CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

The scheduled castes are found in almost all parts of India. These castes consist that part of society which is exploiting from centuries. In Hindu society they are associated with unclean occupations, social restriction, extreme poverty and exploitation by stronger and upper section of society. Sudras, Panchamas, Antyajas, Chandals and other such names were given to them. Latter in early twentieth century they were called as depressed class of people. In 1933, Mahatma Gandhi coined a new term, 'Harizan' (the son of God) for these people.

Jyoti Rao Foole, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and several other keymen of society have been contributed to emancipation of such section of society. Major role in the process of emancipation have played by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In 1930, Dr. Ambedkar demanded for separate voting write in 'Round Table Conference' for these such castes. Mahatma Gandhi opposed of such ideas of Dr. Ambedkar and started 'fast unto death'. Above all, disputes resulted to 'Poona Pact'.

Government of India Act, 1936 included a schedule of such castes who were untouchable, socially exploited and depressed, these castes called scheduled castes. After some Amendments, this schedule of castes, as it is included in Article 341 of constitution of Independent India. All rights of Amendment in this schedule are listed in powers of 'President of India'.
'Panchayati Raj System' is a characteristic of traditional Indian society. Formerly, the power in this system was in hands of some special persons of society but now it is in hands of elected person by the society, and transitional in character. After independence, this system got statutory status.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was not agree with the Gandhiji's dream of 'Gram Swaraj'. Hypothesis of Ambedkar was that, power in Panchayati Raj will goes in the hands of upper caste and powerful persons of villages, who are traditionally exploiters of poorers. Dr. Ambedkar became failed in his mission and Panchayati Raj system become implemented. 'Directive Principles of State' (Article-40) of Indian constitution, states that "the state shall take steps to organise village panchayat and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as a unit of 'self government'."

Hypothesis of Dr. Ambedkar become true, when power really goes in hands of powerful and landlords of rural society. Several studies give evidence of this fact, as Oscar Levis (1954) states that caste and landholding play an important role in decision making in rural India, latter on in 1963 Yogendra Singh studied power structure in six villages of western U.P. and found that upper caste and big landholding is key of power at village level. Bhargava (1979) reported from Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan that, the weaker section of society do not get sufficient representation in Panchayati Raj Institution.

Thus Dr. Ambedkar was not wrong, and power has been captured by the land owners. Scheduled castes were landless, so
there is no possibility of acquiring power for these castes. Several changes have been made in institution of Panchayati Raj, but deprived section of Hindu society neither get representation, nor get development, throw this institution.

1992, Indian Constitution became amended, called 73rd Constitution Amendment Act. This amendment vibrated to Indian social as well as political structure; who were locally restricted for cast their vote they get right to contest election of village panchayat. 73rd Amendment Act give a provision of reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in accordance of their proportion in population. Women also get 30 or more percent reservation in Panchayati Raj System at every level.

In three states panchayat election held in 1994, under direction of 73rd Amendment Act, in eight states held in 1995 and belated in one state in 1996. Other states held panchayat election after this. At present some states as U.P., Rajasthan, M.P. etc. constituted panchayats second time, under the directions of 73rd Amendment Act.

Some scholars make a doubt in their mind, about the results of 73rd Amendment Act. Hoshiyar Singh says that there are some lacuna in the act (73rd). This will ensure that even in the upper caste dominated panchayats, the SC, ST candidates would come to acquire the post of chairperson. This will create social tension in caste-ridden and male dominated society.
Thus power has been shifted landlords to lendees and male to female. U.P. is pioneer state, in implementation of 73rd Amendment Act. U.P. Government amended 'State Panchayati Raj Act' in 1994 and held election in 1995 and in 2000 again. So there was a need to inquiry of effects of 73rd Amendment on society in general and on scheduled caste in particular.

Present study has been conducted in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh. There are 91 scheduled caste Pradhans in this district, all these were proposed to study but, 80 become possible to approach them. So study is based on 80 Gram panchayat who's pradhans are from scheduled castes. The basic objectives of this study are 1. Socio-economic background of scheduled caste pradhans, 2. To know how they (pradhans) get success? 3. To analyse changing inter/intra caste relationship after implementation of 73rd Amendment Act. 4. To measure the extent of Scheduled Caste's Pradhans Participation and co-operation with P.R.I.'s and 5. To find out whether Panchayati Raj Institution has served as instrument or agent of upliftment of scheduled castes.

Interview with a schedule, general observation, formal group discussion with villagers and case study methods have been used for collect the information. Several problems came into face in the duration of research, as absence of pradhan at the home when we visit to village making rapport with pradhans specially in case of female etc. Local language and knowledge help to solve several problem in the field.