INTRODUCTION

Rationale for selecting the topic:
The researcher selected this topic, not because of outside drive, but the inner inspiration and curiosity led him to carry out the present research.

The researcher is from Sutār community/caste (which was considered as an important artisan caste in olden village system (in gavgādā and balutedāri). The same caste is included in the OBC list of central government as well as in state government list.

The researcher had the opportunity to experience Gāvgādā at close angles. Some of his forefathers were Balutedārs, some were not. All of them lived and died for the Gāvgādā, as if they were made for the Gāvgādā. What did they get in return? In the words of our constitution, they remained socially and educationally backward. Mandal Commission categorised and named them as, 'The Other Backward Classes - OBCs'. In college days, the researcher was involved in N.S.S., Adult Education Programme and in other social activities. The researcher selected social work subject for Postgraduation (M.S.W.) and got employed in the Department of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension in University of Pune.

In this long journey, The researcher was always in touch with society. The researcher had a chance of studying
various social problems such as poverty, juvenile delinquency, illiteracy, over-population etc. The Researcher could work with scheduled castes, tribals, labourers and others. But he could never work nor study the community from which he came - Sutar' community, the 'balutedari' system and the communities near to the 'balutedāri' system in 'gāvgāda.'

The issue regarding OBCs, was discussed in Maharashtra at Government level when Deshmukh Committee report was accepted. Then Social Welfare Minister Mr. Baburāo Bhāraskar had to face criticisms and comments when he propounded new list of OBCs.

At national level, after a failure of Kalelkar Commission, the issue of OBCs was raised in 1978, when the then Government appointed Mandal Commission. Galanter has described it as, "In the wake up of Janata (Party) victory in the 1977 elections, the Backward classes returned to the national political agenda." Dhole opines that only two events have created excitement among Indian masses, i.e. an issue of State re-organisation and Mandal Commission report.

Central power got changed from one political party to another and the issue was lapsed.

The issue was lightened again, when Janata Dal Government came on power. The government promoted Mandal
Commission. Rallies, meetings, lectures and debates were organised and the whole nation got trembled.

The OBCs are included in the category of Backward Classes and they have got importance.

However, a common man from OBC Community is unaware about all these developments. Several thinkers, social workers have described this drowsiness differently; however it is a fact.

According to Mandal Commission, the percentage of OBCs compared with total population is about 52% (at national level). This is highly a heterogeneous group. According to some academicians, it is very difficult, rather impossible, to consider OBCs as a 'base' or 'universe' for research. According to them, you cannot club the castes/communities, which are distinctly different and heterogeneous in nature. In a broad sense the argument seems little worth. A man from Gurav community (who is supposed as an authority or privileged of worshiping Gods), cannot be equated with Christian OBCs. Mali community is numerically large, whereas there are some castes, who are small in numbers.

There are many divisions/sub-castes, cults, cultural, social and other differences among these castes/communities. This is reality and it is one reason for which these communities had not studied thoroughly on large scale.

The Mandal Commission had done a good job of clubbing
these castes/communities under one umbrella— The Other Backward Classes; for that the constitution had laid down a Clear-cut criteria, 'socially and educationally backward classes'.

If one wants to advocate against differentiation and heterogeneity among OBCs, the total 'social sciences' need to be analyzed again, because every person is different from others; so one will have to develop as many categories as the number of persons.

So far the OBCs, survey type studies are possible, as well as studies based on group dynamics, interrelations & certain problems can be carried out.

The researcher feels that, lack in organisation at various levels and displacement of various types, are the two major causes of their (OBCs') backwardness.

There are several faculties to undertake research studies. The researcher feels Social work is the proper subject, in view of suggesting solutions.

With an objective of investigating the causes of backwardness of OBCs and recommending proper and practical interventions, the researcher undertook the research work. This study is confined to artisan/service, non-agriculturist and non dominant castes from Gāvgāda.

Thus, the researcher feels that he can serve the society like his forefathers.
References:

"After bifurcation of the former Bombay State, the Government of Mahārāṣṭra appointed a Committee in November 1961 under the Chairmanship of Shri. B. D. Deshmukh to report on reservation of Backward classes in the Services'. In its report submitted in January 1964 the committee recommended that:- (i) Backward Classes should be grouped under four categories, i.e. (a) Scheduled castes and Neo-Buddhas; (b) Scheduled Tribes; (c) Denotified and Nomadic Tribes and (d) Other Backward Communities. (ii) Reservation in services and educational institutions for different categories of Backward classes should be related to the percentage of their population in the State.


4. Dhole, Bhāi M.S. : Mandal Ahwālāchi Chikitsā (Vichār
Probdhini Prakāshan, Sāngola), 26th January 1984, (Marāthi).