CONCLUSION

After more than half a century after independence caste system still plagues Indian subcontinent. Even after new countries were formed with new identities and new aspirations out of Indian subcontinent these new countries including India failed miserably in obliterating caste system. Every attempt to analyse and understand caste based discrimination, exploitation and practice falls short before its ability to transform and reinvent itself with every passing decade! On the surface, it seems that everybody accepts that caste system is inhuman, derogatory and needs to be abolished, yet it is practiced in every city, town, and village and in every family. This hints at the dubious nature of the upper caste Hindus who would never let it die, because the death of caste is the death of their power and control over the society. They need the caste structure to be intact in order to maintain and perpetuate their superiority. On the other hand Dalits who were the worst victims of the caste system needs to demolish it if they want any change in their lives and social status. And there is this continuous struggle between the conspiracy of the upper castes to maintain the caste hierarchy and Dalit’s fight to destroy it and the struggle is still on. This study had made an attempt to understand caste independently (say, if that is possible) and in relation to class.

In the course of their struggle, Dalits have embraced every possible ideology and practice to confront and demolish the caste system. The significance of Dalit Movement is that it had engaged and experimented with all possible political practices, as my study has pointed out in the first chapter, ranging from liberal, reformative to communist, Marxist and Maoist movements in this modern era. Main political parties like Congress and Communist parties did not address caste problems;
most of the times they didn’t even recognise caste as an issue. In their struggle for emancipation Dalits have found a ray of hope in Radical Marxism. Radical Left parties had successfully organised and mobilised Dalits against feudal land lords with the aim of establishing an egalitarian society. Dalit youth joined radical parties in the hope that these parties might find solutions to caste and other social inequalities. This study argued that Radical left parties failed to understand the caste equations while trying to address the social inequalities in the society.

To understand and analyse the interface between Dalit and Radical Left movement, this study has different theoretical frame works such as Liberal, Marxist, structuralist and post-structuralist theories.

Liberal philosophers are basically ethical individuals: they persist that individuals should be free to decide and practice their own notions of the good life. They give enormous importance to individual rights and liberties over community life and collective goods. Some of the individualist liberal thinkers even have gone to the extent of belief that one can and should account for social actions and social goods in terms of properties of the constituent individuals and individual goods. What discerns from communitarians’ discussion is the transformation of cite of autonomy from individual in the liberal discourse to group or community. It becomes a basis for new mobilisation politics in liberal systems to a great extent in the contemporary times.

Ambedkar philosophy was an Enlightening philosophy that could be described as of ‘social liberation’ combined with an emphasis on caste as a social reality; and it distinguished Ambedkar from both Marxists who saw the proletariat as revolutionary and neglected cultural and social factors, and from both the dominant and Congress
party (not to mention the Hindu right wing) which refused to see elements of exploitation and oppression in the Hindu caste society.

Marxist structuralism is basically a theory which theorizes the binary opposition. This proposes that there are certain theoretical and conceptual opposites, often structured in hierarchical human relations and they even permeate the common sensical language. Such binary pairs could include good/bad, rational/emotional, true/false. Marxist especially who focused on relative autonomy also have not succeeded in analysing the question of caste because of its class perspective and over emphasis on economic than socio-cultural aspects which are as important as economic aspects. According to Marxists of the orthodox school, the political revolution led by the proletariat or working class to capture State power would ultimately emancipate all other forms of oppression. Going by this doctrine, it followed that the emergence of Dalit consciousness and identity as a separate social movement was non-progressive and sectarian.

Neo-Marxism or New left, which challenged this orthodox historical materialism, brought about a general renaissance of Marxist thought, led by George Lukacs and Antonio Gramsci. The other luminaries of the new structuralist Marxism were Louis Althusser, the Frankfurt school of critical theory led by Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, all of whom sought to give relevant answers many acute problems of society and politics. They widened the political role of the working class in relation to the new social movements which are based not only on class but on other cultural categories such as of caste, gender, culture and ecology. Influenced by this broadened New Left thought, there emerged the phenomenon of subaltern historiography, popularly known as (he Cambridge School of Indian
scholars, with Ranajit Guha in the forefront. Their mode of historiography is distinctly different from the mainstream history. They wrote "history from below". According to the subaltern historiographers, all forms of social consciousness are an outcome of spontaneous impulse to resist imperial dominance. However, the problem with this New Left or Subaltern studies, as Kancha Ilaiah pointed out, is that they have not given due importance to caste subordination and exploitation. In order to understand the specific caste-class position of subordinated Dalit-bahujans, Ilaiah characterized them as sub-subalterns.

The Study traced the history of Dalit Movement in Telangana from 20th century to present day. It started with Bakti Movement of 13th Century which created Brahmin and non-Brahmin division. The Bakti poets by questioning the religious restrictions on worship, in a way directly questioned the Brahmanical hegemony on religion and religious practices. By preaching all are equal before God, they created a split in the Hindu social order. They brought in Brahman and non-Brahman identity. Dalits who were denied entry into the temples naturally took to these people. Bakti poets paved the way for Dalits to identify themselves as anti-brahmanical thereby created a new non-brahman identity consciousness.

After Bakti movement, it was Reform movement that furthered the Dalit cause. The Arya Samaj in Hyderabad state was founded in 1880 in Dharur Taluk of Beed district. The message propagated by Arya-Samaj was, (a) Equality of all human beings, (b) Condemnation of caste system, (c) Equal opportunities of education and refinement, (d) “Back to Vedas” and “India for Indians.” Brahmo Samaj was established in 1828 in West Bengal by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Samaj aimed at reformation of the Hindu society and the religious beliefs. The Samaj not only
focused on Sati, Child marriage etc, the issue related to dominate castes but also chalked out programmes for depressed castes. The programmes were mainly focused on openings schools for Dalits and also supporting their amelioration.

Hence these organisations became the welcoming shelter for Dalits who tried to escape from the cruel practice of discrimination in the name of caste. Dalits believed and supported its sincere objective in building a casteless society. These movements, in fact, created space for Dalits to come out and articulate their voice. Bhagya Reddy Verma, and Arige Ramaswamy were among the active Dalit workers during 1920s who initially worked with Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj respectively. Then they established their own Dalit organisations and began to address the more specific caste related atrocities like abolition of vetti, Jogini practices. The leaders realised that lack of education was the main reason for Dalits deplorable condition, so they fought for the establishment of educational institutions for the enlightenment of Dalits. In this regard the contributions of B. S. Venkat Rao are noteworthy. He was the education minister of then Hyderabad state had convinced the Nizam to allot one crore rupees for education of the poor. With modern education Dalits began to assert their identity and the movement transformed into independent movement, an autonomous stage. With the entry of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar into Dalit politics the movement has taken a drastic transformation. The movement has acquired a pan India status and began to function on Ambedkar’s ideology, which in the course of time came to be called as Ambedkarism. It has also questioned the opinion of Gail Omvedt regarding Dalit participation in Telangana Peasant movement. And it argued that Dalits actively participation in all the Left movements in Telangana. This study argued that Dalit movement in Telangana from 1906 to the present day has been
continuous and vibrant as against the popular notion of missing decades (1950s-80s) in the Dalit movements’ historiography.

Madiga Dandora Movement treaded a new path within Dalit movement opening up new lines of thought within Ambedkarism. The Dandora Movement brought to the front the discrimination within Dalits and raised the curtains for sub-caste movements. Dalits began to assess the caste and class relation within the Dalit community. This study has traced back the uneasiness within the Dalits to 1930s which is when Arundthiya Mahasabha was established by Arige Ramaswamy. Till then Dalits were treated by themselves and others as more or less homogeneous group, at least in their fight against upper caste hegemony. Here it is to be noted that they are well aware of internal hierarchy that existed within Dalits. From here on, the Dalit leaders started to respond to issues like the attacks on Dalits based on sub-castes. It forced Dalit scholars to be more critical and democratic in studying the Dalits struggle and change their methodology in studying the problems of Dalits.

Dandora Movement threw focus on sub-castes which are otherwise comfortably ignored within the Dalit community. The movement have erased the gap between the rural uneducated Dalits and their leaders in urban areas. It has produced new Dalit organic leaders who are semi-literates and rural based youth. The striking thing that Madigas leaders did was add the prefix ‘Madiga’ to their movement and all related activities such as “Madiga Dandora Movement,” “Madiga Dandora Rally,” and “Madiga Dandora Meeting.” Even they started suffixing their caste name to their name to assert their self respect and confidence and to identify with their own caste men. This was a clever intentional subversion of meanings associated with certain words. The study argued that Dandora movement effectively used the elements of
culture and transformed them into political tools to play it on political arena; it was a simultaneous fight both on political and cultural fronts. This has also created space for the rise of Madiga intellectuals for the first time in history of Dalit politics in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state and present Telangana state. The study has argued that the class conscious generated by Radical Left movement has helped the Dalits to introspect and see the class differences within the Dalit communities, which in turn has led to the formation of Madiga Dandora Movement.

This study also argued that Telangana Dalit movement never disassociated itself with Radical Left movement. With assumption that given the Indian specificity the caste question has to be central and integral to any Marxist understanding, it had been argued that in Indian context, one cannot completely disassociate caste from class. Thus, Dalit movement and Marxist Movement are not two exclusive practices but signify a mutually influencing historical continuation. With all its shortcomings and failure to address the caste issues as promised or as expected, no other movement in Telangana has brought a change such as Left movement in rural Dalits perception of the society. It helped them to break the shackles of upper caste hegemony. The people who lived on the outskirts of the village were made members of the village committees. In a time when Dalits were not even treated as human beings, the Communist party recognised their strength and brought them into village and some of them even rose to become prominent members of the committees.

The movement, for the first time in history, questioned openly the normative arrangements and values that legitimised oppression and marginalisation of poor peasants and labourers in the social, economic and political systems of villages. This movement provided Dalits an alternative world view and life options which equipped
them ideologically to question the legitimacy of existing oppressive and exploitative socio-economic and political system of the rural society. It also united the lower castes, Dalits and tribals people, broke their isolation and empowered them politically to fight against oppression and exploitation. The movement provided Dalits a space to articulate their issues and express their discontent against the existing forms and organisation and values of the rural society. On the whole this movement brought in the message and promise of an egalitarian society that aimed to radically change the old values, institutions and norms of the existing society.

Naxalite Movement, it is argued, was the result of State’s failure to bring about any substantial change in agrarian social relations and social life in the rural areas in spite of its progressive agrarian legislations. The CPI (ML) groups established their support bases in the areas which were on the periphery of the earlier peasant struggle. In a sense, the CPI (ML) agrarian movement tried to finish the process that had remained unfinished since the 1940s.

The issues taken up in those struggles showed sensitivity to caste, though the Party mobilised people using class oriented language. We see two important changes in the CPI (ML) politics in general and the peoples’ War Group in particular. One is the shift to popular mobilisation by strengthening mass front organisations like RSU, RYL, and JNM in the cultural front. Second is the clear direction to bring the subaltern social groups into the movement not in terms of class but in specific caste terms as SCs, artisan and occupational communities. However they did not try to engage with caste at an ideological level. The ML movement was reluctant to accept an ideological combination of Marxism with Ambedkarism. This was seen as diluting of revolution and gravitating towards reformism. More important reflection of this
was the refusal to recognize Dalit movement as an independent political struggle. The
Naxalite movement also strongly believed in the centrality of the armed-wing and a
hierarchical relation with various mass organisations. The Dalit movement therefore
could not fit into their scheme of political organisation and modes of protest and
mobilisation

With Karechedu incident Dalits rejected the Left platform to voice their
grievances. As a symbolic representation of an autonomous struggle, Dalit leaders
decided that only Dalits’ would occupy the dais and address others on the issue of
Karamchedu. It was decided that no upper caste, however radical and sympathetic to
the Dalit cause, would be allowed to share this space. This demand of ‘only Dalits’
was one of the earliest forms in which autonomy was articulated in Andhra Pradesh
(erstwhile). All those Dalits who were part of the communist movement were now,
discursively re-articulated as ‘Dalit communists’. Ambedkarism emerged as the
guiding philosophy for an independent Dalit ‘social revolution’, which was later
referred to as a ‘New Dalit Democratic Revolution’ both as a continuation, and to
counter the ML group’s struggle for ‘New Democratic Revolution’. Such alternate
articulations created conditions for movements to rethink their position vis-à-vis each
other.

Both Karechedu and Chunduru incidents have brought in a set of radical
changes in both Dalit and Radical Left practices. There was serious discussion
between and among Dalit leaders and Naxalites on how to address the issue of caste
and how to construct their future course of action. It is against this backdrop of an
emerging politics of solidarity that the DMS officially launched its journal called
Nalupu (Black) in April 1989. Its focus and purpose clearly reflected this need to
evolve a broader strategy for the Dalit movement. It also reflected the need to forge solidarity with ML parties like the PWG and yet fight for the benefits the existing socio-legal system offered. *Nalupu* emerged as an important platform reflecting the nature of the Dalit movement and the possible directions it would take in times to come. It was to explore further possibilities of solidarity with the Naxalite movement that the Dalit writers started yet another journal called ‘*Edureeta*’ (Swimming Against the Tide), in May 1990. Two important Dalit leaders who were previously part of the Naxalite movement (while the editor of the journal came out of the UCCRI (ML) group, another important member of the editorial board was previously a COC member of the PWG) started it. They together also started the Marxist-Leninist Centre. Though, the journal declared its perspective as ‘Marxist-Leninist’ and as a ‘journal for revolutionary politics’, none of the ML parties owned it but it was the Dalit organisations and writers who identified with it. A more explicit articulation of an ideological basis for solidarity in a synthesis of Ambedkarism and Marxism was acceptable to most of the Dalit groups, not so for many of the ML parties.

The discussions carried in Nalupu and Edureetha have led to intellectual churning in Dalit and ML parties. These discussions stressed the need for a strong ideological base, especially among CPI (ML) parties, to include and address Dalit issues. This period of ideological conflict and uncertainty led to the rise of another Dalit leader, Maroju Veeranna, from Left parties. He felt that the present communist ideology is insufficient and does not suit to Indian society. He strongly argued for the adoption of Ambedkar’s ideology into Marxist ideology. Veeranna proposed that without social transformation class transformation is not possible. He proposed a new revolutionary path for India which includes Phule-Ambedkar’s thoughts and prepared a document towards this end which is called May 17th Comrades Document. In 1998
Veeranna’s group submitted their document titled *Indialo Emcheyyali* (What is to be done in India?) to the Party for discussion on the new revolutionary path to be adopted by the Party. But, the CPI (ML) party not only did not accept this document but also expelled Veeranna’s group from the party.

Dandora Movement has helped the Radical Left parties to bridge the gap created by Karamchedu and Chunduru incidents. Dandora movement is a caste based movement with a class conflict. Dandora Movement brought to the front the inherent link between the caste and the class in the Indian society. This study argued that in Telangana it is caste which decides the class and Dandora Movement has proved the invariable link between caste and class. And this forced the Left parties to reconsider their stance with regard to caste. Radical Left Movement created so much awareness among Dalits about the concept of class and its relationship with the distribution and misappropriation of resources that they questioned the misappropriations of resources within themselves.

Finally this thesis focused on Telangana movement. The Telangana movement is not merely the demand for statehood, but also for demand for political, economic and cultural autonomy, from the Andhra region. The movement happened at the intersection of Dalit and Radical Left movement trying to consolidate their ideological positions. We can see the shades of aspirations of both the movements in Telangana movement. Both these historical movements have created space for the demand for regional autonomy to re-emerge once again.

Both the movements at their regional specifications have a long and cherished history of political struggles and in raising demands for social equality and economic freedom. Both the movements operated with a conscious aggression about their own
ideological merits and hardly built any systematic dialogical relation with the other about the strategies for the defence of the oppressed sections.

However, with all these ideological differences and limitation, I have argued in this study that post Ambedkaraite Dalit movements in Telangana has got its roots in Radical Left Movement in this region. Left Movement has successfully exposed the hegemony of upper castes on Dalits and gave Dalits a cause and reason for united struggle against the oppressive regime. This consciousness has helped the Dalit in furthering their cause and fight for the social justice. Madiga Dandora Movement is a contemporary example which has shaped up and supports my arguments. Even the huge support base of Dalits and their active participation in separate Telangana State could be viewed from this perspective. In Telangana there a solidarity between Left Movement and Dalit movement which is specific to this region.

Finally a consensus, or even an agreement, between these two forces of changes can only be built if both manage to move beyond the contestations of the past and also liberate themselves from their specific ideological canons to be open to constructing new radical alternatives. Regarding caste, there does not seem to be much clarity although there is a general recognition that the caste is an issue that needs to be consciously tackled. The factors that presses this need are: one, there is a pressure exerted from Dalit leaders within the Left movement like Maroju Veeranna and Dalit cadres who constitute a majority to take a stand on caste, two, there is a competitive pressure on these parties to distinguish themselves because the Dalit organisations have become a significant attraction for the Dalit cadres mainly after Karamchedu incident which forced the Radical Left parties to consider the caste issue seriously. However caste is still not recognised as the key issue in articulating
successful class struggle. In any society there would be numerous issues representing as many contradictions but at a given stage only a single issue corresponding to principle contradiction dominates and needs to be resolved. Caste is such an issue but that realization is still not reflected in the understanding of any Left parties. For both the Dalits and the Marxists, there is need to rethink their theoretical model and try to formulate a new ideological base to work together without deviating from main aim of establishing an equal and egalitarian society.