CONCLUSION
Conclusion

Several arguments can be drawn by comparing the Mang and Mahar women from the rural and urban areas in the context of socio-cultural, economic and political perspectives.

One of the most important issues of discussion among these women is the economic aspect. Rural Mahar women who gave up their traditional occupation and migrated to urban places became daily wage, construction and domestic labourers. In contrast, very few Mang women shifted to urban areas; and most of those who have migrated work as rag pickers. They live in unhygienic surroundings and are under the constant threat of the police. The question then is whether migration has changed their lives? Whether it has changed their social location? The answer is negative. The state reproduces the mechanism of the caste system, and Mang and Mahar women remain stuck with stigmatized jobs. In the case of the rural landless agricultural labourers, women from both castes engaged in seasonal work in the sugarcane and maize fields as bonded labourers.

The government of Maharashtra does not have any schemes for such labourers. Therefore, one can assert that democracy in India is a bourgeois democracy, which is a contradiction in terms of theory and practice. Hence, the government needs to seriously reformulate its policies and its implementation. The Mang community who are into the traditional occupations is disappointed with the government’s schemes such as the Annabhau Sathe Mahamandal scheme. The corruption that is visible at every level of such schemes has left the intended beneficiaries dejected. They instead prefer their traditional jobs like broom, basket and rope making. Also, there is no proper coordination between the
central government that has designed these schemes and the nationalized banks that implement them. Bank officials demand that the legal proof (Saat Bara) of the land should be in the name of the intended beneficiaries. In doing so, they systematically exclude the most deserving of such schemes i.e., the landless.

The same is true for other schemes like Bakari Palan, Jersey Cow etc. Thus, it will do the community much good if the government were to scrap such schemes and instead focus on building new infrastructures from the viewpoint of the rural Mahar and Mang community. Here, the views of the women of these communities should be given the most weightage. This is because they are the worst-hit victims of poverty and hunger. The Mahar Buddhist women are more conscious than the Mang women as far as the government schemes are concerned. Most of the Mang women have no information about these schemes because they are totally dependent upon the men of their community.

The urban Mahar women themselves seek out the respective offices rather than depending upon any community social workers to avail such facilities. However, it is found that the social workers within the Mahar and Mang castes are also heavily corrupted; they seem to have no qualms about exploiting the poor Dalits. One of the interesting trends found among the women of both the communities are that they are not conscious regarding political parties; they are completely dependent on the men and blindly follow their instructions. However, they are becoming more and more cynical because the political parties have consistently failed to address their day to day problems. Understandably, they are frustrated with the irresponsible attitudes of the Dalit politicians who have failed to pay any attention to the issue of their survival.
The social mobility of the Mahar Buddhist women is determined by the history of the Dalit assertions of Maharashtra. The legacy of the Ambedkarite movement and the call of Ambedkar for conversion have certainly changed their day to day lifestyles. They are aware of their social and cultural rights. But, what is lacking among them is political consciousness which have prevented them from going beyond Ambedkar's views on politics. For instance, since the foundation of scheduled caste federation by Ambedkar, they have remained alienated from the main discourse of politics. Further, RPI leaders also marginalized the Mahar Buddhist women. Therefore, they failed to transform themselves into a radical force.

In such situations Mahar women are completely dependent on larger parties for their political mobilization. Even today, except the Bharatiya Republican party, no other parties speak for the Mahar Buddhist women. However, the rural Mahar Buddhist women are contesting the reserved constituency which is less in number compared to those that are meant for the Mang and Chamar women. This discrepancy in the number of constituents is because the dominant parties in Maharashtra such as NCP, Shiv Sena and BJP prefer to distribute seats in the reserved as well as general constituency to Mang and Chamar women. However, they are inconsequential entities in decision making.

Mahar Buddhist women are more aware and doing quite well in the field of education. Therefore, they have successfully created a space for themselves in the public sphere. Ever since they converted to Buddhism and reproduced a counter culture of their own, they have been able to organize themselves in the urban spaces under such names as Pragyna Ankoor Mandal, BAMCEF and Ambedkar/Buddha Mandal. On the other hand, Mang women continue to
remain under the influence of orthodox Hindu gods and goddesses without being able to assert themselves in any way. They are also lagging behind in the field of education. They are thus missing out on a vital force that can enhance their awareness.

A significant variation in the patriarchy among the Mahar Buddhist women and Mang Hindu women can be observed. It is found that most of the urban educated Mahar Buddhist women prefer to go and work. But, it does not mean that they challenge Mahar Buddhist patriarchy. However, Mang women face the intensity of patriarchy in more forms due to the lack of education both among Mang males and females. In the case of the Mahar Buddhist women, the intensity of patriarchy is less because they are able to communicate with the larger society in day to day discourse due to their educational status. Also Mahar Buddhist women were able to challenge Mahar Buddhist men through Buddhism.

There, however, seems to a silver lining in the cloud. Educated Mahar and Mang males have begun to interact with each other. Therefore, there are possibilities of the establishment of a forum comprising educated Mang, Dhor, Chamar and Mahar Buddhist women, which can challenge the patriarchal order within their communities, by embracing Buddhism and observing its tenets in day to day life. Another important task is to bridge the gap between the rural Mang/Mahar women and urban Mang/Mahar women. Unless, the two communities and their educated peers look into the concerns of their sisters from the rural areas, it is impossible to fight against global forces pertaining particularly to issues of economic survival.
Therefore, this thesis argues that all the relevant governmental policies should be reformulated from the point of view of the Mang and Mahar community. The importance of the need to educate and promote the two communities to make them conscious of their rights can never be overstated.

The policies need to be reformulated based on the communitarian perspectives of the rural/urban Mangs and Mahars in general and Mang and Mahar women in particular.

In the rural areas, most of the Mahar and Mang women are landless and are agricultural labourers. A minimum of two acres of cultivable land should be allocated to these women in their own names. Also, the government of Maharashtra should provide infrastructure and monetary help for agricultural production for at least five years. In the rural areas the government should provide training programmes related to sustainable agrarian technology to women from these communities. Special attention should be given to those in the famine-affected areas. In the field of education, the drop-out rates in the rural areas are high due to poverty. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the educated women from both the communities to take the initiative to spread awareness and consciousness regarding the importance of education. The Mahar Buddhist women, in particular, should take the lead to empower the Mang women in the field of education. The government of Maharashtra should increase the amount of scholarship. They should design it in a manner that allows the students to face the vicissitudes of capital needed for education. The government of Maharashtra should implement special schemes to promote the higher education of Mang girls. This is because the illiteracy among Mang Women, compared to Mahar women, is very high. They should establish hostels for the Mang girls both in the
rural and urban areas. Similar facilities should be provided for the rural Mahar women as well. To promote the Mang girls in higher education—particularly in technical and vocational education—the government of Maharashtra should introduce new scholarships and institutions. The introduction of such facilities will help them acquire new skills that are essential in the era of globalization.

A sizeable share of the population of these communities has migrated from the rural areas to urban places. Due to the uncertainty in the urban places such as displacement, poverty etc., the drop-out rates of these women in the urban places continue to grow. Therefore, the Ministry of Social Justice and Welfare of Maharashtra should introduce financial assistance at Zilla, Taluka and Panchayat levels by establishing offices for the purpose.

Most of the women from the two communities are agricultural labourers, domestic servants and daily wage workers in the rural and urban areas. They do not have any social security schemes for old-age health care, food etc. The government should, with the help of the community, formulate special policies in this regard. For instance, the community can create institutional frameworks to sensitize the policy makers about the marooned life of these women.

One of the most glaring lacunae in the lives of the Mangs and Mahars is the political inactivity of the women of the two communities. Therefore, the community's literati should empathetically look at their problems and create awareness among them through workshops and other initiatives. This will empower them to fight for their social, political and economic rights.

It goes without saying that it is duty of the educated Mahar Buddhist women to spread the ideologies of Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Shahu and Ambedkar among the
Mang women. Such solidarity will go a long way to challenge the suffocating surveillance system and negative impact of the vitriolic Hindutva forces as well as the internal patriarchy among these communities through the strengthening of the awareness creation process within the community. It will also help them ward off the penetration of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) into the affairs of these communities; the various NGOs have only ended up destroying the political potentials of these people. They should be vigilant of the encroachment of the neoliberal ventures such as non-governmental organizations; corporate social responsibility programmes etc. Moreover, the implementation of government institutions and agencies should be strictly monitored.

In the current debate in Maharashtra, the Mang community is demanding that they should be given special treatment within the existing quotas for Scheduled castes. This, they argue, is because of their marginal status. The group demanding what in effect is a ‘quota within quota’ includes the Mang politicians and educated Mangs. Another group of Mangs are demanding that, in the existing quotas for Scheduled castes during recruitment, the Mangs should get the first preference. This group consists of uneducated Mangs and a few educated Mangs. Within the Mang caste hierarchy, the Mang Garudis are the most deprived. They have demanded that they (Mang Garudis) should get the first preference in the appointment of Mangs in any government service. As of now, it is too early to comment on the outcome of these contestations. What is of extreme importance now is that the community’s intelligentsia should engage in thorough and enlightened discussions taking into account all possible perspectives. Only then can a meaningful and lasting resolution be expected.