IN LIEU OF INTRODUCTION

'Then, they urged him to talk, and Menocchio threw' caution to the wind'

Carlo Ginzburg, 'The cheese and the worms'

What creates and sustains the identity of a given ideological field beyond all possible variations of its positive content? Any problematic concerned with 'hegemony' delineates what is probably the definitive answers to this crucial question of the theory of ideology, the multitude of 'floating causality', theory of ideology of proto-ideological elements, is structured into a unified field through the intervention of a certain 'nodal point' which quilts them stops their sliding and fixes their meaning. And this ideological space is made of non-bound, non-tied elements, here comes the question of the role of 'ideology'.

The problematic, as it is encircled as "The Role of Ideology in socio-cultural movements in Maharashtra during the 2nd half of 17th century." poses a question. To say this is not to pander to morbid delight in aporias of institutional curriculum. It is to 'stress the problem of ideology in socio cultural differentiation and the difficulty of addressing it, in historical and critical terms.

It so happens during the thirteenth century, some saint-poets tend to employ the Marathi vernacular as vehicle for expression, taking on the institutional practices of religion supervised by the Brahmins, came to
be known as Bhakti movements. Often voicing popular opposition to the impersonal and ritualistic aspect of what has been called "the haughty vedant creed" monopolized by the priestly Brahmin caste.\(^1\) Bhakti devotional cults fostered the growth of an intense theism marked by a fervid devotion to personal god.\(^2\) Thus contrasts sharply with the vedic aim of merging in the unconsciousness of the Brahman, or the 'Absolute'. The emphasis in this dissertation is not on the Bhakti aspect, of these devotional movements, but rather on the 'socio-cultural' aspects. And further is demonstrated through the concept of ideology.

It is in this context, three problematics emerge. Firstly, what is the idea of socio-cultural history? Secondly, how the concept of ideology should be viewed? And thirdly, how sources should be treated as they are replete with legends, myths and rhetorical eulogies?

So in a way, an obvious problem for a critical historiography is how to address the relations among high, popular and mass culture in a fashion that allows for a mutually informative and challenging interaction between various perspectives and sub disciplines. Social and intellectual historians have not been altogether successful in achieving such an interaction, in good part because those turning to "culture" as a unifying concept

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1 Nicol MacNicol; 'Psalms of Maratha Saints', Association Press, P. 24, Poona, 1919.
2 K.A.N. Sashtri; 'Development of Religion in South India', Orient Longman 1963, P. 44.
have been insufficiently sensitive to the complex intellectual and ideological issues covered, and sometimes obscured, by its use.

The notion of socio-cultural history was in part motivated by a justifiable revolt against an abstracted history of ideas. History of ideas has traditionally concentrated on selective aspects of culture, in the sense of the artifacts of cultural elites. It has often considered all cultures below the level of a narrow elite stratum and not worthy of sustained attention. It has there by obscured the conventional or symptomatic aspects of culture as well as the very problem of the variable nature and possibilities of its interaction with other aspects or levels of culture.

And with approach only, one has chosen the term 'socio-cultural movements' instead of the unlinear denotation of 'socio-religious movements', which had come as a more suitable replication of same what religio-philosophical mode of terminology, 'Bhakti'. In this context, the notion of 'socio-cultural' has led to a redefinition of intellectual history as a social history of ideas or 'mentalites'. It is at this juncture the category of 'ideology' comes in full swing, when it is, put as the problematic 'Role of Ideology'.

The dissertational problematic presses hard for an articulation of ideological interplay in socio-cultural movements in Maharashtra. The period designated is,
second half of the 17th century. This clearly indicates a nexus between the socio-cultural movements in Maharashtra and the rise of Shivaji or rather in geographical rhetoric, of 'Maratha power.' The person responsible for this innocently brilliant articulation was M.G. Ranade. And he with all his nationalist felicitations attributed the religious movements in medieval Maharashtra with the rise of the pioneer of the Marathas under shivaji in the latter half of the seventeenth century(3).

As Ranade traverses through the eloquence of his insights on Maharashtra, he declares, "There is a curious parallel between the history of Reformation movement in Western Europe and wiring of these saints and prophets who flourished about the same time in Maharashtra"(4) This articulation of linkage requires much attention as it has dominated the later period of Maratha historiography although not in terms of its European counterpart but rather the term 'socio-religious' per se 'Bhakti movements'. Any attempt to bring the role of ideology in relation to the 'socio-religious' would inevitably bring in the idea of state with religious implications.

What is Bhakti movement if a certain religious mentalite is missing? Definitely it has to be. In this context an interesting analogue has to be instituted in a

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4 M.G.Ranade, ibid: P.66.
discursive manner. In the area of french history, Le Goff sees mentalité playing a key role in Georges Duby's analysis of feudalism and the political mentalité of 'feudality'. (5) Le Goff's aim is to demonstrate the complex relationships of attitude with social structure. This is particularly evident in his description of Louis XI. He finds that in politics Louis XI displays a 'machiavellian' mentalité, whereas in religious faith he displays traditionally superstitious mentalité. (6) This evidence of the co-existence of two opposing mentalités in the king's mind suggests to Le Goff that more than one dominant mentalité's can operate in society at any stage in its evolution. Le Goff's analysis of Louis XI begs the question of not only the symbolic power of a king in feudal society but likewise the ideological function of his dual mentalité as he confronts intra-lord strife on the one hand and lord-serf on the other. And this interpretation, however, demands recognition that society is not a whole way of life but a 'whole way of conflict' based on class antagonisms which entail essential objective antagonisms and conflict interest.

Though the concept of 'mentalité' remains untouched, while British tradition of historiography


6 Ibid.; p. 92.
dominates the Indian sense of history whether marxist or non-marxist. Despite of the usefulness of the concept of 'mentalite' here in pre-british Indian schema of history the 'terminology' seems a bit untranslatable due to its limitations. Because for the field of 'mentalities' ideology and the process of history are rejected infavour of the more anonymous and autonomous drift towards enlightenment. And this anonymity had never any 'space' of cultural recognition in Indian context. Because of the fact of medieval Indian sense of identity, which was constituted by not articulated as an individual, but rather the 'person' of Indian peasant was constructed in relation to others, viz. village society.

The point being emphasized here, is that in Maharastra, this notion of 'dual mentalite' has not been explored properly. The 'terminology might not have been prevalent in the writings here, but the question of 'religion' and 'politics' has been taken up by historians. It was V.K. Rajwade,\(^7\) who separated Ramdas from the warkari tradition. According to him all the saints of warkari tradition, with their other worldly outlook and preoccupation with personal salvation, could have hardly created the environment for Shivaji's ultimate achievement. But rather it was Ramdas who contrasted with his 'dharkari' (fightess for freedom) attitude. This was in fact a response to Ranade's actualisation of religious

\(^7\) V.K.Rajwade; 'Sri Samarth Ramdas,' P.38. (No publication, no date)
movements as unilinear one. But nevertheless 'religious' in their perception. Despite of the fact that Ramdas endeavoured to provide an organisational foundation of popular religious life.

The fact that Sabhasad Bakhar in the late seventeenth century does not mention Ramdas as Shivaji's spiritual guru is put forth as an argument by Justin Abbot. Along these lives the mould of the research on Maharashtra was patterned. It is in this context this dissertation seeks to locate the notion of 'socio-cultural' movements. For this purpose two trends of 'socio-cultural variants' have been taken. One is the warkari tradition and the other is the Ramdasi tradition.

There comes the ideological articulations of these above mentioned 'several' movements at a time, when Shivaji was trying to carve out a 'homogeneous' territory (atleast in its political articulation), which have been variegated. Thus comes the sense of confusion, which is quite frequent among medievalists of Indian science. The unitary approach towards bhakti movement, tended to blur the ideological distinction, and therefore usage of the term 'ideology' in a very limited sense. The question of 'ideology' pertains to the evolution of the bhakti movement as a movement of dissent and social reform. To pose

8 Justin Abbot: 'The Poet Saints of Maharashtra During the life of Shahahaji'; (Shivaji: Nibandhavali, vol.1) English section, p. 27, Aryabhusan Press, Poona, 1930.
the 'ideology' as a collaborative resultant, R.S Sharma described the medieval bhakti movement as a reflection of the medieval feudal order. As he stated 'Bhakti' reflected the complete dependence of the tenants or semi-serfs on the land owners in the medieval times. While examining the issue of the transition from "ancient to medieval Indian history", he goes on to the extent of listing Bhakti along with feudalism, as one of the major characteristics of Indian "Medievalism."(9)

Irfan Habib, too suggests in his discussion on the agrarian crisis of the Mughal empire about the medieval bhaktas. A linear sense of contemporaneity looms over Habib's generalisations. For Habib, the movement led by bhaktas like Kabir, Nanak, Dadu etc. had opened a new space for social nobility for two classes in particular, namely, the artisans and craftsmen in the Urban areas and the rural groups such as Jats in certain areas like Rajasthan and Western U.P. (10) As Habib explains that the "Jats were a pastoral people to begin with who had later taken to agriculture - a fact that "demeaned them in relation to the peasant communities."

The question of connecting the 'ideological' leads

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Habib to write "Looking at such information as we possess about the social classes affected ...... we notice that artisan classes are uniformly involved. The involvement of peasantry, on the other hand, does not appear to be universal".\(^{(11)}\) Harbans Mukhia,\(^{(12)}\) does contest this notion of 'ideological as a social cement' and also tries to contest ruling 'class's conspiratorial ideology' which emanates from R.S Sharma's writings. But he has left little to correct the formulation of 'ideology' problemate in a concrete way which could have corresponded to his notion of "free peasantry," which is in fact, as a term, carries more ideological processes.

The sphere of ideology in Maharashtra consisted a rooted problematic in its articulations. One hand we have 'watan' system prevailing in the rural areas, with the language of "Bhauband' or brotherhood and on the other hand we have a hierarchical positioning of offices such as Deshmukh, Deshpande, Patil, Kulkarni etc. Then there is a warkari movement existing in this region, for the last 500 years and in the later half of 17th century a saint called Ramdas established Ramdasi sect with the workship of Hanuman.

This plurality of ideological presence, demands the conceptualisation of 'ideology' in a fruitful way.

\(^{11}\) ibid., p.5

And especially in the context of 'socio-cultural' movements. Above mentioned thoughts elucidate two points about 'ideology' problematic. As Justice Ranade and others appear, that in the religious sphere caste exclusiveness found no place in Maharashtra or atleast in the warkari tradition. As Ranade observes "It modified the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness."(13)

Here a point is worth mentioning, as the religious, as the religious brotherhood of the warkaris had a different articulation of ideology to that of the village level watan dari's sense of 'bhauband' or 'brotherhood'. Indeed, from, Gotasabha or watan nexus, a certain form of ideology emanated which could be expressed as "the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination". This is to say that how ideology can be analysed, specifically and concretely, in the expressions which are uttered in the course of our everyday lines, such as 'bhauband' or 'brotherhood' on the one hand and 'warkari' (irrespective caste position of saints) on the other hand.

If 'ideology' is an evaluative term if its very use conveys a critical note and calls for a process of critique, then how are we to justify the characterization of some discourse as ideological? Questions such as there give rise to complex problems which must be confronted in

13 M.G.Ranade; op.cit, P.76.
a direct and systematic way. Some of the misleading conceptions about ideology have given rise to the problematics in medieval Indian history, of a scientistic nature. Where the simple dichotomy between 'cultural' and 'material' sphere has been instituted. Thus the 'writings from "Ranade to Sardesi has tended to endow the Maratha political tradition with a halo of common national affinity of language, race and religion.\(^{(14)}\)

Though for P.V Ranade, "Bhakti movement was more a protest against the Hindu orthodoxy than a challenge to Islam"\(^{(15)}\) And therefore, the notion of 'ideology' has often assumed that ideology operates, like a sort of social cement, binding the members of a society together by providing them with collectively shared values and norms. The pervasiveness of this assumption is attested to by the number of times, in the Maratha historiography, whether in the sphere of 'socio-cultural' 'history' or in 'socio-economic' history.

In this dissertation, effort, is to redirect concept of ideology away from the search for collectively shared values and towards the study of the complex ways in which meaning is mobilised for the maintenance of relations of domination.

If we look at the 'Warkan's' and 'Ramdasis' in

14 P.V.Ranade; "Feudal Content of Maharashtra Dharma", I.H.R. Vol.1,1974. p.44.
15 ibid., p.44.
the sphere of ideology. One will find three levels of abstractions in their projections as the 'ideological background' to the rise of Marathas. The most immediate level is that of action, that is the preachings and their critique of existing social hierarchy and brahmanism. In this way, action can be articulated as a flow of activity, monitored by various processes and saints capable of accounting for what they are doing, can be distinguished from actions, in general. In the context of saint-poets, the second level of abstraction is that of social institutions. In the context of Maharashtra, especially in the period of Shivaji, social institutions, did integrate 'Warkaris' and other sects like Ramdasis. They may be viewed as constellations of social relations together with the reservoirs of material resources which are associated with them. For instance how, Mathas of Ramdas were heavily endowed by the state, not only this also shrines of other saints. Despite of Shivaji's rhetorics of 'hindavi, svarajya' (16) and himself as a 'protector of cows and brahmans', he does, appear to have given Inams to both communities, and it was 'according to their importance.(17)

Even in the context of 'social institution', the criterion of orthodoxy was quite flexible. Inspite of the

16 MIS, 15, no.269.
orthodox injunction about whom not to give grant as mentioned in Sabhasad bakhar, that "those who go about from place to place for alms nor to those who themselves or whose descendants are or can become wicked and promoters of evil ways nor, to those who are the enemies of dharma or who are heterodox." But as we see this criterion of orthodoxy was not quite practiced.

The third and the most abstract level is that of social structure. It can be proposed conceived as a series of elements and their interrelations which conjointly define the conditions for the persistence of a social formation and the limits for the variation of its component institutions. Two categories of structural elements may be distinguished. On the one hand, there are these elements which must be present in any society, since they represent necessary conditions for the persistence of social life as such, but for the continuation of a particular type of society. This is to say that medieval Maharashtra society may have elements like production process, which in broader sense, encapsulate, watan, caste and other relationship in production process. So whereas production may be necessary feature, but feudal, peasant may not be in every society. And it is the inter-relations between the various elements which define the institutions of a society as feudal or peasant based.

And among these three levels, what comes to the fore, is the phenomenon of power. At the level of action and in the most general sense, 'power' is the ability to act in pursuit of one's gives and interests: an agent (as in the case of Maharashtra, 'agent' can be ascribed to Shivaji) has the power to act, the power to intervene in the sequence of events and to alter their course. Now the question of ideology comes against this back cloth of action and structure. As we have seen in contempororay 'debates' regarding the problem of ideology in historical analysis, it has been used in a 'neutral sense, regarding it as a system of symbols or beliefs which pertain, in some way to social action or political practice. Whether Martin Seliger's (19) inclusive conception of ideology as action-oriented sets of beliefs, or Alvin Gouldner's (20) formulation of ideology in terms of public projects advocated by rational discourse or Paul Hirst's (21) view of ideology as a system of ideas which can be employed in political calculation in each case ideology bears no intrinsic connection to the problem of domination and the critique of domination.


Among the many ways in which ideology operates, three may be cited as central. In the first place, relation of domination may be sustained by being represented as legitimate. Every system of domination, observed Weber, seeks to cultivate a belief in its legitimacy by appealing either to rational, traditional or charismatic grounds; and such an appeal it should be noted, is generally articulated in language. A second way in which ideology operates is by means of dissimulation. Relations of domination which serve the interests of some at the expense of others may be concealed denied or 'blocked in various ways, and there ways often overlapping, seldom intentional - may conceal themselves by their very efficacy, presenting themselves as something other than what they are. A third way in which ideology operates is by means of reification, that is by representing a transitory, historical state of affairs as if it were, permanent, natural, outside of time "To reestablish the dimension of society "without history" at the heart of historical society", that argues Lefort in a remarkable is the role of ideology. There three modes by which ideology operates legitimation

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dissimulation and reification should not be regarded as either exhaustive or mutually exclusive. But at the same juncture, one would like to make an audacious claim, that they tend to overlap (these three categories) each other. As it happened in the case of the coronation of Shivaji. This will be described in the following chapters. Because these three categories of legitimation, dissimulation, and reification can be deeply articulated in the context of Shivaji's effort to establish Maratha kingdom in consonance with these categories. This is not to say that, Shivaji tried to establish a kingdom, which could reflect these tendencies at the ideological plain. Because, if one tends to traverse through the polemic terrain of Maratha historiography, one is bound to find the familiarity of the static notion of ideology. How, Shivaji as a 'person' or 'agent' of Maratha history can be represented. if we locate him in the tradition of conventional problematics of logic, as if one is going to solve the 'modern' 'problems' of medieval Indian historiography.

Because in the context of the later half of seventeenth century, which can be positivistically pointed as 1750, onwards clearly signals the rise of the Maratha phoenix, as Afzal Khan said, "The Raja is a base-born unbeliever (haramzada-Kafir) Jawli is a place

difficult of access, he asks me to meet him there, But the same Raja happens to see his religious figure with one equal eye.(25) Now as we can take John B. Thomson's conception's of ideology on academic credit to serve the requirement of our ideological problematic, it can be said that to study the ways inwhich meaning (signification) serves to sustain relations of domination."(26)

Now come to the area of 'concern', to discern its 'ideological' coating, one may be allowed to put the worries of researcher. Because due to the nature of 'topic', one is bound to go into the realm of textual interpretation. 'Socio-cultural' movements; as they mean the existence of saint-poets (or poet-sants) in Maharashtra, by their popular and contemporary critique of society and polity. These saint-poets through their style of articulation about religion, society, everydayness of life, developed a language, which was lived among the people of a region, in modern times that geographical space is 'Maharashtra'. In tune with their writings or oral articulations, the analysis of ideology will be fundamentally concerned with language. For language is the principal medium of the meaning which serves to sustain relation of domination.

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25 In it S.P.D. Vol.31, No.42, 26 John B. Thomson; op.cit. PP.130-1
Finally the question of sources comes. Especially when a topic like 'role of ideology' has to be translated in terms of its concrete representation. Most of the Maratha sources concerned here are in nature of their representations contentions. Only sources which concern with economic aspects of Maratha life, can tell us more about the social and other aspects. Sources can be delineated as below:

a) V.K Rajwade & D. Maratha Itishasanchi Sadhane 22 volumes
b) Selections from Peshwa daffar ed. by G.S Sardesa 45 volumes
c) Vad. G.C - Samads and lefts, Poona, 1913
d) Ibid, Decision - Poona, 1919
e) Vadand Parasmis - selections from teh Batara Raja and Peshwa's Diaries, VOL. 1-9.
f) Aithihaśīk Samkirna Sahitya Khanda Vols. 1-8
g) Bharat Itihas Samsodhak mandal itivsitta Vol. 1-4
h) Source Book of Maratha History - Rowlinson
i) Shiv Charita Sahitya BISM. Poona
j) Shivakalin-Patra-sar-samgraha

It is not possible for one person to undertake the vast cultural lexicon of Marathas hesitages. The important genre of sources which are of the use for this thesis, because of its emphasis on the nature of saint poets contribution and hence relyingon oral traditions which have been largely written in the end of 17th century and generally in 18th century. There were called Bakhars. Bakhars are replete with anecdotal characterisations of rulers sabhasad who wrote in 1694 is perhaps earliest of
Shivaji’s biographers. And may Bakhars later have been simply, a kind of paraphrared version of Sabhasads Bakhar. Most of the backars have been published by K.V Sane in kavyetihas Sangraha. Bakhars are generally replete with myths and legends.

Vividh Gyan Vistar was the first journal to publish original manuscript. In 1875 it published the Ajnyapatra ascribed to Ramchandra Pandit Amatya. Vishnu Sastri Chiplulan Kar with K.N Save started a journal called the kavyetihas Sangrah in 1878. It collected a number of Bakhars. The kavyetihas Samgrah published Ekvannaya kalami Bakhar, ed. by. V.S. Vakaskor, Peshavyanchi Bakhar, Bhausahebanchi Bakhar, Chitnis, Bakhars etc. In fact the Malhar rao chitnis Bakhar was written in 1810. This journal also published original documents of letters entitled "Kavyetihas Sangraha, patre, Yadi, Vaigaire".

During the ter-centenary celebration of the birth of Shivaji, important letters of his time were published in a series called, Shiv Karlin Patra Sar Sangraha. And at the same time regarding saint-poets oral tradtions too was recorded. Mahipati in later half of eighteenth century wrote, about saints - poets of Maharashtra, which was in an oral fashion. Bhakta vijaya, Bhaktalilamrita, Santavijaya later it was translated by Justin. Abbott in 1930 in the series of "The Poet-saints of Maharashtra. For the purpose of thesis, Induprakash edition of
Tukaram's abhangs in 1869, edited by S.P Pandit is much more standard for the purpose of this thesis. Regarding Ramdas, L.R Pangarkar in 1930 published collected works of Ramdas. Dr. Abbott too translated the Mahipati's sant-vijaya.

The critical issue is that, how can one construct the 'socio-cultural' aspect of society and its linkage with ideology, especially in the context of Shivaji. When, these sources are full of legends myths etc. This is to say how the 'popular sense of past' can be treated, which has been alluded by historians. If Bakhars are full of heroic exploits and godly powers of Shivaji, so is the hagiographical accounts of saint-poets. Then how one is to gather the clue out of these accounts are fragments of these accounts usable in a rational projects of history?

Unfortunately answering this sort of question helps very little to explain why, myths, legends about saints, religious founders, politico-religious figures, hagiographies play such a key role in beliefs and practices of nearly all-sects and major narratives of 17th century Maharashtra? Whether these legends are based on historical fact or not, they claim to offer historical explanations of how these 'socio-cultural' movements arose and how their traditions were preserved, often in the face of adversity, in later years. The legends take the form of stories that the members of the society tell about for themselves.

At the sametime legends can do serve either to
justify or to protest against the asymmetrical relations of power that prevail in the larger societies of which the communities that tell the legends form a greater or lesser part. It can be illustrated well as in the legend of Shivaji as well as in the legends of Tukaram and Ramdas.

As in the case of Afzal Khan's confrontation with Shivaji, Bakhars reflect a sense of legends. 'Shivadigvijaya' tells that goddess of Tuluja Pur came in dream to the priests of her temple and said "Abdul Khan is coming to defile me therefore remove to some other place".(27) Adilshahi nobles, as Sabhasad Bakhar mentions, begun to talk "It seems that Khuda has taken away the Badshahi from the Mahommedans and conferred it on the Marathas. "Sri Bhavani came to the Raja in a dream and said "I shall live in thy kingdom. Establish me and maintain my worship"(28) After the encounter with Afzal Khan, Shivaji established her another idol at Pratapgad Mokasa. Villages were granted to Bhavani and separate Haraldar, Majumdar and Peshva appointed for the goddess property.(29) In the similar manner legends of Ramdas and Tukaram are full with such stories of miracles and encounter with divine.

In other words, legends embody a socio-religious' ideology. By the term Ideology, I refer the the conception of ideology as it has been elucidated earlier.

27 'Shivadigvijaya', PP. 188-89.
29 ibid., P.27
The one, which directly links ideology to the exercise of social power. None the less, whereas Thomson\(^{30}\) regards ideologies exclusively as instruments of domination, One would prefer to also regard the various sort of discourse that protest against such social domination as forms of ideology. Indeed here the articulation of Shivaji’s association with various socio-religious sects becomes important. And further more, indeed in the case of the social meanings that are implicit and explicit in the Tuka legends, their primary intention is to protest against social discrimination and economic exploitation rather than any legitimation of existing institutions of domination. These warkari legends manifest the ideology of peasantry and the powerless, not the feudal lords and sardars of great watan house holds. Ramdasis legends\(^{31}\) do not claim the electicism of 'haves' but rather reflect a desire for the process of becoming 'haves', as in the case of the his 'maharashtra Dharma'. Shivaji’s legends material too reflect the aspiration of a person replete with peasant vocabulary and metaphors.

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30 John B. Thomson; op. cit.

This episodes states that some brahmins were boasting among themseleves of their knowledge. Ramdas thereupon called a Chandal who was passing by with a bundle of sticks to light a fire for cooking and requested the Brahmins to question to him. He then drew on the ground three lines and asked the chandal to cross each line by stepping forward on his command. When Ramdas asked him to cross the final line, Chandal could answer all the question of serious matter. Then Ramdass rebuked all the Brahmins and requested them to boast not. Here the three lines indicated three lower castes and crossing of each line meant improvement by stages with the help of knowledge.