CHAPTER - V
MATANG COMMUNITY:
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

5.1 Introduction:

In 1920 ‘Akhil Bhartiya Bahishkrut Conference’ was organised at Nagpur under the presidency of Chh. Shahu Maharaj. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had attended the conference along with S. J. Kamble, G. G. Kamble, Eithale-Bhosale and Shiratalkar. There was an issue before the organisers that, which sub caste people will prepare the food. The issue was so serious that, there was no trace of preparation of food at sight. This thing went to the ears of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He immediately called all the sub-caste leaders and advised them responding to which every leader sent one person from their caste and thus they had a food in the conference (Kosare H. L., 1984 : 35).

Among Mahars the people belonging to different sub-castes never use to dine together side by side. A Mahar person called Pandurang Raghuji Gajaghat had kept ‘Bhandara’ to mark the end of ‘Parayana’, at the end of ‘Shrawan’, food was arranged and Vitthalrao Mallesar from Yeotmal was serving the food in the row (Pangat) but he was belonging to the sub-caste of Mahar called Ladwan Mahar. So the chiefs of ‘Bavane Mahar’ took objection to it and charged them for making them unholy, because of this the Ladwan Mahar had to pay ‘Panch Pavali’ fine to Bavane Panchayat (Kosare H. L., 1984 : 36).

Another examples of the sub-caste difference and their ego is that, Bramahan Mate who joined the general of Bappu Shinde, a Municipal Corporation member of Indore who belonged to sub-
The leaders always tried to bridge gap between the sub-caste Mahars. Kisan Fagu Bansode, Ganesh Akaji Gavai, Kalicharan Nanda Gavali all these leaders of Bavane-Mahars have even done resolutions in the meetings of their Jaat (caste) Pachayat (Kosare H. L., 1984 : 36). On Oct. 25, 1925 the Mahar panch five member committee of Ladwan Mahars have made certain resolutions in order to minimise this gap. Among it the resolution No-13 was like this, ‘there should be ‘Roti Vyavhar’ among all Mahar community. The Roti Vyavahar was consented by the Panch, however, we do not find the consent of ‘Beti Vyavahar.’ Due to the efforts of Dr. Ambedkar, today we do not find much differences between the sub-caste of Mahars but it is restricted only to the ‘Roti Vyavahar’ however, while including into the ‘Beti Vyavahar’ even today after 50 years of accepting Boudha religions they maintain these sub-caste differences of being sub-castes.

5.2 The sub castes of Mahar:

The colour and caste discrimination in India is based on superiority and inferiority Each caste again has its sub caste and superiority and inferiority is observed. The ‘Roti-Beti’ transactions take place in these sub-castes as well. The untouchable castes are also not exception to it. The Mangs have the sub-castes and Mahars too have the sub-castes. But under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar the Mahar community was united and organised. In 1956, Dr. Ambedkar gave up the Hinduism and accepted the
Buddhism and today the Mahar community calls itself as Buddist. Dr. Ambedkar’s conversion turned into 50 years in 2006. The year 2006 again was the 2500th year of the birth of Buddha. One finds an euphoric state among Buddhism on this occasion. The religious conversion of Ambedkar and the celebration of its for completion of 50 years widely appeared in news. The picture of ‘All Buddhist is one’ was created by the leaders of the community. However, among Buddist even after the conversion and entering into Buddhism, the Mahars seem to follow the practise of sub-castes into it. So the seeming unity of ‘All Buddhist being one’ seems to be a hollow one.

Anand Gaikwad is the former Deputy Mayor and a corporator from Yeotmal. He is a well-known poet as well. He said in his interview that Dr. Ambedkar gave us Buddhism way back in 1956 however, we have taken only the ‘Diksha’. We have not left our Mahar caste even today. In Vidharbha among Mahars (Buddhist), even today there are sub divisions namely Bavane, Ladwan, Somas, Kosare, Andhavan etc. In Vardha district at Nachangaon there is a sub-caste named ‘Kosare’ at other places it is ‘Ladwan.’ At Bhandara, Gondia and Chandrapur district among Boudhas 70% Bawane sub caste is influencing. In the district of Amravati, Akola and Buldhana, one finds the sub-caste called Somas which is more than 70% of the population of Mahars. In the regions of Yeotmal and Digraj the sub-caste called ‘Andhavan’ which is the sub-caste of original Mahars is found even today. Even among the Mahar sub-caste of Bawane again one finds sub divisons namely ‘Zade Bawane’, ‘Khaltate’, ‘Vartate.’ Among the Ladwan sub-caste of Mahars, there is yet another sub-caste called ‘Mali’ that is in the occupation of hair cut. The ‘Mali’ sub-caste is considered to be the most inferior of all which is found only in Ladwan. Among the
Marathwada and western region, the sub caste of Somas is more in proportion. Again an interesting thing is that, these sub castes, Bawane, Ladwan, Somas, Kosare have their own self respect a severe sense of self-superiority. One finds the ‘Roti Vyavahar’ but while including in ‘Beti Vyavahar’ the sub-caste is given more thought. Dr. Ambedkar belonged to the Somas sub-caste and hence they consider themselves superior to all other sub castes. However, Bawane, Ladwan do not underestimate themselves is a reality. The researcher was at Nanded in May 2006, went along with press reporter Vilas Athawale. He narrated experience of his marriage. He liked a girl from Somas sub-caste with whom he wanted to marry, however, the proposal could not be realised because he himself was belonging to Ladwan sub-caste. While Vilas Athawale was narrating to the researcher this marriage experience the anger, sorrow and irritation was clearly seen on his face.

So this is the picture we see among Mahar community even after 50 years of Dr Ambedkar's conversion. It is said that education does improve human beings, it changes them; does not seem to be believable in Indian context. On the contrary caste seems to be more influencing among the educated people. Yoganand is one of the most familiar poet and writer from Tembhrune, district Yeotmal. His collection of Hindi of poems titled ‘Yugantar’ was published in 2001 by the auspicious hands of Prof. Arun Kamble who was president of the ‘Ambedkari Sahitya Samelan’ at Hinganghat. The information shared by him throws light upon the castism among the untouchables (Mahars).

In 1993, at Yeotmal ‘Asmitadarsh’ gathering was organised. Adv. G.M. Bansod was the president of the organising committee of the Sammelan and Yoganand Tembharne was the secretary. That
is why the information given by Tembharne happens to be the authentic one. He said, “by that time the conflict between the two great Dalit thinkers and writers namely Gangadhar Pantawane and Yashwant Manohar was at its height. In order to see that the conflict between them gets resolved they were to be invited for the said sammelan but the conflict between them grew more bitter to the extent that on the local level the Mahar community was split into two groups, these groups were belonging to the Bawane and Ladwan sub-castes. Tembhurne further said that, ‘the Pantanwane-Manohar conflict is not only an intellectual conflict, it is the conflict of complexes of superiority and inferiority because Pantawane belongs to ‘Bawane’ sub-caste whereas Manoher belongs to Ladwan sub caste. The conflict between these two sub-castes is a regular feature in the public life in Vidharbha. Overall the whole picture is shocking. The conflict between Pantawane and Manoher is still continued.

Even after 50 years of accepting Buddhism, if issue of sub-castes is so dominating among Mahars, it becomes obligatory for people those who are going to embrace Buddhism newly to retain their original sub-caste.

In Patan taluka at Satara district in Gude village, there is a sub-caste of Mahars called Pan-Mahar. Their surname is ‘Satpute.’ Traditionally they are musicians (Vajantri). They play on ‘Pipani’, ‘Dhol’ etc. The local Mahars those who follow Buddhism consider these Pan-Mahars as inferior to them. Among these people there is a ‘Roti’ Vyavahar but not the ‘Beti Vyahavar.’ These Pan-Mahars are found in Gude, Janugadewadi, Jounjale, Bhasegaon, Yevati in Karad taluka and in Sangli district they are found in Shirala tahsil in the places like Vakurde, Shirashi, Antri and Dhamavade.
5.3 Awareness of Mahars:

In 1893 the untouchables were banned from recruitment in defence. On behalf of the organization named ‘Anarya Doshpariharaka Mandali’ Mahadeo Govind Ranade applied to the Government supporting for the requirement of the untouchables. This indicates that the present organisation was in touch with the great people.

In 1897 the same organization had prepared a questionnaire for Congress where they had raised question stating that, what right the Congress had got to ask for the political development unless and until they ask for the social development. The result of the social awareness of these Mahar community is that, when Sir Hurbet Resley started collecting the data / information about the customs of Hindu people in 1898, he had sent his questionnaire to the above said organisations. In short, as Mahars were aware and united they were in touch with the established people of that time. Even the government also used to remain in their contact is an important thing to note. On the contrary the Mangs are unaware and divided because of which they are not taken into account.

5.4 About the Caste of Mang:

‘Mang’ is referred to be one of the most lowest caste among the untouchable castes in the Indian caste system however, much has been written about this caste in bad as well as good sense. On the one hand the Mang has been considered as an ‘evil’ at the same time is called ‘shubh’ that is representing good. Saint Tukaram in one his Abhanga’s says
‘Jap Karita raag | Ala jawali to Mang’

which means while chanting what came near is the anger. In his 555th line of ‘Abhanga’ Tukaram Maharaj says ‘Mang means anger’ whereas Mahatma Jyotiba Phule in his ‘Akhand’ says.

*Mangas Bahut pidile | Sajiv dadavile,
Gudhichya Payat ||* (Phadake Y.D. 1991:170)

*Chandal Brahman Manga door dhari ||
Swatha pani Dhari | Adavar ||*  
(Phadake Y.D. 1991:558)

*Tanhene Vyakul | Jari Mang Mela ||
Daya Brahmanala | yet nahi ||*  
(Phadake Y.D. 1991:558)

The above lines mean on the one hand Mang is considered to be the evil and on the other hand he is considered good and is buried under the wall of mansions. No doubt the social system as Brahmins is responsible for this pathetic state of Mangs in this country. This social system negates the humanness so the human beings. The mansions of the upper caste people are standing on the dead bodies, of Mangs.

Prabhakar Mande, who has studied the Mang caste says ‘Mang is a scapegoat’ (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 54) Mangs are valiant, men of deeds and mighty. He is the ‘Shubhankar’ meaning ‘good doer’ (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 71) Mangs are valiant and even rulers (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 108). Mang is an expert in agriculture and even know the black magic. He is the fortune teller and at the same time he is the person who works at the gallows to hang the sentenced. Mang is a criminal, cruel, heartless, crafty, short tempered (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 27). In short there are two extreme opposite views expressed about the Mangs in the
society. This consciously cultivated views about the Mangs in the society is a capsicum effect of the social system. Mang became the victim of this caste system. By developing the enmity between the Mangs and Mahars who are the major untouchable caste, the upper caste people have protected their interests.

Mang is the pioneer in the agriculture revolution because he is the person who tame the oxes, bulls by putting the string in its nose. But he is made a ‘begger’ in the social system. Perhaps, as a curse of the animal he has to eat the food in its dung. Though Mang is mighty he has became a slave. The boy from the Mahar community can go to the British governor and ask justice, which Mang caste can not do. He had to carry the loads of fifth of the village on his head, he was sacrificed for the ‘good’ of the village. Even today the Mang is the victim of the social system.

It is said that lord Vishnu willed the Mang in the form of Rahu and Ketu (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 72). In Ramayana Shambuk’s head was cut off by Ram. Parashuram had cut the head of Matangi. All this injustice was done on Mangs even by the gods. Even in the modern times the Mangs are given in sacrifice. He is made a scapegoat. His houses are put on fire. This is not a fiction but a reality in Vadange village in the Kolhapur district. Mang is given as ‘sacrifice’ can be seen in an incident at Jawalakhurd Dist. Osmanabad. Mang is not free from the caste system in the society.

The Mang is the original ‘son of soil’ of this country, he was the great soldier and fighter, protector of the forts at the time of Shivaji but today his condition has been reduced to animality and is living a begger’s life. Mang was branded ‘criminal’ during British period. He got indulged in criminal acts like robbery and stealing to feed himself. He could not feed himself during British period too.
even after the independence there was no positive development in the status of Mang is the 21st century. The Matang community in great number is below poverty line. Dileep Arjune’s study of Mangs show that there 0.74% families of Matangs whose annual income is between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 1,00,00, where an 82% of Mangs have annual income less than Rs. 12000/- (Arujune Dilip,2006: 93).

The poverty sticken Mang submits to the religious system of the society and become, its victim. Most of the Mangs belong to Hindu religion. He follows the rituals and practices of Hindu religion but he is not free from his bad condition. The devotee of goddess Matangi and Renuka become ‘Devadasi’ and man become ‘Jogata’. The Mang devotee of god Khandoba if male, become ‘Waghya’ and a women devotee become ‘Murali’. The ‘Potraj’ of Laxmiaai is a Mang male. He does all this for the sake of his living. During the fair of Gods the Mang become the priest and once the fair is over he is reduced to a worker in the fields. The Mangs is living not only for god and religion but for his belly fill.

An interesting fact is that Renuka being the upper caste dainty her priests too are of the upper caste. However Matangi’s priests are belonging to Matang community. For example, at Alate (Dist. Kolhapur) the priests of Renuka are of Maratha caste and that of Matangi are of Matangs. In Tuljapur, the holy place of Hindus the priests of goddess Bhavani are of upper caste. However the priests of Matangi are not Mangs but Mahars. There is a conflict between Mangs and Mahars on the issue of priesthood. Ironically though after fifty years of Ambedkar’s conversion the Mahars are not ready to give up the rituals of Hindus as the priestshhood is not a matter of worship but it has dimensions of economics.
In order to come out of his poor economic state, the Mangs started engaged in many occupations. His earlier and traditional occupation was to prepare the strings and ropes and making of brooms but in the industrial society, he has shifted away from his traditional occupations. Garaware's brought the 'Nylon' in the agricultural work and naturally the demand for products like 'ropes' and 'broom' reduced. As a result the Mangs had to turn to other occupation. Traditionally Mangs were involved in the trade of animals, selling the animal meat, to put the horse shoe to the oxen, to play musical instruments, to play in 'Tamasha' and 'Shahiri'. These traditional occupations were changed to their involvement in being rag-pickers, selling the old and used cloths, to work in the construction business, to paint buildings etc. Inspite of finding themselves in these 'new' activities they have found it difficult to earn their livelihood. In his study Dileep Arjune had shown that about 94.44% families are below poverty line as per the survey of Government of India 1997-98 (Arjune Dilip, 2006: 94).

In the below poverty line list of the Government of Maharashtra the names of many families below poverty line have not been incorporated. In order to avail the benefits of Government Schemes, the name in the BPL list is mandatory without which family cannot get the benefits of Government Schemes. The Mang families though being the caste below poverty line have not been included in the list. On the contrary the rich and affluent upper caste families are part of the list. No political leader voices out this injustice done to Matangs. The inclusion of the rich people in the list of BPL is given silent consent by the political agents. This injustice can be seen throughout the state. Though many Dalit
organizations have protested against this injustice through Morchas, movements, but it went in vain.

Government benefits and reservation policies are the constitutional and lawful rights. Eventhough a Matang appears for a job he is termed as 'not qualified' and is rejected. By rejecting his lawful right, person from other caste is appointed by money settlement. Matangs don’t posses 'money' required to get the job because of which he is away from the job. While taking education the Mangs have to face the same problems. In such a case the sections from other caste such as Mahars take the benefits of reservation, they do the negotiations which a Mang finds it difficult to do as a result goes on accusing the Mahars and unknowingly becomes the enemy of the caste on all fronts. The Mang lags behind the Mahars.

There is a provision of reservation in the politics. The upper caste people prefer the Mangs while electing the village head (Sarpanch) and while establishing the organizations where money in incurred because the Mangs are meek and don’t oppose them. He does not have a fighting spirit and speaks not for his legitimate rights. On the contrary he goes on accusing the Mahar community and even says about himself that 'Mang will never progress'. The established caste needs exactly this attitude of 'Elite' among the Mangs e.g. while preparing the list of BPL the head of the village. Through a Mang doesnot fight for the inclusion of 'his' community. Chale, Tal. Pandharpur, Mangs were not allowed to enter the temple. The barbers of the village would not shave the Mangs and do his hair cut. At this place, the head of the village was a Mang but he never raised his voice against this injustice. On the contrary, he himself use to go to Pandharpur like many other Mangs and
have his hair cut. While there is reservation for the post of head of the village, the upper caste don’t prefer the educated young person from Mang community. On the contrary a meek, uneducated person is given priority in which the local leaders and consequently the upper caste gets benefited. Such a person holds the position of Sarapanch only for the name sake. Whatever practice is seen at the local level the same is true at other levels such as while selecting the candidate for MLAs and MPs.

From the Maan constituency of Satara district Tukaram Tupe and Sampatrao Avaghade were the two MLAs elected but they could never challenged their mentor Sadashiv Pol. In the district of Sangli number of spinning mills are under the scheme of Scheduled Caste have been established, the Chairmans of these mills are Mangs but they don’t have any rights. They are present there only for name sake. The upper caste influential leaders have established these mills just to get the benefit of such schemes. A chairman of a particular mill is a house keeper at one leading leader. While the another Mang chairman of other mill is not even invited for the meetings. This is the pathetic state of Mangs politically and economically.

The Mangs don’t have a strength to fight against the established castes. There is dire need for the Mangs to be organised but they don’t do so, as they are under the pressure of the established castes. As an exception to this state in Maharashtra the organization 'Dalit Mahasangh' has organised the Matang in order to get them the legitimate rights and self respect. 'Dalit Mahasangh' and 'Manavi Hakk Abhiyan' are the only two organizations fighting for the equality against the established power system.
These days one comes across many incidents of atrocity against Dalits in Maharashtra. However Dalit Mahasangh and MHA are making Mangs aware about these acts. They are propagating a message to deny the life of slavery. Fight against the injustice and struggle for equal rights is voiced out but volume of this voice is not worth remarkable. For any organization to run, one needs money and in addition to that an organization like 'Dalit Mahasangh' finds it difficult to raise funds for its ongoing programmes resulting into not a remarkable development. Earlier the Mangs were alleged not to be the part of movement but today we see that only Mangs are involved in the movements but they find it difficult to manage media.

The relation between the Mangs and Mahar has been the most discussed issue on the political and social platform of Maharashtra. The critics and political experts write that there is an enemity between these two castes but this is not the fact; because in the Indian society there is not much good relation in any of the castes. One caste has always been the enemy of the other caste. This is not true only of the major castes but within the sub-castes also we find the same. Though Brahmins are the most upper caste one finds a sense of being superior and inferior among them too. This is the truth in other castes like Maratha. These conflicts could be found on social, political and cultural fields. We find the differences are present among each and every class and caste. Mang-Mahar community is not an exception.

Mahar consider himself to be superior. He says, 'I am the Mahar... a garland in the neck of Parvati' whereas Mangs says, 'I am the Mang, the Bhang (parting hair line) of Paravatis head'. The
Mang means to suggest that he is superior to Mahar. The major reasons of enmity between Mang and Mahar are:

1) There are stories constructed of betrayal of Mangs by Mahars in the Hindu myths.

2) The Mahars have suppressed and deceived the Mangs is a dominant feeling among Mangs while getting 52 rights from the Badshah of Bidar.

3) In Paithan too the Mahars have suppressed Mangs and have got some rights.

4) In Umaji Naik’s revolt against British, the Mahars have helped Britishers and have tried to affect adversely the revolt.

5) While employed at Shaniwarwada the Mahar was involved in a love affair but Mangs were punished.

These incidents, myths are not necessarily to be generalized. These incidents happenings, stories were influenced by the time, place, region but using the above, the Mang, Mahar communities are unnecessarily stigmatized.

While having enemity with the Mangs, the Mahars say -

1) Mangs have opposed Dr. Ambedkar.

2) Mangs have not embarrassed the Buddhism.

3) Mangs don’t participate in RPI.

The allegation made by Mangs and Mahars against each other are wrong. In the present thesis it is shown that Mangs were with Ambedkar and even they have converted to Buddhism. There is a presence of Mangs in RPI in the form of 'Matang Front'. There were Mang’s in the movement of Dhale, Dhasal, Athavale and Prakash Ambedkar. There was participation of Mangs in the 'Renaming movement' of Marathwada University. Not only this but
the first martyr of this movement is Matang named Pochiram Kamble (Nanded). There could be the cordial relationship between the leaders of these communities may be true to some extent but there is an enemity between Mangs and Mahars dose not hold any logical, scientific, authentic truth. On the contrary one realizes that there is a cordial relationship among the people of these communities.

The main reason for the conflict between Mang and Mahar is the hunger. In the present context there is a chance of 'power' and 'opportunity' in Maharashtra. One finds that these two communities resides side by side amicably. They are together in their conflicts of life. One finds that the proportions of love marriages between these castes is more but it needs to increase in the days to come.

Even today the Mang community is caught in illiteracy and superstitions. It is not organized. Mahars are unhappy to see this community. Out of these beliefs this unhappiness of Mahars towards Mangs cannot be called enemity, on the contrary Mahars know everything of Mangs and Mangs too know everyting of Mahars. This itself could be the real 'problem' among these communities. We don’t find amicable relationship among the castes such as Maratha, Mali, Dhangar, Vanjara, Banjara. Mahar and Mangs could become friends of each other for many reasons. They should become friendly with each other and a proper atmosphere should be created for this, which is being taking place. The separating walls of these castes should fall down, the complex of superiority inferiority should disappear. The term caste should go away from politics. If one respects the constitution and human beings the day is not too far to see Mang-Mahars together.
5.5 Inhuman Treatment to Matang:

Rajarshi Chh. Shahu Maharaj has tried to transform society by his deeds. He strove hard to give an honourable treatment to Dalits on social, economical, and educational front. The pioneering and social revolution in Maharashtra, was done by Rajarshi Chh. Shahu Maharaj. But there is illtreatment given to Mang community even today. Some example are as follows-

5.5.1 Kavane – Dist. Kolhapur:

There is a village named Kavane in Kagal taluka, Dist Kolhapur. In this village all the upper caste people come together and celebrate ‘holi’. Before the holy wood is put to flame all the upper caste folk including children come to the settlement of Mangs to ‘ask for holi’. This upper caste village folk is usually marked by the vagabond youths. The agitating fact is that, these upper caste people call Matang by ‘Ukhana’. They stand before the houses of Matangs, use abusive and indecent language and call the Matang woman to offer them ‘holi’. The ‘Ukhanas’ are always characterised by obscenity, where these youth demand sexual interaction with Matang women. While this affair of ‘asking for holi’ goes on, the elders of the house such as grandpa, grandma, mother, father, brother etc. are all present. The upper caste youth use such language and demand undue things from Matang women which is quite embarrassing to them. Nobody dares to stop or warn the upper caste youth to do such a thing; on the contrary advise Matangs to ignore it considering it as a tradition of the village. That is why the upper caste people support it with great pride. Matang men and women get publically insulted under the pretext of some tradition which is not challenged by anybody and is mutely tolerated in the name of tradition is a shameful thing and so, an
organisation like ‘Dalit Mahasangh’ voiced against this obscene and inhuman tradition and stopped it.

5.5.2 Dhavaleshwar, Dist –Sangli

It is a village where the Matang community was not allowed to fetch water from the public well till 1982. They were not given entry to the temple. Matang community had to go and wait with their pitchers for some upper caste person to come to fetch water from the well. On request of Matangs, the upper caste man would fill their pots. While pouring the water in the Matang’s pot, upper caste man would take care to see that his pot does not touch with that of Matangs. The village would not like to see that a Matangs pot or they themselves touch water of the well, which will make it unholy. An interesting thing to note is that, the Mangs by tradition had availed the right to serve all the village gods and deities. Even so, the Matangs are not allowed to enter in the main temple of god Dhaval-ling. While the ritual like ‘aarathi’ would be done to the god, Matangs had a right to play music, which was a part of ‘Gaoki.’ As a reward to this kind of service the Mangs do, they are given 16 acres of land as ‘Baluta.’ It means, to serve the god, to play music at the time of ‘aarati’, to supply the ropes on the occasion of Gudipadwa, to carry the ‘palakhi’ on the occasion of ‘Dasara’ etc. were the duties of Mangs bestowed upon by tradition. The villagers had belief that, god would not come out of temple unless and until Mangs play the music. Ironically enough, Mangs are not given entry into temples. In 2000, an upper caste man had punished a Matang by beating him for not giving the ropes, used to colour the god/temple on the day of ‘Gudipadhawa’ on annual fair of Dhavaleshwar. For the pathetic state of Matangs, it is not only the upper caste people who are responsible, but they are supported by
even other balutedar communities. Even they torture Matangs, they give them secondary treatment, humiliate them. Many ‘Balutedars’ like Sutar, Lohar, Kumbhar, Barbar etc. treat Mangs as inferior, though they themselves are one of the ‘Balutedar’ community.

5.5.3 Kamathi - Dist-Sangli :

In a place called ‘Kamathi’ Tal –Atpadi, Dist-Sangli, barbar community would not offer their services to Matangs. Till 1998 they denied to cut their hair and shave them. Matangs had to go to have these services as far as 16 k.m. to taluka place Atpadi. However through the organisation ‘Dalit Mahasangh’ the voice was raised against the unjust treatment given to Matangs in this respect. With the help of Atpadi Tahsil office and police, cutting of hair and shaving was agreed upon by the barbers. The barbar community (Nhavi) in this village itself falls into the category of ‘Balutedars’ like those of Matangs and yet they use to refuse their services through their profession.

5.5.4 Chale – Dist. Solapur :

The same practice was on at ‘Chale’ 4 k.m. away from Pandharpur in Solapur district. Even in this village, barbar community used to refuse to cut the hair of Matangs. There is a weekly bazar in the village. The nearby city Pandharpur is a place of Lord Vitthal who advocated the social equality throughout Maharashtra through the ‘Varakari’ culture, however the scene is not different just 4 km. away from Pandharpur. Surprisingly enough, in 2003 though ‘Sarpanch’ of the village was belonging to Matang community, even then the barber community did not cut his hair. In this respect too, ‘Dalit Mahasangh’ intiated and the barbers in ‘Chale’ village were made to cut the hair of Matangs.
5.6 Injustice and Torture on Mangs:

The barber community itself belongs to the backward community. In the traditional village system the barbers also come under the category of ‘Balutedars’ like those of Matangs. These 12 Balutedar communities have to render their services in their respective areas to the entire village including the balutedars. But these services of Balutedars were given to the entire village including other balutedars except those of Matangs is a noteworthy point. When this behaviour of barbars was analyzed, even more horrible truth came in to light. The barbar community refuses their services to Matangs because they are pressurised to do so by the upper caste people. They are warned that if they serve Matangs, the upper caste people would not cut their hair from them. The barber community would succumb to their pressure and deny their services to Matangs. There was a fear among them that, if the upper caste decide they can suppress them economically. This fear made them behave indifferently to Matangs. The barber community that denied to shave the heads of widows at the time of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, the same community in 2003 deny their services to Mangs.

There used to be atrocity on Matangs in the early 16th and 18th centuries but the tradition has even continued in the 20th and 21st century. In Maharashtra hardly one can find a district or a taluka place where Matangs are not made to suffer from the hands of upper caste people. If we look at the injustice and atrocities on Matangs, one can understand the reality of the Matang community and their place in the Indian social system. Some of the prominent incidents:
5.6.1 Shirawadi (Budruk) – Dist. Aurangabad:

Mouje Shirawadi (Budruk), Tal. Khuldabad, Dist Aurangabad at this village on 22\textsuperscript{nd} Nov. 1983, a Matang person named Zadu Bhavani Pachunde was sacrificed so that an upper caste Saleharam Nana’s well would have water. He was called in the well and then was killed. A (Mang) man was taken to be as a symbol of good omen. Since the ancient time it has become customary to begin any good work by the auspicious hands of Mang. Even before this at many places Mang is sacrificed during the construction of fort. The proofs for these acts could be easily found in the pages of history. Even at the time of ‘Peshwai’, Mang has been sacrificed at the base of Shanivarwada construction. These incidents could be considered as old one but in 1983 at Aurangabad, the capital of Marathwada, a Mang is sacrificed is a bitter truth.

5.6.2 Saratale Dist. – Satara

On 23\textsuperscript{rd} February 1988, in Saratale, Tal-Jawali, Dist – Satara the upper caste people with the chanting words of “Har Har Mahadeo” attacked Matang settlement with weapons. The reason was: two Matang boys had entered the community centre meant for upper caste. The Matang community of this village is economically sound. These people have achieved economic and educational development by going out to cities like Pune, Mumbai for work and business. They have constructed good houses in the village. They were found well dressed which was not tolerated by the villagers and so they attacked their houses with swords and weapons by midnight. Later the villagers spread the news that the Matangs were involved in misdeeds.
5.6.3 Chorakhadi - Dist, Osmanabad :

On 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 1988, at Chorakhadi, Tal – Kalamb, Dist Osmanabad Shri. Hanuman Shinde had participated in the procession of ‘Nandi’ by chanting holy words ‘Har Har Mahadeo’, for this reason villagers took him to public place ‘chawadi’ and slashed him publically. He was threatened to cut feet and hands if ever he would utter the name of god.

5.6.4 Bhutegaon, Dist. Jalana :

On 14\textsuperscript{th} May 2003, Bhutegaon, Tal-Ghansanghavi, Dist-Jalana the Ambad taluka of Marathwada was divided to form another taluka called Ghansanghavi. Bhutegaon has 1800 population, and it is 30 km. from Ghansanghavi. There are 14 Buddhist houses and 18 Matang houses. Most of the Matangs are landless and all the land of the village is in the possession of Maratha. The power centers of this and Ambad taluka are held by ex. M. P. Ankushrao Tope and his son Rajesh Tope. Most of the organisations are dominated by them. Rajesh Tope was elected from this constituency as MLA. He was a minister in the Govt. of Maharashtra and still continuing. By and large this taluka is known for its feudalism and at Bhutegaon the Maratha community by surname Bhutekar is a influencing one.

In 2003, Maharashtra was hit by the worst kind of famine and water scarcity was felt everywhere in the state. There were 12 hand pumps in Bhutagaon which had water. As the caste discrimination was strictly observed in the village, one pump was reserved for upper caste community and the other one for Dalits. On 14\textsuperscript{th} May 2004, Bhutekar family had a marriage ceremony and so they were fetching water from both the pumps.
Shankar Rao Shedage, belonging to Matang community had been in Mumbai, who had left the village since long. He arrived to his native place to arrange marriage of his son along with his family members. That time, as the water scarcity was serious, all the people were waiting in a queue to fetch water. Dilip Shedage’s 16 year old sister Lata was also waiting for her turn to come. When her turn came, she kept her container under the tap. At the nick of the time, few people from Bhutekar family came there and stopped her to fetch water. While doing so, they were telling about the marriage ceremony they had at their home. However, Lata told them that she had no water at home and asked them to wait until she fills her pot. This act of Lata was not at all liked by Bhutekars. They could not tolerate such a opposition from a Matang girl and they started beating the young girl. The news spread in Matang community like a wild fire and Dileep Shedage, who was about to marry, ran to the spot and questioned Bhutekars about their act. He did not allow the Bhutekars to fetch water and gave them beating. Bhutekars were furious at this, however they managed to control their furry till marriage ceremony was over.

When the marriage people went beyond the outskirts of village, they returned and went straight to the Matang settlement hunting for Dileep Shedage, who was about to get married on 27th May 2003. By seeing the fury of upper caste villagers, Dileep was kept in hide in a house. Bhutekars traced him out and mounted on the house and entering thus, Dileep was driven out of the house. He was dragged before all the Matang community and before all of them he was put to flame by pouring kerosin on his body. He was burnt alive before all of them. Dileep’s parents, brother and sister were witnessing the scene. A strange thing is that, Ramesh
Bhutakar, who threw kerosin on Dileep’s body and burnt him alive before all was a post graduate and was working in a Institute of Ankush Tope as a professor. The incident that stirred the whole Maharashtra took place on 14\textsuperscript{th} May 2003. The Matang is burnt alive by upper caste people publically under the broad day light throws much light on the real state of Matang community.

5.6.5 Murty - Dist. Jalana :

Murty, Tal-Ghansanghavi, Dist-Jalana has 3000 population. This village is 3 kms from Kumbhar Pimpalgaon. Laxman Wadale is the president of Shetakari Sangathana Maharashtra and he belongs to this village. The village is known for social awareness, however, the people have traditional mentality. This village Kumbhar Pimpalgaon has a weekly bazaar and people in the vicinity attend it. On Wednesday 10\textsuperscript{th} July 2003, Ankush Thorat and his wife Janabai from Murty went to Kumbhar Pimpalgaon for weekly bazar.

In 2003 famine, the water problem was very severe in Murty. Bapurao Surase and Sandip Surase were the neighbours of Ankush Thorat at Murty village. Both these neighbours of Ankush Thorat belonged to Maratha community. There is a hand pump for water close to their home. Ankush Thorat and Bapurao Surase were not in good terms, they often used to have quarrels over petty things. Ankush Thorat had nine children and his wife Janabai was expecting for the tenth child. Ankush Thorat’s daughter was at home with her younger brother while her father and mother had been to weekly bazaar to Pimpalgaon on 10\textsuperscript{th} July 2003.

In the afternoon, nine year old Kalpana Thorat casually went to fetch water from the hand pump nearby. As she started pumping water the grand daughter of Bapurao Surase (the daughter of
Sandeep Surase) Ayodhya too came to fetch the water on the same pump. These two girls started quarrelling on the issue to fetch the water. In a real sense it was a quarrel on petty thing between the little girls. Ayodhya’s grandmother took interest in the quarrel of these two little girls and she started fighting with Matang girl Kalpana.

By the evening when Ankush and Janabai Thorat returned from Bazar Surase too returned from Bazar. Bapurao’s wife Vatsalabai reported about afternoon quarrel to her son Sandeep, who started abusing the Thorats, on which Thorat’s started abusing them as a reply. The petty quarrel of the girls thus entered among the elders and took a serious turn so much so that Bapurao Surase and his son came on the hand pump with an axe and Ankush Thorat too arrived on the pump in the same fashion. As such a scene was an usual one to the people around and they neglected it, but the quarrel on this day took a serious turn. The allegations went on increasing and Bapurao and Sandip Surase, father and son belonging to Maratha community wounded seriously Ankush Thorat with the axe. In order to save her husband, Janabai fell on her husband’s body but Sandeep Surase hit her with his axe in the head and she died on the spot.

Janabai Thorat, a Matang pregnant woman was literally slaughtered by Maratha upper caste people. On 30th March 2005 came a court judgement from Jalana district in which Bapuram Devram Surase and his son Sandeep were punished by the life imprisonment and Prayagbai Madan Surase, Vatsalabai Bapurao Surase were given one year rigorous punishment. Though the people involved in the act were punished by the court of law, the fact remains that, how a pregnant Matang woman is killed before
all the upper caste people is a fact that talks volumes about Matangs’ unsecured position. The example cited above is not an old one but the one that took place in 2003.

5.6.6 Takali (Sikandar) – Dist. Solapur:

Takali is a town 25 kms. away from Mohol. The place is important from the political point of view. Bhima Sugar factory is located in this town. On 27th Oct. 2003, upper caste people have burnt the houses of Matangs on a very petty reason. The root of this incident that took place in 2003 goes back to 14th April 1998. On that day Matangs were asked to remove blue flag they had flared to mark Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti at a prime square of the town, instead the upper caste people urged to put on the saffron flag. In order to have an amicable solution it was decided to raise both the flags at two different places in the same square. The Matang community have flurred the blue flag at the main square of the town was not liked by the upper caste community. The suppression remained boiling in their minds. On 27th Oct 2003, a Matang boy named Shivaji Kamble went to a tailors shop where, he touched an upper caste boy and the quarrel started. In this incident Shivaji Kamble slapped the upper caste boy, which was taken by the upper caste people as their insult and they attacked Matang settlement in the night in a planned way.

The electricity, telephone connections of Mangs were cut off and during night time they beat them including children and women and finally put their houses on fire. Thus they turned their settlement into ashes. The upper caste people came back to village after that and broke the idols of Ram, Laxman at the village temple and spread the news that it was the act of Matangs or Dalits.
5.7 Change and Continuity in Religion:

Matang is a Hindu community which is a reality. However one finds the Mang people of Boudh and Christian community as well. In 1935 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar declared his conversion at Yeola Dist. Nashik and the whole country was stirred with his declaration. There was a serious discussion at all levels in the Hindu religious as well. The untouchable castes of Hindu religion also engaged in the discussion on the matter. It is but natural that the Mahar community had upheld the decision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considering the Indian social structure. However, forgetting the traditional enemity that was existing for thousands of years between Mang-Mahar community, the Mangs supported the declaration of Dr. Ambedkar on 2nd June 1936. The Mangs had called for a conference at 9.00 p.m. at Nayagao, Mumbai and supported Dr. Ambedkar on the above issue (Ambedkarachi Bhashane, 2002: 537). Matangs from Satara, Solapur, Kolhapur, Pune, Nagar and Nasik districts had supported the said conference at Nayangao.

Matang is one of the major castes in Hindu society. Whatsoever religious and social works assigned to the Mang community according to the Hindu religious system, Mangs have been actively participating into it traditionally. In the religious and caste system of Hindus the Mang have been considered the ‘sacred’ one. There is a proverb recurrent in the state of Maharashtra as ‘Bhetala Mang, Fitala pang’ which confirms the ‘sacredness’ of Mangs in Hindu caste system. The Mangs too have a proud feeling about it. In short, among the Hindu religious system, Mang is one of the important component. This means the Mangs follow customs,

Mangs consider themselves as Hindus and they have a proud feeling about this. Among all the sects and cults of Hindu religion one finds the presence of Mang. In the Mangs of Vidharbha, one finds the people belonging to Shaiv, Manabhav, and Warakari sect. They worship the Lord Mahadeo and Lord Shri Krishna. However, right from the beginning the Mangs are the devotees of Goddess Mariaai they call her as ‘Laxmibai’ (Dhere R.C., 1964: 93). The Potaraj of Mariaai is usually Mahar or Mang but very often he happens to be a Mang. As the number of Potaraj in Vidharbha is less, the Potaraj from Marathwada came to Vidharbha and wander in the villages (Khadase B. K. 1990: 110).

In short we can say that the Hindu gods and goddess and they carry out their responsibilities given to them by Hindu religion. Among the deities assigned to them are;

1) Amavasya Magane  
2) Toran Bandhane  
3) Udgar magane  
4) Diwali Magane  
5) Dhondi Magane  
6) Gudi Ubharane  
7) Hel Takane  
8) Patravali Magane  
9) Sada Takane  
10) Gavhan Magane  
11) Matere Magane etc.

All the above stated social practices of asking aims on the festival and other religious occasions are taken by Mangs to be their religion and they follow those practices. All the male-female Mangs participate in socio-religious practices. In a real sense, these socio-religious practices are the means of living for the Mangs as the Mang community happens to be poor. These religious beliefs of Hindus are the identity of Mang’s ‘slavery’. However, Mangs take them to be their ‘pride’, with this feeling of pride they worship the
Hindu gods and goddess and even participate in their social practices.

Mangs mostly worship the Hindu gods and goddesses; among them are Ram, Krishna, Shankar, Hanuman, Ganapati along with the Bahujan gods like Vithoba, Mhasoba, Khandoba, Mangirbaba, Bahiroba, these male gods are mostly worshipped by the Mangs of Marathwada region (Arjune Dilip, 2006: 129). Among the goddesses they worship Ambabai, Janai, Yesai, Yamai, Inai, Mariaai, Matamai, Bhavani, Laxmiaai, Asara, Gouri, Saraswati etc. (Arjune Dilip, 2006: 129). The Mangs of Vidharbha primarily worship Laxmiaai, Dhrupada Aai and among the male gods they mainly worship ‘Mangirbaba’ (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 237).

The Mangs of western Maharashtra mainly worship male gods like Shankar, Vithoba, Jyotiba, Yedoba, Yetalba, Mhasoba etc. and among the female gods they worship Mariaai, Ambabai, Kalubai, Bhavaniaai, Yalamaaai, Tayaaai etc. Among these religious practices, the Mangs keep fast on Monday which is considered to be the day of ‘Shankara’ on that day people keep fast and abstain non-vegetarian food. People worshipping ‘Vithoba’ go on ‘vari’ to Pandharpur and wear a chain made up of beads of ‘Tulasi’ which is called ‘Tulasimal’ They avoid the non-veg food. The worshippers of god ‘Khandoba’ go to the fair of Khandoba to the places like Jejuri (Pune), Pal (Satara), Pethnaka (Sangli), Mangsuli (Belgaum), Bale (Solapur) which are the seats of the god Khandoba. They do ‘Jagaran’, on the day of Jagaran they sacrifice the goat. They call Vaghya Murali and do jagar. Most of the Mangs in western Maharashtra have Khandoba as their ‘Kulaswami’. The devotees of ‘Yalamma’ go to a place called Soundatti and Mayyakka Chinchani in Karnataka, Kokatnur (Athani) etc. They perform a
rite which is known as ‘Limb Nesane’. They call the ‘devdasi’ and offer their worship. Jyotiba is primarily the ‘Kuldaivat’ of Marathas in western Maharashtra however, it happens to be the ‘Kulswami’ of Mangs too in some villages like Kapuskhed, Tal.- Walwa, Dist. Sangli. His devotees go to Jyotiba fair and offer their prayers through the ‘Bhavini’ of Jyotiba.

The ‘Potraj’ of Mariaai go to the villages on Tuesdays and Fridays and do her worship (pooja). He sings the songs in her praise and play on ‘Dafade’ and dance. He himself happens to be the ‘Poojari’ of Mariaai.

Taiaai and Neela Chandratai are also the two important Matang daities. They are also worshipped by ‘Potraj’. A pregnant sheep is sacrificed to Tai aai. She is worshipped at the midnight hours. The offering is not distributed among women. The offering is to be finished before dawn else it is to be buried in the ground. The main seat of Neelachandra Tai is at Kumbhargao, Tal-Kadegaon, Dist-Sangli. During the fair of the daitety large number of ‘Potraj’ assemble on the earlier day of the fair and the godess is offered the sweet offerings and next day ‘Khare’ that is non-vegetarian offerings are offered. The Potraj even does the Pooja of Mariaai. She is given sacrifice of he buffalo, even today this practice is on at the places like Tasgaon (Dist-Sangli) Khandal and Kadalge, (Tal-Gadhinglaj, Kolhapur). Even such a sacrifice of he buffelo is made to ‘Varakhadachi aai’ at the Nagar region of Aurangabad district. The Mangs worship this daitety (Chavan Ramnath, 1989:161).

Thus the Mangs are religiously Hindus. They worship gods and goddesses of Hindus. In the rural areas even today the worship of ‘gaodev’, ‘Kuldev’ is done extensively. The participation of Mangs is at higher level during the fairs of traditional gods and goddesses
and other religious practices. Among the Matangs, the percentage of performing daily pooja is 70%, on the day of fast 73.8%, occasional on the days of festival is 68.6%, at the time of ‘Sankav’ 54.7%, about 50%, of people do ‘pooja’ at the time of (Khadase B. K. 1990: 114).

In Marathwada region 64.81% of Matangs worship all the gods and goddesses 92.22% families follow Hindu religion. Not a single family was found atheist in the study of Arjune. (Arjune Dilip, 2006: 135).

Though mainly Mangs follow Hinduism, they even do ‘Pooja’ of many saints and ‘Sadhus’. They worship the saints like Chokhoba, Dnyandeo, Namdeo, (Arjune Dilip, 1990: 129) along with other saints like Tukaram Maharaj, Gondavalekar Maharaj (Satara), Sevagiri Maharaj (Satara) Gaganagiri Maharaj (Gaganbawada, Kolhapur) Balu Mama (Admapur, Tal. Bhudargad Kolhapur), Swami Samarth (Akkalkot), Sai Baba (Shirdi), Gajanana Maharaj (Shegaon). Motiram Maharaj (Amarawati). The Matangs of Rajarampuri, Kolhapur worship ‘Appasaheb Maharaj’ in their settlement. The Mangs of Mhaswad (Tal-Man, Dist-Satara) perform pooja of Mangoba and Mhasoba.

Apart from the above the Mangs even visit the Peer-Dargas of Muslim community. The places like Miraj, Kabanoor (Ichalkaranji, Kolhapur), Nandre (Sangli), Dawalmalik (Devkhandi, Tal-Khanapur, Dist-Sangli), Kalandarbaba (Lengare, Tal-Khanapur, Sangli) Haji Malangbaba (Kalyan, Dist. Thane) are frequently visited by Matangs for their worship. Mostly the fairs take place in the villages happens to be of some ‘peer-baba’ and participation of Mangs in that is remarkable.
In Marathwada region Mangs mostly worship the Peerbaba’s like, Shadulbua Tajawade baba etc. They worship to the peer and fakirs (Arjune Dilip, 2006: 129). Mangs at Nanded go at gurudwara of Shikhs with great devotion. The Mangs of Jalana and Aurngabad district of Marathwada, Nagar and Nasik district of Northern Maharashtra, Sangli, Pune, Kolhapur, Satara, Solapur of western Maharashtra even pray Jesus. They visit church and pray to Jesus Christ. A large number of Matangs from this area have accepted Christianity, they go to the church and prey.

In Arjune’s survey 4.45% Matang families are found to be christian (Arjune Dilip, 2006: 133). Apart from this, many Mang families have converted to Buddhism inspired by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. They visit the ‘Vihars’ and pray Lord Buddha. This means though Mangs are mainly Hindus, we find among them the people following Christianity and Buddhism, we find in them even the worshippers who visit muslim baba’s and peers and gods and goddess of Shikhs as well.

Mangs are Hindus because this is one of the castes in Hindu religion. The Mangs of rural area worship the village daities and their traditional gods whereas in the urban area they worship the gods at the places like Shirdi, Tirupati, Astavinayaka etc. The Matang women in the cities worship and perform pooja of banyan tree on the day of ‘Vat Pournima’. They engage programmes like Haldi-Kunku’ imitating the neighbouring women folk. They give away the presents as per the custom. They perform pooja of ‘Vaibhav Laxmi’ and on the Thursday of the Hindu month of ‘Margashirsha’ they worship ‘Mahalaxmi’. In the rituals performed at villages there would not be necessarily a presence of Brahmin but in the urban area it is the ‘Brahmins’ who conduct the pooja
which means in the cities these acts come closer to ‘Brahat’ (great) tradition (Khadase B. K. 1990: 115).

Though Mangs are Hindus, they try to nurture the religious beliefs of all the religions. Mang males worship the gods of Hindu, Muslim and Shikh. Hindu Mang believe in magic, Bhagat, Poojari, Sadhu etc. They tie a black-red thread around their neck.

The Matang women of Marathwada, western Maharashtra and Vidharbha ask for the ‘Jogawa’ of ‘Bhavani mata’, Mahalaxmi and Inai respectively (Interview of Bhalerao – Deorao Sonabai).

Though by and large Mangs belonging to Hindu religion one finds the Muslim, Christian and Bouddh Mangs too.

5.7.1 Muslim Mang:

The 'Muslim reign' is one of the most important period in the Indian politics. Muslims have ruled Indian for about more than 800 years. It seems that because of the caste and creed system, colour discrimination, unsociability and many such ills in the Indian social system, many people have accepted Muslim religion (Islam). Among all these untouchable, Mangs have been also included. However, one do not find Mangs converting to Muslims in an organised manner. But Mangs have accepted Muslim religion. Many social thinkers have referred 'Muslim Mang' as one of the sub-caste of Mang.

There was an incident that a Mang family had converted to Muslim at Bhamburda (Pune). Mangs took a serious note of this incident and in the Matang Meeting held on 14th Aug. 1923 this act was condemned. People like Kondiram Sakat, Tatyaba Gaikwad, Ranadive, Babu Dhondi Vayadande gave stern speech against this act. Even in the 'Matang Meeting' held at Khadaki, Pune the act of the Matang family that converted to Muslim was condemned. R. T.
Bhingardive, Tukaram Mahapure, Shiva Dnyanaba Kamble, Sitaram Babaji Landage gave speeches against the conversion, not only this but they appealed to excommunicate the converted family and a resolution was passed at the meeting (Mande, Prabhakar 1999: 86, 87).

In the Nizam regim at Bachori, Tal. Udgir, Dist. Nanded shankar Rama Waghmare Matang by caste had got married to a Muslim woman and accepted Muslim religion. Shankar became Shankarmiyan. His wife Chandrakala remained Mang till the end of her life whereas Shankar Waghmare remained 'Shankarmiyan' till the end.

At Aurangabad Lalaso Salve's daughter Janabai Salve accepted Muslim religion and got married to a Muslim. After marriage she became Janabai. It was not a common practice. However there is a rare possibility that many Mangs might have converted to Muslims during 'Muslim reign'

5.7.2 Christian Mang:

By and large though Mangs in Maharashtra follow the Hindu tradition we find that Mangs have been found in Christianity. At the places like Pune, Ahamadnagar, Kolhapur, Miraj, Jalana, Aurangabad, Latur, Marathwada, North Maharashtra and Vidarbha in order to negate the caste system, unsociability of Hindu religion, and to overcome poverty, Mangs might have been converted to Christianity. Of course Mahar also was behind in this act. Perhaps he was ahead of Mang.

Although Mang and Mahars have converted to Christianity the conflict and difference between them have continued even after conversion. In order to posses the property of British American
churches the converted Christian Mang, have made lot of efforts but in this case too Mahars have gone ahead of Mangs.

People from many castes in Ahamadnagar district have converted to Christianity. Among them are Rev. Tilak, Balkavi Thambare and cine actor Shahu Modak. Their graves are found in Christine graveyard. The graveyard was at Vatawadi which has become Siddharth Nagar today.

An interesting thing is that at Ahamadnagar though Mang-Mahars are Christians, Mahars have separate churches. They communicate to the world through these churches and even get help from all over the world. Mangs do not have a seperate church in Ahamadnagar and Mangs don’t enter in the church of Mahar. The church built by the kinsman of Shahu Modak is at 'Kokaranchi Mandali' where Mangs go for worship. At Maliwada Matang colony, there is a small church for Mangs but it is also related to the church of Shahu Modak. In short can be said that though Mang-Maharas have turned to Christianity they don’t have amicable relationship and are having difference.

There is an organization of Christians 'Salvation Army' in Ahamadnagar district but Mahars are in great number in this organization, where as in 'Sun Adventist Church' the Mang Christian are in great number. There was complete of superiority and inferiority even among the Christian Mahars became of which the Mahars Christians have began the de-caste movement. The movement was meant to give a message that 'if you are originally a Mahar be united'.

In Ahamadnagar district, Tarakhpur, Santipur, Prakashpur , Bhingar, Savedi (HUDCO) were the place where there were earlier 'Maharwadas' and Christians were in great number at these places.
The Bishop colony and Loyed colony are the most sophisticated and standard colonies, where Mahars are more in number, whereas at the place like Lal Taki, Bhaskar Colony, Nalegaon, Koti, Maliwad, Vaitagwadi the Mang Christians dominate. The people here collect waste paper, tin etc. and later on go to church for prayer.

Mahars modified themselves after they converted to Christianity and got the benefit while Mangs could not do so. They don’t have their own church and even graveyard. Mang have been given land here to the compound wall of Vaitagwadi (Siddharhnagar) for their burial. While digging a grave the skeletons of dead bodies buried earlier came out of it. This means even after the death, the Mangs are humiliated. The questions of their bread are still there as they were, so Mangs ask for alms at the Christians and Diwali. This means that during Chrisman, Mang is a Christian and at the time of Diwali he is a Hindu. A social reformer Shekatkar performed last right of his mother in Christians way and of his wife in a Hindu way. Mahars are Christians at church and they are 'Scheduled Caste' at the time of availing benefits from government scheme. The Mangs don’t seem to have this smartness which Mahars have. (An interview of Dattatraya Madhavrao Lokhande)

Prabhakar Mande, a researcher on Mang caste consider Christian Mang a sub-caste of Mangs. Number of Christian Mang women get possessed by 'Satavai' (Laxmi Aai) in the fair of Laxmi Aai even Christian Mang participates. (Mande Prabhakar,1999: 140). During Navaratra Christian Mang women ask for 'Patravali' whereas at the time of no moon night they ask for house hold items such on oil, salt, and chilli powder (Mande Prabhakar, 1999: 141).
5.7.3 Baudh Mang:

There are number of examples cited that the Mang have embarrassed Buddhism at the time of Buddha. The Matang King named Prasenjeet had patroned the Buddhism. The person who argued Buddha was Mang Kashyap. He was the first person to spread Buddhism in China outside India. This clearly shows that Mangs were Buddhists earlier. But when Mahars accepted Buddhism the Mangs went away from it is a history (Jadhav V.T. 1980: 7) later on we see the religion of Buddha had almost disappeared from India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar embarrassed the Buddhism on 14th Oct. 1956 by that time the Mangs who had accepted Ambedkar their leader too had converted to Buddhism among them are R. G. Khandagale (Daund - Pune), M. T. More (Kolhapur), Tukaram Bhalerao (Vayapankar) of Tal. Hadagaon Dist Nanded, Dagadu Suryawanshi (Manara, Tal. Hadagaon) Sakha Gaikwad, Koli (Tal. Hadagaon) Shahir Dayanand Sabale of Snkali Tal. Umarkhed, Mahadeo Sonaba Bhalerao of Shendri Tal. Darva, Dist Yawatmal, Ramchandra Mahajan (Yawatmal), Laxman Wankhede of Tal. Khanulgaon (Yawatmal) and Shri More (Nashik). All these and other Mangs have accepted Buddhism along with Ambedkar at the 'Dikshabhoomi' at Nagpur.

In the year 1980 Shri Ingale of Kasarali, Tal. Viseli Dist. Nanded accepted Buddhism. Ramrao Gavali of Latur got married in 1981 in a Buddhist way. Not only this but he had organised a seminar in which the Dalit Panther leader Ramdas Athawale was present. Ramrao Gavali was on the front in the renaming movement of Marathawada University in 1984. Sukumar Kamble (Kolhapur) through Trailokya Boudh Mahasangh at Minache
accepted Buddhism unitedly (1988). Among them were Mang families from Savarde, Minache, Alate Latwade, Khochi, Ghunaki, Ambap, Padali and Kuralap villages.

On 14th Jan. 1995 Matang community Buddhist Dhamm conference took place at Nanded. Many Mangs were converted to Buddhism at the hands of Buddhist Surai Sasai of Japan. This occasion was presided over by Shivaraj Tukaram Kolikar of (Rankhamb). Kolikar originally hailed from Zadgaon Tal. Umarkhed (Yawatmal) and Sakha Gaikwad who had converted himself to Buddhism along with Ambedkar was his maternal brother (mama).

After the Dhamma conference at Nanded Kolikar became active in Buddhist movement and organised another such conference at Nanded on 4th May 2004 and G. S. Kamble was a chief guest. The third Dhamma Conference was held at Kalamandir, Nanded on 11th Sept. 2005 in which Laxman Mane (leader of nomadic tribes) was the chief guest. The fourth Dhamma conference was organized on 10th Dec. 2006 at Aurangabad for which Dhammachari Ratnasheel (Pune) was the chief guest. The fifth conference was held on 28 May 2006 at Nanded. Shivaraj Kolikar founded 'Bahujan Vishawa Seva Sangh' a Dhamma organization.

In 2006 fifty years were completed for Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism. This motivated many Mangs in Maharashtra and on this fiftieth year, Mangs got attracted towards Buddhism. In addition to it Ekanath Awad (Beed) and his companions gave a call 'Buddh Ki Oar Chalo' meaning let us go towards Buddha and started organizing meeting in this respect. Awad organised Dhamma meetings at the places such as Latur and Amarawati. These Dhamma meeting were opposed at many places
by the local Mangs community; inspite of this opposition Awad entered in Buddhism on 14th Oct. 2006 under the leadership of Laxman Mane at Nagpur.

Though Shivaraj Kolikar and Eknath Adhav are the supporters of Buddhism, they have serious differences between them. Kolikar felt that though converted to Buddhism Mangs should not mix up with Mahars and maintain their identity. That's why he has established a separate 'Bouddh Sangh' only for converted Mangs. Trailokya Bouddh Mahasangh is of Indian Mahars and Bahujan Vishwa Seva Sangh is of Mang Community.

In all we find that there is no uniformity and unity among Mangs even after their conversion to Buddhism. When Awad was asked 'how did you turn to Buddhism?' he replied 'whatever has happened is happened. In the conversion of Awad to Buddhism one find less 'religion' and more 'politics'.

An interesting things is that, G. S. Kamble who went to Shivaraj Kolikar's second Dhamma conference on 4th May 2004 as a chief guest took a position of 'Wait and Watch' regarding the conversion. Lataron Kamble organized 'Dharmchintan Parishad' and started posing questions: Does Matang community have a religion? Do they really need a religion? If needed which religion they need? He had organised conference posing these and such questions at Latur, Aurangabad, Pune, Parabhani and Jalana. By organising these conferences in the golden Jubilee year of conversion, G. S. Kamble indirectly opposed for the conversion. Even in this the 'Mang' politics was dominating.

Mangs have tried to embrace Buddhism and one find that number of Mangs respect Buddhism. If at all Mangs have to
convert to some religion, they should convert to the 'Satya Dharam' of Mahatma Phule which is also a dominant voice of Mangs.

5.8 **Social System: Continuity and Change:**

Indian social system is a caste based society. Inequality is its base. This system is based on the ‘Varna’ system. There are four major ‘Varna’s i.e. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Brahmins are considered to be superior to all by birth itself. and ‘Shudra’ are taken as the most inferior to all of them. The ‘Varna’ system has given birth to thousands of castes sub-castes and creeds however, among all these ‘Shudra’ are considered to be the most debased caste. Among Shudra, Mang is one such a caste in untouchable community.

Matang is an untouchable caste and in Indian social system this caste is the most inferior one. Mang are the ‘Balutedar’ of upper caste people, it is the caste that is slave, poor and destitute among all. In a real sense, this caste is a caste of Valours. It is a caste that is active but it has become ‘helpless’ before the caste system. This caste is leading its life in humiliation. In peshwa period even a shadow of this caste would make an upper caste person ‘impious’ or ‘unsacred’. The Mantangs were not allowed to come on road before 9.00 a.m. and after 4.00 p.m. A Matang was not given entry in the temples. They could not drink water at public places. They had the special provisions for water near by rivers and rivulet.

Though such a humiliating treatment was given to Matang, he was considered a ‘sacred’ one. As he was considered ‘sacred’, was buried alive in the foundation while constructing a castle, mansion or such a structure. There was a dominant feeling that “the death
of Mang bring prosperity to village” because of which Mangs have
died in all generations. This itself confirms the social status of
Matang. That’s why injustice and atrocity is not a new thing for a
Matang. After independence the constitution has given a protection
to all the Shudras along with Mangs. Laws are made in their
favour. The community is awakening with the thoughts of Phule-
Ambedkar. We find the Matang is fighter for his right. He is voicing
out against the injustice done to him. He is debunking the
traditional values attached to him and throwing off the life of
slavery. Commendable change is being seen in his life style, thinking
and behavior.

Even though we find case like Mohan Keshav Gaikwad
(Narangwadi, Tal. Omarga, Dist. Osmanabad), who was a ‘Kotawal’
was beaten up and hanged to death on a tree. At Boragaon Tupahi
(Tal. Tuljapur Dist. Osmanabad) a Matang named Dattatraya
Dethe was killed to death by a group of upper caste people. From
Devalali Dhoki (Tal. Kalamb Dist. Osmanaban) Mandakini Yedave,
a Matang girl who denied physical relation with an upper caste
person was burnt alive by throwing kerosine on her body. At Yevati
(Tal. Taljapur) a Mantang bride and bridegroom entered Maruti
temple because of which they were beaten up along with their
relatives.

At bhutegaon (Dist. Jalana) a Matang Ramesh Shendage was
burnt alive. At Murti (Jalana) Janabai Thorat, a pregnant lady was
brutally axed to death. At Ghagarwada (Dist. Beed) Sheshrao
Lokhande denied to do ‘gaoki’ and was killed by upper caste people.
At Athavad (Tal. Dist. Ahamadnagar) Arjun Datal took a
procession of Matang lady Tarabai Chandane making her clothless.
At Risangaon (Tal. Loha Dist. Nanded) Ramchandra Waghmare’s
funeral procession was attacked by upper caste people because of which Ramchandra Waghmare’s dead body lied unburied openly for almost three days. At Sategaon (Tal. Naigaon, Dist. Nanded) Chandrakant Gaikwad loved a Maratha girls become of which his eyeballs were taken out by upper class people. At Manerajuri (Tal. Tasagaon, Dist. Sangli) seeing Matang women becoming independest through self –help group, upper caste people have beaten them up with bats and stumps. At Vadanage (Tal. Karveer, Dist. Kolhapur) upper class people set Matang settlement on fire. The same case took place at Prabhani district where two Matang colonies were set on fire. Upper class people attacked Pochiram Kamble (Nanded) and Baban Misal (Ahmednagar) seeing that they are bringing about transformation in Matang community inspired by transformation movement.

Matang community is not allowed to enter in Hindu temples in the districts of Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur. A separate cup and sausor is kept for Matangs at the home of upper class people. They are poured water for drinking. At certain place like Sangli and Solapur the barbers don’t share the Matagn. The above examples show that today Matang community is leading a life of slavery and their condition is just pathetic.

Today we see Matang is fighting for his rights. He is taking support of the law, constitutional rights and trying to create his own space while fighting against upper caste people. He is organizing himself through several organizations and raising questions in the social system. He is no more holding a back seat while figthing for social equality and justice. He is awakened with the thoughts of Lahuji Salve-Phule-Ambedkar and Anna Bhau Sathe. He is narrating his ‘grief’ through literature. This change
and transformation in Matang community is no doubt a remarkable one and heralding a new beginning in the community.

5.9 Culture and Literature: Continuity and Change

The contribution of Matang in Marathi literature is noteworthy but Marathi critics have neglected the Matang writers. One of the major trend in Marathi literature is Dalit literature. Mukta Salve (Matang) is the pioneer of this trend but Dalit and Marathi critics deny this right to Mukta Salve. Anna Bhau Sathe has been writing since 1931. He is a prolific writer and has authored short stories, novels, plays, shahiri poems, (Ballads). However the pioneership of Dalit literature does not go to Anna Bhau Sathe, on the contrary it is given to Baburao Bagul who imitated Anna Bhau Sathe. These critics are doing great injustices to the Matang writers.

The Buddhist Dalit and Marathi writers do not accept a Matang writer and do not incorporate him in this cult. Gangadhar Panatavane runs Asmitadarsh Dalit Chalval (Asmitadarsh Dalit Movement) for the past 39 years, however he has never done any Matang the president of any literary meet. This was not done even by the people who run Satyashodhak movement and Vidrohi movement.

Vidrohi literary movement began since 2000, which later on divided into different groups. Bharat Patankar headed one group while Kishor Dhamale, Pratima Paradeshi headed the other. Both the groups run the movement in the same name that is ‘Vidrohi Sahityik Chalval’. Patankar group opted for Parth Polake (Satara) as president for their movement while Kishor – Pratima preferred Kishor Jadhav as the president for their movement. Parth Polake is
an ex-Mahar and Kishor Jadhav is Mang while PatANKar and Dhamale are Marathas. This itself shows that, even cultural and literary movements are dominated by holding Mang-Maharas for name sake.

Comred Govind Panasare and his Communist Party is organizing ‘Anna Bhau Sathe literary meet’ since 2008 along with some socialists. In this meet too hardly one can find a Matang else we see the presence of members other than Matangs. For the first literary meet that was held at Kolhapur, Arjun Dangle an ex-Mahar was the president and for the second meet Uttam Kamble an ex Mahar won to inaugurate the meet. In both these meets RavaSheb Kasabe was present. In a real sense the Communist Party is disappearing from the political scene. In Maharashtra too the party is going through pathetic state. Anna Bhau died in 1969, since then in these fourty years Communist Party never considered Anna Bhau a ‘hero’. We find the public support of Communist Party is diminishing fast while that of Annabhau is ever increasing, that’s why these days they have taken the support of Annabhau. In short, even in literary movements we find great ‘politics’.

Anna Bhau Sathe, Shankar Bhau Sathe, R. K. Tribhuvan, Namdeo Kamble, Uttam Bandu Tupe, Vitthal Sathe (Pune), Vamanrao Awale have proved their metal in the field of literature even then the established writers have kept them aside. Consequently Matang Community is getting their own identify by reading the literature of Ambedkar, Phule, Shahu and Annabhau. They are running their own literary movement. The new Matang generation is holding Annabhau and Mukta Salve as the true pioneers of Dalit literature and heading in the new directions. In the University of Pune and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada
University, Aurangabad centers in the name of Annabhau Sathe have been established.

Hari Narake (Mali) heads the study center run after the name of Mahatma Phule, Raosaheb Kasabe (ex-Mahar) heads Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar center, however no Mang heads the centre named after Anna Bhau Sathe, on the contrary Ramnath Chavan (ex-Mahar) heads it. The former Vice-Chancellor of Pune University Narendra Jadhav who is Ambedkarian has appointed the above people. Mangs struggled demanding that the headship on Anna Bhau Sathe should be given to a Matang however, some thinking souls came forward and calmed down Matang in this respect.

We do find the change taking place in the field of literature and culture and it is motivated by a sense of community. It has not reached on the broader scale due to the role placed by established communities. All the castes are ‘caste centered’ and even Mangs are not exception. It could be hard to comment so soon whether this charge is a positive or negative but one cannot ignore this change which perhaps is unavoidable.

In the field culture especially in the art sector Uma Babaji gave birth to the art of tamasha. Umaji Kamble (Savlai) and Babaji Sathe (ped) pioneered the tamasha in Sangli district. They immortalized the Vagnatya (drama in tamasha). Raja Harischandra and Mohana-Batav in the province of Marathi. 1880-90 Umaji, a Mang boy was famous for his ‘Lavani’. He was called as ‘Lavanikar’ (writer of folk composition known as Lavani). (Shinde Vishwanath 2006: 37).

This grand father as Kalu-Balu, Hiru-Satu (Koulapur, Dist. Sangli) was at his zenith in the field of tamasha. Subarao Mang’s
tamasha was also very popular. By the same time Bhau Fakkad alias Bhau Maloji Bhandare (At post Mundrale, Tal. Patan, Dist Satara) a versatile artist, a shahir has made his fame reach to Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur. Shahu Maharaj himself had remained present to see the tamasha of Bhau Fakkad on the land of Tembalai, Kolhapur. Seeing his art, Shahu Maharaj had honoured Bhau Fakkad by garlanding him with his own pearl necklace. He had even presented him the honorable attributes like ‘Shela’, Pagote’ and a ‘Shirpech’ (Shinde Vishwanath, 2006: 72). Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had praised him by patting him after seeing his tamasha in Mumbai.

Patthe Bapurao (Shridhar Krishna Kulkarni) is a respectable name in Tamasha. He was a Brahmin by birth and a great Shahir (ballad singer). Once there was a programmer of both Pathe Bapurao and Bhau Fakkad. This Jugalbandi (a sort of competition) went on for 17 days continuously but on 15th day Shahir Patthe Bapurao submitted himself before Bhau Fakkad and ‘Jugalbandi’ was over (Shinde Vishwanath, 2006: 58).

In short, Mangs have given remarkable contribution in the fields of Arts. Literature and Shahiri. Bhau Mang (Narayangaonkar) and his daughter Vithabai Bhau Mang were the recipients of ‘Presidents Award’ for the Tamasha Art individually. These were great artists but remained unnoticed we do not find any memorial in their name.

A memorial of Anna Bhau Sathe as been raised at Vategaon (Dist. Sangli) by the stale government. This memorial is nothing but a tin shade. We find even ‘Bachat Bhavan’ buildings are more attractive and worth noticing but Anna Bhau’s memorial, its
construction, design is degraded one. Anna Bhau has remained a ‘Mang’ even after his death in the eyes of government.

In is pathetic to see that even the Matang community and government attitude is not changing. Both have remained ‘untransformed’ by and large.

5.10 Political System: Continuity and Change

During ancient time, more especially at the time of Buuddha Matang community was a ruler community. There were eight states of Matangs in north India (Wankhede Chandrakant, 2007: 145) and there was Matang state on the banks of river Tungabhadra in southern India. In the 6th century there was a state of King Mangal or Mangal at Badami in Karnataka. (Shinde V. R. 1976: 106). This means, initially Matang community was a ruling community of Kshatriya but with the passage of time this community got included in the untouchable community and was considered as ‘Shudra’.

In 1946, Laxman Khabaji alias Tatyasaheb Bhingardeve become the first MLA from Karmala-Barshi region later on he even became MLA from Khanapur (Sangli) and Maan (Satara). When the first post independence Lok Sabha elections were held in 1952, Deorao Kamble (Nanded) and K. L. More (Kolhapur) became MPs. They were belonging to Matang community. The state of Maharashtra came into being in 1960 and in 1962 first elections were held in which of Matang MLA’s were elected, of course this opportunity to the Matangs was given by Congress. Mangs being the community with a sense of patriotism, it was with Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle. As Gandhiji was with Congress, Mangs too were with Congress.
In 1967, Baburao Bharaskar became the first cabinet minister from the Matang community. After that Premanand Awale became the state minister for some time. Mangs did not have the place in the 'Puloda' government. Since 1990 two other parties that in BJP and Shiva-Sena became active in the politics of Maharashtra which came in power in 1994. During this period, Dileep Kamble became a state minister when he was removed Uttamprakash Kharate of Shiva-Sena was state minister for some time.

In 1999, Sharad Pawar founded Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Congress and NCP contested the election separately and formed an alliance government. This time Jayawantrao Awale became Cabinet Minister for social welfare for five years, whereas Dhobale became Cabinet and State Minister for some time. Since 1977, Sundipan Thorat was M. P. from Pandharpur constituency. However NCP got Ramdas Athavale elected and in this way the existence of Matangs from the parliament came to an end.

In the Lok Sabha election of 2004, Laxman Dhobale contested election from Osmanabad, but was defeated and in Assembly election Jayantrao Awale was defeated from Vadgaon. Dhobale's relative Raju Kisan Awale became MLA through Janasurajya Party. In the Lok Sabha election of 2009, Jayantrao Awale was given candidature by Vilasrao Deshmuka from Latur constituency and got him elected, whereas Laxman Dhobale went in Vidhansabha from Mohol. At Vadagaon (Kolhapur) Jayantrao Awale's son Rajubaba Awale (Congress) and Laxman Dhobale's relative Raju Awale (Janasurajya Party) contested the election but were defeated by Shivsena's Minachekar (Mahar).
In Osmanabad Lok Sabha elections Eknath Awad alleged against Dhobale that ‘Dhobale is not a Mang and he is a holar’. This allegation was challenged by Dhobale in Aurangabad Court. Even in the elections of 2009 a defeated candidate Uttam Prakash Khandare, too alleged against Dhobale in the same way saying that ‘Dhoble is not a Mang and the is a holar’. He filed a petition in the Mumbai High Court. While at Latur Dhobale’s relative MLA Raju Awale alleged that ‘Jayawantrao Awale is not a Mang and he is a Christian. All this shows that Mangs leaders’ do not bring only the caste in politics but even bring about the sub caste. This caste and subcaste tars their image. Mangs are dependant on the established leaders and parties in ‘politics’. A local leader prefers the candidate of his choice and gets him elected. A Mang candidate hardly plays any role or no deed of his makes him able to contest the election. For example. at Maan (Satara) Tukaram Tupe and Sampatrao Awaghade were the two Matangs became MLAs only on the favour of NCP leader Sadashiv Pol. These established leaders get Matangs elected as MLAs and MPs but they don’t allow them to work. These Matang leaders are meek before their ‘godfather’ that they don’t dare to sit in the chair in his presence. The Matang are given candidature on the merits of their fidelity, trustworthiness and meakness. The established leaders don’t give opportunity to the Matang who have self-respect, scholarly perspective, fighting nature and when they give opportunities to such candidates they give it for short term.

In 2010 Vidhansabha elections Ramesh Bagawe (Pune) got a position in Ashok Chavan government but he (Minister of State for Home) virtually carried the ‘Chappals’ of Congress General Secretary Rahul Gandhi during his visit to Mumbai. The incirtent
took place at Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar, Ghatkopar where Rahul had gone to garland Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (www.Sakaltimes.com/india.today.in).

In short, Mangs are with Gandhi and consequently with Congress since beginning but after 1990 the community has been divided into several other parties like Shiv-Sena, BJP and NCP. Though all the parties are giving opportunity to Mangs, one who is more meek gets the opportunities first. They don’t have their own space in politics. They don’t have their own identity. They are dancing to the tunes of established leaders. As Matang community does not have organizational power, economical power and don’t have even will power to enter in politics with self respects. The established leaders are ‘using’ them. They don’t trust each other, they don’t respect each other that is why their politics is based on the quality of ‘leaking’ the established leaders.

Eknath Awad (Beed) founded ‘Bahujan Majur Paksh’ but got his own wife elected for Z.P. on ticket of NCP. Sukumar Kamble (Sangli) founded ‘Democratic Party of India’ but filed the nomination on the ticket of Bhartiya Republican Paksh Bahujan Mahasangh from Vadgaon. The double standards of these leaders can be seen through the above examples.

Even Mang community also did not stay with a leader who is a self-respected person. The community always worship and follows the rising sun. If one leader loosen the position they sack him and follow the new one. The community don’t have the integrity. This means the Mang community is always with that Mang who is in power. This society in not with any movement, Agenda or self respected leader. Thought the political will is strongly entering in
this community it has became weak and directionless in the field of politics.

5.11 Marriage System – Continuity and Change:

Matang community is the one that follows the Hindu rituals and traditions. We see mostly in marriages the children giving more importance to the choices of their parents and get married to the grooms and brides. The marriage system includes many traditions and rituals like Sakharpuda (mouth sweetening ceremony) and Basta Bandhane (selecting clothes for the groom and bride). The marriage ceremony takes place at the house of groom. Privileges of the elders (Maan-Paan) and due respect to them is given by presenting them by clothes (Aher). When Bahmin priest or Bhataji chants the sacred words (Mangalashtake), the people gathered for marriage throw coloured rice (Akshata) on the groom and bride which declare, the marriage. There are other practices like-Devak, going to temple, to take out ‘veer’, to apply Halad, to accept dowry etc. The assembled people from bride’s side (Varhad) leave to their place after having lunch after the marriage ceremony. In the night the groom’s family take out a procession (Varat) of bride and bridegroom. Pendal and Music players are a must in this ceremony.

As the times have changed the pendal from the leaves of plant called ‘Karanj’ has been replaced by modern pendal of clothes. In earlier times Mang or Holar himself use the beat ‘dafade’, however now-a-days, Banjo parties are invited to play. Earlier the dowry amount happened to me meager, however today the dowry is decided depending on the education and job of the groom. Inter-caste marriages are taking place. They are not welcomed by the
society. This itself shows that has deeply the caste system is rooted in the psyche of the people. The marriage ceremony used to take place through five days but in today’s context it has been observed only for one day. As ‘Mangawadas are not having sufficient place for the marriage, the venues are changed to the well constructed marriage halls. Those who cannot afford to such marriage halls arrange the ceremonies in a temple. Though bylaw the age for marriage is decided as 18 for bride and bridegroom respectively, one finds that early marriages too take place on large scale. Even it is observed that lal marriages take place among those who have gone for higher education. This ‘more than wasted’ education itself becomes a ‘problem’ in finding suitable match in marriages. Matang community is also using marriage bureaus. Information is even given in matrimonials through newspapers and internet.

Buddhist Mang carry out marriage as per their custom while Christian Mang marriages take place in churches. Mantang youths are even opting to go in for love marriage and court marriage. Matnag those who have gone abroad have even got married to foreign girls in rare cases. The conflicts in inter caste and inter religion marriage is also seen sometime. Nilesh Namdeo Kathale (Nagpur) was a social worker in Matang community. His brother has done an intercaste marriage because of which the people from bride's side have murdered Nilesh Katnale. (Nanded) tried to go in for love marriage with a Hindu girl because of which Maratha community brutally took out his eyeballs. That one can see even love marriages in Mang community.
5.12 Family system continuity and change.

Matang community has a patriarchal family. The family name is continued after the name of father. After marriage bridegroom goes to the home of bride. She changes her name of her father and takes the name of her husband. In earlier days Matang community had joint family system, even today one can see members two to three generation living together. All the family members take part in religions rituals.

Though this is the general scene, we do see certain change. Traditional ‘Mangwadas’ fall short to cope up with the ever growing population of the community. Two to three brothers find it difficult to stay together along with their wives and children due to lack of space that’s why we find married men are shifting to other places along with their wives and children. In many rural places of Maharashtra one finds colonies are coming up for ‘homeless’. Inhabitants in such homeless settlements are mostly Mangs. Population of Mangs in cities is increasing as the educated and employed Mang youth are shifting to the cities along with their families.

Though basically Mang community has a patriarchal family one can see the women in the family dominates after few years of marriage. Her decisions become important. Though the family of Matang community continues after the father, the ‘home’ runs as per the mind of Matang woman. In almost all the matters Matang lady leads in the family, even in the quarrels and fights a women leads and a man takes, back seat. In matters of injustice and atrocity a Matang lady is ahead of a man on record. Through it is said that a Matang community is ‘patriarchal’, in practice it is really ‘matriarchal’. 
Matang community is also going in for ‘family planning. Mostly women go for the operation. Men do not go for viscotomy and even a women do not allow the man to opt for that. It is seen that it a first wife do not beget a child men go for second marriage. That is why polygamy system is seen in Matang community even today. If husband and wife do not get along with each other, even divorce is opted for. Divorcee women can remarry twice or thrice, however a Matang women cannot stay with more than one husband. Many a times it is seen that a groom can stay at his in law’s house as ‘Gharjawai’ (groom staying in his in laws home permanently).

In short the modern times and education has changed the attitude of Matang community to look at wife and women but still the reins of family mostly remain is the hands of man.

5.13 **Education System : Continuity and Change :**

As the Matang community was considered to be ‘Shudra’ and untouchable in the Hindu Varna system, they were forbidden to take education. If somebody tries to do so a punishment was given during ‘Ramayana’, Shambuce had tried to take education because of which he was killed by Rama. Eventhough ‘Matang Rishi’ was the one great rishi who was given pre ‘Gurupad’ (Teachership). Shabari, Jarila, Siddha and Tapasi were the disciples of Matang rishi. The teacher of Lord Krishna Sandipani rishi was a Matang. During Buddha period Kashyap was a great scholar who spread Buddhism in China. In Jain religion too, Harikeshbal was a Matang. Bhadali who was believed to have knowledge of all times was also a Matang lady (Somawanshi B. C. : 1989 : pp. 16-38). In conclusion it can be said that, though Matangs were not allowed to
take education they have shown their intellectual and scholarly capacities the hard core Brahmins killed the pursuit of knowledge among Matangs.

In 1852 Mahatma Phule began education of Matangs. Ganu Shivaji Mang, a student in the school of Mahatma Phule became the first teacher in Matang community in 1857. From the three schools for untouchables, scholars were selected among which Dhondi Bin Hanmantg, Vithu Bin Panduji, Kondi Bin Kallu, Mahadeo Bin Kallu and NamaBin Kallu were the five Matang students. Other scholars included Mahars – 3, Chambhar – 2, Kunabi – 1, Mochi – 1 and Muslim – 1. (Phadake Y. D. 1991 : 651).

In the school of Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule, Mukta Salve was a student belonging to Matang community. She had bagged first prize in an essay competition organized by Mahatma Phule when she was studying in 4th student. This girl become the pioneer of Dalit literature lateron.

In the region of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj when a Matang boy called Krishnaji More expressed his urge to take education, Rajarshi Shahu took him in his car into the school run by Arya Samaj and did all his provisions. This boy became member of parliament twice (Jayasingrao Pawar – 2001. 88).

Karmveer Bhauro Patil began Rayat Shikshan Sanstha at Satara. Laxman Krishnaji Bhingardeve stood first in Sanskrit there. When Mahatma Gandhi visited Rayat Shikshan Sanstha on 25 Feb. 1927, seeing Bingardev’s merit Mahatma Gandhi himself garlanded the boy by his own garland (Dhage subhash 2005 : 65). This boy lateron became a graduate in that subject and came to be known as the first graduate from Matang community. Not only this but he even became M.L.A. three times. Tukaram Bhauro Awale a
Matang boy from Rayat Shikshan Sanstha went to England for higher education in 1945. Lateron in 1950 he became a Professor of History in Chh. Shivaji College, Satara. He became chairman of SSC board of Aurangbad region. Ganapatrao Abaji Wayadande a Rayatian became B. E. (Civil) and went to America. He was the Mayor of Visilia City is California for about 10 years Vilasrao Ghat was the first Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Shivaji University, Kolhapur. Subhash Awale was the first Vice Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technical University. Lonare (Dist. Raiged) Deorao Kamble, who was inspired by Swami Ramanand Tirth became M. P. and ML. A. for one term each from Marathwada.

Maharahi Vitthal Ramji Shinde established Depressed Class Mission at Pune and began a night school at the Ganjpeth Matang colony in 1950. Many Matang people like Shripatrao Chandane (Satara), Kondiram Kashiram Sakat, Baburao Wayadande, Vishwanath Vishnul Salve, Sitaram Genu Ballal, Tatyasaheb Gaikwand, Sitaram Babaji Landoge (all from Pune) helped Maharshi Karve in his mission. Marshi Shinde organized a untouchables conference at Pune on 5th Oct. 1912 in which a new governing body of Depressed Class Mission was elected V. R. Shinde became its president. Among other member elected were : Tatyaba Gaikwad and Khaburao Wayadande (Pawar G. M. 2004 : 378 - 76).

Shripad Mahadoo Mate's work too is of immense importance in enlistment of Matangs in tems of education. Mate established 18 schools for untouchable in 1917. The first school was established at the Matang settlement Navi Peth. Apart from this, such schools were established at Bhamburda, Katarkhana, Gultekadi. Mate established an organization called ‘Ashprushyata Niwaraka
In short it can be said that though Hindu religion had banned the Matang community from taking education declaring it as untouchables, we find Mang have shown remarkable development in this field. However, the percentage that was expected had not been attained by the community. The reasons why Mangs remain away from education: superstitions and backwardness. During the days of Mahatma Phule Mang’s interest in education was worth considering but in 20th century they remained away from education. This is one of the major reasons why this community has remained away. The Bristishes have stamped this community as the criminal community Mangs could not take education because of their Participation in freedom struggle and ‘pratisarkar Chalval’ (Parallel Government Movement). Apart from these their struggle for existence has kept them away from education.

The percentage of illiteracy among Matang community was as follows 1961 -90.13%, 1971 – 83.05%, 1981 – 76.27%, 1991 – 76.27% and in 2001 this percentage is 74.27%. Merely 1.45% students complete their education up to 10th standard and only 0.36% Matang could reach up to graduate level. 0.20% Matangs can emancipate themselves, by attaining education at post graduates level. This data brings before the backwardness of the community in education.

This means among Matangs illiteracy was existing before 1960 and it is present even today. Though there is reservation for the community in the field of education after independence...
Matangs could not take benefit of it. There reservation policies became of their backwardness on the contrary Mahar community is ahead in this area. This her resulted in to a mentality among Matang that they remain away from such benefits became of New Buddhist Mahars. This mentality has given rise to their demands to have a special reservation policy for Matangs for which the community has come on streets for their rights. This has even widened the gap between the Mangs and Mahars.

Though the literacy rate of Matang community is minimum many Matangs are proving themselves in this field. They are holding respectable positions in various fields. In 1978 Awaghade (Borade, Tal. Khatav, Dist. Satara) stood first in HSC examination in Maharashtra. He working at a respectable position at ISRO. Prashant Awale (Vajuj, Tal. Khatav dist. Satara) Matang by community is a pilot. Vivek Maruti Gaikwad from Ravangaon, a settlement of displaced people because of lendi dam in Nanded district has cleared ITI examination while struggling against his odd situation. His mother is a daily wage working women and father was in a Band group no one in the family has gone to the school. On such a background Vivek has achieved this merit is noteworthy. (www.esakal.com) Such examples are very rare.

Matang community is pursuing education because of Phule-Ambedkar thoughts, movement in Matang community, development of rival community of Mahars and overall pressure of globalization but this development is not satisfactory. As we see the development among Mahars become of Ambedkar movement and that awakening ‘accepting Buddhism; duo to happening with Matang community. Mahars have stopped traditional ‘Gaoki’ after their conversion to Buddhism, gave up traditional occupation, but
still we find Mangs caught in old occupations Gaoki, rituals and traditions which have definitely affected adversely to the development of Matang community

5.14 Economic System: Continuity and Change:

As Matang community is a ‘Balutedar’ and untouchable community in the Indian social system, it was involved in traditional system of ‘Balute’. In this system it was involved in the occupational such as preparing ropes from the plants called ‘Ghayapat’ to make brooms from the branches of a tree called ‘Shindi’, to prepare baskets from bamboo plants, to play on a musical instrument called ‘Dafade’ etc. However because of modernization, urbanization, industrialization new educational policies and globalization its age old involvement in traditional occupation has become less and the community thrown away has such traditional occupations.

Mangs used to prepare ropes from the plant fibre called ‘Vakh’ but Bodrei brought in the market nylon ropes because of which the demand for traditional ropes diminished. In addition to that, the plant needed to make such ropes are not cultivated on large scale which affected their occupation. Mangs make brooms out of leaves and branches of a plant called ‘Shindi’. Broom is considered as ‘Goddess Laxmi’ in rural Maharashtra. However these traditional brooms have been replaced by long brooms and vaccume cleaners. The trees of ‘Shindi’ are found scarcely and the occupation of making brooms has almost come to close. Plastic articles are available in the market which are preferred by customers resulting almost cut down of bamboo articles. Even though in certain villages like Yedi Nipani (Tel. Walva Dist. Sangli)
Mangs prepare ropes. Branches of Shindi plants are brought form Karnataka and brooms are made in districts like Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur. In place like Karad, Shirala (Dist. Sangli) and (Yetomal), Mangs prepare baskets from bamboo plants. Though this occupation is carried on traditionally at these places it is just for name sake. In case of traditional occupation of playing musical instruments like Dafade, Sur, Sania Mangs have opted for modern Banjo Parties. They are involved in business like having Band groups. This business is at its peak in the marriage season. During the ‘Yatra Season’ in rural Maharashtra artists in these bands are called to play on in folk arts like ‘Tamasha’. Mangs get occupied in ‘Tamasha’ in these days. Another fact is that ‘Tamasha’ needs large capital which the owner usually borrows from a private money lender at higher interest rates. If there is demand for Tamasha, this business incurs great loss. In addition to this, artists playing in Tamasha are usually interested in gambling, drinking because of which they loose money Consequently we find Mangs not making any remarkable development even in this business.

In this new economic system these traditional occupations of Mangs are disappearing and Mangs are migrating to cities. They live in slums and make their living. In Pune city Mangs are involved in great numbers in picking up (tin and glass). While in rural Maharashtra Mangs are working in sugarcane cutting groups. In Solapur Mangs work as porters. In certain villages bazaars, Mangs do the occupation of castrate of oxes, they work as agents in animal trade. Some are involved in selling beef. At certain places Mangs are even involved is selling country liquor.

Mangs are seen working in the agricultural fields on meagrs daily wages. About 82% Matangs in Mahharashtra are landless labor
45% Mangs work as agriculture. 37.22% Mangs do the traditional business. (Arjune Dileep, 2006 : 104). In cities Mangs are involved in construction as worker.

The Government of Maharashtra has established, Lokshahir Anna bhau Sathe Development Corporation on 11th July 1985 in order to strengthen the economic status of Mantags. Initially this corporation used to give loan to the traditional occupations of Mangs but with the changing times the Corporation has changed its policy and brought in many other things under its loan policy. It means now the loan is available to purchase music systems, computer business, purchase of vehicles etc.

In order to avail the loan of Rs. 1 lakh receiving party has to share 5% of the amount. He gets the subsidy of Rs. 10,000 and 15% amount is shared by the corporation and the remaining amount is contributed by NSFDC. In order to get the loan of Rs. 1 lakh sanctioned, a Matang has to spend a lot of money in fulfilling papers for the proposal. Apart from that he has to give unofficial money in the form of bribe to the agents and sanctioning authority. In this whole process a Mang has to spend a large amount. The loan money he gets after all this ordeal is very less in which he cannot do any thing. In short, corruption, lesser amount and delay in the process of loan giving institutions of the government do not prove beneficial to the Mantang and they remain backward as before.

Mags are seen working at other areas like Z. P., Corporations etc. They are driving auto rikshaws. At place like Pune Matangs are in the business of construction. Mangs those who MP’s and MLA’s have ventured into the business of cooperative spinning mills, cooperative institutions etc. Sandipan Thorat of Madha taluka in
Solapur district has established a spinning mills, however this mill is in a closed condition at present.

Jayantrao Awale, an ex social welfare minister and MP from Latur has established a spinning mill of Scheduled Castes at Vathar (Dist. Kolhapur). Laxman Dhobale has established Rajarshi Chh. Spinning Mill Vitthal Gaikwad, an ex MLA has established Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Scheduled Caste Spinning Mill at Gangakhed, Parabhani, Niwas Awaghade, and Ram Kamble have established Ramai Spinning Mill. All these people call themselves. A Mangs ut have never accepted the name of Anna Bhau Sathe. At the places like Ichalkaranji (Kolhapur), Nakenoor (Osmanabad) and Nanded, Mangs have established business under the social welfare scheme. A fact to be noted is that all these businesses and organization have been established by Maratha leadership with the help of educated Matnags and have got benefit of social welfare scheme of the governments.

We find traditional occupations are going on even today among Matangs. along with newly accepted occupations with the change of time. Mangs are even found in corporate business. On 14th April, 2005 DICCI (Dalit Indian Chembor of Commerce of Industries) was founded by Milind Kamble who is a Matang. This organization had organized DEEP – EXPO 2010 exhibition at Pune on 5, 6, and 7 June 2010 and it at the state level.

In short, we find the two extreme scenes about the Matangs. At certain places Mangs are involved is traditional ‘Gaoki’ and at other place we find Mangs exploring corporate world as leaders.
5.15 Traditional Balutedari: Continuity and Change:

Traditional ‘Balutedari’ system involve the following:

1) To make ropes, (2) To make bamboo baskets and booms, (3) To tie ‘Toran’ on the day of festival of ‘Bendur’, (4) To guard the village that is to work as Naik, (5) To play on instrument like ‘Dafade’, (6) To inform the relatives of upper class person when his daughter gets manstral cycle of the first time, (7) To work as nurse in the delivery of upper class women, (8) To carry the ‘gudi’ to the relatives us upper class persons when they beget a male child (9) To do announcement in the village by playing on Halagi (10) To play on the instruments at the time of as village daichy, (11) To provide string to tie dead body while carrying for last rights, (12) To castract the oxes, (13) To play on ‘Dafade’ while carrying dead body to grave yard, (14) To do away with unclaimed dead bodies, (15) To pull the dead animals, (17) To help police to trace out criminals, (18) To execute the criminals or to hang the criminal, (19) To stand as witness at the time of Guarreh in the village, (20) to run after the horse of Patil or an officer, (21) to blow the begul / trumphet at the time of war, (22) To announce good news, (23) To ask for Dhondi at the time of femine, (24) To ask for Dhodi at the time of eclipse, (25) To take on the stigma (26) To work as priest to the daites like Natangi, Marimata, Masai, Maragubai (27) To tie the ‘Toran’ at the time of inauguration of new home or at the time of marriage.

These were the work of Matangs in rural Maharastra traditionally given to them in ‘Balutedar’ system but in the present day ‘Gaoki’ is considered to be slavery. Becaus of the awakening of Dr. Babasaheb Amebedkar, the Mahars have denied this system. They don’t do ‘Gaoki’ these days. Even Mangs have been keeping
away from such practices but there are easier reported of the attacks on the Mang community for this denial. Many times the conflict between Mangs and upper caste people have resulted into the killing of Matangs. At a place called Dhavaleshwar (Dist. Sangli) when Matangs have denied to do ‘gaoki’ they were beaten up by upper class people. Sheshrao Lokhande from Ghagarwada Tal. Dharur Dist. Beed rejected for gaoki he was killed by upper caste people.

In short, the works of gaoki which were given to them traditionally have almost came to an end with the passage of time. Same Matangs have given up this task. The community is changing with the thought of Phule – Ambedkar – Shahu and Anna Bhau. Even then one can see Mangs doing the work of asking of ‘Dhondi’, ‘Girhan’ at the time of feminine and eclipse respectively. Mangs are even seen doing the priesthood of village good and goddesses. That’s why we see Potraj, Waghya, Murai, Devdasi, Jogati among Mangs even today.

5.16 Religion System – Continuity and Change:

Mang is considered as ‘pious’ or ‘saered’ in Indian society. In rural Maharashtra there is a proverb called ‘Bhetala Mang, Phitala Pang’ meaning as we seen Mang al worries are over signifying that seeing of Mang is a good sign. That’s why in major sacred events, for example like entering a new home, construction of home, digging of a well, sowing reaping and harvesting Mang has been always called. On the occasion of ‘Bendur’ a Hindu festival Mang ties a ‘Toran’ that is a garaland like strip made out of mango leaves to the enterance or door frame of a house. It is believed that this act take away all the ills of the home and prosperity is seen.
Whenever there is arrival of diseases in the villages, Mangs carry the responsibility of ‘Paparahak’ because it was again believed that such diseurs hit the village because of unified deeds of villages. A Mang takes the responsibility of such misdeed on him and then the disease disappears. In one of the ritual a Mang carries a cart of Mariai out of the village. Mariaai is a goddess that cures the diseases and Mangs are the priests of Mariaai. The villages consider Mang as pious one because of which Mang considers himself a ‘great’ one and does all the work of villagers quite happily. He considers his Pioness as a proud feeling. He does ‘gaoki’ because of this feeling and leads a life of untouchable staying at the out skirts of villages.

But with the changing time, Mangs who have got awakened due to the thoughts and movements of Phule-Ambedkar-Anna Bhau Sathe, Lahuji Salve, are questioning about their being in such a state in the society. ‘When we are pious then why not we are allowed to enter in the home of upper caste person. Why upper caste people don’t allows us to fetch the water from the well? Why they don’t establish relationship with us?’ These are the questions they are asking.

Answer to these questions is that, the Mangs are untouchables, their caste is an untouchable caste. The religious system is responsible to bring about the difference of upper and lower caste. Religions responsible to make Mangs ‘backward’ Dr. Ambedkar denied Hindu religion and embraced Buddhism. This is understood by the new generation and that why they are changing their thoughts is the new light. They are defying this inequality among Hindu religion. Some Mangs have got inspired by the ‘Satyadharama’ of Mahatma Phule. Matangs are also practicing
‘Satyashodha marriage system’. In short modern Matangs are denying the Hindu religion for its unequal treatment and they are posing questions.

Even though the scene is changing we find that there are the Mangs who feel ‘proud’ that they are Maggns. At a place called Tasagaon Sangli district, participation of educated Matang youth in the fair of goddess Maragubai as seen large numbers 65 young male buffelos, and more than 100 goats and innumerable rooters were sacrificed to the deity Maragubai. This fair was organized by all the educated Matang youths. At Tasagaon, there was a quarrel on the issue that who will sacrifice the male he buffalo to deity Maragubai, became this kind of privilege is given traditionally but this quarrel led to establishment of another temple of Maragubai in their own lane. This way we find two temples of Maragubai in one Mang settlement. The fair is organized accordingly. Even the Christian and Musalman Mangs are also staying there as Hindu Mangs.

At Kurundwad (Tal. Shirol Dist. Kolhapur) fair of Maragubai takes place. There too young male buffelos are given a sacrifice to deity Maragubai. There too educated young Matangs are ahead to celebrate this kind of fair. The above pictures are the changing signs among the Matang community. Some Matangs are even going to sacred places like Shirdi, Tirupati and such religion place along with their family. An terms of religion changes the community has not got the pace, perhaps expected.
References: