INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

India is ethnically and religiously heterogeneous. Its predominant religious tradition sanctifies the concept of homo-hierarchichus. The referent ideology of Hinduism in ‘Varnashrama dharama’, according to which mankind is divided into four categories (varnas), as ordained by God. According to this ideology, all men are born unequal with unequal capacities in order to perform functions of unequal importance to him. The meta-ethical principle of “karma” places individuals in hierarchy with prescribed duties and functions according to one’s past deeds. The rewards of performing dharma or duty as ordained by God are to be reaped after death or in the next life. So everyone must do his prescribed duties and maintain social order. The social groups (castes or jatis), numbering in thousands, that subscribe to this ideology are accordingly hierarchically placed. Caste is the most pervasive parameter differentiating the Indian society. The secular constitutional government notwithstanding, this “sacral tradition” still has a strong hold over the minds and lives of Indians. Though ideologically caste is an institution of Hindu inegalitarianism, its imprint on other religious groups is real and discernible. Stern (1993) aptly describes castes as Gemeinschaft, “communities of fate”, “us” as differentiated from “them”. While caste is determined on the basis of birth, it, in turn, traditionally determines the distribution of human and physical capital, occupations, social status and power. Class differentiation is still weak and tends to overlap caste.

At behavioural and value level, caste may be looked upon as a hierarchical ranking of social groups in society where the allocation of social, cultural and occupational role is decided by calling of the caste. At this level the main features of caste and caste system are fixidity of occupations by birth, practicing of diacritical signs such as restrictions of inter-mixing, inter-dining, social avoidance and social distance. There is a definite system of super-ordinate and subservient relation in terms of mutual obligations towards
different caste groups by each caste. The subservient relationship and practicing of diacritical signs are based on the Hindu concept of superiority and inferiority and the concept of pollution.

According to some researchers, by the 4th century AD, and certainly by the 7th century AD, there were people excluded from society altogether - the group of outcastes now referred to as Dalits or the “downtrodden”. Thus, an ‘untouchable’, or an “outcaste”, was a person who was deemed to not have any “Varna by those who claimed to possess it”. Hence, majority of the Shudras are classified into Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in modern India.

During the Vedic period there were four Varna categories namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya and Shudras. In the post-Vedic period, these four classes became rigidly structured and closed hierarchical groups, with each following its own occupation and its rules of endogamy. Each one of them included a number of Sub-castes. Each class was rigid in observing its rules. Marriage of people from one class with those of another was treated as violation of norms. Children born of such unions were called mixed breed or of improper origins. They were not given the caste of either of the parents, but were placed outside of the four Varnas. They were not permitted to associate with the four categories, nor were they allowed to take up professions of the four classes. They had to take occupations that involved dealing with unclean things. As they were left into themselves without any care and concern by the upper castes they were described as “Harijians” by M.K. Gandhi. They could not aspire to do better jobs, because of a very rigid rules imposed on them by the three upper Varnas. Persons from three classes thought it improper even to touch them, as they had unclean occupations and led inferior social-culture and economic life. Hence, they were treated as “untouchables”. The ever growing conservation of the four-fold caste system gave stability to the practice of untouchability. The untouchables considered themselves as such since their birth. They were designated as the “fifth caste” or “panchamas”. They lived outside villages, in isolated areas which were unclean and unhygienic. They were prohibited from entering the village temples, from drawing water from the public wells, from
approaching the wards inhabited by clean castes, and from following any occupation designated for three upper caste divisions. Thus, they suffered many socio-economic disabilities (Somashekharappa, 2010).

Untouchability is one of the outcomes of caste system. The untouchables are the Scheduled Castes who occupy the bottom most rung of the social ladder. These castes have been discriminated against by the superior castes through generations and centuries. They have never had any kind of social acceptance from the upper castes people. This has been the unique feature of Hindu social system that there has been in existence a large group of people known as untouchables who are now constitutionally called “Scheduled Castes”. Today, the term “Dalit” is popularly used to identify the Scheduled Castes.

As stated by Nirupama Prakash, since the dawn of history, Indian society has suffered from diverse types of social disabilities. Some of the most unsocial and unscrupulous social inequalities and disabilities were centred around the institution of caste. The caste is hierarchical determining the social status in the group. The caste can be classified into four groups—the highest castes, the upper castes, the lower castes and the lowest castes…’. The highest castes are the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and among the lowest castes are the Harijans that is Scheduled Caste or untouchables or Dalits.

The institution of caste led to the crystallization of many prejudices and behavioural patterns that alienated many sections of society from the main stream of Hinduism. These groups had to suffer many inhuman atrocities and disabilities. Out of all these factors, most enigmatic social inequality was epitomized in the institution of ‘untouchability’. The so-called untouchables (now designated as Scheduled-Castes) occupied the lower rank in the social hierarchy of Hindu caste system. They were the most oppressed and downtrodden lot of the Indian society. Members of Scheduled Caste community were not allowed to enter higher occupations and were even prohibited to worship in temples of high caste Hindus. They have been subjected to atrocities at the hands of high caste Hindus.
Indian caste system is based on Varna system. Varna, as enunciated in the Brahminical texts, e.g., the Rigveda or the Manusmriti, or Purusha sukta categorized the people in the Indian society into 4 categories. The Varna system should however be differentiated from the cultural, non-religious, Jati-caste-system. “The Brahmans’ primary vocation is to learn the Vedas and other sacred texts, teach and pray. The Kshatriya’s chief occupation is managing their kingdoms and military service. The Vaishyas are occupied with economic activities (agrarian and trade) and the Sudras are skilled workers and service providers of all types”.

The terms ‘Dalits’, ‘Shudras’, ‘Scheduled Castes’, ‘Mlechchas’, ‘Chandals’, etc., are used synonymously to mean Scheduled Castes in India. There is also confusion, as many authors have stated that the untouchables or Dalits were belonged to ‘Shudras’, while few of the authors writes that the Dalits were not belong to any of the groups including ‘Shudras’ and are outcastes. The word ‘Shudra’ was occurred first in the Purush Shukta. The duty of Shudras was to serve the twice born. In the early age the sons of the soils were converted to Dasa or Shudra. In the later Vedic period Shudra denoted a slave. Thus, the ‘Aitreya’ Brahmana ‘Says’, “One like a Shudra shall be born in the line, the slave of another who may be driven away or slain at will”. He was snatched away from all the privileges of reading Vedas etc., and from the fundamental rights of living freely. He was virtually treated like an animal. Manu, the Hindu law giver described the untouchables as Varna Bahayas and thus kept them out of Chaturvarna. Thus, a general argument that Dalits were part of Shudra was wrong and this concept obviously was politically motivated (Ghosh and Ghosh, 1997).

The ever growing conservation of the four-fold caste system (Varna System) gave stability to the practice of untouchability. The untouchables considered themselves as such since their birth. They were designated as the "fifth caste" or “panchamas”. They lived outside villages, in isolated areas which were unclean and unhygienic. They were prohibited from entering the village temples, from drawing water from the pubic wells, from approaching
the wards inhabited by clean castes, and from following any occupation designated for three upper caste divisions. Thus, they suffered many socio-economic disabilities. The caste system as a form of social stratification is peculiar to Hindu society. It is an inseparable aspect of the Indian society. The hereditary occupations, ideas of exclusive family, ancestral worship, the sacramental meal etc., was the design of the Brahmins to keep themselves pure (Somashekarappa, 2010).

Hence, the term ‘Dalit’ is not defined clearly. Many would include all the Scheduled Castes as Dalits, but it is noted that all the Scheduled Castes are not Dalits and all the Dalits are Scheduled Castes. The Census Report of 1911 actually laid down ten tests to mark off the untouchables from-those who were touchables. Under these tests the census superintendents made a separate enumeration of castes and tribes who are (1) denied the supremacy of the Brahmins, (2) did not receive the Mantra from Brahma or other recognized Hindu Guru, (3) denied the authority of Vedas, (4) did not worship the great Hindu gods, (5) were not served by good Brahmanas, (6) have no Brahmin priest at all, (7) have no access to the interior of the ordinary Hindu temple, (8) cause pollution, (9) bury their dead and (10) eat beef and do not reverence low. Though it was the first attempt to define Dalits in an official government document, it however does not give clear picture (Ghosh and Ghosh, 1997).

Sociologically, the Dalits can be defined on the basis of three social characteristics (Vivek Kumar, 2009):

1. Their structural location in Indian society
2. Social exclusion they suffer in the society
3. Their unique construction of consciousness, which is anchored in their structural location and social exclusion.

In India, untouchability is the social practice of ostracizing a (usually) minority endogamous group by regarding them as “ritually polluted” and segregating them from the mainstream by social custom or legal mandate. The excluded group could be one that did not accept the norms of the excluding group and historically included foreigners, nomadic tribes, law-breakers and
criminals. This exclusion was a method of punishing law-breakers and also protected against contagion from strangers. A member of the excluded group is known as an untouchable. The term is commonly associated with treatment of the Dalits class among Hindus of India, Nepal and Bangladesh, but the term has been used for other groups as well, such as the Burakumin of Japan or the Al-Akhdam in Yemen. Untouchability has been made illegal in post-Independence India but prejudice continues (Wikipedia, 2013). The struggle for influence among the untouchables in the thirties found its reflection in the fact that members of the lower castes began to be called “Harijans” (God's children) on the insistence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Yurlova, 1990).

The struggle for influence among the untouchables in the thirties found its reflection in the fact that members of the lower castes began to be called “Harijans” (God's children) on the insistence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Yurlova, 1990). The history of categorizing some castes as Scheduled Castes commenced with the Government of India Act, 1935. This step, on the part of the then British Government, was meant to treat the most oppressed and exploited castes with a degree of special political dispensation. Most of these castes were known as ‘untouchable’ in the context of the Hindu social structure. Thus, the ‘Scheduled Caste’ category initially comprised castes that were isolated and disadvantaged by their ‘untouchability’, i.e., their low status in the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy, which exposed them to an oppressive life, characterized by a blatant deprivation of opportunities.

Indian Constitution defined Scheduled Castes in Article No. 366 (24) as “Scheduled Castes means such Castes races or tribes or parts of groups within such castes races or tribes as are deemed under Article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of this Constitution” Further, Article No. 341 reads “Scheduled Caste : (1) The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor thereof by public notification, specify the caste, races or tribes or parts of groups within castes, race or tribes which shall for the purpose of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be. (2) Parliament may be law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any
caste, race or tribes but save as aforesaid notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification”.

There are a number of Dalit castes exist in India in various States. To name a few, Mahars of Maharastra, Holeyas, Madigas, Bhangis, etc., of Karnataka, Balais of Central India, Parihas of Tamil Nadu, Paneens, Betunes, Poleas, Revoieers, Maren, Canqus, Heathens, Ageres, Tuies, Mongeres, Monquer etc., of Kerala, Chandala, Hadi, Dom, Chamar, Bhangi (or Mathor or Mehtor) etc., of Eastern and North India. It is also noted that a few of the touchable castes are also included in Scheduled Castes.

Social inequality was epitomized in the institution of ‘untouchability’. Before independence, the so-called untouchables (now designated as Scheduled-Castes) occupied the lower rank in the social hierarchy of Hindu caste system. They were the most oppressed and down-trodden lot of the Indian society. Members of Scheduled Caste community were not allowed to enter higher occupations and were even prohibited to worship in temples of High caste Hindus. They have been subjected to atrocities at the hands of high caste Hindus.

In the context of traditional Hindu society, Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure, such as any involving leatherwork, butchering, or removal of rubbish, animal carcasses and waste. Dalits work as manual labourers cleaning streets, latrines and sewers. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual and this pollution was considered contagious. Brahmins in course of time in connivance with Kshatriya, who wielded power and Vaisyas, who owned wealth, consolidated themselves and divided society into two water-tight compartments viz., higher and lower castes. In order to preserve their power, position and authority, Brahmins developed ideologies, customs and traditions to block mobility of Shudras. In Maharashtra and in other parts of India, Shudras were compelled and forced to engage in manual and menial jobs. The Shudras were systematically barred from entering temples, religious establishments and public places. Shudras and untouchables were allotted
separate areas for habitation. They were allowed to enter higher castes areas for
doing menial jobs only under specific hours (Ghurye, 1986). In Western India –
Maharashtra – a Mahar, an untouchable caste was prohibited from spiting on
the road as a pure caste Hindu might become polluted by touching it with his
foot. Therefore, untouchable castes were asked to carry an earthen pot, hung
from his/ her neck to spit. Further, the untouchable castes had to drag a thorny
branch with him/ her to wipe out his/her footprints and lie at a distance
prostrate on the ground if a Brahmin passed by, so that his foul shadow might
not defile the holy Brahmin (Ghurye, 1986). Brahmins also developed dual
systems of rituals for the pure and impure. Vedic rituals were used for pure
caste, while Puranic rituals for impure castes. Thus, Shudras and untouchable
castes were subjected to all forms of exploitations.

Consequently, Dalits were commonly segregated and banned from full
participation in Hindu social life. For example, they could not enter a temple
nor a school, and were required to stay outside the village. Elaborate
precautions were sometimes observed to prevent incidental contact between
Dalits and other castes. Discrimination against Dalits still exists in rural areas
in the private sphere, in everyday matters such as access to eating places,
schools, temples and water sources. It has largely disappeared in urban areas
and in the public sphere. Some Dalits have successfully integrated into urban
Indian society, where caste origins are less obvious and less important in public
life. In rural India, however, caste origins are more readily apparent and Dalits
often remain excluded from local religious life, though some qualitative
evidence suggests that its severity is fast diminishing.

On occasions like marriage, festivals and ceremonies, non-Brahmin
students were invited, but separate arrangements for seating were made for
them. School teachers from Shudras and untouchables background, felt that
Brahmins treated them unfit for teaching. Lack of caste-consciousness, self-
respect on the part of non-Brahmin castes made them accept Brahmins ill-
treatment, insults and humiliation. In short, Brahmins by creating caste system
have not only dominated Indian society, but also blocked mobility and change for lower classes viz., Shudras and untouchables.

After Independence, the Government of India took up the removal of untouchability as one of its main and important tasks. Equality constitutes the “basic structure” of the Indian Constitution. Excessive “redress” of disadvantages to a group, class or caste sought through privilege of protection by positive discrimination in jobs militates against it. Thus, the subject is attended by splendid legal niceties (Upadhyaya, 1998). In order to end exploitation of these sections at the hands of upper caste Hindus, the modern polity provided many protective measures in the constitution and initiated many programmes of their social development. The schemes which have been taken-up for socio-economic upliftment of Scheduled Castes, are in the field of education, occupation, economic upliftment, health and housing schemes. The Indian Government has provided many facilities in the field of education and occupation to Scheduled Castes in order to bring about their upliftment. Many Scheduled Castes people have sought urban employment, away from their rural exploitative system. Now that members of Scheduled Caste community are in a position to seek entry in urban occupation, a change in their life pattern is expected. Many studies have been conducted on Scheduled Castes and fields related to it. Ghurye (1969) has defined the term ‘Scheduled Caste’ as the Scheduled Castes are those groups which are named in the Scheduled Caste order in force for the time being.

On the other hand, the Government of India, too, has denied the claims of equivalence between caste and racial discrimination, pointing out that the issues of social status is essentially intra-racial and intra-cultural. The view of the caste system as “static and unchanging” has also been disputed. The Indian government has been working towards creating equality between castes with guaranteed seats in educational institutions, government jobs (and promotions) and even in the parliament for those of the Scheduled Untouchable castes and tribes. Scholarships have also been available to all of these groups, so that they can go on to further education more easily and this has raised their social status.
According to Nirupama Prakash, the term “Scheduled Caste” is the expression standardized in the Constitution of the Republic of India, Article 341 of the Constitution empowers the President, after consulting the head of the particular state to notify by an order, “the castes, races or tribes which shall for the purpose of the constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Caste in relation to that state”. The expression standardized in the constitution was first coined by the Simon Commission and embodied in the Government of India 1935 in Section 309. Hence, Scheduled Castes are those groups which are named in the Scheduled Caste order in force for the time being. A detailed account of origin of Scheduled Castes has been given. Atrocities committed on Scheduled Castes by High Caste Hindu soon after Independence has been accounted for. Various legislative measures passed by state legislatures for removal of untouchability and to affect the welfare of Scheduled Castes has been highlighted. An account of Scheduled Castes before Independence has also been given. It states that special efforts to encourage the education of depressed classes were made before Independence was achieved. Various features of castes within the Scheduled Castes have been highlighted with respect to different States of our country.

Within the Scheduled Castes there is hierarchy. The members of the Harijan castes follow the hierarchial principle among themselves as rigidly as those of the higher castes. The higher caste Harijan will practice untouchability towards lower caste Harijan.

Today, in India caste has received social, economic and religious sanctions and has become an inseparable part of Indian society. Neither democracy nor modernization has been able to eradicate it. Caste has today only become modified. Due to caste politics, the aspects of caste have been highlighted to a greater degree. Untouchability is one of the outcomes of caste system. The untouchables are the Scheduled Castes, who occupy the bottom most rung of the social ladder. These castes have been discriminated against by the superior castes through generations and centuries. They have never had any kind of social acceptance from the upper castes people. This has been the
unique feature of Hindu social system that there has been in existence a large group of people known as untouchables who are now constitutionally called “Scheduled Castes (SCs)”.

The term “Scheduled Castes” was first coined by the Simon Commission in 1928 and later in the “Government of Indian Act 1935”. This act listed out a few of the castes as the most inferior ones which required some special attention. This list of castes was designated as “Scheduled Castes”. When India became Independent this term was adopted by the new constitution for the purposes of providing them with special facilities and constitutional guarantees. However, a status not all Scheduled Castes suffer from the disability of untouchability, such as, for example the Bhajantris Lambanis etc. However, a vast majority of the Scheduled Castes do suffer the stigma of untouchability. Before Independence, the term "depressed classes" was also often used. Today, however, the term Scheduled Castes is officially used for those castes, both “touchable” and also “untouchable” but enshrined under the same constitutional provisions from time to time following a procedure of the government (Somashekharappa, 2010).

It is noted that the term Scheduled Castes is not defined in the constitution. The Articles 341 and 342 of the constitution expressly empowers the president of India, who in consultation with the various state Governments can notify the list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from time of time. Today the term “Dalit” is also often used to identify the Scheduled Castes. It is now quite extensively used as in “Dalit movement”, or “Demands of the Dalits”, etc. They are a large group of people of those castes and communities in the Indian population who have suffered from social, cultural, religious, political, educational and economic disabilities from many centuries and have been denied proper status in Hindu Society. This common usage of Dalit is not entered into the official language of the state. But generally the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are understood to constitute this larger category. However, since the Scheduled Tribes are to cover largely the Adivasis who lived outside the purview of social structure of Hindu Society, they are not to
be considered as part of Dalits. In a literary sense, Dalits are the most deprived sections of Hindu Society.

It is noted that even though Government has formulated welfare schemes and policies and also passed protective legislations for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, still there are many forms of discrimination and atrocities faced by the Scheduled Castes in India. Following is a statistics pertaining to such violence against the Scheduled Castes in India (India facts, 2010).

Every 18 minutes a crime is committed against a Dalit and every day 3 Dalit women are raped, 2 Dalits are murdered & 2 Dalits Houses are burnt in India, 11 Dalits are beaten. Every week 13 Dalits are murdered, 5 Dalits home or possessions are burnt, 6 Dalits are kidnapped or abducted. Social and Economic condition of Dalits 37 percent of Dalits living below poverty in India, More than half (54%) of their children are undernourished in India, 83 per 1000 live birth children born in Dalit community are probability of dying before the first birthday. 45 percent of Dalits do not know read and write in India. Dalits women burden double discrimination (gender and caste) in India, Only 27 percent of Dalits women give institutional deliveries in India, About one third of Dalit households do not have basic facilities, Public health workers refused to visit Dalit homes in 33% of villages, Dalits were prevented from entering police station in 27.6% of villages, Dalit children had to sit separately while eating in 37.8% of Govt. schools, Dalits didn’t get mail delivered to their homes in 23.5% of villages, Dalits were denied access to water sources in 48.4% of villages because of segregation & untouchabilty practices, Half of India’s Dalit children are undernourished, 21% are severely underweight & 12% DIE before their 5th birthday, Literacy rates for Dalit women are as low as 37.8% In Rural India.

Many of the massacres and revolts were took place in different parts of India due to atrocities against the Dalits by landlords or against landlords by Dalit groups. Major among them include robberies of Phoolan Devi in Uttar Pradesh, massacres of Ranvir Sena in Bihar, Kilvenmani and Melavaluvu
massacres in Tamil Nadu, Muthanga incident in Kerala, Khairlanji massacre in Maharashtra, etc.

It is also highlighted that even there is the Prevention of Atrocities Act to protect the Scheduled Castes, the conviction rate under SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act is 15.71% and pendency is as high as 85.37%. The conviction rate under IPC is over 40%. The position of women of Scheduled Castes is vulnerable as they are double disadvantaged that is from caste and gender.

**Status of Scheduled Caste Women:**

Dalits constitute about 250 million people and half of them are women, the most marginalized in the caste hierarchy of our societies. Among the large-scale violations of human rights perpetrated on Dalit people are the burning of their homes and fields, murder, torture and assault of women, molestation and rape, and deaths in custody. These occur in spite of Constitutional guarantees abolishing untouchability and ensuring protection of the human rights of all Indian citizens. Victims of bonded labour, child labour, prostitution and of the Devadasi system (sexual slaves dedicated to temples) are drawn largely from Dalit communities.

Dalit women constitute 16.3 per cent in the total population. 18 per cent of Dalit women live in rural areas. After the unpaid hard Domestic work, they continue to toil in the hot sun as a wage earner. Dalit Women undertake manual, low paid tedious, time consuming work. They get low pay, less than an U.S. Dollar. They walk miles to fetch drinking water. They live in huts, denied of basic amenities such as sanitation, light, water. They work in building construction, carry heavy loads, work in brick kiln from early morning till evening. They are employed as casual labourers in laying roads with hot thar in the burning sun without sandals and without any protection. They carry heavy loads, heavily burdened to collect fodder, fuel, water for everyday consumption. They do all kinds of inferior and menial jobs. Dalit women are bonded, they are abused, sexually exploited by other caste humiliated and are easy target of insult. They work more than the bullocks and men. Bullocks and men work in a hectare in a year for 1064 hours and 1202, but women work for
more than 3485 hours. The caste and the patriarchal norms legitimize the poor Economic conditions of Dalit women. She had to work to survive. She is resourceless/powerless and has no access to resources. Dalit Women are working in manual scavenging, removing excreta, cleaning sewage, sweeping which are humiliating, degrading and discriminatory.

Dalits live in separate colonies, cut off and distanced from other communities and localities. Even today, inter-caste marriages lead to large-scale violence. Dalits do not have access to public wells, or to public eating-places. They have to use separate glasses for drinking tea or coffee at village restaurant in some states of India. Atrocities and violence against Dalits basically arise in the context of ‘keeping Dalits’ in their place, within the social hierarchy mediated by caste and untouchability. These forms of violence amount to racial discrimination.

The oppressed Dalit people confront barbaric atrocities and violence, denial of their basic needs and land rights, infringement of civil liberties and most important of all denial of their status as human beings. They live with dehumanising living and working conditions, impoverishment, malnutrition and poor health conditions, a high level of illiteracy and continuing social ostracism. Despite the existence of Constitutional rights and other protective laws which are meant to address their problems, Dalit communities continue to live in extreme poverty, perform menial and low-paid jobs such as scavenging and suffer from the lack of access to basic amenities and resources. There is the denial of such basic needs is a gross violation of the social and economic rights of the Dalit people. The Dalit women are thrice alienated on the basis of their class, caste and gender. The Dalit women have to grapple with discrimination due to caste hierarchy and untouchability on the one hand, and extreme deprivation.

In addition to general protection and reservation given to the Scheduled Castes, Constitution of India provides equality to women and also empowers the state to adopt measures in favour of women to upgrade them from their disadvantage status in terms of socio-economic, education and political
scenario. Several articles of the constitution of India such as, equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42).

Despite many positive developments in securing women's human rights, patriarchy continues to be embedded in the social system in many parts of India, denying the majority of women the choice to decide how they live. The over-riding importance of “community” in a patriarchal sense ensures that women rarely have an independent say in community issues.

Dalit women in India are targeted for violence and discrimination not just because of their gender, but also on the basis of their caste, community, religious affiliation and other factors. The rape is a major means for isolating her and her husband within the community because of the stigma attached to this crime in India. Other common forms of violence perpetrated against Indian women include: female feticide (selective abortion based on the fetus' gender); domestic violence; dowry death; mental and physical torture; sexual trafficking; and public humiliation (Meena Anand, 2005).

Female feticide continues to be common. Poor families have little interest in educating girls and will often engage them in marriage as children to ensure they are taken care of economically. Levels of crime, high all over India, include rapes, kidnappings, instances of dowry death, mental and physical “torture”, sexual molestation and harassment and trafficking.

Domestic violence is also widespread and affecting women in all classes, castes, and religions and is often associated with “dowry”. While dowry has been banned since 1961, it still contributes to high levels of violence against women, whose husbands and families harass wives for increased dowry.
Therefore, the situation of Scheduled Caste women in India needs special attention. They are one of the largest socially segregated groups anywhere in the world, and make up 2% of the world’s total population. Scheduled Caste women (or Dalit women) are discriminated against three times over: they are poor, they are women, and they are Dalits. Scheduled Caste women constitute half of the ca. 200 million Scheduled Caste population and 16.3 of the total Indian female population. The traditional taboos are the same for Dalit men and Dalit women. However, Scheduled Caste women have to deal with them more often. Dalit women are discriminated against not only by people of higher castes, but also within their own communities. Men are dominant in Dalit communities. Dalit women also have less power within the Dalit movement itself. Women are active in large numbers in the movement but most leadership positions in the organizations, local bodies and associations have until now been held by men.

If the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) were (and still are) a victim of discrimination, the women belonging to these sections were doubly so. On the one hand they were discriminated on account of their caste status and on the other; they were discriminated on gender lines. If the social order relegated the Scheduled Caste people to the periphery, the gender discrimination forced the women belonging to these sections to perpetual marginalization and subordination.

The social deprivation of Scheduled Caste women revealed that these women had to shoulder as a burden, the women belonging to this segment had to bear the brunt as they became a victim of double discrimination- as part of caste inequity on the one hand and as part of gender inequity on the other. Their position in the society and within the family made them the worst victims of a social system which relegated them to complete insignificance. It is no wonder that, the Scheduled Caste women in India today occupy a position in the ladder of littermates only a shade better then their Scheduled Tribe counterpart- a segment which also shares similar discrimination though emanating from a different socio-historical context.
Certain kinds of violence are traditionally reserved for Dalit women: extreme filthy verbal abuse and sexual epithets, naked parading, dismemberment, branding, pulling out of teeth, tongue and nails, and violence including murder after proclaiming witchcraft, are only experienced by Dalit women. Dalit women are threatened by rape as part of collective violence by the higher castes. However, sexual assault and rape of Dalit women and girls also occur within their own communities. For Dalit men, the suppression and rape of women could be a way to compensate for their own lack of power in society. The Devadasi system of temple prostitution is the most extreme form of exploitation of Dalit women. Dalit girl children are forced to prostitution. The majority of cases of violence against Dalit women are not registered. The lack of law enforcement leaves many Dalit women unable to approach the legal system to seek redress. Women are often also unaware of the laws and their ignorance is exploited by their opponents, by the police, and by the judiciary system. Even when cases are registered, the lack of appropriate investigation, or the judge’s own caste and gender biases, can lead to acquittal.

The plight of SC women seems much more alarming when one looks at the data pertaining to serious crimes such as rape and murder. The number of reported cases of SC women being raped by the non-SC men increased from 604 in 1981 to 727 in 1986, 784 in 1991, 949 in 1996 and 1316 in 2001. The number came down to 1089 in 2003, but once again increased, though gradually, to 1157 in 2004, 1172 in 2005, 1217 in 2006, 1349 in 2007, 1457 in 2008 and 1346 in 2009. From the 2009 data, it may be understand that in India on an average every day 2 Dalits are murdered and 4 Dalit women are raped by the non-Dalits. The data for the 1981 to 2009 period for India as a whole indicate that not only the overall number of incidence of caste discrimination and violence but also the brutal crimes such as rape and murder are on the increase. Recent data seems to confirm increasing trends on discriminations; in 2007 there were 1,349 reported rape cases, whereas in 2008 there were 1,457 cases; hence, the increase in 2008 was 8.0 percent. It should be also noted that in India about 90 percent crimes against Dalit women are not reported to the
police for the fear of social ostracism and threat to personal safety and security especially Dalit women. Also the legal proceedings are so complicated, tardy, time consuming, costly and unfriendly to Dalits that usually they do not approach courts or other law enforcing agencies for their redressal (AIDMAM, 2010).

A study entitled ‘Gender-Violence and Access to Justice for the Dalit Woman: Final Report December 2011’, was undertaken by Navsarjan Trust in collaboration with Minority Rights Group International, London. It was focused on three districts of Rajkot, Kutch and Bhavnagar. It covers the atrocities cases on Dalit women registered from 2004 to 2009. The study shows that it is more difficult for Dalits to get justice in the court of law for their traumatic sufferings. The study indicates that in the cases of violence by non-Dalits on Dalit women, no non-Dalit accused have been convicted so far, and in cases of violence by Dalits on Dalit women, there have been convictions only in six cases. The data received for the study shows a more gloomy picture of delivery of justice to the victims. Of 889 registered cases - 185 cases of violence by non-Dalits and 704 cases of violence by Dalits, only 6 cases (or 0.7% of the total) resulted in conviction of the accused (Jha, 2011).

Vulnerably positioned at the bottom of India’s caste, class and gender hierarchies, Dalit women experience endemic gender-and-caste discrimination and violence as the outcome of severely imbalanced social, economic and political power equations. Their socio-economic vulnerability and lack of political voice, when combined with the dominant risk factors of being Dalit and female, increase their exposure to potentially violent situations while simultaneously reducing their ability to escape. Violence against Dalit women presents clear evidence of widespread exploitation and discrimination against these women subordinated in terms of power relations to men in a patriarchal society, as also against their communities based on caste. Violence against Dalit women is to deny them opportunities, choices and freedoms at multiple levels, undermining not only Dalit women’s dignity and self-respect, but also their right to development. Twelve major forms of violence constitute the basis
of this study, nine being violence in the general community – physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and assault, rape, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, kidnapping and abduction, forced incarceration and medical negligence – and three being violence in the family – female feticide and infanticide, child sexual abuse and domestic violence from natal and marital family members.

The life of Dalit women in rural areas is full of hardships and misfortunes. They have to face the problem of hunger almost daily. Due to extreme poverty they have to go to collect fuel for cooking and while doing so listen to the curses and abuses of higher class Hindus. ...She has to tolerate the injustice and torture of the higher caste masters when she goes out to work in their fields. Even then she lives to fight them back and does not surrender herself to the wretched system. While doing so she becomes vociferous and cannot speak in a refined manner as other class Hindu woman can. The rural Dalit women have to face the adversities of the caste system much more than the urban Dalit women (Pawde, 1995).

Poverty compels most rural Dalit parents to send their children to work rather than to school. Many Dalit parents view education for girls as a luxury, pointing out that it is expensive and there is a lack of gainful employment opportunities after graduation. For example, Dalit women’s participation in the organized sector is negligible. However, many parents also feel that education beyond the primary level for girls will affect their household management.

Dalit women are victims of social, religious and cultural practices like Devdasis and Jogins. In the name of these practices, village girls are married to God by their helpless parents. These girls are then sexually exploited by the upper caste landlords and rich men and directed in to trafficking and prostitution. They don’t own any land nor are they aware of their rights on land. Dalit women’s daily diet is the leftover of family meals, inadequate in quantity and quality. Health services are either not available in case of illness or unaffordable even if available. In addition to that, due to early marriage and too many pregnancies their health is always at risk.
Realizing the vulnerability of Dalit women, before independence, many of the social reformers were organized movement through many organizations such as Arya Samaj, Harijan Sevak Sangh, etc. Similarly, after the independence, many of the social welfare schemes such as reservations, self-employment training, participation in Panchayats, etc., were encouraged.

According to Suresha and Mylarappa (2012), more distressing and dismal was the picture of the educational status of untouchable women. In general, neither they had access to indigenous schooling nor modern schooling introduced by the British of the three important agencies which spread modern education in India the British government especially made no efforts till the end of 19th century make a provision for the education of the untouchables in fact, it strictly followed the policy of neutrality in respect of social and religious matter. Least they incur the wrath of the Hindu orthodoxy that strongly resisted all progressive social measures including the promotion of education among untouchables.

More and more girl children from Scheduled Castes and communities are school drop-outs and working as child labourers. Scheduled Caste women are illiterate because they have less access to education which is inherent part of the caste system. There are not enough facilities to educate, insecurity, taking care of small children, joining the adults to add to the income of the family. Scheduled Caste girl children are involved mostly in hazardous work like Beedi making, match factories and in making crackers. The fear of paying dowry and the fear of sending the girls to schools which are usually in distant places deprives them of education. Further, caste is practised in schools where Scheduled Caste children occupy separate seats given to them. Due to lack of uniform, school books, special fees, walking miles everyday, limits Scheduled Caste girl children to avail education.

Till some years ago, many Dalit women were ill treated and educationally backward in spite of the facilities for free education. The reasons for the high rate of illiteracy among Dalit women are listed as under:
1. Resistance from the family to send girls to schools.
2. Fear of insecurity in villages.
3. Lack of physical facilities like accommodation, school, transport and medical facilities.
4. The girls were forced to take care of the siblings when the parents are away at work.
5. Girls were forced to do domestic chores which prevent them from attending school.
6. Working to earn for the family prevent the girls from attending school.
7. Working with parents to earn their livelihood in beedi factories or other unorganized sector made them illiterate.
8. Because of the sick and unemployed parents girls were forced to work.
9. Many were forced to get married at young age, which stop schooling.
10. Social restriction is that the girls should stop education after marriage.
11. In some areas there are complaints from Dalit women teachers of misbehaviors, blackmail and exploitation by the male staff of other high caste people.
12. Distance of schools from home.
13. Irrelevant content of the education system.
14. Fear of alienation of girls from their environment as a result of education is some of the other factors for low literacy level among SC girls. Even if the education improved the marriage prospects of the girls, the minus point is the increase in dowry. Therefore, many parents wish to withdraw the girls from schools.

The caste discrimination inherited by birth leaves Scheduled Caste women facing multiple oppressions that violate their economic, political, social and cultural rights. The most deprived section of the society comprises of Scheduled Caste women who are the poorest, illiterate and easy targets for sexual harassment. The women face not just caste violence inflicted on them by the dominant castes, but also state violence.
Female infanticide is more prevalent among the uneducated Dalit families. Educational development among SC women is very marginal because only girls were not sent to school because of the responsibilities at home. Therefore, the gender discrimination starts at the very early stage in the life of a Dalit girl. Normally girl children are retained at home to look after the siblings. Another thing is the compulsory marriage of the girls at very early age after which the education is stopped. Generally in the male-dominated society, polygamy is allowed and more so in many Dalit families. Because of this the position of the women deteriorated. Joint family system, polygamy, property structure, early marriage, and permanent widowhood were hurdles for the development of all women in early period. But in the twentieth century, after the Mahatma Gandhian movement to educate women, slowly changes occurred in the position of women. But here, rural women were more blessed than urban women because divorce and remarriage were allowed for them (Muthumary, 2010). Mainly few of Dalit communities allowed divorce and remarriage for their women.

The occupation of many SC women can be divided in the following heads:

- Agriculture labourer.
- Marginal Cultivators.
- Fisherwomen.
- Traditional artisans.
- Leather Workers.
- Weavers.
- Scavengers and sweepers.
- Midwifery.
- Beedi factories and unorganized sectors.

The contribution of SC women to the economic development of our country is significant especially in the agricultural sector. They are exploited by the higher caste landlords. They are paid very marginal salary for the hard work
in the field for the whole day. In leather industries the tanning process is considered to be an unclean job which is done only by socially backward class. Traditional artistes get very more benefit because the middleman exploits them. The condition of scavenger and sweepers is very deplorable and they the most vulnerable sectors among SC. The working condition is very poor and the remuneration is also very poor.

The girls remain uneducated, they got married very early. Marriage in the high reproductive stage with high fertility rate, children care more. Because of the unlimited family, the burden fell on the young girls which affected their health. They were not able to assist in family matters to their husbands. But now the situation is different. The girls manage to plan their family, educate the children, assist the husbands in family matters and office going and professional girls improve the economic conditions. On the whole the family becomes socially developed because of the education of the girls.

As discussed by Meena Anand (2005), Dalit women are deprived of health services. The health services are denied and the life expectancy of Dalit Women is only 50 years. The infant mortality rate is 90/100.000. The sex ratio of Dalit Women is 922/1000 as against 927/1000 in India. Dalit women suffer with prolapsed uteruses. They are malnourished and anemic. They work in Agriculture, bending throughout creates back pain, skin irritation due to excessive use of pesticides. They suffer with soars in the toes. Most of them have infectious diseases, especially cervical cancer with white discharges. The government Birth Control Schemes targets Dalit Women. They are forced to sterilize and tested on new contraceptives - like guinea pigs. They are forced to use long acting harmonal dangerous contraceptives. They do not get basic medical facilities. The pregnant Dalit women are turned away from Government hospitals for Doctors refuse to conduct delivery on Dalit Women.

The Scheduled Caste women are oppressed by the broader Hindu society, their own community’s men and also their own husbands. Thus, they are triply disadvantageous. The issues of Scheduled Caste women are different from that of other Indian women. They have been deprived from all kinds of
human rights, education, income, dignity, social status, religious rights, etc. They have to face outside world necessitated by economic deprivation, and an urgent need to earn for livelihood. Thus, their subjugation is more acute—being Dalit they are treated with great contempt by upper caste men and women alike, and their own men folk. Despite that they have hugely contributed to the development of India by their seer hard work and labour. But, their contributions have never been recognized. Their voices and protests are almost invisible. In fact, when we talk of marginalization of women in the development process, or feminization of poverty or woman’s contribution to the unorganized sector in India, we are referring to them without even being conscious about their specificity (Chandra and Sangha Mitra, 2003). It is regrettable to note that mainstream women’s movement in India also ignored and neglected the pitiable condition of Dalit women (Verma, 1999).

Educated Dalit women encounter discrimination as well, for example in employment and wages, appointments and promotions, in political representation, demands made for dowry, and in personal relations. The major beneficiaries of education and employment reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are men from the 'forward' castes among the Dalits. This fact reveals at least two issues:

(a) that not all Dalits have equal access to reservations, and

(b) that Dalit women, especially do not have equal access as men to benefits reserved for SC/ST.

Further, as a result of persistent casteism and corruption, many seats in college and positions in government reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes go unfilled, though qualified Dalit candidates do apply. Thus, if a qualified Dalit woman applies for a job or college seat reserved for an SC/ST, she is told to apply as a woman; if she applies for a job or college seat reserved for women, she is told to apply as an SC/ST.

Given these trends, it is doubtful whether the recent debate over granting reservation for women in parliament would have much benefit for Dalit women in general. Even though 25 per cent of the seats in local assemblies, like the
panchayat raj, are reserved for women in Karnataka, the reservation for Dalit women only amounts to twenty percent of the women’s quota. Those Dalit women who are elected are restricted by their lack of education and ownership of land. Even if educated, their power as landless, female representatives in a body comprised of powerful landed, caste Hindu groups is still limited. With diminished marriage prospects due to lack of dowry, many educated Dalit women become educated unemployed and underemployed single women. In marriage, educated Dalit women are still subordinated within the family; educated Dalit males are refuters of Manuism, but followers in regards to women. Due to triple oppression of class, caste and gender, Dalit females have the least access to education and other opportunities for social and economic mobility. Their liberation does not lie purely in economic or political terms, but social and cultural liberation must also be taken into account (Meena Anand, 2005).

Even though reservations are given to women and Scheduled Castes in panchayats, their active participation is suppressed. Dalit women are excluded from decision-making. They are not in a position to exercise their power. Wherever Dalit women have contested, they have faced stiff opposition and even been brutally attacked. There are instances where Dalit women have been elected into local governance and, through the reservation policy, nominated as the president of the local governing unit (Panchayat). But when these women have endeavoured to exercise their role, it has met with resistance, even to the extent of physical violence. The reservation for Dalits, particularly for women, is accepted in form but seldom in substance. Any change in the status quo is resisted. Dalit women’s sitting on chairs is seen as threat to social hierarchy. So, the upper castes in the village vetoed chairs in the panchayat office (Sainath Rao, 2003). A Dalit woman president is not allowed to sit on a chair if the other caste members do not allow this. She is forced to be a mere figurehead, while the functioning of the Panchayat is taken over by upper-caste members. Political parties in India speak much about equality of women but have totally ignored the Dalit women (Jogdand, 2005).
Education of Dalit girls and women is necessary for their full participation in all aspects of society. Despite multiple obstacles and oppression, many Dalit females are struggling daily to gain access to educational opportunities. Their resistance and determination to obtain access to information is but one aspect of their agency and power.

The process of globalization has affected Dalit women considerably. With the introduction of new farming techniques, such as mechanization for harvesting and transplanting, women have lost their traditional work in the agricultural sector. Food crops have been replaced by cash crops. Horticulture has been introduced by big agribusiness corporations for export purposes. This has deprived Dalit women of their land and the common resources in the village. Women used to collect greens, fish, and shells from fields for their food requirements for free. This is no longer available to them. Abject poverty has driven large numbers of Dalit women into the sex trade to earn for their families. The globalization process has increased the feminization of poverty and this has affected Dalit women in every sphere of their lives. There is also large-scale migration from rural areas to the urban centres in search of better livelihood options. Women are left behind to bear responsibility for the family. More and more female headed households emerge and most of them are headed by Dalit women. Such situations push the women into further situations of impoverishment, making them more and more vulnerable to all forms of discrimination and violations (Ashalata, 2013).

The Scheduled Caste women had occupied a very low position socially, economically as well as educationally for generations. But the recent changes have enabled few among them to acquire better education as they may desire and are provided with a variety of new choices and opportunities in the occupational field also. As a result they may be able to improve their representation in organized sectors. The new Governmental policies help them very effectively to increase job opportunities to these category people and also they may have utilized all such facilities provided to them by government from time to time. But still majority of these women are living in rural and backward
areas, where still the social stigma attached to the Scheduled Castes. Hence, the present study on Scheduled Caste women is made in backward Hyderabad-Karnataka region of Karnataka that is Gulbarga district.

1.1. Statement of the Problem:

As discussed above, caste system based on Varna system divided the Indian society and created inequality among different castes and communities. Due to caste system, the Scheduled Castes are backward in terms of socio-economic, educational, political and such other aspects. After independence, Government of India assured the rights of all the people vide Indian Constitution based on equality. Further, many of the policies and schemes were announced to empower the backward classes including the Scheduled Castes. Still, there are acts of violence against the Scheduled Castes, illiteracy, poverty and negligence among the Scheduled Castes, which made them to live below poverty line without any status in the society.

The position and status of women among the Scheduled Castes is also lower, as they are prone to violence, blind beliefs such as Devadasi, domestic violence, dowry, etc. Due to their caste and weaker gender, the Scheduled Caste women are exploited in the society and are facing many kinds of violence. Illiteracy and exploitation from the family members as well as the society are the general problems of Scheduled Caste women. In backward areas and rural areas, the problems of Scheduled Caste women are manifold and different. Hence, the present study is made to explore the problems of the Scheduled Caste women in backward area under the title “Problems and Challenges of Scheduled Caste Women: A Sociological Study of Gulbarga District”.

1.2. Significance of the Study:

It is already noted that the education of the Scheduled Caste women at the national level is very low, as there are many problems associated with their castes, distance to the schools, social discrimination, etc. As such, there is lack of awareness about the social welfare schemes formulated by the Government
among the Scheduled Caste women. Due to the social stigma attached to their castes, many of the Scheduled Caste girls and women are facing different types of violence such as trafficking, abduction, rape, assault, sexual exploitation, murder, naked parading in public, stripping, etc. There are also evil practices such as dowry, Devadasi, etc., which made the Scheduled Caste women to suffer in their families and communities too. In this way, Scheduled Caste women are facing many problems and challenges in the society.

The status of highly educated or employed Scheduled Caste women is improved to a greater extent. On the other hand, if the Scheduled Caste women are housewives or working in their conventional caste based occupations that is too in backward areas and rural areas, their status and position is still more vulnerable, as they are facing many of the problems and challenges in their day-to-day life. Hence, the present study is proved as significant in assessing the Scheduled Caste women in rural areas of backward region of Gulbarga district.

1.3. Objectives of the Study:

The study is made:

1. To know the status of the Scheduled Caste women, who are engaged in conventional and caste based occupations and also housewives;
2. To look into the educational and social background of the Scheduled Caste women;
3. To study the problems and challenges faced by Scheduled Caste women in their family as well as in society;
4. To study the psychological problems of Scheduled Caste women as they are depressed and suppressed in the society due to gender and caste;
5. To analyze whether Scheduled Caste women are facing violence in the family and society and to know about their particular problems; and
6. To explore the developments made by Scheduled Caste women in socio-economic, political, education, etc., due to the welfare schemes and programmes of the Government.
1.4. Hypotheses:

Following are the hypotheses for the present study.

1. Majority of the Scheduled Caste women are living in unhygienic environment.
2. Majority of Scheduled Caste women believe in blind faith and social evils.
3. Due to their caste and gender, majority of the Scheduled Caste women are facing exploitation and harassment of different kinds in society.
4. Few of the Scheduled Caste women are facing problems of inadequate income due to poverty.
5. Outside employment or self-employment has given status, recognition, respect and cooperation to Scheduled Caste women in society.
6. There is no gender equality among Scheduled Castes.

1.5. Limitations of the Study:

The study is limited to the Scheduled Caste working women in their conventional caste based occupations and Scheduled Caste unemployed women in Gulbarga district. There are seven talukas in Gulbarga district and it is not possible to survey all Scheduled Caste women in the district. As such, considering the time limitations of the research study, total 400 respondents were selected to collect primary data. Of these respondents, 200 are Scheduled Caste unemployed women chosen from seven talukas and 200 are Scheduled Caste working women selected from different departments in seven talukas of Gulbarga district. To cover the respondents from all the areas, at least 50 respondents are selected from each taluka in the district, of which at least 25 are Scheduled Caste working women and at least 25 are unemployed Scheduled Caste women. Hence, the present study is limited to 400 Scheduled Caste women in Gulbarga district. The selection of respondents, sampling method, techniques to data collection, etc is discussed in third chapter.
1.6. Chapterization:

The present study is structured into seven chapters with two appendixes as under.

The first chapter provided brief background information to the research topic such as Scheduled Caste working wives and Scheduled Caste housewives, the problems of Scheduled Castes in general and problems and challenges of Scheduled Caste women in particular. Here research problem is stated clearly. The significance of the study is also discussed. The clear aims and objectives are discussed. The scope and limitations are stated in this chapter. Some generalizations and assumptions are fixed as hypothesis of the study. The first chapter will be written under the title “Introduction to the Study.”

Before conducting the present study, it is necessary to know about the research gap in the studies that are already conducted. Hence, the studies already conducted and published already in the secondary literature such as research papers, books, journals, articles, conference and seminar papers that are published will be reviewed in the second chapter under the title “Review of Literature”.

Methodology is significant to conduct every research study. The methodology covers the sources of information used such as primary sources and secondary sources. The concepts used in the research are defined in the methodology. Selections of sample units, sampling method, data collection tool, techniques of data processing, etc., are discussed. It covers the step-by-step process in the present research work and the methodology is described in third chapter under the title “Sources and Research Methodology”.

Area or location plays an important role in the status and development of the people. As such it is also applicable to the both Scheduled Caste working women and unemployed Scheduled Caste women in Gulbarga district. Hence, there is need to study on the Gulbarga district in particular. The fourth chapter covered the area, demography, population, literacy, education,
The present study is social and it also includes education and health as they are basic to social life. Basically, Scheduled Caste women are facing problems in getting education and health facilities and facing problems in their marital life and problems in society due to their castes. Hence, the primary data collected from Scheduled Caste women on these problems are analyzed and discussed in the fifth chapter under the title “Social Problems”.

Economic factors play a significant role in the development of Scheduled Caste women. Due to education and government facilities, many of the Scheduled Caste women are engaged in employed or self-employed. As such, to a greater extent, there is a change in status of Scheduled Caste women and on the other hand, the status of unemployed women may not develop. Further, the social culture and caste-based problems are depicted by analyzing the religious problems and the participation of Scheduled Caste women in politics is also needed to be discussed. Hence, the primary data collected on economic problems, religious and political problems are discussed in the sixth chapter under the title “Economic Problems”.

After the analysis and interpretation of the primary data, findings are derived from the study and summaries of the study are stated. Useful suggestions are given for improvement and development of the status of Scheduled Caste women. Many of the problems such as illiteracy, negligence, violence, lower status, gender and caste discrimination, etc., should be encountered. Further, the research study is concluded. Hence, the seventh chapter is written under the title “Findings and Conclusion”.

Apart from the above-stated seven chapters, two appendixes are given at the end covering Bibliography and Interview Schedule. The research papers, books, Journal articles, etc., that are used and relevant to the present study are listed in appendix-1 under the title ‘Bibliography’. The Interview Schedule used to collect Primary data is given in appendix-2.