CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The caste system in India derived from the Hindu religion has legitimised the differential patterns of treatment among various caste groups from time immemorial. In this system, the lowest social group has been labeled by various names starting from Asprishya (untouchable), to present day legalised label as Scheduled Caste and more recently identified as the Dalit. Each time every new Hindu religious text appeared, either in the form of Smriti or a Shastra, it only added another appendage to their new identity, but failed to give them a positive identity. Even the travelers, and foreign writers have noted them as such in their accounts. Which attracted the interest of foreign scholars to initiate researches on the system of untouchability and the untouchables. Taking this into account, the British administrator collected a lot of information of various castes in India which resulted into census enumeration. The persons related directly or indirectly to census operations have provided a systematic account of the Indian caste system. This has become a controversial issue now whether caste should be included or not in the census enumeration. The Indian Brahmanical scholarship when promoted the connotations of Dalits as Atchut, Bahya, Antyavasin, Panchama, Asprishya etc, the western scholarship promoted their identity as out-castes, ex-untouchables, depressed classes and Scheduled Castes.
This was later legalized by the government of India. But more recently, these unfortunate classes in the process of carving their space in the Indian social fabric have constructed a more pronounced assertive identity and have called themselves as Dalits.

One account of their extremely degraded conditions, they have always been the subject of concern for the missionaries social reformers, administrators and the scientists but due to the perpetual degradation in their social conditions, they continue to be the focus of attention even today. In spite of their poor conditions of living, they play a significant role in the process of development by way of providing agricultural labour in the agrarian economy. As the landless agricultural labour, they are the backbone of the rural economy. Yet, they are deprived, marginalised and exploited. Their perpetual problem of socio-economic and cultural poverty has been the source of academic work on them. There are relevant studies on them to trace the dominant trends and changes taken place among them. The available studies and literature can be classified into three major heads:

(i) The early trend of descriptive and monographic studies,
(ii) Action oriented researches, and
(iii) Problem posing studies.

The first type of work started by the British Census of India in 1871-72. The British census officials were not clear whether 'untouchables' could be categorised, as Hindus, or they are he people,
sui-generis. This remained a problem from the fact, from the first to the last British census of India. The Census makers were concerned about who were the 'untouchables' and what relation they had to other Indian communities. Consequently in 1871-72, the Chamars, long since recognised as the largest 'untouchable' caste in India, found in majority in the province of Bengal were termed as 'semi-Hinduised Aborigines'in the British census. In other provinces, untouchable castes such as, the Mahars and Pariahs were included in the category of untouchables on 'outcastes or a Not Recognising caste'.

The British census officers were busy seeking in the answer of the question who could be categorised as Hindu in the census but at the same time, their Indian counterparts, invariably from higher castes working in census operation, raised objection for including the low caste untouchables as part of the Hindu religion. They wanted them to enumerate them as Dhar, Mang and Chandal as if they belong to religion other than Hinduism. The high caste Hindu officials of the British census were not prepared to recognise untouchable castes as part of Hindus religious community at all. Accordingly, they were placed in the Censuses of 1891 and 1901. The exclusionist attitude continued and the British noticed that a complete reversal had occurred, whereby the self-styled leaders of Hinduism were adamant of the untouchable castes being considered as a regular part of

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1 Census 1871-72, General Report, p-22, 26.
2 Census 1881, General Report, p.17.
Hinduism. In 1911, the census commissioner issued a preparatory circular to his provincial commissioners on the question of drawing a line between the Hindus and others based on the following queries:

1. Do the members of the caste or tribe worship the great Hindu Gods?
2. Are they allowed to enter Hindu temples or to make offering at the shrine?
3. Will good Brahmins act as their priests?
4. Will degraded Brahmin do so? In that case are they recognised as Brahmins by persons outside the caste, or are they Brahmins only in name?
5. Will clean castes take water from them?
6. Do they cause pollution, (a) by touch; (b) by proximity?

In the eight of the appropriate answers to these questions, community was regarded as Hindu. It was during the 1930s that a new set of titles were given to the untouchables, such as, the “depressed classes”, “Exterior Castes”, “Scheduled Castes” etc. In 1930, the Indian statutory commission defined that these castes actually seem to be partly functional castes because they followed occupations held to be unclean or degrading occupations such as, scavenging, leather working etc. The term exterior castes known as

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4 The Tribune No. 12 November, 1910.
depressed classes appeared for the first time in the Census of India, 1931.

The expression Scheduled Castes was first coined by the Simon Commission and embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935. While the castes were listed systematically in the 1931 census of India, the term Scheduled Castes was applied to these castes for the first time in the Government of India Act, 1935. The Government of India published a list of Scheduled Castes under the Government of India (scheduled castes) order, 1936. But the term scheduled caste come to be extensively used only during the post independence period.

Besides Census reporting, some early writers like Riseley, Crook, Elliot, Thurston, Rose, Russell and Hiralal and Nesfield made their individual contributions in furnishing very rich account of various unexplored aspects of the life of untouchables, on the such as, the ethnic background occupational pattern and customary habits and practices of the untouchables during the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Their studies on these aspects were not so systematic and empirically, sound but they were of immense importance from many angles. Being empirical observations they were inevitable sources for further serological and anthropological enquiry. More serious efforts were made on untouchables based on proper intensive fieldwork after the middle of the 20th century. The first known work on scheduled castes by Briggs is a full-length monograph on social, cultural,

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economic and religious life of the Chamars of U.P. in particular and other parts of India in general but in study the aspect of change remains untouched. The author being part of the Christian Missionary, said that only Christianity can offer to the Chamars a satisfactory social life. Further, only Christianity to him is a real hope of redemption for them. Another work by Hunt\(^7\) an evangelist, provides a vivid picture of the life-condition of the untouchables in Andhra Pradesh with special reference to their conversion into Christianity. Stephen Fuches\(^8\) has also focused on Balahis, an untouchable community in the Nimar district of Madhya Pradesh. He has highlighted their mentality, beliefs, customs and traditions, along with the social conditions of living of the Balahis.

Action-oriented studies with the anti-colonial movement when Gandhiji undertook the task to cleanse Hindu society and religion by changing the evils of the institution of caste and the social disabilities resulting from it. In the process he discarded existing connotations and called them as ‘the Harijan’ (meaning, ‘the children of God’). He pleaded with the high caste Hindus to accept them as their brothers and allow their entry into temples and other places of public interest. He also propagated his ideas frequently through the news letter titled Harijan and Young India. He called upon the caste Hindus to create an atmosphere of equality. At the time, Ambedkar, a western educated

\(^7\) Hunt, W.S. 1924, India’s outcastes : A New Era, London.

Mahar from Maharashtra, was against Gandhian approach to bring changes in the position of scheduled castes through persuasion and 'change of heart' of the privileged Hindu. He has criticised Gandhiji very strongly in his numerous writings and remained an ardent critique of Hinduism throughout his life. He declared that as untouchability is an integral part of Hindu caste system, and for its eradication the caste system itself has to be denounced and abolished. He has propounded a new thesis on the origin of the so-called untouchables. He said that neither any racial difference exists between them and the caste Hindu nor there is any occupational basis for untouchability. They are the part of the broken population from the aliens tribes. Secondly, the reason for the origin of untouchability was the contempt for Buddhism, the religion professed by the broken men. Thirdly, the reason for the origin of untouchability was the habit of beef eating by the broken man. Thus, according to Babasaheb Ambedkar, the 'stain' of untouchability was imposed on broken men. Gandhi and most importantly Ambedkar took up the cause of downtrodden scheduled castes. They are regarded as the prime-movers of the changes among them. They advocated different means to achieve their upliftment. Gandhi sought to bring about change by stressing upon the innate goodness of the Hindus and advocated a 'change of heart' of the higher castes. Ambedkar strove to reinstate the untouchables by bringing about fundamental changes and self-

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Ambedkar, B.R. 1990, The Untouchables. Who were they and why they become untouchables? Writings and Speeches, vol. 7. Education Department Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, (rpt.).
respect that had been severely threatened under the yoke of years of psychological, physical and economic stress and social isolation of the untouchables. For Gandhiji, solution of the problem lies in incorporation of the untouchables into the Hindu fold and endowing equal status to them by changing the original theory of varna-ashrama in which there was no place for the untouchables and other social groups. On the other hand Ambedkar sought for annihilation of the caste system itself. For him equality meant equal opportunity: social, economic, political and religions to all on rational basis rather than that in terms of equal status of all the varnas. His neo-Buddhist movement was only manifestation of this inspiration. Thus, Gandhi's and Ambedkar's approaches to the problem of caste were essentially different and influenced by the contemporary movements and the presence of the colonial power.

Their viewpoints influenced the trend of problem-oriented studies on the scheduled castes. Such studies grow more after independence and the scholars centered around specific issues related with the following:

a. the studies concerned with socio-economic disabilities of SCs.
b. the studies related to social mobility and social change among them.
c. those focusing on the impact of development programmes and strategies for their upliftment,
d. those related to improvement of status through political mobilization.
the studies dealing with the intercaste conflict and tension.

Harold Isaacs\textsuperscript{10} interviewed 50 educated members of scheduled castes from different professional background. It is a travel account of scheduled castes living in urban centres. Issacs writes "I went to India early in 1963 to find out what has been happening to educated ex-untouchable in these first years of Indian independence. My inquiry was a modest one and so is this report in which I simply pass on what I learned from talking with some fifty individuals going through the experience of students, teachers, civil servants, politicians, who have come up through the openings in indian society created by the new educational opportunities. My brief report obviously does not exhaust the subject but it does introduce it. There is also the connection between the experience of 'untouchables' in India today and that of the Negroes in the United States". In his book, a brief account on the origin of the untouchability is given and the details of dialogue which took place between Gandhi and Ambedkar during the crisis of 1932. His record indicates their different lines of thinking. He also gives the accounts rendered by the educated scheduled caste individuals who being segregated and looked down in the society prefer to remain anonymous without disclosing their untouchable identity. Most of them would not like to maintain relationships with their rural and urban kinsmen. Although they deeply feel interested to revolt against

\textsuperscript{10} Issacs, R. Harold. 1965, India’s Ex-untouchables, Asian Publishing House, Bombay.
the caste Hindu society. The accounts given by Harold Isaacs are of immense relevance because they trace the grievances of the disillusioned untouchables and the failure of the system to evolve a casteless society. There is an other study by Lakshmana\textsuperscript{11} who has based on a sample of 20 Andhra Pradesh Villages how the untouchability assists in different forms and how the untouchables are discriminated against.

There are other studies as referred below which have visualised the problem of Scheduled Castes in terms of social change, taken place among them in both rural and urban areas. They observe a very slow process of upward mobility among them due to their own efforts and due to the impact of modern forces. They have observed social mobility among them in terms of the occupational pattern, customary practices, behavioural changes and the level of aspiration among the scheduled castes. Some of the important studies taken into account there aspects are: Epstein (1962), Beteille, (1967), Lynch (1968), Bailey (1958), and Cohen (1955). Epstein's\textsuperscript{12} study, for example shows that in two villages in Mysore the provision of the reserved seats for 'untouchables' in the village Panchayat to promote changes among them is actually a national provision because they continue to be dependent on their peasant masters for mobilization in support. The provision tends to be ineffective unless democratic legislation is


\textsuperscript{12} Epstein, T.S., 1962, Economic Development and Social Change in South India, New York, Humanities.

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accompanied by redistribution of land and change in the production relationships to free the untouchables from the clutches of economic domination and from their peasant masters.

Andre Beteille's\textsuperscript{13} "caste, class and power" is a micro level study of a village named Sripuram in Tanjore district. He undertakes to study the phenomena of caste, class and power along with changing relations. In the traditional structure class and power are subsumed in the caste but in a changing society they are to some extent caste free. He collected data through participant observation. The predominant castes in the village were the Brahmins, Non-Brahmins and Adi-Dravidas (Untouchables). The physical structure of the village was described by him by giving an account of the disposition of the different communities inhabiting the village. Physical segregation is a dominant feature which is observed in this disposition. The caste structure of the village in terms of these three groups was analysed along with an analysis of the heterogeneous character of each caste group. He further examines the economic organization in terms of production, distribution and exchange while chiefly concentrating on the class system as a system of social relations. The process of change of ownership of land from Brahmins to Non-Brahmins was analysed. In this process the economic position of Adi-Dravidas has not undergone any change. Power has shifted from Brahmins to Non-Brahmins though the creation of new institutions, such as, the

\textsuperscript{13} Beteille, Andre, 1967, Caste, Class and Power, Oxford University Press, Bombay.
Panchayats. Political parties have made inroads into the old power blocks. The Adi-Dravidas with their numerical strength could make their voice felt in the elections.

Owen M. Lynch\textsuperscript{14} during his study of the Jatavs of Agra city has spent a year and half with them with the interest to examine their quest for new identity, despite their poverty. "He is particularly concerned to know the effects of independence and of the adoption of parliamentary democracy on a small group of people in India, the Jatav caste". He observes that this caste had begun a process of self evaluation and self reformation in an effort to gain respectability and higher status in the caste system. They have made efforts to secure mobility not through sanskritization but through active and separate political participation. He concludes that in modern independent India political participation is a functional alternation to sanskritization". But the untouchable status of the Jatav continues to be an impediment to gain access to power, political participation and job opportunities.

In the work in Bisipara village in a remote hills of the western Orissa, F.G.Bailey\textsuperscript{15} explains that in the village social hierarchy the warrior caste is at the top of the hierarchy while the Boad untouchables occupying the lowest position and work as farm labourers. During the last hundred years, the process of the change


\textsuperscript{15} Bailey, F.G. 1958, Caste and Economic Frontier, Oxford University Press, Bombay.
initiated through administration and trade has altered the structure of the caste groups in the village. The Boad outcastes because of their monopoly of trade could raise themselves to some extent in the economic ladder but they have been prevented from finding a social level appropriate to their new economic status because of the barrier of pollution. Consequently, they tend more often to invoke the protection of the administration, and to use their rights as citizens of the state to overcome the disabilities improved by the rest of villages. The Boad outcastes do not seek justice through the village council, but-through the government courts. They attempt to go beyond the political frontier of the village and seek to establish themselves as citizens of the state. The Boad outcastes "are tending to separate themselves from the rest of the village and try to order their relationship with their caste groups in the village not in terms of village structure, but within the frame work of administration".

A study by Bernard S.Cohn give an interesting and vivid account of the changing status of Chamar of Madhopur in a Rajput village in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh. The Chamars occupy a subordinate place in all the economic and political affairs of the village. He has described several fundamental issues regarding Chamar community related with kinship organization, religions customs and social status. He notes "that Chamars are regarded as defiled especially because of their repugnant traditional occupations of

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skinning, tanning, and midwifery and eating carrion beef'. He elaborates on economic aspect by saying that the Chamars are 'economically tied to the village, especially to the Thakurs, as tenants, traditional workers and labourers'. On an average, a Chamar family cultivates about one acre of land and the income from this sustains them only for four months of the year and in the remaining part of the year they work as agricultural coolies. In recent years, outside village, urban employment has increased. They have started to work in cotton and jute mills, in the mines and in the cities as construction workers and rickshaw pullers. Further, in the political sphere, he notes that the status of Chamar is subservient to Thakurs. In recent times changes have been occurring on an extensive scale. The infrastructural development has facilitated spatial mobility and changes in the work position of Chamars of Madhopur village. The Arya Samaj movements of religious reform grew strong, elections brought political competition on a wider scale, and the nationalist struggle became a reality for the villagers. Along with these outside influences, populations in the village and surrounding area steadily rose. Because of strains on the village economy more and more residents from all castes began to seek work in the cities. Family structure, political behaviour, attitudes towards caste status and religious customs have all undergone notable change. All these are summed up in a remark often heard in the village that "new wind is blowing" for a change in the caste relations. This study locates the
process of transformation from their traditional servile status in response to a new status and direction of development.

The study undertaken by Saberwal (1976) and Patwardhana (1973) examines the positive role of factors like urbanization and modernization on the scheduled castes. Sunanda Patwardhan studied the changing position of scheduled castes in Poona city. This work concentrates on mobility as it seeks "to understand and determine the nature of change that has taken place among the Harijans of one particular region of Maharashtra. She examines as to what extent social mobility has been possible for the low polluting caste, in a system which can no longer be called a closed system of stratification. She had taken a sample of 360 families in Poona city drawn from Mahar, Mang, Chamabhar, Dhor and Holar- communities. The scope of the study encompasses an analysis of change, as well as, continuity at behavioural and socio-cultural levels. She perceives changes as occurring at two different levels: materialistic level and at the level of value system. She seeks to answer the fundamental questions, how far the Indian social system as a system of values has changed during the last few decades. Further, she raised the question, is it possible for individuals and groups belonging to the low polluting castes with low income categories to move up in terms of socio-economic status and change their polluting occupations inspite of ritual restrictions and structural constraints. Again, is it possible for

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the Mang or the Mahar in Maharastra, or the Harijan or the Neo-Buddhist to have access to the new opportunities that are the result of the inculcation of new technologies into Indian society. She has analysed the upward mobility of the untouchable in terms of changes in occupation, education, political participation, sanskritization and conversion to other religions and caste association. It is observed that planned development, reservations of posts in public services and in educational institutions for the Harijans and their increasing political participation have made the process of mobility flexible and greater among them. The larger system and micro units of subsystems are changing in response to external forces in the political, economic and bureaucratic system. According to her, the Indian society is no longer a closed system of stratification because of changes in the larger system. The scheduled castes are affected by those changes. The purity-pollution is not much significant today. It has changed, although continues in some form. She described the co-existence of elements of changes and continuity, and shows structural stability, as well as, strain; cooperation as well as conflict. It is indeed a good work on social mobility and change, among the Scs.

In yet another work, Saberwal\(^\text{18}\) makes a comparative study of social mobility among three scheduled castes, namely Ad Dharmis, Balmikis and Ramgarhias in a small township of Modelpur in Punjab.

In this effort he makes an interesting observation of the conflicting results as effecting these specific communities.

According to him, the forces of urbanization and industrialization have enabled one the Ramgarhias to develop entrepreneurial activity in their traditional occupations of carpentry and blacksmithy. This has led them and the Ad Dharmis as well to leave their tradition occupation of weaving and shoe-making and to adopt new ones. The Balmikis have continued in their traditional occupation of scavenging of the demand of the new situation.

The study by Sachchidanand\textsuperscript{19} has concentrated on the elite formation among scheduled castes. He had covered 200 households (respondents) in different parts of Bihar. The educated elite which belong to both the urban as well as rural areas. He has chosen the elite from public services, and political and social workers which covered a cross section of important scheduled castes in Bihar consisting of Chamar, Dusadh, Musahar, Dhobi and Pasi. He describes the measures taken by the elite to bring about social, economic and psychological changes among the ‘Harijan’ to integrate them into the larger society, eliminate caste disabilities, improve the social position of women, education of men and women to raise the level of aspiration, adopt new system of medicine and innovations, promote caste solidarity and raise their political consciousness. He makes an observation that they tried to elevate their social status through

\textsuperscript{19} Sachchidanand, 1977, The Harijan Elite, Thomson Press (India) Ltd., Faridabad.
various measures including internalization of Sanskritic and modern values. As a result the socio-economic conditions of the SCs have improved. They are found to be active in discouraging child marriage, encouraging freedom in the choice of marriage, and persuading acceptance of widow remarriage. It is pertinent to note that this dimension is of crucial reference as it focuses on the newly acquired status of the untouchables and the internal changes brought about by such transformation. In a similar attempt, Abbasayulu\textsuperscript{20} seeks to study the scheduled caste elite in Andhra Pradesh. The elites identified here are state legislators, IAS officers, lawyers, judges, doctors, engineers and university teachers in Andhra Pradesh. He dealt with the socio-economic aspects of scheduled caste elite in his study. He also observes that most of them played a role in seeking solutions for grievances with regard to official procedure.

Similarly, Ramashray Roy and V.B. Singh\textsuperscript{21} have examined 75 Scheduled Caste elites from Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh. The elites included here are political leaders, caste leaders, bureaucrats, independent professionals and teachers. They have confined their study with specific reference to their social mobility, perception of community problem, the issue of reservations, elite identity and views regarding upliftment of their community.

\textsuperscript{20} Abbasayulu 1976, Scheduled Caste Elite: A Study of the Scheduled Caste Elite in Andhra Pradesh, Department of Sociology, Hyderabad.
\textsuperscript{21} Roy, Ramashray and Singh, B. 1987, Between Two Worlds; A Study of Harijan Elites, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi.
There are scholars who have undertaken to assess the impact of constitutional safeguards and various public welfare measures on the status of the SCs. Ramaswamy\textsuperscript{22} has studied the self-identity, formation among the scheduled castes. She concludes that in the process of constructing their self identity she discovers a separate identity of Scheduled Castes creating problem integrating them with the rest of the society. In another article, she says that the provisions like reservation and educational facilities have merely benefited the urban dwellers while the lot of the rural scheduled castes remain the same as they were decades ago. Singh\textsuperscript{23} highlighted the changes that took place in their social, cultural, occupational, educational, political and economic life and health sanitation and housing conditions alongwith development. He says that the measures taken to improve their status have fail to attain a reasonable success.

The study by Shyamlal\textsuperscript{24} focuses on the 'Bhangi' who are the lowest of the 'low' in the society. Here, he attempts to delineate the internal and external factors responsible for the changes in the socio-economic status of Bhangi. He examines the implications of social change among them. He also focuses on the impact of various welfare schemes launched by the state government for the amelioration of the socio-economic condition of the Bhangi. In his study on the scheduled

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castes, Beteille\textsuperscript{25} raises some very fundamental questions in regard to special safeguards being extended to the scheduled castes. For centuries, he says, men's social capacities were known and judged from the caste and lineage they were born in and no further test was felt necessary to determine that. Accordingly, if it is believed that the Brahmins and Shudra were born with markedly unequal mental capacities. It is on the basis of this erroneous belief, unequal provisions are made for their socialization they are bound to develop sharply unequal capacities as adults. Further, he reveals that social discriminations are not only more visible in India, they are also more rigid, elaborate and pronounced in this countries. By and large individuals live and die in the station of life into which they are born. There is little mobility and the barrier between classes and strata appear to be almost insurmountable. According to Nandu Ram\textsuperscript{26}, due to the various special provisions like the protective discrimination and the individual effort from the scheduled caste communities itself have raised their status to a new middle class.

The study by Ramashray Roy\textsuperscript{27} focuses on the hard core of the poor in India, namely the Dalits who suffer from both economic, as well as, political deprivation. He has mentioned that there is not much improvement in the condition of scheduled castes despite fifty years of independence. A few privileged among the Dalits have even made

\textsuperscript{25} Beteille, Andre, 1969, Caste: Old and New, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
\textsuperscript{26} Ram, Nandu, 1988, The Mobile Scheduled Castes: Rise of a New middle Class, Hindustan Publishing House, Delhi.
\textsuperscript{27} Roy, Ramashray, 1999, Dalits Development and Democracy, Shipra Publication, Delhi.
substantial gains. But for the bulk of them, growth has been only marginal. He has rightly pointed out that the continued depressed socio-economic condition of the Dalits in India raised inevitable dissatisfaction about the nature of relationship between development and democracy. In his book, he has examined the social, economic as well as political issues concerning the development of the Dalits.

A similar study by Mendelsohn and Vicziany\(^\text{28}\) devotes three sections on the untouchables. Its first three sections deal with the identification of the ‘untouchables’, and the changes in their religious and political aspects from the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) to the middle of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century. Atrocities against Scheduled Castes in the last few decades have also been examined in this section. Another section deals with the outcome of state intervention since independence in banishing adverse discrimination by enforcing compensatory discrimination through reservation in services and legislatures. The impact of the attempts of the state to improve the economic condition of the Harijans through various anti-poverty programmes is also examined. The third part, and the last three sections, deal with the post independence phenomenon of the emergence of the ‘untouchable proletarian’ and their struggle, first through a case study of the Faridabad stone quarries, then through an analysis of Dalits politics and Dalit politicians since 1956, and finally through an investigation on the fascinating lives and careers of some of the Scheduled Caste MPs and

MLAs. In the concluding part, the examines the role of the state in improving the conditions of the 'untouchables' and reducing their subordination and poverty.

Some of the studies which have attempted mainly to assess the status of the scheduled castes make an emphasis upon the fact that the SCs can improve substantially only through the organised efforts and by acquiring political means. Through political mobilization, some scheduled castes have not only improved their status substantially.

Hardgrave's study29 of the Nadars of Tamil Nadu: the political culture of a community in change, has highlighted about the improvement of their status through organised protests. The Nadars in the 19th century were considered to be untouchables, defiling and degraded. They suffered severe social disabilities. There were economically one of the most depressed communities of south India. Formerly they were known to be toddy-tappers by occupations. On account of being considered ritually impure, Nadars were denied temple entry. They were prohibited from making use of wells, umbrellas, shoes, or milk cows, etc. They could not walk in certain streets and their women were forbidden to cover their breasts. A Nadar could not approach within 24 pace of a Brahman.

Having suffered serious social disabilities, some Nadar's left Hinduism and embraced Christianity. The humanitarian efforts of

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missionaries brought about tremendous educational and social development among Nadars. They renounced the defiling and arduous traditional occupations by getting small garden lands with the help of missionaries. As a result of awareness and improved economic position, Nadras initiated a social reform movement to fight against the degraded status. This pressurised the then government to issue a proclamation in 1829 permitting Nadar women to cover their breasts. This move was reciprocated by the exploitative section of the society in the form of riots, and burning villages of the Nadar community.

The improvement in their social status made them claim the Kshatriya status and force their entry into temples in spite of a court verdict against this. This provided a new impetus for unity and uplift. They formed Kshatriya Mahajan Sangam and later transformed it into 'Nadar Mahajan Sangam' to promote, social, material and general welfare of the Nadars and to fight for their upliftment and advancement. Today, they are economically and politically quite secure and are no more untouchables.

In a study Barbara Joshi\(^{30}\) has dealt with the political reservation for the SCs in her study. In this study, Joshi positively assesses the role of SC legislators. She argues that the policy of political reservations proved important particularly in maintaining the support for the development programme for the welfare of the

untouchables in the face of increasingly organised violent opposition to their welfare and mobility. Joshi's study further shows that the political reservation has made the SCs legislators politically assertive on socio-economic issues concerning the upliftment of the SCs. She believes in access to opportunities through reservation. She also throws light on the 'contextual' mobility and improvement in self-image of the scheduled castes through reservation. In this context she cites an example of the scheduled caste young men who says that we do not know Jagijivan Ram and his politics but we are proud of Ram because he is at the top of government.

The importance of reserved constituency, lies in the fact that no political party can ignore the value of the Scheduled Caste and the reserved seats for them in the parliament and the state assembly. Showing their political significance, these seats will be invariably filled by scheduled caste representatives of above whether the candidate belongs to one party or other and each party. Every Party feels interested to mobilize their support in their favour.

Thus, Joshi is of the opinion that the introduction of reserved constituency can draw the attention of high caste politicians towards the Scheduled Caste people. The high caste politicians consider the SCs as a potential factor in the struggle of acquiring political power. She argues that in order to consolidate the factions within the ruling party, there is competition among the different factional groups which try to muster the support of the SCs representatives within the ruling
party. In this competition, Joshi believes that the scheduled caste politicians get benefited through getting the party ticket and funds for election campaign.

Thus, on the one hand, Joshi projects a happy pictures of reserved constituency, but on the other, she tries to show in her study that the provision of reserved seats is not enough for the SCs to reduce their political dependence on the high caste community. She concludes that relatively low educational and economic status of the SC community as a whole does leave scheduled castes legislators in hardship. She argues that while the institution of reserved constituency can reduce the political problems of the SCs but it cannot completely compensate for them.

In the last section of her study, Joshi deals with the political attitude of the Jats of Rajasthan towards the political reservation of the SCs. On the basis her study of Jats, Joshi argues that while the Jat peasants favour reservation of the SCs for their political interests, but they oppose the SCs at economic level. In addition to this, it is further points out that the political skill and knowledge gap which forms a part of the legacy of the past has not been eliminated from among the SCs community. A persistent relative shortage of skilled leadership and skillful political lieutenants contributes to the frequent dependence of the SCs representatives on the higher caste community. Thus, Joshi tries to cover, in her work, the costs and benefits of the political reservation.
There are a few studies which analyse the process of tension and conflict in Indian society within the frame of the structural boundary. Here, the structural boundary implies the boundary of a system constituted by unit-variables such as family, caste, and village relating to the structural of the system. Some sociologists, both Indian and foreign, have attempted to study the intercaste conflict and a state of crisis arising out of it. Some of them have taken the lower caste people including Scheduled Castes on one platform and the upper caste Hindus on the other while a few have seen the antagonising state of affairs between the 'untouchables' and the so-called clean castes. Murphy's work done under an UNESCO sponsored project on "The Social Tension in India" (1953) tries to highlight rising social tensions between various castes at the village, towns work place, family and kinship. Similarly, Silverton tries to focus on the existing pattern of relations among different castes, mainly between the scheduled caste and the upper castes in a Tanjore villages. He admits that although, mainly due to political influence, some radical changes have taken place in their status but their relations with the 'higher' caste elites still remained the same as they still avoid association with them. They do not care to intrude them unless very urgent. They do not allow them the use of public place

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under their control and do not permit, although not openly, their entry into the areas inhabited by them.

The study by Mukherjee and others has highlighted the caste tension due to unwillingness of the members of the higher caste to associate themselves with the untouchables in terms of sharing the use of wells, living in proximity eating and interacting with each other. The study shows the caste tensions due to changes in the traditional pattern of caste relations within the framework of Hindu community. This change has promoted conflict and tension among various caste groups during the recent time. The high caste people defend their vested interest in the ‘status privilege scheme’ while the dissatisfied low caste people try to achieve the higher status within the given system in their own ways. Thus, the study observes that the changes in caste hierarchy and in the pattern of social relations are the root cause of the inter-caste tension.

A similar study by Beals and Seigal highlights the conflict and conflict as a source of change between the ‘Yajman”- authority or the head of an institution and the subordinates within the (Aya) system in south India. Beteille has also shown the emerging tension among them from a societal point of view. According to him, conflict occurs to a large extent, “from the contradictions between the normative and the

33 Mukherjee, et. al., 1951, Intercaste Tensions (Mimeograph) University of Lucknow, Lucknow.
Likewise, Nandu Ram\textsuperscript{36} observes the conflict between the scheduled castes and non-scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh villages, occurring within the frame of structural boundary of castes. He has discussed conflicts and atrocities occurred on the issues like using the public place, bonded/forced labourer, dispossession of form land and/or houses meant for them, the non-payment of debts alleged to have been taken by higher caste peasants, refusal to perform traditional caste occupations and expecting unqualified respect to the non-scheduled castes. Due to non-compliance, the SCs are humiliated, tortured, terrorised and ejected from the villages in the separate huts. There is no denying the fact that there exist jealousy and prejudice among the non-scheduled castes towards positive changes taking place in the socio-economic status of the scheduled castes. As a result, there is a feeling of revenge against the SCs.

However, some sociologist have refuted the structural boundary aspect of conflict situation. Singh\textsuperscript{37} for example, says that the conflict between the castes does not seem from the fact that they are castes. According to him, the people belonging to different castes may be treated as groups of people and these groups in any society come into conflict with one another for such reasons as control over economic resources, social dominance, self-assertion, or the desire for

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Singh} Singh, K.K., 1976, Pattern of Caste Tension, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
\end{thebibliography}
autonomy" but he fails to not that such conflict draws immense legitimacy and support on account of its caste dimension.

The study by Rabindra Kumar Mohanty\textsuperscript{38} argues that the increasing status mobility among the scheduled castes brings some imbalance in the traditional caste pride of the high castes. In the past, dependence of Scheduled Castes on their non-untouchable counterparts and the present increasing independence through non-traditional employment, higher education and secular income, creates a feeling of hatred and jealously which later manifests in anger, tension and atrocities. He further elaborates that police connivance, bribery, government inaction, and loopholes in judiciary, delay in legal proceedings against the culprits and make them escape from the clutches of the law. This increases their confidence further in suppressing the scheduled castes. The study by Dinesh Khosla\textsuperscript{39} observes that several centuries of uninterrupted and ritualistic adherence to the values of caste by the people and nurturing of these values by the social, religious, cultural and political systems left the untouchables victims of oppressive inequalities. In other words, the caste system, through a series of orthogenetic modifications, created an environment in which the human craving for freedom equality, respect and dignity lay deeply buried under the weight of a tradition.

\textsuperscript{38} Mohanty, Rabindra K. 1988, "Dynamics of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes in Rural India" in the Indian Journal of Social Work, January.

that sought to actively rob the human personality of its capacities of departing from the tradition.

An important aspect of grim social reality of contemporary India which powerfully illustrates the contradictions of new approaches towards an understanding of Scheduled Castes is the violence that is systematically inflicted against the them by more powerful castes classes, especially in the rural areas. Elaborating this line of argument, K.S. Subramaniam\textsuperscript{40} states that the violence against the scheduled castes in India is not a law and order or administrative problem. It is a socio-economic problem which arises out of the deeper process at work in the economic, social and political structures.

Arvind Sinha and Indu Sinha\textsuperscript{41} note that the recent Bathani Tola massacre in Bhojpur district of central Bihar highlighted the ongoing suppression of the struggles of the under privileged by the private armies of upper caste in alliance with the middle caste state apparatus. This makes clear the dangerous nexus that has emerged powerful in the rural areas. The study by Atul Kohli\textsuperscript{42} points out that the suppression of the backward classes because of (1) declining effectiveness of the state, (2) increase in agrarian conflict in a civil society, and (3) inequal distribution of resources. The study observes that the struggles among the competing political elite from various


classes is an important causal force. The absence of a significant effect of economic development and the growing delegitimization of traditional caste domination due to the spread of democratic politics have posed significant factors of generating more agrarian conflict. The governmental ineffectiveness and agrarian conflict exacerbate one another. Agrarian and caste related problems have given rise to private armies in the state like Bihar which undermines the government's capacity to rule. The governmental ineffectiveness has opened up political space within which agrarian struggle are grouping.

However, the available literature on scheduled castes in India in general and Bihar in particular have focused their problems in general but how for the developmental programmes ment for their upliftment have affected various segments of scheduled castes has not been studied in depth.