CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
It is generally accepted that the traditional Indian society was based largely on the principle of caste and was, to the greater extent, a closed system. Keeping in view this aspect of caste, one may say that the traditional society in India, especially that of Hindus, has been a closed one and no mobility was possible in it.

It is, again, accepted that the caste system is based on division of labour, though for several Sociologists and Social Anthropologists such a division is traditional or an elementary one. But it has been regarded as a division of labourers also. For those who regard caste system as a division of labour, the various types of occupations are divided to satisfy the needs of the society. Although, they do not deny implication of such division in terms of castes and sub-castes, yet the idea of division of labourer seems to be more convincing as it clearly explains the division of labour vis-a-vis division of population into numerous castes and sub-castes of closed type. In the division of labour or labourers certain castes are equally regarded as privileged and others (lower or lowest castes) less privileged or non-privileged at all.

The history of these people in the caste ridden society in India is a history of their continuous suffering and

and oppression. They suffered from multiple deprivations and were the victims of 'cumulative domination'. There was a glaring social, economic and political inequality between castes and castes. The bulk of the Hindus were still deeply concerned about purity and pollution. For nearly two thousand years the practice of untouchability has been rooted in the social and religious life of the country. The roots of the evil have gone so deep in the system that the untouchables (now the Scheduled Castes) are subjected to the numerous social, economic and religious disabilities even in independent India. In the words of Commen "... the sources of deprivation of the Dalits of India were (and still are) three: low ritual status, appalling poverty, and powerlessness".

Enraged over this, these people, suppressed and oppressed for centuries together, have come to the forefront with a new awakening and consciousness. Thus, recently, they have become increasingly militant in demanding their rights and have inclined to a revolutionary path for their amelioration.

There are various types of movements launched, mostly, by the Dalits all over the country. Their oppression and

3. Ibid., p.46.
disabilities led them to rise against their oppressors in the form of various protest movements.

A favourable environment for the emergence of protest of the Dalits was created by Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Gopal Baba Walangkar, Shivram Janba Kamble, Kisan Pagoji Bansode and others in Maharashtra.

As in Maharashtra, Non-Brahmin movements and attempts of the untouchable castes to organize for social and political purposes have occurred in other parts of India. There were movements among the untouchables of Madras, the Chamars of Chhattisgarh area, the Depressed Classes of the Punjab, the Namashudras of Bengal and the Mahars of Maharashtra.

For the origin of the Mahar movement in Maharashtra Eleanor Zelliot has put forward six essential factors. The figure in the Mahar movement is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He was a innovator of new techniques for rising, and symbol of achievement for many untouchables outside the Mahar caste as well as within.

Prior to Dr. Ambedkar’s first public statement on the

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political rights of the Depressed Classes in 1919, the Mahars' attempts to raise their social and economic status were made through claims to recognition of worth within the Hindu religion, and use of British created economic opportunities.

Four of the best known Mahar leaders in the pre-Ambedkar era illustrate the use of both paths. Gopal Swami Yagavkar was a Paymaster in the British army. Gopal Baba Walsekar, also a soldier in the British army, wrote an essay showing that the Vedas did not support untouchability. Kisan Fagoji Bonsode, from the Vidharba region, worked a lot and wrote a Chokhamela's, a Mahar Saint, biography. Shivram Janba Kamble, from Pune, directed an unsuccessful Satyagraha at Parvati, Poona's holy hill. Their contributions towards the Dalit movement is discussed in length in third chapter.

Before independence, a number of reform movements were launched by the upper castes people to tackle the social evils. Since their approach was a reform one they could not bring about any structural changes in the Hindu social structure. And after independence, the activities of the social reformers slowed down probably because of their belief that independence would bring about the necessary changes and solve the problems of the downtrodden.
The beginning of the 20th century saw the emergence of two great leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, on the national scene to promote the cause of the Scheduled Castes. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the effort of Gandhi suffered from the weakness characteristic of all reform movements which started from above and excluded the subject people from the prime or even exclusive responsibility for their own fate. Dr. Ambedkar considered Gandhi an enemy of the untouchables from the time of the Round Table Conference until Gandhi's death in 1948. The conflict between the two leaders can be defined in several ways: Dr. Ambedkar's complete rejection of caste versus Gandhi's defense of Chaturvarna (four caste system) as necessary to Hinduism; Ambedkar's rational, democratic liberalism versus Gandhi's appeals to traditional modes of thought etc.

Despite the efforts made by the social reformers, Dalits found it necessary to launch a movement of their own. It is observed that the movements that have occurred among the Backward Classes in India have undoubtedly arisen under the diverse social and cultural circumstances.

The movement which arose from within the Backward sections with a different ideology were more radical, aggressive and militant. It is again observed that unlike

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the earlier movements initiated by the outsiders, the movement in which Dalits participated have consciously and voluntarily brought about a sea-change in their socio-cultural identity and self-definition.

Such movements are the results of conscious efforts on the part of the deprived to mitigate their deprivation, secure justice and demonstrate their power. Thus, the Dalits were fed up with the established system and disappointed with the performance of social reformers to their cause. They, therefore, started protest movement on their own under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar from 1919 onwards.

Before we examine the relationship between the discrimination, miserable conditions of the Dalits and the protest movements carried out by them and the interplay of these two and of their social change or urge for that, it is necessary to analyse briefly the concepts of social movement and social change.

Conceptual Clarification:

Conceptually, movement is an organized effort made by some persons, group (s), or community for some specific cause. According to Rao, "a social movement is an organised attempt on the part of a section of society to bring about [6. Common, T.K., Op.Cit., p.51.]

either partial or total change in society through collective mobilisation based on an ideology. In the words of Herbert Blumer, social movements may be defined as "collective enterprises to establish a new order of life". They have their inception in a condition of unrest and derive their motive power from dissatisfaction and from hopes of a new scheme of living. The central conception here is the "group behaviour directed in a concerted way at bringing about social change". Heberle, in a similar vein, declares, "the main criterion of a social movement... is that it aims to bring about fundamental changes in the social order". He continues with the observation that a social movement is "a collective attempt to reach a visualised goal, especially a change in certain social insti-


tutions". In the opinion of Gusfield, social movements are
"socially shared demands for change in some aspect of the
social order". Turner and Killian advance the most inclusive
definition: "A collectivity acting with some continuity to
promote or to resist a change in the society or group of
which it is a part".

The study of social movements is primarily a study of
social change as well as cultural change, of a changing
social order as well as of changing values and norms. Sherif
and Sherif define, "A social movement... is a formative
stage of interaction in human relations. It expresses an
on-going process". Hence, attention is focussed on the
interaction of conscious, striving human beings as part
of an emergent collectivity which is the social movement.
In this context Lewis says, "This is not the study of

10. Gusfield, Joseph R., Protest, Reform and Revolt, John
Wiley and Sons Inc., New York, 1970, p.2; see for details

11. Turner, R.H. and Killian, L.M., Collective Behaviour,
p.308. See also Wilson, John, Introduction to Social


E.L. (ed.), Handbook of Modern Sociology, Rand McNally
stable groups or established institutions, but of groups and institutions in the process of becoming". "A "movement", therefore, is collective ready for action by which some kind of change is to be achieved, some innovation to be made, or a previous condition to be restored".

The social movements arise mostly due to the discontent of the people with the existing social order. The genuine social movements, thus arise among the people dissatisfied with the social order that is in operation. The roots of social movements mostly lie within the social problems. Once a feeling of dissatisfaction is shared by and communicated to, others in the society, a social movement develops.

But mere frustration or rebellious behaviour are not sufficient for the development of a social movement. For a social movement to develop there must be a vision, a belief in the possibility of a different state of affairs, and there must be an enduring organisation devoted to the attainment of this vision. This is the active nucleus of the movement, the leadership group. "The nucleus consists of a group of individuals who are committed in varying degrees to the same mission and who stand in definite status and role relations to one another".


"An important factor in bringing about change in a stable system, for the rise of any type of movement (be it rebellion, revolt, reform, dissent or protest), is non-conformism."

In the definitions offered by various scholars about social movement the following aspects have been emphasized by them.

Most of the scholars have emphasized upon the element of 'collective behaviour'. On the whole, particular attention is given to the elements of collective behaviour, dissatisfaction, deprivation and the shared demands for change the social order or to resist change. In fact, the idea behind 'social movement' is that of agitation, protest, unrest, a collective attempt to reach a visualise goal. The main intention to change the patterns of human relations is an essential characteristic of a social movement. Moreover, social movement involves elements of discontent and thereby protest.

Thus, a social movement begins with a group of people as a result of fundamental disagreement to economic,

educational, political and even other reasons. A social problem is a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable about which it is felt something can be done through collective action. In short, social movement actually aims to bring about certain fundamental changes in the social order.

Theories of Social Movement:

Broadly speaking, there are three main theories which explain the structural conditions and motivational forces which give rise to a movement. These are theories of strain, revitalisation and relative deprivation.

The strain theory, propounded by Smelser, treats structural strain as the underlying factor leading to collective behaviour. Structural strain occurs at different levels of norms, values, mobilisation, and situational facilities. Smelser posits a sequence of six elements which when combined in a unique pattern constitute social movements. The sequence is governed by the principle of 'value added'.

The six elements in their sequence are: structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth and spread of a generalised belief, precipitating factors, mobilisation of

participants for action, and the operation of social controls. The first two structural conduciveness and strain deal with genesis of social movements. The rest dictate the course and possible outcome of social movements.

Another theory, put forward by Anthony F.C. Wallace, is the theory of revitalisation. According to this theory of re social movement is defined as a deliberate organised and conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture. Revitalisation is, thus, a cultural change phenomena; the persons involved in this process must perceive their culture as a system and they must feel that this cultural system is not satisfactory; and they must innovate a new cultural system. The revitalisation movement occurs under two conditions; high stress for individual members of the society, and disillusionment with a distorted culture. This theory offers a positive programme of action to solve the situation.

Still another theory moved by the authors of American Soldier is a theory of relative deprivation. The term


relative deprivation was first coined by the authors of American Soldier in their socio-psychological study of American Army. Later on, it was Merton who systematically developed the concept in relation to Reference Group Theory. Following Merton, Runciman developed the concept of relation to reference group and problems of inequalities and social justice. According to this approach, people feel relatively deprived because they did not have many things which others had. Thus, social inequality gives rise to relative deprivation. Gurr has given clarification in this context. He defined relative deprivation as a gap between expectations and perceived capabilities. Thus, the structural conditions of relative deprivation provide the necessary conditions for the genesis of social movement.

In this way, the existing explanations attribute the rise of social movements to three different viewpoints. One refers to structural strains. Second speaks about revitalisation. And third one confines to relative deprivation. The theory of relative deprivation is, I believe,

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21. Ibid., p.4.

the appropriate one. In the words of Rao, "... the relative deprivation theory offers a more satisfactory explanation of the genesis of social movements... motivating people and mobilizing them around certain interests and issues. Secondly, it offers the best explanation for the change orientation of movements rather than to looking at movements as adaptive mechanisms restoring functional unity and equilibrium". Thus, it is the deprivation consciousness at the collective level which gives rise to social movements. Despite this, what is essential is awareness and awakening of injustice which is being meted out to certain sections of society as a result of which they protest. The social sharing of deprivation and disprivilege can be considered to be the starting point of movement. While studying the genesis of Dalit movement we found that the theory of relative deprivation is more rewarding amongst all other theories. It gives the answer as to why and a particular stand is adopted by a section of society at a particular juncture. It was the perception by the Dalits of the rapidly deteriorating socio-economic situation that gave rise to a feeling of deprivation in relation to other sections of society. The concepts of "relative deprivation", "Protest Ideology"

and "opposition reference group", proposed by Rao, M.S.A., in understanding the ideology of a movement, were found useful while analysing this movement. It was an ideology of protest against the Hindus and the caste system based on relative deprivation. Its severity was felt more in comparison with the privileged groups which was an opposition reference group for them. The members of the concerned group did not want to imitate or emulate the reference group but to challenge, attack, and wrest away from them their monopoly in economic, social, political and educational fields. A detail discussion on these lines is made in the pages to come.

Classification of Social Movements:

There have been several attempts at the classification of movements, based on different criteria. In fact, the nature of the chances that a social movement brings about or intends to bring about is a crucial criterion in the classification of movements. Accordingly, movements may be classified into reformative, transformative and revolutionary. One of the important criteria is ideology. On the basis of ideology movements are classified into protest or revitalizing. Apart from this, movements also classified on the basis of locus i.e. peasant, linguistic, caste,

worker, tribal, student, ethnic and women. In short, movements are classified into reformatory, protest, revolutionary, transformation, revitalization, and status quo maintaining ones. A classification of this sort provides us a broad guidelines for further analysis so far as Dalit movement is concerned.

It is against this background, an attempt is made to analyze the Dalit movement within the framework of sociology of social movements. Like any movement, the Dalit movement is a social movement. "It is a protest movement in the strict sense of the term". It is a social movement with wider social objectives. It is a crusade carried out by Dalit themselves for their complete liberation.

Before we analyze this movement in detail it is necessary to look into as to what protest movement is about.

Protest Movement

Protest movement is an attack on the prevailing system in an intellectual and organized way. Protest is based on every man’s desire to be free. The awareness of protest arises when man confronts an unjust and inhuman situation, and decides to get rid of the slavish mentality. A consciousness regarding fundamental rights, a tendency to struggle,

a sense of independence and liberty, and change orientation are some of the ingredients of protest, which naturally come into conflict with the establishment.

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In the words of Damle, "Protest is generally very specific in nature and centres around a particular issue. But initially there has to be a consciousness of some injustice which is being noted out to certain sections of society as a result of which they protest."

Protest as a collective action involves factors such as agents of protest, reasons of protest, and modes of protest which are interrelated to bring about social change in society.

A movement may be protest in nature wherein some persons or group(s) of a community as such may launch a protest movement in getting a number of irregularities or social inconsistencies corrected. It may also be launched for getting certain benefits obtained, some guarantees and such other commitments fulfilled and one's status enhanced in the social hierarchy. In fact, the dissent which is an expression of dissatisfaction with the existing situation is a necessary pre-requisite for a protest movement. On the other hand, "protest is a formal declaration

of dissent and represents a more confirmed state of opposition and conflict”. Both dissent and protest are “part of the formative process of a movement” or protest movement and its ideology which is based on social deprivation.

The protest movement may obviously be directed to certain persons, group(s), community(ies) or norms, values, system, etc. It may also be carried out for countering certain injustice and discriminatory behaviours noted out to a person, group or community as a whole. Accordingly, various types of movements launched by the Scheduled Castes in the different parts of the country are basically to protest against their discrimination, exploitation, degraded social status and the numerous types of atrocities inflicted on them by caste Hindus and others. Their protest is also directed against the government’s attitudes which, in their opinion, are passive and sometimes even partial and partisan especially on issues like implementing properly certain constitutional measures and protecting them from both social and physical violence committed on them by others. More so, “… the Scheduled Castes in the country have become increasingly militant in demanding their rights and have

inclined to a revolutionary path (not necessarily the Marxist path) for their social amelioration. These people, suppressed and oppressed for centuries together, have come to the forefront with a new awakening and consciousness... shaped by both content and discontent from the protective discrimination policy evolved for their betterment. This has also been generated from their political awareness and exposure to the outside world.

Sometimes, their protest also gets transformed into conflict between them and caste Hindus and others causing the loss and damages of both the sides. In any case, their protest movement at present is governed largely by Dr Ambedkar's ideology based on the principles of equality, justice, freedom, dignity and self-respect.

Dalits, especially in Maharashtra, have been launching various protest movements on every possible fronts, which resulted into gaining confidence to fight collectively for their genuine demands. Thus, the protest movement is considered as one of the factors to bring about social change among the Dalits in Maharashtra.

Social Change:

Social change is explained in terms of an overall change including social progress, educational development.

occupational mobility, economic growth, radical change in cultural values, self-perception and attitude. More clearly, social change means an upward change in social, economic and cultural conditions of a person or group of persons or community. It also includes the greater political participation.

However, in the case of the Dalits, social change is to be understood in terms of bringing them out of their degraded social status, poverty and exploitation. In other words, social change means progress in their overall socio-economic condition and an upward enhancement in their caste status.

Dalit protest movement and social change are interrelated to the extent that one cannot expect social change without protest. Besides this, political participation, education, occupation, reform movements, British rule in India, Christian missionaries, sanskritization, conversion, state policy of protective discrimination are some of the sources that have taken into account for analysing social change.

Prior to Independence, various reform movements have launched by the caste Hindus in the country in general and Maharashtra in particular. The weaker sections of the society, especially the Scheduled Castes have had
expected a real brotherhood and equality from these movements. But these reform movements failed to bring about unity and equality in the society.

Reform movements, however, have contributed to the consciousness and awakening among the Scheduled Castes to rise against the injustices done to them besides adhering them to education and realisation of its importance. Further, the Christian missionaries also helped grow consciousness among them by organising a number of educational and welfare programmes for them. Finally, the British in India helped in a way, develop awareness among these people by introducing liberal education, egalitarian system of law and other institutions in the country.

It was only after independence that the Government of India adopted a policy of "protective Discrimination" to deal with the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Under this the various provisions have been laid down in favour of these castes and tribes in accordance with the spirit of a Constitution of the country. With the inception of the Protective Discrimination policy, a number of protective and developmental measures including reservation in education, services, and Parliament and State Legislatures, have been adopted.

by the Government. A number of welfare measures have also been adopted by way of providing some aids and loans to these people for constructing houses, wells etc. Besides, some measures like protecting these people from their social and economic disabilities, exploitation, untouchability and other forms of discrimination have been also enacted upon. Although these measures may not be regarded as a part of the protective discrimination policy, yet they have been adopted for protecting the Scheduled Castes and Tribes from any sort of exploitation.

30 Despite this, a number of Commissions have been appointed and committees set up to look into the progress made by these people.

Most of the studies show that discrimination is being practised against the Scheduled Castes in every sphere in almost all parts of the country and government's efforts for checking them are inadequate. Dushkin, for

30. See for details the various Reports of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India; See also a Report of the Committee on Untouchability, (Sri L.Klayaparamal Committee) Economic and Educational development of the Scheduled Castes and connected documents, Government of India, Dept. of Social Welfare, 1969, New Delhi, pp. XX.

instance, finds ineffectiveness of the protective discrimination policy. She states that government efforts deal more with the secular condition than the untouchability of the Scheduled Castes. She concludes that almost all forms of protective discrimination remain even on paper. Further, a number of studies have also been shown that these castes are slow, as compared to the other communities, in terms of their socio-economic progress.

No doubt, the provisions have helped the Scheduled Castes to overcome, to some extent, their handicaps arising from deep rooted inequalities and enabled them to secure some opportunities and positions in life as others. The Scheduled Castes have only marginal gains. Still they are not able adequately to join the emerging socio-economic stream of the country. Since independence attempts have been made by state and Central governments to improve the social, economic and educational status

32. Ibid., p.182.
33. Ibid., p.186.
of these people, but efforts have not significantly altered the life chances of most of the people. By now it is clear that various provisions have not yet been fully implemented nor have their limited benefits evenly reached to the masses of these castes. There also remains a large gap between their dues and actual share in every field. Besides a little change sponsored by the government, the Scheduled Castes themselves have, time and again, contested for the improvement in their educational and occupational levels, acquisition of political power and social status. In recent years attempts have been made by these sections to move out of Hindu faith by converting to Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. This may be regarded as continuation of their struggle to raise their social status. Although it might not have brought any material change among the Scheduled Castes, yet it has created a sense of self-respect and integrity among them. This kind of cultural change has created a self-motivation among them which is an important factor for their mobility. The mobility among the Jatavs of Agra (U.P.) and the Mahars (Maharashtra) is an evidence of such a phenomenon.


The limited advancement of these people in the cultural, job and educational fields is, however, not tolerated by caste Hindus, because it has produced the sense of deprivation among upper castes and communities in the country. The tension is being created every where on the issue of reservation. The recent riots in Marathwada and Gujarat have made it clear that where the Scheduled Castes have urbanisation, high literacy, and physical concentration, the conflict between them and others takes place and continues for the longer period.

The Scheduled Castes, however, are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. Their strong urge for development is reflected from the fact that they are not satisfied with the extent of benefits of the protective measures offered to them in the fields of education, public sector employment and political representation. They find the various laws and provisions made for their benefit inadequate and not properly implemented. As a result of this and several other problems arising out of absence of a comprehensive policy for catering to their needs of enhancing status, the Scheduled Castes are organising themselves and agitating against their social and economic exploitation. "They also agitation against their

low status and resent to the negative societal responses (which often get flared in the form of atrocities) to their limited social development or strong urge for proper development. Thus, the development of the Scheduled Castes is not a simple but complex process where they want to move upward and throw-off disabilities imposed on them in a given point of time and are not satisfied with the gradual and oblique changes planned and carried out by the State machinery. Hence, their protests or protest movements for a rapid and radical change in their socio-economic conditions and in their overall status in the society.

Thus, they are struggling for getting rid-of their degraded status in the rural social structure. In urban areas they are agitating partly against the improper implementation of the policy and discrimination practised against them and partly against the atrocities committed on the Scheduled Castes living in villages due to their emotional attachment and traditional linkages with them.

The New Awakening

As a matter of fact, the quest of the Dalit movement is levelling up the status of people and it is the real mani-

festation of a new consciousness among them. Thus, new awakening not only provided them basis for establishing self-respect, self-determinism and honour among them, but also a means for protesting against the domination of upper castes and classes in the society. Those groups who have joined the movement have a sense of self-respect and feeling of unity, an ambition for improving their social and economic status and a political awareness which may be of significant aid in the solution of India's age-old problem of untouchability.

In the present time the Scheduled Castes mostly youths are very much conscious about their status in the society. They no longer consider themselves as untouchables. No one uses today the terms like untouchables and Harijans. Most of them have begun to call themselves as 'Dalit' and implies a desire to change an exploitative society. Rao rightly points out that the deprived sections of societies in different parts of the world have organised themselves into protest movements to fight against discrimination of the various kinds. Their problem, however, has been of establishing a new identity, the kind of image that they want to protect in order to gain self-respect, honour and status.


For example, Dr. Ambedkar's conversion movement, in his opinion was based on the principle of rejection of the Hindu religion. Through conversion to Buddhism he found a new identity, self-respect and honour for the Dalits in the country.

Thus, Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism has been regarded by his followers as an effective instrument to bring about social revolution. Dr. Ambedkar's movement has spread largely among the Dalits and produced a highly conscious generation of educated and militant youth. The increasingly negative situation has made the Dalits to express, in the organized fashion, their dissatisfaction toward social injustice done to them in the country. Through their writings and speeches they have given a call for social movement which has come into existence in the form of Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra. The continuance of social and cultural inequalities and victimization were severely felt by young educated Dalits. A profound feeling of disenchantment emerged among them as a result of their perception of the disparity between promise and reality. The Dalits had come to look upon themselves as legitimate competitors for rewards which the Sawarnas have traditionally

41. Ibid., pp. 198-99.
monopolised. They were caught in a revolution of rising expectations. The awakened Dalit youths realised that decades of discrimination, humiliation, degradation, and exploitation were not going to be alleviated or corrected by a stroke of pen. Dr. Ambedkar's thought have created significant awareness among the youths. They were fed up with the established systems and the parliamentary ways of solving the problems.

Thus, recently the Dalits have become increasingly militant in demanding their rights and have inclined to a revolutionary path for their social amelioration as stated earlier. Moreover, as education and social awakening has spreaded among them, these people have begun to stir for their basic human rights.

The main objective of the Dalit Panther movement and other similar movements launched by the Dalits is to create a counter culture and a separate identity for the Dalits in the society. However, they are not against any groups (individuals, caste or communal groups) but against the establishment, the government and the social system which in their view keep them in away, down in the society. How far they have succeeded in their objectives is the main subject matter of the present study.
The Term Dalits

Dalits are known by different names such as exterior castes, out castes, depressed classes, Scheduled Castes, Harijans, Ex-Untouchables, Untouchables. These terms have been used by the caste Hindus, officials, social reformers to refer to this social category. However, the people belong to this category prefer to describe themselves as Dalits which include all aspects of oppression.

The term Dalit was first coined by Dr. Ambedkar to describe the Scheduled Castes communities.

Nanoo Dhasal, one of the leading leaders of the Dalit Panther, put forth his own definition which includes Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Neo-Buddhists, landless labourers and all those economically exploited. He has adopted a class approach while defining the term Dalit. The Marxists would define Dalit in terms of class, generally including women, tribals, workers and agricultural workers.

Still another definition has offered by Dr. Pantawane.

According to Pantawane, “Dalit is not a caste. Dalit is a

42. See the manifesto of Dalit Panther drafted by Nanoo Dhasal.

symbol of change and revolution. The Dalit believes in humanism. He rejects the existence of God, rebirth, soul, sacred books that teach discrimination, fate and heaven, because these have made him a slave. He represents the exploited men in his country... Dalitness is essentially a means towards achieving a sense of cultural identity. The inferiority complex based on (to be Dalit) has now disappeared. Now Dalitness is a source of confrontation. This change has its essence in the desire for justice for all mankind..."

From these definitions, it is revealed that the term Dalit has a very broad perspective. At the same time, it is being observed by the different people that this term has its limitations from practical point of view. The Dalit term is referred to the Mahars, to a greater extent, in Maharashtra. The Scheduled Castes, other than Mahars, do not like to be called as Dalits. It has been confirmed during the field work of this study. I, however, used this term although it has a reference to Mahars only. Simultaneously, the developments that occurred among the Scheduled Castes, other than Mahars, have also been looked into.
Review of Studies Undertaken on Dalit Movement:

A very few studies have been carried out in this area so far. A study that I have made reads as "From Discrimination to Movement - A Study of the Dalit Movement in Maharashtra". R.B. Pandey of Nagpur University worked out a study entitled "Vidarbhathil Dalit Chalwal from 1900-1956". Both studies have been undertaken for the award of M.Phil degrees. Hence, they had certain limitations. Admittedly, I would say that my study, that I have done in the form of M.Phil, is based on secondary sources and not an empirical one.

Besides this, the studies conducted by Sunanda Patwardhan and Gore and Limaye deal with the changes in the living conditions of the Dalits of Maharashtra.


45. Pandey, R.B., Vidarbhathil Dalit Chalwal from 1900-1956, M.Phil dissertation, Nagpur University, Nagpur.


One more study has carried out by Eleanor Zelliot entitled "Dr. Ambedkar and Mahar Movement". Even this study is not exhaustive. It has not covered the various aspects of the Dalit Movement of Maharashtra. And I believe, these studies do not provide a comprehensive picture of this movement. Hence, this study is an endeavour to make an intensive enquiry of Dalit Protest movement.

The Present Study -

Now coming to my present study I would like to state that all over the country the underprivileged sections whether they are lower castes or classes are organising themselves to fight against injustice, deprivation and inequalities of any kind. They often agitate for their legitimate share in educational privileges, economic opportunities and political power. As a result, collective mobilisation generates in order to gain their share which have brought about changes, to some extent, in their lives.

While I agree upon this, the study undertaken by me is an attempt to look into the genesis, protest ideology,

and social and cultural consequences of existing movement, i.e. Dalit Protest Movement. Further, this study poses a question as to what extent social change is brought about and will be brought in the lives of Dalits in Maharashtra by the movement led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his followers. How far they have succeeded in their mission and objectives is the main subject matter of the present study.

This study has also touched upon the protest of Dalit in different forms such as conversion to Buddhism, Dalit literature, Dalit theatre, Temple Entry Movement and various Satyagrahas and protest for the renaming of Marathwada University. It helped us to know the trends of their struggling and thereby their growing inclination towards change.

The attempt has been made to focus upon the various methods, strategies, tactics and objectives adopted from time to time, by these people in order to protest and express discontent towards the system.

Further the present study inquired into the consequences of the various measures adopted by the Government of India and the contribution made by the social reformers for the upliftment of the Dalits.
Finally, a concentration has also been given on the growing factionalism among the Dalits which exposed the quality of Dalit leadership and the reasons behind the factionalism.

In short, I believe, the present study is of immense useful in order to have the authentic picture of the Dalit movement of Maharashtra. It is also useful to the leaders of the movement so as to enable them to touch upon the neglected areas and thus make this movement more effective.

Methodology

Change is a continuous process. There is no society which can remain static for ever. The speed of change occurring in the society may be slow or fast depending upon the exposure of the society to the forces of social change.

Social movements as such are essentially historical phenomena. It is, therefore, desirable to focus attention on the historical aspect of the movement.

Thus, the present study has carried out in historical as well as empirical perspective. The researcher's contention is that the movement has historical aspect of its occurrence. So there is a need to explore the historical aspect of a movement first and then conduct empirical analysis.
In the case of present research, the historical aspect deals with the miserable conditions of the Dalits in every walk of life, the contribution made by the British rule in India, Christian Missionaries, social reformers and the initial efforts by the Dalit themselves to ameliorate the deprived positions of the Dalits. The subsequent analysis deals with the genesis of the Dalit Protest movement in Maharashtra, its leadership, ideology and programme etc.

The empirical aspect designed around the socio-economic, political, educational and cultural characteristics of the respondents, the pattern and causes of their social mobility. The most important aspect is the perception of the Dalits of the role of the Dalit Protest movement in their status improvement. Thus, the chief objective of this research is to make an assessment of protest movement among Dalits in Maharashtra and to find out its role in order to bring about social change. Despite it, the study has taken into account the following objectives:

1. Relative deprivation is increasing among Dalits which generates a sense of protest.
2. To study the changing nature of this movement with respect to their strategies, planning, policies and programmes.
3. To know as to how Dalits moved from Sanskritization process to protest.

4. Response to change is observable among Dalits in terms of education, occupational mobility, self-perception etc.

5. There has been a protest in different forms such as conversion to Buddhism, Dalit literature, Dalit literature, Dalit theatre, temple entry movement, renaming of Marathwada University, etc. Hence, it is required to know the impact of all these protests on the lives of Dalits in Maharashtra.

6. It is also required to know the extent to which social change brought about by this movement.

7. Counter forces have become more hostile against the reservation policy and Dalit movement as well.

8. Dalit Protest movement is based on the collective actions and collective behaviours.

Hypotheses:

Briefly, we are required to test the following hypotheses. The above mentioned objectives have been examined in the light of following hypotheses.

1. The more deprived Scheduled Castes, the greater is the awareness and urge among them to come forward to improve their status.
2. With the changing circumstances Dalit movement has also changed its mode of protest.

3. As they realised that a process of Sanskritisation is not a way to move up, they are more inclined to protest movement.

4. The more discontent among the educated and uneducated Dalits towards the social system as such, the greater is agitation among them for improving their social status.

5. The more urge among the Dalits to raise their social status, the more hostile attitudes and the atrocities committed on them by the caste Hindus and others.

6. To a greater extent the degree of social change among these people is noticeable as they have become more active on every possible fronts.

7. The more they are united, the greater is a sense of security to fight against untouchability, casteism, discrimination etc.

8. Dalit movement is aimed to create a counter and separate identity in society.

Sources of Data

The above mentioned objectives incorporated in the present study have been pursued on the basis of primary and secondary sources. For the historical aspect an
intensive use of secondary sources was made. The secondary sources comprised of the historical records, researches already done on the various problems of the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra. The census reports, Government reports, especially the reports of Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes regarding the explanation of a number of facilities granted and implemented for these people, have been analysed. A number of statements published in the newspapers, research magazines, journals, pamphlets etc. have also been examined. Besides this, the various activities, agitations, and strategies undertaken by the Dalit organizations/ parties such as Dalit Panthers, Mass Movement, BAMCEF (the all India Backward S.C., S.T., O.B.C. and Minority Communities Employees Federation), Republican Party of India, Bharatiya Republican Party and others have been taken into account for having a comprehensive view of the growing agitation among the Dalits in Maharashtra. The secondary data has been supplemented by primary data. Primary sources included the interviews of the Dalits from different walks of life, discussion with them and researcher's participant observation.

**Tools for Data Collection**

In the present research work, the tools of data collection comprised of interview schedule. In the interview schedule a number of variable were identified. These
variables were related to social status. The various questions framed were posed to Dalits for discussions and responses. The nature of questions was in accordance with the objectives of the study.

The present study is based on purposive sampling. The direct method of collecting information was through interviews with several respondents such as people involved in the movement, social activists, politicians, writers, leaders of various Dalit organisations/parties, Government employees, academicians, especially those who have worked more or less on the same theme, and the common masses.

The number of such respondents was 100. Of the 100, most of the respondents, come from the different strata, were from Mahar caste. Some of the leaders belonged to Nang, Dhor and Chambar castes were also interviewed to have their perception towards Dalit movement. Names of some of these to whom frequent visits have been made are given in Appendix.

A number of field trips have been undertaken by researcher where this movement was and still is active in urban as well as rural areas. My meeting with the people helped me to judge their understanding about this movement. And, moreover, on the spot observation gave me a lot of insights.
Characterisation

In this chapter I have defined a theoretical aspect of social movement. With this background Dalit movement has been described through the perspective of relative deprivation theory. It is examined that as to how deprivation and discrimination of the Dalits have led them to protest in different forms. Protest for what? It is also highlighted.

Chapter two is an account of various reform movements carried out by non-Dalits in the country and in Maharashtra as well. Here an attempt is made to know the contribution by these reform movements towards amelioration of the Dalits.

Chapter three concentrates on the genesis and the development of Dalit Protest movement. To make it more clear, this chapter is divided into two sections. First section speaks about the pre-Ambedkar and the Ambedkar era and the another section speaks about post-Ambedkar era. The various developments occurred in the movement from time to time have been analysed in detail.

Chapter four confines to different aspects of social change among the Dalits in Maharashtra. Despite the various sources of social change, protest movement of the Dalits
has been identified as a source of social change.

Chapter five touches upon the styles of protest and social change among Dalits. Consequences of their styles of protest have been explored. Such analysis is substantiated with empirical facts.

And finally chapter six provides the researcher's concluding view. It also focuses upon the limitations of this study. In addition to this, this chapter suggests some researchable areas in which further research can be carried out.