire of both the grooms is given to Brahmin for necessary rites to perform. Brahmin applies Haladi and kunkum and then the clothes of the bride are sent to ‘Janwas ghar’ however, the groom changes his clothes in presence of all others. Then the bride come in the square, dressed in her new ‘Shalu’ or marriage saree. Bride’s maternal uncle carries her to the mandap. The bride and bridegroom stand facing each other.

All the things that are given by the bride’s parent as the gift are displayed in the mandap. The things include bed, matress, utensils, stove, wooden rod to prepare chapatti, cradle, eatables prepared for the occasion etc. Among these the spoon, stove, Shevaga and ulthane is not given because it is an assumption that some times fate works against family.

As the bride and bridegroom sit on the ‘paat’, Brahmin fills their ‘oti.’ The maternal uncle of groom is offered ‘Aher’ and he is to stand behind the groom. He holds a dagger and a lemon pierced at its tip. Brahmin confirms that the ‘Akshata’ (coloured rice grains) have been distributed to the people witnessing the marriage. It is expected that the ‘dowry’ which was promised by the bride’s father is to be given before Akshata else, it may create problem in the marriage. Sometimes even the marriage can break on this issue. Once the issue related to ‘dowry’ is over then only the way of marriage is made clear. Brahmin inquires about whether a cow and calf has been released. Whether curd and rice has been thrown over the mandap, the inquiry is positively nodded by the assembled
people. Then Brahmins says, “Shubha Mangalam Sawadhan” responding to the words of Brahmin the people assembled throw ‘Akshata’ on the bride and bride groom. At the time of Akshata the groom is made to stand facing east and the bride to west. A white cloth is hold in between to part them with a symbol of ‘Swastik’ on it. The ends of this partition cloth is hold by its ends by two senior persons one of them could be the priest (Bhataji). The bride and the groom are asked to fix their eyes on the symbol of ‘Swastik.’ This suggestion is given perhaps to see that they won’t see each other before ‘Akshta.’ Five, seven or nine ‘Mangalashtaka’ (hymns of akshata) are recited and once they are over the musician waiting outside mandap play on to declare the marriage ceremony. The people clap their hands expressing their happiness for the marriage and thus the couple enter into the conjugal relationship.

3.11 Occupation of Matang Community:
3.11.1 Making of Ropes:

Making of ropes is a traditional occupational of Matang community, Mang is a ‘Balutedar’ caste that is why they prepare ropes and give it to the farmers and in exchange take ‘Balute’ that is food, clothes and grains etc. This was considered to be their ‘right’.

The ropes are made from a plant called Ghayapat. Mang cut the leaves of this plant and bring the bundle to their homes. The leaves of this plant are having small thorns at its both edges and has a sharp thorn at its end. Mang take out all these thorns with an instrument called ‘Vaapane’. Many a times in this process they get hurt by these thorns. After removing the thorns the leave are cut with the instrument ‘chirapane’. These cut leaves are allowed to
dry. Then they are soaked into the water and lateron beaten up to make ‘Vakh’ out of it. This ‘Vakh’ that is fibre is used to make the ropes.

Many fibre strings of ‘Vakh’ whey hold in finger tips it is called ‘Bat’. These many ‘Bats’ together are woven to make ropes. There is wheel used in this process which Mangs hold in their hands and move backward while rotating the wheel, if they fall to rotate the wheel and move backward the string get what is called ‘Menda’ or ‘Tida’. A string which has such a Menda or Tida is useless to make articles from the strings.

In earlier days, Mangs are to prepare ‘Kasare’ their strings to tie the animals sabatya (belts made from weaving small strings use to tie in the neck of oxes to pull cart), Nada (a thick rope wed to fetch water from well) Shinke (a rope holder that is kept hanging in which milk container is kept), Chabuk (whip used for animals). These are the articles Mangs use to make from the ropes.

From he plant of Ghayapat, ‘Vakhli’ is prepared and from ‘Dor’ ‘Bati’ is prepared. This ‘bati’ is very strong if one tries, to pull it may cut the hand. (Ghatage – 2009 - 3) Mangs use to prepare the useful articles for the farmers and give them in exchange of ‘Balute’.

In today’s context the plantation of this plant called ‘Ghayapaat’ is hardly done by the farmers. Apart from that other options of Nylon ropes are available to the farmers that’s why this system is disappearing gradually. However, even today in certain villages it can be seen existing.

In the pre Shahu era (1894) the business of making ropes was very much is vogue in the places like Karveer, Shirol, Panhala in then Kolhapur state. The Mangs involved in this business were
called on ‘Nade Mang’. They would make the use of plants like Ambadi, Nag, Kekati in order to extract ‘Vakh’. This business would take place in summer season on large scale. The thick ropes which are used to fetch water from the well were called ‘Nada’. These ‘Nadas were is full demand from such are a Apart from that, the ropes were used to tie the animal. This business was carried out on large scale at the places like Vadagon (Peth) Hupari, Kodoli, Rukadi, Kerle, Alate and Kabnur (Shinde Khanderao 2008: 171).

3.11.2 To make Brooms:

To make brooms is one of the traditional occupation of Matang community. The broom is considered as ‘Goddess Laxmi’ in rural Maharashtra. That's why the Mang’s are considered ‘pious’ as they prepare brooms.

As Mangs are the ‘Balatedars’ they give the brooms to their ‘Kul’. In return of this, the Mangs get the ‘Balute’ from the upper caste people or from their ‘Kul’. This ‘Balute’ can be in the form of bread (Roti) and curry. However, today the nature of this occupation has changed. The Mangs exchange brooms today not for the ‘Balute’ they use to get traditionally but in exchange of money. Because of industrialization and urbanization the old system of ‘Balutedar’ has came to an end even the traditional occupation has undergone sea change. The occupation of ‘Brooms’ too has gone down among the Matangs. In certain villages and small towns we find the Mangs involved in this business however, rarely.

The broom is made out of the branches of a tree called ‘Shindi’. Because of cutting down these trees are rarely found. That’s why today the Mangs bring the branches and leaves of these trees from Andhra Pradesh. There are several people involved in
this trade in A. P. and Karnataka. The Mangs purchase one bundle of the leaves for Rs. 105 which has about 150 leaves. The leaves are large in size. One bundle contains about 500 leaves and it small they could be about 650 bundles. The rich Mangs those who have money purchase raw material on large scale. They have to pay about Rs. 65,000 for one truck. The bundle purchased for Rs. 105 in A.P. or Karnataka is sold in Maharashtra at the Rs. 115 per bundle, this way the Matang can have the profit of Rs. 10 per bundle, thus for 650 bundles he can have the profit of Rs. 6,500. All these leaves are sold to the Mangs involved in this business. Akkatai Sampat Devkule is one lady in this business from Sangli district. She sells her products to the markets like Nerle, Vategaon in Sangli district and Pachagani, Vai, Koregaon, Satara, Rahimatpur, Malharpeth, Marali, Gopuj etc. from Satara district.

The other people in this business purchase the bundles as per their capacity. They purchase one bundle at the rate as Rs. 115 out of which they prepare 25 brooms. One broom is sold for Rs. 20. The production cost involves Rs. 115 for the raw material like leaves, the thread to tie for Rs. 25 making it about Rs. 140 in all out of the sale of 25 brooms they get Rs. 500. If we consider Rs. 100 as the wages for a man for a day a Mang gets only about 260 excluding Rs. 240 as the production cost. One finds that all the family members of a family are involved in this production.

Generally we find the Mang’s preparing brooms themselves go to the market places at Taluka or small town and sell their brooms. Sometimes even the Mangs go round the villages and sell the brooms. The brooms made in the western Maharashtra are marketed in Konkan region. The small retailers keep these brooms at their shops. The Brahmins in Konkan purchase the broom with
great respect. After bringing it home, they do its pooja by offering it red powder (Kumkum) and turmeric powder (Haldi).

There is a specific procedure to prepare broom from the leaves of ‘Shindi’. Mangs call these leaves as ‘Phade’. In the beginning these ‘Phade’ are beaten up. Then the leaves are cut open. Then these leaves are soaked in water and lateron these leaves are tied in bundles (Mudage) and finally the broom is made. Thus prepared broom is once again beaten up on the nails fixed on wooden ply. After this the broom is slimmed and finally it is ready for marketing after colouring it. Mostly this broom is purchased in rural area, why other castes like ‘Burud’, ‘Kaikadi’ too have entered in this profession. However, these people purchase the brooms from Mangs and sell them off. In a place called Takari from Walwa taluka one Patil (Maratha) purchases brooms from Mangs and lateron keeps it is his shop for selling.

In short, the traditional occupation of making this brooms among the Mangs has not remained as before. However, in many villages it still goes on. Many Mangs have turned their back to this occupation thinking it as mark of slavery. Some people consider it as home business and find it more suitable and convincing than going for work elsewhere.

3.11.3 Tamasha :

Tamasha is one of the premier folk arts of Maharashtra, which not only has been kept alive by untouchable community of the state but also has widened and even given a dignity to this art. There is a proverb called “Bamanaghari Livana, Kunabya Ggaru Daana, ani Mangaghari Gaana” meaning Knowledge with Brahmins, food with farmer and singing with Mangs. Keeping up
the meaning of this proverb we see the Matang community has
taken this art of Tamasha on a national level.

In 1961 Bhau-Bapu Mang was honoured by ‘President’s
Award’ which was accepted by his daughter Vithabai on her
father’s behalf by the auspicious hands of then president of India
Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The history repeated and in 1990 even
Vithabai Bhau Mang too as awarded the ‘President’s Award’. R.
Venkatramana was the President of India then in 1961-62 while
India–China war was on, Vithabai had performed and presented
this tamasha art before the Indian Jawans on the border of Nepal.

Tamasha is of two kinds, one that takes place in the tents
and second that takes place under the trees of villages. Most of the
Mangs work in Tamasha in different capacities. The amount
needed to rasie tamasha that would be performed under the tents
would be big one because of the expenses. It is not possible for all
Mangs to raise such parties as more money is required. That’s why
most of the Mangs perform their art in some parties and make
their living. However, many Mangs have their own parties.

In rural Maharashtra, the time for the fairs is between
March and May. This is considered to be the ‘season’ for Tamasha.
However in this period too, the top season is considered to be
between April (Gudi Padwa) and May (Askshaytritiya). Tamasha
parties are very much in demand during this period. Chhaya
Nagajkar the owner artist of tamasha said that ‘though tamasha
programmes are full for only one month, the artists are needed to
be paid for three monts. That’s why the expenses of tamasha are
not affordable’.

Generally speaking, during the peak season a rural tamasha
party can have about 35-40 artists among them 10-12 are the
women artists, about 6 artist are to play different instruments such as Trible, Tumaba, Pyad, Kucchi, Dholaki, organ, Halagi, Duff etc. 2 to 3 male artists are to play songade, 4 to 5 artists to play in the ‘vagnatya’ that is dramatic part in tamasha. 2 Surati, 3 Bigari, 2 Speaker wala. In rural area, tamasha having more women artists is given priority that’s why the number of women artists is kept at maximum level.

Most of the artist in tamasha belong to the community of Mang or Mahar. Some artists are ‘paid’ artists however some are paid on ‘night’. The amount paid to women artist is more than anybody else. One women artist is paid about Rs. 10,000 per month, some are paid the honourium of Rs. 700 per ‘night’ performance. Male artist charge about Rs. 7000 for a month and Rs. 600 per night. Songode are given about Rs. 500 per night, surati are given Rs.500 to 700, Bigari Rs. 200 and Speakerwala’s are given Rs. 1300 per performance. The transportation goes up to Rs. 1000 per performance. This all amounts to the expense of Rs. 18,000 per performance. If a tamasha is given ‘Supari’ (Fixed amount for one performance) of about Rs. 22000 to Rs. 25000, then only the owner can afford Tamasha. However times have changed and the attitude to look at tamasha to has changed. Donations, contribution in the villages have become less and that is why tamasha owners have to go for negotiations to the extent that sometimes they need to performs on ‘no profit, no loss’ basis.

Chhaya Nagajkar, a owner of tamasha has told the researcher that the season of 2009-10 was in loss because it is almost custom any that the artist are to be given ‘Uchal’ (advance money). This amounts to certain lakhs of rupees, which the owner has to arrange on interest @ 5% form private money lender which
they return after the season. If tamasha did not do well in the season, it became unaffordable.

Though the general scene as tamasha is as above, tamasha is considered as the hereditary occupation and in order to maintain this feeling sometimes though it became unaffordable, the owner run tamash. Somehow most of the artists in tamasha are addicted to drinking, gambling that is why life of many artists become ‘Tamasha’ itself. Though this is the pathetic picture of Tamasha, this folk art has been kept alive by the community of Mangs and Mahars.

The women artists who performs their art in Tamasha do not work in agriculture as labourers in rural areas. After working for four months, they try to maintain their livelihood on the same earning or take loan from money lenders.

In the case of some women artists, they maintain relations with the landlords in villages and it becomes a source of livelihood for them.

3.11.4 Animal Trading :

Matang community is indulged in many occupations. One of the important among them is ‘animal trading’. There are many other people belonging to the communities such as Maratha, Dhanagar, Dhor, Chambhar etc in this occupation. However, the Mang and Muslim community is found in large number doing this occupation. In the western Maharashtra weekly Bazars of animals is a remarkable. Peasants from the nearby areas bring their animals to a taluka place for trading. Mostly the Mangs work as ‘agents’ in such a trading. This profession is to purchase the
animals from the farmers and to sale it on to others. Two kind of animals are mainly found in this trading.

1) Domestic animals 2) Bhakad animals

Domestic animals are purchased for milking and Bhakad animals for killing for meat. Such an animal trading is mostly done on a large scale at the weekly bazars at Kolhapur, Vadagaon, Ichalkaranji, Miraj, Vita, Palus, Wayafale, Mangale, Satara, Karad, Phaltan, Koregaon, Mhaswad etc. The Mangs of Mhasawad are in the trade of horses. The animals that include in such a trade are goats, sheeps, oxens, cows, buffalo etc. The reasons for Matangs being ahead in this business is their dialect. The Mangs have a typical language which is hardly understood by others. In such a trading two agents cover their hands with a piece of cloth and decide the price of an animal by counting the figures. They use different words for different animals. e. g. cow is called Bhakkar, Buffallow (Jamashi), Ox (Gorapa). He buffallo (Rekhana) etc. for money to they have unusual and typical words. For example – Rs.10 (Hatū), Rs. 20 (Sooti), Rs.25 (Kapasooti), Rs. 30 (Meta), Rs.100 (Kasala), Rs.200 (Dubara), Rs. 300 (Dhala), Rs. 400 (Araba), Rs. 500 (Kap), Rs. 600 (Sbam), Rs.700 (Danabat), Rs. 800 (Bat), Rs. 900 (Danyasar), Rs. 1000 (Dhokan), Rs. 3000 (Dhaladhokan), Rs. 25,000 (Kapasooti Dhokan), Rs. 50,000 (Nimati Dhokan) etc.

This language is typically of Matangs which is secret one. The business takes place in the presence of all but nobody understands anything about it because of ignorance of language used by Matang agents. “The main asset in this business is the language.” is what says Rajaram Gulab Sakat of Saidalpur, Tal. Karad. But this language is to be learnt which takes at least three
to four months. The whole affair of this business takes place by holding index finger under the cloth.

### 3.11.5 To Fix a Horse Shoe to the Oxes:

The Mangs and the oxes are related to each other since ancient times. The Mangs tame the oxes by putting a string through its nose and even he fixes a horse shoe to the ox. They are indulged in this profession. Sahebrao Maruti Kendale of Ranjani village, Taluka Pathardi, District Ahmednager says in this regard in the weekly bazaars or sometimes in the village the ox is fixed in a loop in its waist and then the second loop is put to the left hide leg and the rope is pulled this makes the ox fall down on the ground on his left side. All the four legs of the ox are then tied together and with the help of iron rod they are raised in such a way that their sole are exposed completely, after that their nails are cut and cleaned after which a horseshoe is fixed to the sole of their legs. One ox needs eight horse shoes because though ox is having four legs it has eight nails that is why eight horseshose are fixed. There are four nails required for one horse shose which makes thirty two nails in all for one ox. The fixing of a horseshoe for an ox takes about fifteen minutes and Mangs charge about hundred Ruppes for that. The cost of horse shoe and nails is about twenty rupees and the Mangs get net profit of about eighty Rupees, per ox."

The Mangs from Ahmednager and Beed district are greatly involved in this profession. The Mangs of this area go to the weekly Bazaars at various places in Ahamadnagar district such as Pathardi [Wednesday], Shevgoan [Sunday], Khodhegoan [Thursday], Shirur Kasar [Monday], Ghodegoan [Friday], and Mirinaka [Monday], and do the business. The Mangs get the
average income of Rs eight hundred per bazaar, sometimes the income goes up to Rs. Three thousand per bazar during the season. However sometime they even don’t get a single penny still then Mangs of Beed and Ahmednager district are greatly involved in this occupation. The village that dominate this occupation are Moheri taluka Pathardi, Pagori, Pimpalgaon, Ranjani, Karodi in Beed district Mahinda of Ashti taluka is greatly is involved in this occupation.

The occupations of Mangs include to prepare ropes and strings, to make the brooms, to make bamboo baskets, to play Banjo and Bendabaja (musical instrument), to sell meat of animals (beef), to sell the old and used clothes, to work as artists in Tamasha and to collect material from sewage and scrap. Mang is involved in most of these occupations mainly.

3.11.6 To sell old and used cloths (Chindhya):

In Vidarbha, especially in the districts of Nagpur and Chandrapur the occupation of selling old and used clothes is found on large scale. In this business the Matang community is involved in large numbers. This business of selling old and used clothes is called ‘Chindhya Bazar’ in Nagpur.

This business has a history of about over hundred years in Nagpur. The women in Matang community are involved in this business. These women carry daily utensils such as, (Dibba's, Parati, bowls, dhamde, Chalanya, Kadai, Baranya, Dinner set etc.) on their head and collect old and used cloths in exchange. These women call out for clothes in exchange of the utensils they carry. They call out ‘Bhandi Ghya Bhandi’. Take utensils and the people
call take them to their home and in exchange of old and used clothes new utensils.

These Matang women collect clothes from Gopal nagar, Telicom nagar Pratap nagar, Defence Colony in Nagpur and later on sell those clothes in the street bazaar. This street market of old and used clothes is held on Saturday at Satara/Market, Tuesday at Sadar Bazar and on Sunday at (tawara Bazar). On Friday this bazaar is held at Kamati (Dist. Nagapur).

In this kind of Bazar the cloths are kept on the street itself. The customers comes and selects the cloths they need. The clothes generally are shirt, trouser, pant, saree, lugade etc. The cost of the pant or trouser is Rs. 10, shirt Rs. 5, saree Rs. 20 and lugade Rs. 15. The customer for such clothe genereally consist of the people living below poverty line such as inhabitants of slums, people from Dalit community and working class people etc.

Nagpur the second capital of Maharashtra it has man workers coming from neighboring stats such on Chattsgraha and Madhya Pradesh. This working class is also the buyer of these clothes along with the Dalits is Maharastra. An important thing to note is that, like poor people even some cloth merchants too purchase clothe from this bazaar. These merchants come from the places like Jabalpur, Bhopal, Raipur etc. These merchants purchase the clothes on large scale amounting up to Rs. 50 to 60 thousand. These 'old' clothes are sold in the show rooms as 'new' after doing certain process colled 'pasting'.

Matang women collect clothes on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and the sell clothes on Tuesday Saturday and Sunday. Usually a woman collect about 15 to 16 old cloths in exchange of one frying pan (Kadai) costing about Rs. 130. Thus
after selling one cloth for Rs. 10, these women get about Rs. 150 from selling 15 such cloths. This means a Matang lady gets a profit of about Rs. 20 on one utensil. In this way these women get about minimum Rs. 50 to maximum Rs. 150 to 200 in one bazaar which means they get about Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 per week. Obviously enough, ever to run this business these women need some principle amount of about Rs. 10,000. These women being poor does not have even that amount, so they have to take loan from a private money lender 10 to 25%. Most of the women is this bazaar are the viztim of this system. They are being exploited by these private money lenders not economically but even sexually. Because of the pressing need of survival these women don’t voice out their sexual harrassemest and silently go on tolerating. In Nagapur the Matang women from the places such as Ambazari, Pandhara Bori Laljgaing, lakadi pul, Bharde Plot, Antapri and Kharat are found in this business in large number. Even males are found in the business but their presence is negligible. These men collect clothes on bicycle.

One can find number of bazaar is the society, such as Saraf Bazar (Gold Bazar) Kirana Bazar, (Grocery) the bazaars of vehicle but the ‘Chhindhya Bazar' is one such bazaar in which there is no dignity and identity. Any bazaar needs to have a market but Chindhay Bazar dosenot have such place. Nagapur Muncipal Carporation Collect the tax from these merchants but doesnot provide any facility to these people. On the contrary the goondas from the city collect their share (Khandani) from these poor and unprotected people and exploit them. Matang women full an easy prey to these exploiters.
By seeing the pathetic condition of these women, Hemant Ramesh Matukar an author from Nagapur has written a play entitled 'Chindyabazar' depicting the life of these women. Prof Ashok Kamble (Matang) produced this play and brought it on stage. An interesting fact worthy to note is that, all the artists in this play were children of these cloth selling women. This play had baged the frist prize in Deeparang Drama festival, Nagpur and second prize at the Drama Competition organized by the Government of Maharashtra in 2005.

3.12 Educational status of Matangs:

Among all the men in India, who strove for the upliftment of untouchables with their deeds, the prominent name that should be taken into consideration is that of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. He has pondered over logically on the social, economical, educational and cultural backwardness of untouchables and gave a firm direction to their emancipation in future. Through his social thinking, he has come out with an observation that, among the backward state of untouchables, women are untouchables among the untouchables in there existence even after thousands of years. The main reason for their state is nothing else but the ignorance. That’s why Mahatma Phule concentrated on the education of women. He had a feeling that untouchables would become wise with the touch of education and they would start displacing slavery and then they would start fighting for their freedom on their own.

With this view, he started first girl’s school in 1848. He has done a historical deed of beginning the first school for girls in India. The untouchable children of Mang, Mahar and Chambhar used to take education in this school. There were many European natives
too. The report says that there were three schools and about four hundred students were taking education. There were many children belonging to other communities. This reference is found in a news published in ‘Dnyan Prakash’ on 9th Sept. 1856. Later in 1855-56 the government had allotted a piece of land for the school but the school got closed down. The secretary of the school was Raobahadur Sadashivrao Ballal. The land remained in his possession then. The extra land that remained other than the school building was given to a Mang for cultivation (Shinde V. R. 1976: 232).

Brahmins of this country have consciously kept other communities in the darkness of ignorance for their own benefits, and as a result the backwardness of other communities is the subtle conspiracy of Brahmins, Mahatma Phule had opined (Samagra Vadanmaya p.687). Brahmins have coiled like the snakes around the neck of ‘Shudras’. They must be freed from the state and the government should initiate into this, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule had remarked in his appeal, he put before ‘Hunter Commission’ (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 717). Mahatma Phule had a firm trust in British Govt. and had felt that the British Govt. is a kind Govt. and so has an anger on those who were revolting against them.

The children of Mahars and Mangs cannot go for education because as soon as they reach the age of five to six, they are made to labour in some or the other way and so they are deprived of the education. Their parents seem to be incapable to send them to schools. Those who go to school and educate and do some job, are hated and troubled by the upper class people (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 709-710). The Mang Mahar parents cannot pursue the
studies of their children as the people from other communities do, because they are unaware of the benefits and pleasures of the studies (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 653). If a Mang is seen in a clean attire, with a white ‘bandi’ and clean ‘turban’ on the head, good quality ‘Dhotar’ and with a footware ‘Joda’ the upper caste people would remark out of a jealousy “Who has given you the right to wear such kind of clothes. If you are proud of then put it in the government treasury” (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 703).

Mahatma Phule had strongly felt that the untouchables should take education against such background and so he opened a school for them. In a Report of Board of Education of 1852-53, we see that Mahatma Phule himself used to teach in the girl’s school for four hours every day. He has developed his wife as a teacher. This report further states clearly that, the girl’s school in Pune was the first school for the Mahars and Mangs and even the library too was the first one, credit of all this goes to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 607).

There was an article published in ‘The Puna officer view’ and ‘Deccan weekly’ report on 25th March, 1853 on the occasion of annual examination of the students belonging to Mang and Mahar community. The article says that “this occasion is a historical beginning of new era in the history of Hindu culture” (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 608).

The ban that was imposed for centuries together on imparting education to the ‘Shudras’ was the real cause for their pathetic condition. Mahatma Phule had thoughtfully opined and touched the aching nerve (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 29).

Jyotiba Phule took the pains and problems of the downtrodden as his own with a stand to see that the Mang, Mahars
and Ramoshi community should be educated. In 1851 he started
the school for the Mangs and Mahars respectively. An important
thing to be noted that in the school that was started by Mahatma
Phule for the children of Mangs and Mahars, Ganu Shivaji Mang
was the first teacher belonging to Matang community. He used to
teach alphabets and numbers from one to hundred to the second
standard. This means that Mahatma Phule was the first teacher
belonging to ‘Bahujan Samaj’, Savitribai Phule his wife the first
woman teacher in India and Ganu Shivaji Mang was the first
teacher among the untouchables. In other words it can be said that,
if given chance the children from Matang community too can shine
out. This can be further endorsed with a reference to the remark of
Capt J. F. Lister, the education Inspecter of Pune who said in his
remark, “the children are quick and intelligent. I particularly
mention the following boys who give much promise of future
excellence if they can be taken care of and the means of carrying on
their education can be availed to them” (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991:
640-645).

The remarkable thing is that, from the three schools
belonging to untouchables, Capt J. F. Lester selected the intelligent
students, among them Dhondi, Mahadev, Hanumantha, Vithu
Panduji, Kondi Kallu, and Nama Limba were the five Mang, three
Mahar, two Chambhar, one student each Kunabi, Mochi, and
Muslim community. One student has no clear reference (Phadake,
Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 651). The incident referred above is of 1857. (The
three Mahar and Mang schools record by Capt. Lester educational
of the Deccan division on 26th Dec. 1857.)

If we consider the above quoted situation as a remarkable
one, then one can understand about the conditions prevailing prior
to this must have been very poor. Mahatma Phule had begun school for Mang and Mahar children in 1852 because of his father Govindrao had driven Mahatma Phule out of his house. Later on the school got closed and whenever efforts were made to reopen the school, nobody was ready to give the place for the school. There was no money to build the school building and above all the people were not prepared to send their children to the school. In such a grim situation a man called Lahuji Bin Raghu Raut belonging to Matang community came forward and made his community aware of the benefits of being educated, this is how with his efforts the school was reopened. The number of students started growing. This incident is of the year 1853 (Phadake, Y.D, (ed.) 1991: 611).

The helping hand given by a Matang leader Lahuji Salve to Mahatma Phule in his educational work at the very crucial time can be considered as a turning point in Phule’s educational work. Another remarkable point is that, the first essay written expressing the grief of Mangs and Mahars by Mukta Salve was a Matang girl who was educated in Phule’s school. She happens to be the pioneer of the expression of Dalits that was later on amplified through ‘Dalit Sahitya.’

With a view to emancipate Matangs, Mahatma Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule threw open the opportunity of education to Mangs and Mahars. This historic unparralled deed of Mahatma Phule in the field of education falls in 19th century on the platform of which the 20th century has proved to be the revolutionary one.

3.13 Role of Social Reformers:

20th Century is an important one in a view of emancipation of untouchables in India. People who worked for the untouchables in
the field of education after having inspired from the works of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule are Rajashri Shahu Maharaj (Kolhapur), Sayajirao Gaikwad Maharaj (Baroda) and Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde. Maharshi Shinde’s work for untouchables is remarkable one, his analysis related to the problems of untouchability was not only scholarly but had a touch of scientific perspective. So history cannot forget his contribution in the field as first leader, who studied deeply about untouchability and began the movement about their issues” (Shinde V. R. 1976: 30).

Mahatma Phule’s work related to untouchability was restricted to Maharashtra. However, Maharshi Shinde’s work in this area crossed borders of the state and the country.

Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde began his work in 1903. He took the first step into this work on the suggestion of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad and did the survey of educational status of the untouchables in Baroda Sansthan. He travelled across Hindustan during 1903-1906 in order to have a close view of the life of untouchables and established an organisation named “Depressed Class Mission”. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was just 15 years then, who later on came to be known as the 'Masiha of untouchables'. Maharshi Shinde had worked in social, economic, religious and educational fields. He opened several schools for untouchables like that of Mahatma Phule through ‘Bharatiya Nirashrit Sahayakari Mandal.’
Table No. 3.1
Literature in Untouchables 1911-1915

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mahar</th>
<th>Dhed</th>
<th>Vhaleyar</th>
<th>Chambar</th>
<th>Samaj</th>
<th>Mang</th>
<th>Madiga</th>
<th>Dhor</th>
<th>Bhangi</th>
<th>Mentar</th>
<th>Upper Caste</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>05</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1084</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>208</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>285</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1672</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td>340</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1564</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4192</td>
<td>547</td>
<td></td>
<td>259</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>280</td>
<td></td>
<td>1160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6805</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The comparative study in relation to the various other untouchables castes shows that the Mang community lies far behind to the others.

The figures of the year 1915 in the table above are low as the report of Madras school did not reach Head office (Shinde V. R. 1976: 136).

3.14 Status of Matangs after Independence:

India became independent in 15th August 1947 and became republic after accepting the constitution on 26th January 1950. The dreams to form new country and new society were seen. A policy was accepted to bring in depressed section of the society in the mainstream of social, economic and cultural development of the country. A constitutional right was given to the various castes and creeds that were buried in the darkness of ignorance for the ages, so that they can be assimilated into the developmental process of the country besides giving them a respectable place in the society which was not promised them before. As a result of this the
reservation policy in the field of education, service and politics was adopted. The main objective behind all these principles was to see that, Dalits are made able and their development would take place. Education and employment are interrelated. One who can educate oneself could find a job which ensures a definite income, obviously that would upgrade economic status of the Dalits. That is why Dalits were given some facilities in education and reservations in employment by the state as well as central government. 60 years of Indian independence, it is necessary to think whether the educational facilities and reservation in the areas of employment have proved beneficial to the Dalits or not.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had appealed Dalits to “educate, unite and organise”, responding to which the Mahar community has achieved a remarkable progress in the field of education. Mahar community has gained solid ground in the employment sector by enjoying the benefits of reservation policy. However, inspite of having such a reservation for Scheduled Caste, how much the Mang community has progressed in the educational field is a matter of great concern which should be thought over seriously. According to the Census of 1981, there are 69 castes in Maharashtra that has population of 44, 79, 753 which is 7.14% of the total population. Mahar, Mang and Chambhar are three major castes among the Scheduled Castes with the population having the percentage of 83.15. Though having a commendable population among Dalits in general, Mangs out of these three major Scheduled Castes have remained backward in educational field. In this area Shankar Gaikwad has put forth certain conclusions on the basis of his study about Matang community, Dalit society and the reservation policy. Accordingly the Mang, Mahar and Chambhar
have the following percentage among the total population and their literacy rate.

**Table No. 3.2**

**Literacy Rate in Mahar, Mang and Chamber 1921-1981**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahar</td>
<td>36.79</td>
<td>38.18</td>
<td>26.28</td>
<td>15.69</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mang</td>
<td>27.04</td>
<td>23.73</td>
<td>16.91</td>
<td>9.87</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambhar</td>
<td>19.32</td>
<td>41.74</td>
<td>37.71</td>
<td>21.17</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One can easily sense the wide gap between these three communities. In a real sense the literacy rate of the Mahars and Mangs in 1921 was 2.9% and 1.6% respectively. In the following years that is 1961, 1971 and 1981 the literacy rate no doubt has gained a momentum but the gap between this development is a matter of great concern. One can see that, among the Mahar and Chambhar, the Chambhar community has achieved highest literacy rate which is followed by the Mahar community however, Mang community has remained far behind as compared to these two communities. In other words it can be said that, there is inequality in getting the educational facilities or even it can be said that all the Scheduled Castes have not received the equal benefits of the facilities given to them. Some castes have made use of their opportunities and were shining, whereas some castes have lagged behind.

Along with the literacy rate of Mang, Mahar and Chambhar Shankar Gaikwad has even studied about, how many students
have availed the government scholarship among these three communities. Following table would show the percentage by which we know which of the Dalit community is in advance to seek the benefits of government scholarships.

Table No. 3.3
Scholarships Holders in Mahar Mang and Chambhhar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>No. of holders of scholarship</th>
<th>% of students of total Dalit st.</th>
<th>Total % of scholarship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahar (Boudh)</td>
<td>16,142</td>
<td>79.62</td>
<td>63.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mang</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambhar</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>11.87</td>
<td>9.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gaikwad Shankar, Samajsanstha Sanshodhan Patrika, 1995: p.34.

The above figures show that out of three dominating communities among Dalits Mahar community is the one that has availed scholarship benefit of 63.50%, the Matang community students have got only 3.67% of S.C. scholarship. One can note the difference in getting the benefit of scholarship like that of literacy ratio. The table clearly shows that, Mahar community is the major beneficiary in terms of S.C. scholarships (Gaikwad Shankar, 1995: 34).

The figures of SC scholarship holder students of Maharashtra states that even in the benefit holders of scholarship, the Mahar community has taken the share of 91.80 which is followed by Chambhar with 4.11 and the Mangs though being the more in population to the Chambhars in Maharashtra, the percentage of scholarship holers is just 3.16. Gaikwad Shankar states that development in the field of education is the only major means of the upliftment of Dalits. As there is direct relationship between education and the employment, those who have lagged behind in
the higher education were even unable to avail the facilities in the employment. Dalits other than Mahars have failed to take the benefits of the facilities in education has directly affected to their employment.

In case of any person or creed education and the job affects on the economic condition. Education leads to employment which generates money, that gives stability resulting into a concrete status. In a real sense Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has given reservation in the constitution of India in order to see that, Dalits could get good status casting away their backwardness and promised the upgradation of economic condition of Dalits. But the above study reflect that the Mahar is the only community that has availed the benefits of education and that is why even in the employment sector they are aheading other Dalit communities. On the contrary, Mangs who remained away from the education have remained lagged behind in the employment sector as well.

In this respect Patawardhan Sunanda has put forth her observations through her study on the conditions of Dalits. Pathwardhan Sunanda has classified the jobs in 279 kinds with respect to the different castes and has stated that, the employment sector is mainly filled by Mahar community. In 279 kinds of job, Mahars took 183, Chambhar 37, Mang 26, Other 15, Holar 3, Meghwanshi 4, Chavadi 2 and Bhangi 9. According to Pathwardhan’s study, Mang community though being next to Mahars in population, has remained behind the Mahars and the to the Chambhars in the employment sector.

Pathawardhan Sunanda also has given certain figures through her study on the employment of Scheduled Castes. Shankar Gaikwad has selected different offices for his study, in
Aurangabad where half the employees of the concerned offices were the respondents. Accordingly among the total 691 Scheduled Castes, the Mahars had a percentage of 87.84 Chambhar and Mang had 5.35 each and Dhor and Bhangi had 0.58 and 0.72 respectively.

Thus Mahar community is the only community to avail the most prominent position in literacy, education, employment sector and overall benefits given by the government. In comparison, Mang though being second largest community in population to the Mahars among Dalits has remained backward in all areas. Mahar community is conscious and that is why it has speeded up into overall development, on the contrary Matang community not being aware of it has remained backward. So it is necessary for Matangs to be aware of the percentage kept reserved at the govt. hostels run by the social welfare dept. of Govt. of Maharashtra. Gaikwad had suggested that Mang community should be given a special reservation in the education and employment sector, otherwise the wide gap between the Dalits of availing the government facilities could lead to engrave the restless among them. A deep and special study in this area is necessary.

The educational condition of Matangs in Maharashtra seems to be more pathetic according to the above study. Mahar community is advanced to those of Matangs. Mang should introspect on this issues. Such an introspection could be expressed in the following reasons for their backwardness –

1) Most of the Matang Community is poverty sticken.
2) Mang community does not feel importance of the education.
3) There is no proper leadership to awake them in terms of education and render them proper guidance.
4) There is a greater influence of rituals and traditions in Matang community.

5) They lack in the self confidence.

6) Those who have progressed in the higher education, don’t look back to their community and even the other community do not look at the educated ones with respect.

7) There is no organization that strives for the Mangs in the field of education.

These things put forth the picture of the Matang community in education. A boy from Mahar community complains way back in 1856 to get his right for higher education to the British Governor General and finally gets his right. This resoluteness which is with Mahar community is not with Mangs and so instead of despicing Mahar community, the Mangs should introspect on the issues and steed themselves ahead.

Table No. 3.4

Education in Matang Community in Maharashtra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>illiterate</th>
<th>Upto 4th Std.</th>
<th>5th to 7th Std.</th>
<th>8m to 10th Std.</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Post-Graduate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>655254 (90.13)</td>
<td>71032 (9.77)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>666 (0.9)</td>
<td>54 (0.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>727006 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>751935 (83.05)</td>
<td>149440 (16.51)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3762 (0.42)</td>
<td>224 (0.02)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90477 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>923877 (76.27)</td>
<td>214660 (17.72)</td>
<td>48448 (4.00)</td>
<td>17578 (1.45)</td>
<td>4365 (0.36)</td>
<td>2407 (0.20)</td>
<td>1211225 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The table shows that Mangs in majority have remained illiterate. The preparation of their level of education in 1987 shows decreasing trend with increase in level of education.
Table No. 3.5

Literacy among Male-Female in Matangs in Maharashtra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male Literary</th>
<th>Female literary</th>
<th>Male Illiteracy</th>
<th>Female Illiteracy</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>62.637 (17.04)</td>
<td>9115 (2.54)</td>
<td>304950 (82.96)</td>
<td>350304 (97.46)</td>
<td>77006 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>124187 (26.97)</td>
<td>29255 (6.58)</td>
<td>336349 (73.03)</td>
<td>415586 (93.42)</td>
<td>905377 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>224870 (36.47)</td>
<td>62588 (10.52)</td>
<td>391768 (63.53)</td>
<td>532089 (84.48)</td>
<td>1211335 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arjune, Dilip 2006: 75.

The table shows male and female literacy has increased in Matangs during 1961 - 1981.
References:

Babar, Weekly Yashawant Nayak, Thane Mumbai.


Gakwad, R.D. Magazine Sugawa, Pune.


