CHAPTER - II

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

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2.1 Meaning of Scheduled Castes:

The Government of India Act 1935 placed the ex-untouchables in a schedule and they were for the first time called scheduled castes. In 1936 British government of India ordered in specifying certain castes in the list of depressed classes as scheduled castes. The scheduled caste throughout the country occupy the lowest rank in the castes hierarchy. In the hierarchy of unequal relationships, the scheduled caste are at the bottom and hence socially inferior to all others in the community.

Scheduled castes were one of the groups which were most backward. The basic determinants of scheduled caste status were untouchability and impure occupations, other determinants were their low economic, political and educational conditions. After independence, the scheduled castes (SC's) receive special mention in the constitution of India with special provisions in education, employment and political representation. Article 46 for instance declares. "The state shall promote with special care the programmes for educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Wankhede, 1999 : 28).

The various terms by which they were identified early in 19th century, e.g. Jyotirao Phule used the term Dalit to describe them as the most oppressed and broken victims of the caste ridden society
Though it is also believed that the term was first coined by Ambedkar (Murugkar, 1991: 6). The term Dalit as understood by the Dalit, Panthers, indicates that the Dalits (the scheduled castes) are those bearing the worst forms of atrocities, having no power to counter it and thus need to take the support of similar groups of people such as scheduled castes, tribes, neo Buddhists, the working people. The landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion (Joshi 1986: 145).

The term scheduled castes coined by the British government of India brings to light the fact that these castes had suffered from untouchability and hence, need to be helped by the government through its special constitutional safeguards and measures. On the country, those used in Hindu religious scriptures reflect not only their degraded social status but were also responsible for their degradation. In the Vedas they had been described as Dasa and Dasyu depicting their unique dark colour complexion which was considered to be inferior to a relatively fair complexion of the Aryans and as Raksasa and Asura depicting them as evils. They had also been polluting the Brahmans and others for instance, under the rule of the Peshawar in the Maratha country the untouchable was not allowed to use the public streets if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute the Hindu by his shadow. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or in his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindu from getting themselves polluted by his touch through mistake.
In Poona, the capital of the Peshwa, the untouchable was required to carry an earthen pot, hung in his neck. Whereever he went, for holding his spit lest his spit falling on earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to tread on it (Ambedkar 1979 : 39). If an untouchable caste touched a caste Hindu either by mistake or unconsciously, the former seemed to have polluted the latter and for this 'crime' he had to undergo severe punishment and the polluted one to a series of purification ceremonies in order to purify himself from the defilement. Such was the social condition of the scheduled caste.

2.2. Degradation of the Scheduled Castes' Status:

To understand how they have been degraded to the status of untouchables and also considered inferior to all other castes. It is essential first to understand the nature and function of the caste system. Caste has remained, since ages, one of the exclusive characteristics of Indian society particularly of the Hindu social system. It divides people into inferior and superior castes and accords them lower and higher statuses respectively. It divides the Hindu into five major caste groups. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and Ati-Shudras or untouchables. These have been arranged in a hierarchical social order with the Brahmins at the top followed by the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and the Ati-Shudras or untouchables, within each of these five major caste groups, there are innumerable sub-castes placed one over the other. Nobody can change one's caste membership from the one in which he or she is born each caste in the
past was supposedly associated with a particular occupation which in turn determined the social and economic status of its members. While the Brahmins were considered to be the priests, teachers and advisors, the Kshatriyas were regarded as warriors or protectors or rulers similarly, the Vaishya were considered traders, and the Shudras as cultivators and manual labourers. The untouchables were assigned filthy menial and defiling occupations, such as sweeping scavenging removing night soil etc. It is also said that changing occupation from the given one was difficult and often discouraged besides the other characteristics of the casts system such as endogamy. Commensality, purity and pollution were strictly observed and a few of these are observed even today. All these have comulatively contributed to the degraded status of the untouchables.

Then, the logical question is who the untouchables or the scheduled castes are and how they have been socially degraded. There are more than one view on this for instance, the racial theory of Stanley Rice maintains that the present day scheduled castes are the descendants of the Indian aboriginals who were conquered and enslaved first by the Dravidians and later by the Aryans and were reduced to assume the menial occupations (Ambedar, 1990 : 289-90)

It is also asserted that they were the early inhabitants of the Gangetic plains of Punjab and were later invaded and enslaved to be the untouchables by the Indo-Aryans who linguistically belonged to the larger family of the peoples designated either as Indo-Europeans or Indo-Germans in About 2500 B.C. (Ghurye, 1987: 163-64). Another
view is that it was because of continuous associations of this section of people with the unclean and fifty occupation they were socially degraded and reduced to be the untouchables (Ambedkar, 1990: 305). However, these theories are rejected by Ambedkar who states that there is no racial difference between the untouchables and the Hindus, both of them belong to the same race. In his opinion the caste system is a result of superimposition of endogamy over exogamy and there is nothing divine in its creation. Looking at the meaning of certain terms such as Antya, Antyaja and Antyavasin found in the Hindu shastras, he asserts that these terms refer to those people who lived at the Antya i.e. the end or periphery of the village and were different from those tribes who lived a settled life inside the village. They were the broken men or the defected people who lived outside the village from the beginning. Ambedkar concludes that the broken men cuere Buddhists and they did not suffer from Untouchability prior to 200 A.D. untouchability emerged only around 400 A.D. as a result of the struggle for superemacy between Buddhism and Brahmanism in which the broken men or the Buddhists were exposed to scorn and contempt of the Brahmins. Though beef-eating was initially a common practice among all the castes, the Brahmins gave it up later to gain supermacy over the Buddhists. They made the cow a sacred animal, and beef-eating a sacrilege. However, the broken men being wanderer and economically poor could not afford to give up this habit. They continued beef eating and being guilty up of sacrilege, they necessarily became beyond the pale of society and were reduced to be the untouchables (Ambedkar, 1990: 311-55).
Though there are more than one theories on who were the untouchables, the theory of Manu seemed to have had a greater impact. In our efforts to understand the degraded social status of the untouchables or Chandalas, it is necessary to take stock of the innumerable number of indignities prescribed in the Hindu shastras like the Manu smriti against the Shudras, the fore fathers (the Brahmin women being the fore mothers) of the untouchables. It is also claimed that the chandaas followed for sometime the customs and occupations of the Shudras, because they were actually considered to be a variety of them (Ghurye, 1987: 80).

The law of Manu laid in his Manusmriti, was one sided as it extended undue support of the first three Varnas and opposes social justice to the people of the fourth Varna, the Shudras and Ati-Shudras. Though Manu himself declared that the object of the sacraments and śānýasas is to sanctify the body and purify it from five in this life and here after and to make it fit for union with God, he makes these avenues open only to the higher classes and denies the same to the Shudras. He praised the Brahmins as God on earth and condemned the Shudras to be unworthy human. Social interaction by denying them the religious equality. Manu presents the Shudras from setting with in the main village boundary but only at the outs kirts (Ibid : 97). It is, maintained in the Manismriti, “A person who dies with a Shudra’s food in his stomach will be born again as a pig or Shudra” (Ibid : 78). Also Adultery with a women of higher caste entailed punishment, the severity of which increased with the caste status of the women
violated." But contrarily, the "...illicit intercourse with females of lower caste women by males of higher caste was not regarded in the nature of a serious offence" (Ibid : 77). Vasishta, another Hindu Law giver declares that the place of the Shudra is a burial ground. It is also said that "the Veda must not be recited in his presence, no advice must be given to him, nor must he be asked to perform a penance. The Shudra had no right to perform any of the important sacraments." It is further declared that "he shall use the old shoes, discarded garments etc. of the members of the other Varnas, and eat the leaving of thier food" (Ibid : 59-60).

Though education is a prerequisite for the upliftment of every individual and community, the Shudras were denied access to it in the past. As stated above, they were not allowed even to hear the Vedas which was the only source of knowledge in the ancient time. An additional advantage to the Brahmin was that he alone had the right to teach the vedas (Ambedkar 1987 : 36-43). A Brahman, whether learned or ignorant, was considered a powerful divinity (Ibid : 344). The Shudras who attempted to study were dealt with inhuman indignities. It is stated that a "Shudra trying to hear the Vedic texts shall have his ears filled with molten tin or lac, if he recites the veda, his tongue shall be cut off, and if he remembers it he shall be dismembered. If he assumes position of equality with twice born men either in sitting, conversing, or going along the road, he shall receive corporal punishment (Ghurye, 1987 : 61-2). These were few of the numerous laws which governed the social rank of the four Varnas and
kept the Shudras always below the rank of others.

The law of Manu governing social status of the Ati-Shudras or the Panchama (the fifth Varna) or the Chandalas or the untouchables are obviously bound to be more inhuman. There are many laws which have direct bearing on the social degradation of the Chandalas. For instance, the verse No. VII. 281 of the Manusmriti declares, "A man of the lowest class (Chandalas), who shall insolently place himself on the same seat with one of the highest, shall either be banished with a mark on his hidden parts, or the king shall cause a gash to be made on his buttock" (Ambedkar, 1987 : 29). It further says, "One who has touched a Chandala must immediately bathe with his cloths on." Even people of the other Varnas have been directed to treat a Chandala differently. It is said "A Householder is exhorted to though some food for them and the outcastes along with that for crows and dogs. Outside the house, after all the members of the househod have taken their meal's" (Ghurye, 1987 : 79). The untouchables were kept both physically and socially away from the caste Hindus usually they had to reside at the fringe of the villages. Their houses in general were made up of mud walls and thatched roof and located away from the main village as hamlets which in course of time grew as independent villages, with only untouchables being the inhabitants. Whatever Manu had prescribed as the Hindu code of conducts had been considered sacred and advocated by the priests and rulers of all times and were strictly followed the caste rules were severely punished (Hutton, 1946 : 81).
In the most recent days, there were instances in which the Dalits or the scheduled castes were forced to eat human excreta and drink urine for participating in human rights activities. These inhuman treatments are meted out of them not only by the caste Hindus but also by the police department which is supposed to protect them from such illtreatment (Hindustan Times, May 24, 1988).

Fifty one years after Dr. Ambedkar drafted the Indian constitution Dalits continue to be the wretched of the earth, compelled to follow the dehumanised code of the Varna vyavastha. In the times of aggressive Hindutva, their fate remains unchanged. In Nathdwara in Rajasthan there is this unwritten law that no Dalit can enter upper caste temples. Dalits here remember Swami Agnivesh’s padyatra from Udaipur to the Nathdwara temple in the Eighties, when despite days of tension and a national outcry, he was not allowed to enter the temple with Dalits. Later Chief Minister Shiv Charan Mathur led a group of Dalits inside the temple, only to be followed by an elaborate cleansing ritual by its priests (Hindustan Times, April 14, 2001).

In post-Mandal Bihar, Dalits of Pani and Sarsemi of Nalanda district cannot enter the century old Shiva temple. If they dare to do so, they will have to pay a price as public thrashing or begaari (bonded labour) tonsuring of heads, or a blackened face with a humiliating ride on top of a donkey. On March 11, 2001 a day after Holi, Babulal Ahirwar, Dalit Sarpanch of Semara in Sager district of M.P., was beaten black and blue by Thakurs during a Holi milan festival. His crime: he had dared to put gulal on the Thakurs. The same Thakurs forced the
Dalit women to play Holi with them. In Karnataka most towns and villages have at least three temples marked for specific castes. The Brahmin temples have banned Dalits. Hence, the low castes have their own 'untouchable sacred spaces' (Hindustan Times, April 14, 2001).

Incidentally Infosys CEO Narayana Murthy once visited the Kannadiga temple 'Mantralaya' on the Andhra border where he was asked to disclose his caste and show his sacred thread. Irked, he refused to do either. He was made to sit with a non-Brahmin group for food. In Orissa, Dalits still remember how the notorious Pandas at Jagannath temple in Puri turned away Indira Gandhi from the temple gates questioning her religious credentials. In most temples, the gates are still shut for the Pariahs. In Tamil Nadu, Dalits are not denied entry into temples. This is also due to the protracted anti-Brahmin movement. But the 'two-tumbler' practice is still on. Local tea shops keep two sets of tumblers, outside. The Dalit customer picks up one tumbler and his tea/coffee is poured in it by another tumbler-making sure the two tumblers do not touch. The Dalit will then have to wash his tumbler from water kept in a separate drum. But there is rare exception an aberration. Fifty five years old Vanguri Muttaiah is like any other temple priest. The difference is that this priest who presides over the Ram temple at Vallabhi Village in Khammam district, happens to be a Harijan.

What had been prescribed as the Hindu code of conduct by Manu very much became a social reality over a period of time. The
worst ever affected were the untouchables as in the day to day social interaction, even their shadow was considered to be belied to believe that their plight was God-ordained and thus never to be protested. The social stigma attached to their untouchable identity continued unaltered. They were reduced to the state of an unseable, untouchable and unapproachable entity. They remained the most gullible, pilloried and socially deraded section of the Indian Society.

2.3. Derivation of Economic and Political Power

The second major problem that the untouchables or Dalits have ever faced is their state of powerlessness. The power that could have ensured them economic independence and physical security, the power that could have ensured them economic independence and physical security the power that could have protected their self-respect and dignity and the power that could have assured the equal opportunity in all spheres of their life is the power they have been deprived of. Their powerlessness can be seen in terms of their deprivation of economic and political power. We shall see how these two, in turn, have contributed to their degraded social status and brought multiple forms of misery to them.

The economic powers of the Shudras, as prescribed in the Manusmriti, can also be seen from the observation of Ambedkar who states that Hinduism in the first-place denies freedom of avocation. The occupation of each caste being preordained, it has no relation to individual's capacity nor to inclination. In the second place, Hinduism
compels people to serve ends chosen by others. By declaring that the Shudra is born to serve the higher classes. Manu in fact directs the king to see that all castes including the Shudra do discharge their appointed tasks and in the third place Hinduism leaves no scope for the Shudras to accumulate wealth. Manu says imperatively that, "No collection of wealth must be made by a Shudra even though he be able to it, for a Shudra who has acquired wealth gives pain to Brahmins." He also asserts that the left over food of the Brahmins must be given to the Shudra. They may also give the apparel which they have warn, and the refuse of their grains as well as their old house hold furniture (Ambedkar, 1987 : 313). Manu insists that a "Shudra shall be servile, unfit for office without education, without property and as a contemptible person, his person and property shall always reliable to be conscripted" (Ibid : 311). Thus according to Ambedkar there is no choice of avocation in Hinduism. There is no economic independence and security (Ibid : 39-41).

It vividly indicates that while the Brahmins were bestowed with all such ordinances that favoured and perpetuated their economic superiority, the Shudras were denied even opportunities to improve their economic status. All such injunction contributed to the Shudras economic deprivation. While such was the economic condition of the Shudras, the Ati-Shudras or untouchables were subjected to more economic hardships. They were all assigned menial, defiling and filthy jobs with meagre or no income as stated earlier. The assured jobs or occupations for them were sweeping, cleaning streets, scavenging,
and carrying night soil, removing, skinning and hiding the dead animals, etc. as a means to make-out their livelihood. Carrying out such occupations became the unquestionable duty for them and forcing them to perform these occupations became the unquestionable right of the caste Hindus over a period of time. Many times they had to depend on the unclean food materials left over by the other caste people and also on the flesh of the carrion. In some parts of the country they had to eat coarse grains sorted out from animals dung (Ram, 1988). As a result the untouchables experienced abject poverty and were forced to depend on the mercy of the caste Hindu for their survival particularly in rural areas. This is one of the most important reasons due to which they seldom dared to protest against the caste Hindus injustices and exploitation by caste Hindus.

The second important reason due to which the untouchables could not protest against all indignities inflicted on them is that they were deprived of political power the power to rule over others. Nowhere in the Hindu Shastras there is any mention of support to the untouchables to be the rulers, nor was it tolerated. According to one view, the Ati-Shudras being the Padaja clone who is born from the feet of the creator, were to be the slaves of others (Ghurye, 1987: 59). However, attention may be drawn to the thesis propounded by Ambedkar regarding origin of the Shudras. According to him, the Shudras were part of the Kshatriyas (Ambedkar, 1990: 11-12). Though this thesis also indicates that there were kings from the untouchable castes, along the passage of time they got dethroned
and made powerless. They remained deprived of political power all through the ages and have not been able to come together as powerful in the caste system. It is mainly because they have remained divided. These divisions emerge on account of the following reasons.

First, though constituting a considerable portion of the total Indian population, they are scattered all over India mostly in villages and Squatters in towns and cities. Being small in numbers in every village and also due of the fact that their fellow caste men in the neighbouring village do not dare to come to their rescue, the untouchable, seldom have had the courage to protest against the heinous crimes heaped on them by the caste Hindu. But the situation is somewhat different in urban areas they are in a way socially and economically better of second, though they are collectively called the scheduled castes or Dalits, there are divisions among them on the basis of their castes and sub-castes. Those considered to be the high caste among the scheduled caste treat the rest as untouchables and discriminate them in the manner in which they are treated by the caste Hindu although the rigidity with which such practices are observed many have regional variations. This stands as a stumbling block in the unity and solidarity. Third, they are divided on the basis of the religion, region, language and political party they belong. In other words, they confine themselves to their religious linguistic, regional, political and ideological domains. The Hindus Dalits in many regions do not join hands with those Dalits converted to other religious as they are warned and discouraged by the dominant castes. Bringing
together these differential collectivities has always been a challenging task for the Dalit leadership.

Finally, the Dalits have remained divided on account of the difference in their economic status. Presently, not all scheduled castes or Dalits are dependent on the caste Hindus for their livelihood though their majority are economically backward. Some of them have achieved economic independence either through the state support under the policy of reservation and other schemes or through the property inherited or earned by them. Given a chance, these people may not yield to the under demands of the caste Hindus. Though less in numbers, they would often look for an opportunity to protest against such demands. But many times they are even wove by the rich caste Hindus particularly in villages, not to join hands with the poor scheduled castes, enjoying bureaucratic and to some extent better economic power and status tend to join hands with the caste Hindus enjoying similar status not only to conceal their untouchable identity but also to protect their newly achieved socio-economic (class) status. On the other hand, the economically poor scheduled castes in villages can not afford to displease the caste Hindus for the obvious reason of safeguarding their source of livelihood. In this process, even the limited economic power of small section of the scheduled castes enforced to get alienated from majority of the fellow caste people (Ram, 1988: 61-62). By and large, the untouchables or Dalits in most of the villages have remained perpetually as non-entity or an entity exclusively meant for humiliation, oppression and exploitation. Due to the said reasons,
they have not been able to master enough courage and support to challenge the dominance of the caste Hindus.

2.4. Constitutional Remedies:

The constitution of the Indian Republic has provided a number of legal safeguards for the scheduled castes. Being the architect of the Indian constitution, Ambedkar was able to get a number of the provisions enshrined in the constitution in favour of the scheduled castes. While some call the act of providing certain exclusive special provisions in the constitution for the scheduled castes as compensatory discrimination and yet some other accept is as preferential treatment. The act of treating the scheduled castes as a special category is constitutionally valid under Article 46 of the directive principles of the state policy of the Indian constitution. We shall discuss below the specific constitutional provisions safeguarding the social, economic and political interests of the scheduled castes.

For protecting the scheduled castes from all forms of social discrimination, the practice of untouchability has legally been abolished under Article 17 of the constitution. Accordingly the, untouchability (offences) Act, 1955 was passed. Under this act an offender was fined up to Rs. 600/- and/or was subjected to imprisonment. To enlarge its scope and make its penal provisions more stringent, the Act was subsequently amended in November 1976 and was also renamed as the protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 (PCR Act). The cases filed under the PCR Act are cognisable and non-compoundable offences.
An offender under this act is subjected to an extended duration of imprisonment and is also fined up to Rs. 1000/- Since the number of cases of atrocities could not be curbed down significantly owing to the fact that the punishment prescribed under this act was less severe and many of the offenders manged to go scot free, and also because of the emergence of new forms of discrimination, the need for yet another act was realised. Accordingly, the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes (prevention of Atrocities) act 1989 has been passed. Under this act the following have been made the cognizable and non-cognizable offences: (1) Forcing any of the member of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to drink or eat obnoxious substance; (2) dumping excreta or waste matters in their premises or neighbourhood; (3) stripping; (4) wrongfully occupying their land; (5) keeping them as bonded labourers, (6) intimidating them during voting; (7) mischievous litigation against them; (8) causing them public humiliation, intending to outrage the modesty of their women and exploiting them sexually; (9) corrupting or fouling the water used by them for drinking purpose, and (10) denying them customary rights and forcing them to leave their houses or village. Under this Act, the offender shall be punished with an imprisonment of not less than six month extendable upto five years with fine. The offences of custodial rape, highway robbery and house breaking carry a maximum punishment of 10 years imprisonment under the penal code of this act. This act also provides external and collective fine for forfeiture of property of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (Report of National Commission for SCs
and STs 1990 : 55). These provisions are not only aimed at protecting the self-respect and dignity of the scheduled castes and Tribes and promoting them from their degraded social status but also at empowering them to stand on their own and protect against atrocities meted out to them.

Another constitutional remedy is the reservation policy. This was constitutionally adopted in 1950 with a view to ensuring opportunities for the scheduled castes educational and employment advancement and enabling their participation in the major decision making bodies at various levels. More precisely, the reservation policy has three components: (1) educational reservation ensuring admission of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribe candidates in all educational institutions including engineering and medical colleges; (2) job reservation ensuring their representation in all government departments and other public sector undertaking and (3) political reservation ensuring their representation in Lok Sabha at the centre and Vidhan Sabha at the state. To ensure proper representation of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe candidates in all the three areas of activities, there is a provision for appointing a liaison officer and for establishing special cells in every government departments and educational institutions under article 338 of the constitution, a commissioner for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is appointed to monitor all matters relating to them. Years ago, a commission for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was set up replacing the role of the said commissioner to investigate all matters
pertaining to the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes. According to the policy of reservation, they are now entitled for 15 percent and 7.5 percent (together 22.5%) reservations in each of the three said areas of activities. It is necessary to briefly look at the functioning of the policy in all the three areas and the results it has produced so far.

The seats for the scheduled caste candidates in admission to the various programmes of study in every educational institution is made obligatory under Articles 15 and 29 of the Indian Constitution. All the educational institutions receiving financial assistance either fully or partially from the state are supposed to adhere to this condition. Thus the reservation in educational institutions has contributed to their enrolment not only at primary but also at secondary and higher level of education, the percentage of enrolment have declined at the subsequently higher level of education (Ram 1995: 108). Similarly, these has been gradual increase in their literacy rate over the years.

Beside, Article 16(4) of the constitution declares, "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state". In addition, Article 335 provides "The claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribs shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of a state". Thus under these Articles members of the
scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes have been ensured employment opportunities in government services including the public sector enterprises, nationalized banks, statutory and autonomous bodies and institutions receiving grants in aid from the state for the purpose. The percentage of reservation, however, varies from state to state and from union Territory to union Territory depending on the actual percentage of the scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe population in the concerned to fill up the required number of posts, the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes have been given certain concessions such as a relaxation in upper age limit minimum percentage of marks/grades and number of years of work experience if required. In matters of recruitment and promotion, the roster system is followed with a view to enabling more and more scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe candidates to get employed and promoted in services.

These provisions are expected to improve lot of the scheduled castes such a way that over a period of time their ascribed untouchable identity is blurred and their achieved status as educated and government employer or white collar workers takes the prominence as their social identity. It may be noted at this stage that the educational and job reservations are used by the scheduled castes not only as means to elevate themselves from their degraded social status but also to assert their rights. Due to these provisions, many scheduled caste persons have been able to get employment in government services. It may however, be stated that though there has been increases in the representation of the scheduled castes in different
categories of government services, there is still significant number of 
backing of post to be filled particularly in groups A and B posts. For 
instance, by September 1989 about 4800 posts reserved in groups A, 
B, C and D services were found vacant. It was then decided to fill up 
all reserved posts through the special recruitment drives. Ban on de-
reservation of posts was also introduced to stop the reserved post 
being converted into general category posts. Yet significant number 
of posts in groups A and B services remain vacant (Ramaiah, 1990 : 
13-16). It may also be noted that many reserved posts remain vacant 
on the pretext of not finding suitable candidated though many 
scheduled caste candidate with adequate qualification and experience 
have been hunting for emmployment.

Sachidanand (1974 : 276-278) has found that social change 
among scheduled castes had come through reform movements, 
sanskritization, westernization and state policies.

R.S. Pandey (1991: 105-107) has observed a perceptible 
change among scheduled castes in rural areas because of the 
educational facilities provided by the government. He has further 
noted. The impact of government programmes in the village which 
lies in close vicinity of block head quarters.

As stated above, the political reservation is meant to enhance 
the power of the scheduled castes to voice their grievances in the 
highest decision making bodies such as the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan 
Sabhas. This provision has been guaranted under Articles 330 and 
332 of the constitution under which seats are reserved, for the
scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha in proportion to their population. Initially, this provision was valid only for a period of 10 year from the commencement of the constitution but subsequently it has been extended under Article 334 after every 10 years. Now, this provision is to continue till the year 2000 A.D. under this provision 79 and 40 seats out of the total of 544 seats in Lok Sabha are reserved for the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes respectively. In the Vidhan Sabhas, out of 3997 seats spread over all the states, 557 and 315 seats are reserved for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes respectively (Government of India, 1988 : 532-36). There is no reservation of seats of seats in Rajya Sabha at the centre and Vidhan Parishad (State Council) in the states.

The political reservation, no doubt enables the scheduled castes to get elected to state legislatures and parliament as stated above, but is has been found that the scheduled caste leaders by and large, have never enjoyed due importance in decision making be it the state legislature or parliament or the village panchayat or the district council. Similar is the case of their representation in organisational structure of the different political parties. They are often unable to effectively articulate interests of the scheduled castes both in parliament and state assemblies as they are caught between their promises to safe guard interests of the caste Hindus on the one hand and to protect the fellow scheduled castes from the tyranny of the former on the other. Moreover, they are often used by the upper caste political
leaders or bosses to meet their own political and personal ends (Narayanan, 1986: 85).

Pundir (1997: 72-73) observes that there are many changes among scheduled caste which are coming as a consequence of the state welfare measures and other factors and processes the changes are a reoccurring in economic, social political and cultural dimensions on social dimension lessening of social distance increase intercourse in daily activities indicate a qualitative change. Change in political dimensions is indicated by the facts like increasing participation in democratic processes.

However, the situation changed for the better when the National Front Government came to power in 1989 with Mr. V.P. Singh as the prime minister and Mr. Ramvilas Paswan as the welfare Minister of India Mr. Singh in 1996 argued "unjust social order gave rise to an unjust power structure and this structure then distributed the benefits of power unjustly" while talking of empowerment of the Dalits, he maintained that he was for 'transfer of Power' and not for 'transaction of Power' which may be understood in terms of how much support a political party could muster from the scheduled castes and how much power it has to share for the same in return. The situation changed further for the better of the Dalits with the emergence of Kanshi Ram, a powerful Dalit political leader. His Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) emerged recently as a major force representing the Dalit cause. The BSP has been powerful enough to muster the support of other political parties over the issues concerning the Dalits, for the first time in 1996
it was this party which could install Mr. Mayawati a Dalit Women, as
the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, the biggest state in the country.
This was a historic victory in the Dalit struggle and was a surprise on
the Indian political scenario. Though Ms. Mayawati's government
lasted only for a few months, it vividly demonstrated the emerging
Dalit consciousness to the dominant political forces and also to the
dominant castes. Again in 2002 she has become chief minister. The
BSP has also successfully proved that its presence cannot be ignored
by any political party. Thus, today the social justice platform is no
more considered divisive, castiest and restrograde.

2.5 Meaning of Social Movement:

In order to explicate the potentiality of our framework it is
necessary to elaborate upon each of the dimension involved.
Traditional India was characterized by political fragmentation and
linguistic regional insulation, hierarchical social division and
institutionalized inequality, cultural-ethnic diversity and social
tolerance, primacy of group over individual, and transcendence of
mundane concerns. (Singh, 1973 : 185). Each of these elements in
the historicity of Indian society influenced the nature and types of
social movements which originated and spread in India. First, most of
the movements were prepolitical and religious in orientation, variously
described as millenerian, chiliastic, revivalistic, revitalization, nativist,
messianic, etc. (Fuchs, 1965 : 170-71) Even when the objectives of
these movements were political or economic, mobilization of
participants was mainly achieved by invoking their primordial similarity
and employing religious symbols. Given the severity of the caste system and deeply entrenched social inequality, these movements were mainly directed against the evils that emanated from the caste system (Natarajan, 1959: 108-9). Since there existed a rough correlation between the caste hierarchy and the possession of wealth and power, the movement participants were specific primordial categories even when their deprivation was economically rooted. Because of the tremendous importance of the collectivity over individuals, often movements which aimed to bring about mobility had to mobilize members of status groups into collective actions (Silverberg, 1968: 161).

Pimplcy (1992 : 1-5) has observed reformists' social reform and reform movements are often scoffed at for their conservative bias and for the slow pace of change sought by them persons in a hurry to being about change in the society tend to prefer revolution involving protests but violence to reform. Two points may be mentioned in this regard firstly, reformist methods could lead to radical changes. In other words, there is not logical entailment between the suddenness of change and its radical character. Radical change can be brought about in a gradual manner. Secondly, a revolution does not necessarily guarantee a radical structuring of society.

Anthony Giddens (1989 : 624) States that a social movement may be defined as a collective attempt to further a common interest, or secure a common goal, through collective action outside the sphere of established institutions. This definition has to be a broadened.
precisely because of the variations between different types of movements. Many social movements are very small, numbering perhaps no more than a few dozen members, others might include thousands or even millions of people. Some movements carry on their activities within the laws of the society or societies in which they exist, while others operate as illegal or underground groups. Often, of course, laws are altered partly or wholly as a result of the action of social movements.

T.K. Oommen (1972 : 250-264) states "when an elementary collective behaviour, the crowd action, mass or public behaviour becomes organised behaviour then it becomes a social movement." He further states, "when an elementary collective behaviour acquires leadership, an enduring division of labour, social rules and social values, in short a culture, a social organisation and a new scheme it becomes a social movement. Thus according to Oommen a social movement is an organised collective behaviour which has a culture, social organisation, leadership, rules and values and a new scheme.

A standard definition of social movement includes socially shared demands for change in some aspect(s) of social order. Like any movement, the scheduled caste movement is a social movement. It is a protest movement in the strict sense of the term but protest is not really a social movement according to Michael Lewis in the orthodox sense of the concept. If protest is not social movement what is it then? He continues to say that it is a class of social movement.
M.S.A. Roa (1978: 1-15) distinguishes between three levels of structural changes and pursuanty three types of social movements: reformist, transformative and revolutionary. Reform movements aim at effecting middle level structural changes and the objective of revolutionary movements is to bring about radical change in the totality of social and cultural systems. These movements also vary in terms of conflicts embedded in them, conflict is the least in reform movements, it acquires a sharper focus in transformative movements and in the caste of revolutionary movements conflict is based upon the marxist ideology of clas struggle.

Partha Mukherji (1977: 38-59) classifies movements based on the quality of changes accumulative, alternative and transformative. While accumulative change are intra-systemic, the latter two are systemic changes. Alternative change is geared to create new structures (and by implication to destroy the existing ones), transformative change aims at replacing the existing structure and substituting it by another:

Aberle (1966 : 75) distinguishes four types of social movements

1. Transformative Movements aim at for reaching change in the society or societies of which they are a part. The changes their members anticipate are catadymic, all-embracing, and often violent.

2. Reformative movements have more limited objectives, aspiring to alter only some aspects of the existing social order. They concern themselves with specific kinds of inequality or injustice.
Cases in point are the women's christian temperance union or anti-abortion groups.

3. Redemptive movements seek to rescue people from ways of life seem as corrupting. Many religious movements belong in this category, in so far as they concentrate on personal salvation, examples are the pentecostal sects, which believe that individuals spiritual development is the true indication of their worth (Schwartz 1970, 113).

4. Alternative movements, which aim at securing partial change in individuals. They do not seek to achieve a complete alteration in people's habits, but are concerned with changing certain specific traits. An illustration is alcoholics anonymous.

In terms of this paradigm, the anti-caste movement, which began in the 19th Century under the inspiration of Jyotiba Phule and was carried on in the 1920s by the non-Brahman movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and then developed under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, had characteristic of all four types of social movements though at its best it was revolutionary in terms of society and redempive in terms of individuals. In partial context, the 'Post-Ambedkar Dalit Movement' has had revolutionary practice. It has provided alternative ways of living, at some points limited and at some points radical and all encompassing, ranging from changes in behaviour such as giving up modern society. It is to be noted that most political and social change of twentieth century have been accelerated by various protest movements (Joseph 1986 : 108).
beef-eating to religious conversion. It has focused on changes in the entire society, from radical revolutionary goals of abolishing caste oppression and economic exploitation to be limited goals of providing scope for members of scheduled caste to achieve social mobility.

But, on the whole, looking at the 50 years since independence, this movement has been reformist. It has mobilised along caste lines but made only half-hearted efforts to destroy caste it has attempted and achieved some real though limited societal changes, with gains especially for the educated sections among Dalits, but it has failed to transform the society sufficiently to raise the general mass out of what is still among the most excruciating poverty in the world. Though this movement has carried forward the challenge of empowerment and brought anti-caste issues into the political agenda, it still seems unable to become a decisive political force, leaving Dalits and other suppressed caste groups forced to bargains for concessions with the dominant political parties it characteristics as "manuwadi", dominated by upper castes and the ideologies of Brahmanic Hinduism. The day promised by the 'new sun' seem still far away. (Omvedt :2000, 144-45)

2.6 Meaning of Protest:

Protest is an attack on the prevailing system in an intellectual or organized way. Viewed against this is revolution which is a sickness in society, a break down of the social order, general demoralization
and civil war protest is based on every man's desire to be free. This feeling is above any reason, tradition and power. Protest per se is rather good or bad but it is an effective means of achieving social change and mobility in a modern society. It is do be noted that most political and social change of twentieth century have been accelerated by various protest movement (Joseph, 1986: 108).

Clutterbuck (1973 : 89) says protest is necessary to maintain a fair rate of change in the face of entrenched interests in any society—both to further the will of the majority and to attain equity for minorities.

Charles Tiley's (1978:106-108) distinguishes four main components of protests.

1. The organization of the group or group involved protest movements are organized in many ways, varying from spontaneous formation of crowds to tightly disciplined revolutionary groups

2. Mobilization this involves the ways in which a group acquires control over sufficient resources to make collective action possible. Such resources many include supplies of material good, political support or weaponry.

3. The common interests of those engaging in collective action what they see as the gains and losses likely to be achieved by their policies or tracts. Some common interests always underlie mobilization to collective action.

4. Opportunity obviously chance events may occur that provide
opportunities to pursue revolutionary aims. May occurs that provide opportunities to pursue revolutionary aims. Many forms of collective action, including revolution, are greatly influenced by such incidental happenings.

Singh (2000: 95-97) has discussed the protest ideology which not only articulates the new values and new goals but also unveils the structure of social inequalities and injustices found existing in the prevailing social order of the society and mobilize justification for the rejection of an unjust structure. The position of the untouchable within it and the strategies available to them for registering their protest and of seeking an effective share in the power structure of Indian society could perhaps provide a framework for developing a more generalized ideology of protest for subnational deprived groups.

Arora (1971 : 341-350) has written that there is a large scale politicization of protests. Protest and dissent are not the activities of merely the irrational and opportunistic sectors of society. They represent a particular mode of political participation chosen by the citizenry, such politicization devalues ideology which is the basis of any protest movement.

K.P. Singh (1999 : 95-97) observes that both the Dalits in India and Blacks in the United states of America have been engaged in struggles and protest movements of several types for a long time for a new social identity based on de-stigmatised caste and racial considerations.
Gopal Guru (1997: 1876-80) has studied the recent Dalit protests in Maharashtra. The state-wide Dalit protest over the desecration of Ambedkar’s statue in Mata Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar in Mumbai has been seen by many, particularly the non-Dalits as an aspect of political manipulation by political forces in the state.

V.T. Rajeshkar Shetty (1991: 2212-20) writes, “there are synoptic accounts such as my own which focus upon protests, conflict and self-redefinition.” Shetty described post-Ambedkar fragmentation followed by an upsurge of Dalit movement in the 1970s. There have also been overview of the Dalit situation in India and various aspects of Dalit life.

S.R. Charsley and G.K. Karanth (1999: 31-37) have tried to understand the plight of the untouchables and their activities. The untouchables have protested against their humiliation and they have put forward the challenges to that mortification.

Gopal Guru (1993: 570-573) says that Dalit protest as a necessary out-come of an obscurantist Hindu tradition with its deep rooted prejudice against the Dalits. It therefore assumes that the movement is limited to achieving the objectives of advancement in socio-economic, civic and political fields within the exiting order without seeking a transformation of that society.

Bhoite and Bhoite (1977: 60-75) studied the Dalit sahitya (literary) movements. The Dalit literary movement is essentially a protest movement. It is one of the several movements which go to
constitute the wider liberation movement of the ex-untouchables. The target of their protest is mainly the Hindu intellectual tradition.

V.N. Seth's (1982: 40-54) study provides a valuable insight in understanding the correct perspective on caste in Indian stratification in its contemporary context. It seeks to throw light on the interactional dynamics among caste groups (upper castes, backward classes, scheduled castes) in a conflict situation. This study undertakes to examine the hitherto neglected but nevertheless important area of research, the sociology of Harijan protest. This study seeks to throw light on the sociological categories of protest and lack of protest and the relationship between these and the social structural variables such as status situation.

P.E. Mohan (1993: 68) has studied the descriptions of those organizations, agencies and individuals who were involved in elevating the scheduled castes and then assesses result of their efforts in the areas of economic, education, political and civil rights.

Ramaiah (1998: 102) has studied protest movements and scheduled caste identity and the impact of constitutional provisions on scheduled castes in selected villages of Tamil Nadu. He aimed at understanding the struggle of Pallars a scheduled caste in Tamil Nadu, to achieve an unstigmatized and respectful social identity and freed themselves from socio-economic exploitation and atrocities method out of them. Various protective and developmental programmes undertaken in accordance with the special provisions enshrined in the constitution of India in favour of the scheduled castes have proved
to be useful to them in their struggle.

**Rajani Kothari (1994 : 1589-1594)** has found the new 'Dalit' movement in India is emerging, or seems like emerging. The Dalit consciousness is by no means limited to the scheduled castes. It has begun to symbolise a much broader spectre of the oppressed and hitherto excluded social strata. It is based on an attempted though by no means still realised solidarity of the poor and the discriminated classes of the people, long held back and frustrated, the Dalit phenomenon would not have emerged with the power and confidence that it did in 1993. The Dalit movement is also distinctive in some other respects compared to the new social movements or the 'alternatives movement' on major issues especially in respect of the nature of struggle against dominant forces.

**BBC Report on Caste Fanaticism in India (2001)** ahead a major UN Conference on racism, due to pain in Durban (South Africa) from 31 August to 7 September 2001. Many Indian non-government groups are demanding that casteism discrimination on the grounds of caste should be added to the agender. However, activists-argue that despite many official measures, caste is still a constant cause of oppression for more than 250 million people at the bottom of the caste hierarchy.

The above brief survey of literature, which is only illustrative, indicates that the scheduled caste protests were limited as they did not make a strong frontal attack on the actual framework on the caste
system though they tried to do. Therefore, these protest movements by themselves could not have brought about any substantial social change and development of the scheduled castes as a whole. This kind of the new protests in India are emerging and there is a gap of studies of these protests. That is clear and therefore new studies of protest movements of the Dalits are required.

2.7. Dalit Movements and Protests: Search For Identity and Historical Antecedents

Spontaneous revolts and protests as well as organised struggles by Ati Shudras or Dalits against socio-economic exploitation, discrimination and subjugation is not a recent phenomenon. Through out the history of the caste system such instances of protests though not always widespread but can be found. Even while practising the rituals and worshipping the deities of upper caste Hindus, Dalits do not accept their present status as a result of their deeds in the previous birth (Shah, 2001: 28-29)

Kumar (1999 : 109) has found Dalit movement can be divided mainly into three stages and for this we will let the movement of Dr. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar as the centre point. Therefore on this Basis, the Dalit struggle before the movement of Dr. Ambedkar in the first stage of Dalit movement. The Dalit struggle in the life period of Ambedkar is the second stage of Dalit Movement and the Dalit struggle after their death in the third stage of Dalit Movement, which is continuing at present.
The forms of struggles by Dalits vary in different contexts from time to time. They often resist passively, a weapon which all weak adopt (Scott, 1985: 168-70). Alternative cultural symbols and idioms have been created for voicing their aspirations and ventilating their anger against dominant castes. The upper or middle castes who subscribed to the Brahmanical ideology and enjoyed social and political power, did not concede the demands of Dalits for human dignity and social justice. More often than not, the rebels and their supporters were crushed with brutal force. Methods of co-option and conciliation were adopted either to control the revolts or to use them against the rebels.

The initial protest movements of India, starting with the Buddhist revolt of the 6th century BC were all geared to question the central ideology of the concept of purity and pollution and Brahminic supremacy. The second major religious protest movement Vashnavism and Shaivism, sought to abolish the intermediary between man and God, the Brahmin. The movements initiated by Kabir, Ramanand and Ravidas in the north, Chaitanya in the east, Narsinh Mehta and Tukaram in the west and Ramnuja and Basava in south India. None of the bhakti movements had a programme of socio-economic uplift, but confined its attention to the identitional realm. In the final stage, although bhakti movements became popular among the Dalits, insofar as they did not change their socio-economic status, the equality professed by them remained a mirage. All the bhakti movements movements were 'reformist' in that they only attempted to correct some
of the evils of Hinduism, particularly the practice of untouchability without questioning the caste system. They were all initiated by caste Hindus and/or 'admitted' clean-caste Hindus also into the movement fold. Once castes with differing ritual rank came to be associated with the movements, the participants developed a dual identity: A religious ideological identity with fellow movement participants and a socio-cultural identity with social collectivities (castes) to which they traced their origin (Oommen, 1990: 258).

By the middle of the 19th century a new trend of protest was begun by Vivekananda and Dayananda Saraswati and later by Gandhi. Their movements may be designated as neo-Vedantic movements (Shah, 1980: 3-4). The kernel of this movement was the dissociation of the practice of untouchability from Hinduism, the argument being that there was no scriptural sanction for this abominable practice. However, the neo-vedantists upheld the Varna scheme as an occupational division of society and Varnashrama Dharma as an essential prerequisite for the preservation of harmony in society and purity of the soul. This doctrinaire unity of Hindu religion was sought to be extended to social life by the campaigning for temple entry of the Dalits and commensality or intermarriage with them. Secular sources of change, such as legislation, education, and improvement of material conditions were pressed into service for the welfare of the Dalit. However, both the Bhakti and neo-Vedantic movements were protests from within, initiated by the caste Hindus. At best they brought about minor changes, helping the Dalits to make some adaptations
and caste Hindus some concessions. (Oommen, 1990: 259).

During the 1880s and 1890s, a small group of social reformers of the national social conference raised the problem of untouchability and pressed the Indian national Congress to take up the cause of untouchables. But the congress did not respond to the demand till the Morley Minto Reforms in 1909 when the issue of 'communal representation' became important. Politically-minded Hindus and socio-religious reformers were alarmed by such demands and apprehended that time was not far when the untouchables might even be weaned away from the national movement, if nothing was done urgently to ensure them of at least liberal caste Hindus 'Support and co-operation in the removal of their disabilities' (Gupta, 1985:171).

Besides the Dravida Maha Sangam founded in 1881 by Ayothiadas Pandit a Panchama by caste has claimed that the depressed classes (chiefly the Paraiahs) should be referred as Poorva Tamizhar (Adi or original Tamil people) and demanded special measures for their educational and economic advancement. During this time a few other Dalit intellectuals such as M. Masilamani, Maduliar and Apadwaias also protested against caste system, supremacy of Brahmains and the subjugation of depressed classes through their proleferic writings (Thirnavukarases, 1993; Gettha and Rajadurai, 1993 : 2901-83). Similarly, the Ezhavas, another untouchable caste of Kerala engaged in the same occupation of toddy tapping, organised movement during the early 19th century in order to come out of their untouchable identity. The focus of the Ezhavas movements, popularly
known as SNDP movement under the leadership of Narayan Guru Swamy was more on getting access to all those ritual and other religious services which were denied to them under the Hindu fold. Though they did not go out of Hinduism, they created a structure parallel to it them in the Hindu temples. But their emphasis on enhancing economic status and achieving political power was relatively less. The extent of success achieved by them was relatively less. The extent of success achieved by them in eliminating their stigmatized caste identity was also relatively less. As a result, unlike the Nadar movement the Ezhav's movement could only blur their untouchable identity and could not alter their caste identities as such (Shah, 1990:110).

The claim of Jatavs (Chamer) of Agra in Uttar Pradesh for Kshatriya status by the end of the 19th century was also an attempt, movement which did not last for a long period and could not succeed in achieving its goals. Attempts were also made by the Jatavs to imitate the life styles of upper castes as means to protest themselves from the humiliation of untouchability (Lynch, 1969 : 62-63). Ultimately, they gave up such claim but improved and political power positions and embraced Buddhism. Unlike this, the Adi-Dharm Movement of the Churhas (untouchables) of Punjab was revolutionary in its aims and strategies. Dissatisfied with the untouchable status accorded to them in the Hindu social orders, the Churhas traced their religious root as Adi-Dharm outside the Hindu fold which was founded in the early 20th century. The member of this movement demanded to be
recognise as Adi-Dharmis and not as the Hindu untouchables. Though this movement largely succeed in its objective, there emerged division among the followers on the sub-caste line. As a result, many renounced their association with Adi-Dharm and embraced other religions like Christianity and Buddhism (Juergensmeyer, 1980:80).

The Satnami movement was another such movement founded between 1820 and 1830 by Sri Guru Ghasi Das, a Chamar from the chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh. Sri Ghasi Das returned to his fellow caste people one day after the traditional sojourn in the wilderness bearing certain dramatic revelations. He said that all individuals were equal irrespective of caste and there was only one God- the God of the true name or Satnam. He named himself to be the head priest and forbade the worship of Hindu deities observance of the rituals associated with it and refrained from consumption of liquor, tobacco and meat. However, no significant effort was made in this movement to enhance the economic status of his followers. The population of this movement helped the Chamar to attain a group identity, also political power through electoral politics and widening their scope for further development (Babb, 1972 : 143-51).

Yet, the untouchables in some parts of the country resorted to conversion as a strategy to end their problem of untouchability. Being influenced by the Nadar movement of Tamil Nadu and the Ezhavas movement of Kerala, the Pulayas the untouchable caste of Kerala, protested against the inhuman practice of untouchability, their political disenfranchisement and economic exploitation. They took shelter
under the umbrella of Christianity in large numbers during the 17th century for their physical, economic and social security. Even then, their conversion did not help them much to come out of the tyranny of caste system and untouchability (Mathew, 1986: 95-119)

Muzaffar Assadi (1997: 210-17) has found that until the 1970s the rural conflict or contradiction centred around upper caste on the one hand and the dominant caste on the other. The second shift took place when dominant caste occupied the space left over by the upper caste, leading to new forms of contradiction between Dalits and the dominant caste.

Out of many things that Ambedkar, a Mahar by caste, did for the uplift and empowerment of the untouchables, as there has no scope even in future as long as they remained within the fold of Hinduism. With a view to rescuing the fellow Dalits from the bondage of untouchability, he renounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism at the fag end of his life on October 14, 1956 at Nagpur (Maharashtra) along with lakhs of his followers. Since the Dalits in Maharashtra and other parts of the country have been converting to Buddhism called neo-Buddhists. But they have not yet fully overcome their stigmatized caste identity, the associated practice of untouchability and their economic vulnerability (Patwardhan, 1973: 73-74, Mathew, 1986:119). However, Ambedkar's contribution in cluding Dalit conversion to Buddhism in general and the Mahars of Maharashtra in particular to assert their right self-respect and dignity in immense and loudable (Rao, 1979: 216).
Another example of religious conversion in independent India is that of the Pallars, one of the militant scheduled castes in Tamil Nadu. In 1981 about 2200 Pallars resorted to conversion to Islam as the last resort not only put an end to the innumerable indignities inflicted on them but also to come out of the stigmatized untouchable identity imposed on them by the caste Hindus. The Pallars of Meenak shipuram in Tirunelveli district and of Attiyuttur and Kooriyur in Ramanathapuram district embraced Islam, renouncing their mechanical affiliation with the Hinduism. The Pallars from Thanjavur and Kanyakumari districts and Gudiyattam taluk also followed the same path (Swarup, 1986: 14). In order to keep up the newly achieved social status as Muslims, the Pallars had to keep a distance even from their close relatives and Pallars had to keep a distance even from their close relatives and fellow Dalits who remained Hindus. Though the extent of social respect the Dalits converted to Islam enjoy in much more than that of their counterparts in Hinduism, they are not yet fully integrated into the Muslim community where already exists a social division similar to the caste system. In the sense, the Dalits even in Islam do not have access to free social interaction and hence suffer from the notion of untouchability (Ahmed, 1973: 40).

However, most of the Dalit movements both in pre and post independent periods have felt that as long as there is caste system, there would be upper castes and lower castes or touchables and untouchables and unjust distribution of power and status between the two. The experience of all these movements in fact reiterate the fact
that even conversion is not found to be the appropriate means to free the Dalits from their bondage of untouchability and the degraded social status. Therefore uprooting the caste system is the Panacea to their miseries and degradation (Ahmed, 1973 : 41).

However, the situation began to change with the advent of the British rule, though to a very limited extent, when state and societal power got separated. The British rulers introduced the western legal system in India as it had evolved in Europe in the 19th century under a capitalist economic structure and liberal ideology with the change in the politico-legal structure, movements by Dalits demanding rights, such as admission in schools, walking on public roads, entering temples and dressing like caste. Hindus were launched in different parts of the country. Some resulted in riots. The colonial state did not support all the demands of the untouchables relating to the social and religious spheres. For instance, not only local courts but the privy council in London also gave verdict against the Nadars for their attempt to enter the temple. The courts declared that the Nadars had gone beyond their hereditary calling, and asked them to pay Rs. 500 for the necessary purification ceremonies to be performed in the temple (Hardgrave, 1969 : 69-70).

Dalit organisations came into existence to pressurise the British government to create space for them in the public sphere. So as to secure their interests. Over the years, Dalit increasingly felt that they had to depend on the state to get protection and equality in the social and economic spheres. Slowly, avenues for their participation in the
political arena increased. Though there were no safeguards for the depressed classes the Act of 1909, the demand for separate representation and protective measures for them continued. Some of their leaders opposed the congress and supported the British rule. Kamble of Poona and T.N. Nair of Madras opposed the Home Rule demand of the congress and pleaded before the Montogu-Chelmsford committee that the British must remain in power and continue to provide protection to the depressed classes and others instead of leaving them at the mercy of superior castes (Nath, 1987: 19-20).

Consequently in 1917, the congress for the first time expressed its concern over the issue of untouchability. The congress urged the people to understand the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes but the party did not articulate any concrete demand or programme to protect the interests of the depressed classes (Shah, 1987: 68-69).

On the other hand, the franchise committee of 1918-19 recommended nomination from the depressed classes in provincial councils. The act of 1919 accepted the recommendations, but leaders of the depressed classes from different parts of the country were not satisfied with mere nomination. Their demand for separate electorate persisted. In its memorandum to the Simon commission, the Bahiskrit Hitarini Sabha from Bombay, under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, opposed nomination and strongly pleaded for the extension of the principle of election to the depressed classes. It was argued that they
needed political education and as ministership was a very important privilege, they must find place in the Cabinet (Keer, 1962 : 17-18). M.C. Rajah, a nominated member in the Madras Legislative Council, demanded reservation of seats for Panchams in government schools and colleges as members of various local bodies and municipalities. On his instance, the council passed the resolution issuing instructions to District collectors asking them to nominate suitable men from the depressed classes as members of various local bodies and municipalities (Gupta, 1985 : 224)

The Dalit movement under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar was actively involved in politics by the late 1920s. Political power, Dr. Ambedkar believed, could help Dalits solve their socio-economic problems. In 1933, he said:

"You have now a way of bringing about change, an improvement in your life conditions. That way is though political action, through appropriate laws... you can make (the) government provide for you what you are now denied- Food, Clothing, shelter, education.....Hence instead of resorting to rosary counting or prayer you should now depend on the political path; that will bring you liberation.....The conflict hereafter, will not be between the British and the Indians, but between the advanced classes of India and backward classes. No borrowed or hired person who does not belong to your class can further your welfare by the least degree you must rid yourselves of internal divisions and organise strongly".....(quoted by Gore, 1993 : 213).
At the all India level, the political articulation of Dalit interests and identity was first initiated by the great lawyer and constitutional expert, B.R. Ambedkar, a Maharashtrian Mahar. The first visible manifestation of this was found in his demand for separate electorates for the scheduled castes. The Dalit political mobilization on the national scene can be traced to the late 1920s when the British government initiated a series of Round Table conferences to provide political representation to the scheduled castes. In the second conference in 1931, Ambedkar was invited as the representative of the depressed classes, but he soon realized that precious little could be achieved through the official channels. Ambedkar firmly believed that unless the caste system was destroyed the social evil of untouchability could not be removed and he realized that the achieve this objective the Dalits should have political power keeping this end in view he established in 1942 the All India scheduled caste federation of an All India depressed class conference in Nagpur. In 1957 the AISCF was dissolved and the Republican party of India was formed. Although an exclusive political party of the Dalits, the RPI endorsed the fundamental tenets of the Indians constitution and it pursued these objectives though the medium of parliamentary democracy. The specific aims of the party were fighting for the equality of all Indian citizens with a provision to give the Dalits some special consideration to bring about a balanced Indian society, and for the removal of exploitation of man by man and class by class (Oommen, 1990 : 264).
The various struggles launched in Dr. Ambedkar's leadership by Dalits, whether they are for protesting the practice of untouchability and perpetration of atrocities, or for demanding minimum wages, land rights, employment, self-respect, dignity and political representation, have also aimed at raising consciousness among Dalits about the need for political participation so as to bring social transformation leading to an egalitarian social order. The Nadars in South India launched struggles in the late 19th century demanding temple entry and that their women be allowed to dress like Nair and Christian women. During the 1920s, there were a number of movements by Dalits to enter temples and to take water from public tanks. As mentioned earlier, they also struggled to get political representations on legislative bodies (Shah, 2001: 34).

However, after Ambedkar the RPI weakened gradually and most of its followers took shelter in other political parties including the congress party which had greater political hold in most parts of the country. Subsequently, fractions within the RPI also became a reality which could not be sorted out even till date. The Dalits at large manifested overtly their disappointment over the leadership of the RPI Prakash Ambedkar, the grand son of Ambedkar, attempted to unite all the RPI factions during the 1990 Maharashtra Assembly elections through his Bharatiya Republican Party (BRP) formed in 1984. It culminated in the formulation of an ad-hoc committee to decide on the constitution for unified Dalit body to work out programmes organisational structure and working of the party along with the
dissolutions of all faction. This situation forced all the factions of the RPI to come together. On December 6, 1992. Although the functions led by B. C. Kamble, Ramdas Ambedkar refused to do so. And the RPI still remains an ununited political party of the Dalits. Though the RPI emerged as a major political wing of Dalits, it could not sustain its popularity beyond a particular time and space. Moreover, the performance of its elected leaders in mustering political support for the cause of Dalits in legislature and parliament has also not been much appreciated by the Dalits themselves. The factions with the RPI remains a reality. In 1998, the Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra, Dalit Sena of Uttar Pradesh, Dalit Mahasabha of Andhra Pradesh and a Dalit organisation from Kerala come together and formed a federation. It demanded proper implementation of reservation policy, extension of reservation to Neo-Buddhists, prevention of sale of arrack and today, and protection for the scheduled castes. This move also could not bring the Dalit together.

Muzaffar Assadi and S. Rajendra (2000: 1610-612) has found the recent incidence of caste violence in Karnataka forces the Dalit movement there to face the issue of internal conflicts and contradictions especially subcaste politics of identity formation. Like any other social movement, Dalit movement/politics too, in the initial stages of its inception created an euphoria that its politics of cultural protest would ultimately transform the social relations at different structured levels. Dalit politics adopted the symbolism of Ambedkar—an uncritical symbol of fightin the landed gentry, rural discrimination and for new identity formation of Dalitism. That is why the Dalit
movement politics entered the villages through the inauguration of Ambedkar Yuvak Mandals in Karnataka State.

In 1992 there was another non-political attempt to unite the Dalits across their religious, regional linguistic, sub-caste political and ideological differences under the banner of the Dalit Solidarity Programme (DSP). Though the Dalits have remained divided, the problem of caste discrimination suffered by them remains common and hence, the DSP attempted to unite them all on the basis of this commonness. It organised conscientisation programmes, at the national regional and district levels. Exclusively for the Dalits through meetings and lecturers has been feasible in urban areas, it may not be so in rural areas where there could be stiff opposition from the caste Hindu against such programmes. Whether the DSP would be able to ensure protection to Dalits at this stage is still an issue for debate.

2.8. The Scheduled Castes Movements and Protests in U.P.: Some Evidence

The S.C./Dalit Movement in U.P. has specific characteristics which distinguish it from the Ambedkarite movements in other regions, particularly Maharashtra. It arose later than in Western and Southern India, and in the colonial period was both weak and limited to a few pockets in the state. The absence of anti-caste social movements and the moderating effects of Gandhi upon the anti-colonial struggle, shaped the identity of SCs as 'Harijans'. Attempts at introducing change were largely limited to Sanskritisation, and the SCs continued
to remain politically backward. It was only in the 1940, influenced by the ideas of Ambedkar, that a small section in parts of the state rejected its earlier status and identity, and began to use politics as a means to achieve an equal position in the Indian polity. Moreover, in the post-Independence period, apart from a brief phase in the 1960s, it was only in the 1980s that a radical caste consciousness arose, leading to the formation of the BSP which attempted to create a new identity and political consciousness. Hence, the SC movement in U.P. lacks the depth, intensity and maturity which characterise the movement in Western India.

2.8.1 Scheduled Castes Movements and Protests in The Colonial Period

In contrast to parts of western India which came under the influence of Babasaheb Ambedkar, U.P. did not experience any large scale anti-caste movement during the colonial period which resulted in delayed development of political consciousness among SCs. The reasons lie in the rigid and unchanging character of the social structure in U.P. (Pai, 2001: 260).

The caste structure in the north Indian plains differs fundamentally from that of southern and western India. Historically, anti-Brahminism seems to have developed in the latter regions due to their steep and discontinuous traditional social hierarchies which were almost tyrannical in some parts. Regions with relatively higher proportion of twice-born castes, having more gradual and continuous
hierarchies leading to a less oppressive structure such as the north Indian plains, seem to have been less susceptible to horizontal mobilisation from below, comprising ritually deprived castes seeking opportunities to improve their status and political power (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967: 78-79).

The lack of scheduled caste movements in the U.P. plains meant the absence of any widespread anti-caste ideology and the passive acceptance of the unequal social and political system. The anti-colonial movement in U.P. came under the leadership of Gandhi while in Maharashtra, though the congress played an important role, it was profoundly influenced by Ambedkar. In the united provinces, both during the Kisan Sabha agitation in 1920-21 and the Civil Disobedience and rent campaigns in 1930-31, low caste tenants and labourers participated in large numbers and even produced an SC leader, Pasi Madari. However, once the movements acquired a degree of autonomy producing peasant leaders and incorporating some of the basic contradictions of Indian society—such as the unequal caste/class hierarchy, the leadership made a conscious effort to separate the 'political' and 'social issues' and called off the movements (Pandey, 1978:206).

Gandhi and Ambedkar also differed on their stand regarding the method of caste reform and the future role of SCs in India. Ambedkar saw advancement for the untouchables in terms of using politics to achieve social and economic equality with the highest classes in a modern society, while Gandhi held to a more traditional
concept of a Varna system cleansed of untouchability, in which untouchables would be 'Harijans' and their unclean work made honourable (Joshi 1986). These were two styles of leadership representing western influenced, modernism and idealistic Hindu traditionalism respectively; the first was confrontationist and the second accommodative (Zelliot, 1972 : 70).

In the 1940, a section of SCs in a few districts, from where the Republican party of India later emerged, rejected the Gandhian framework and adopted the idea of Ambedkar in an attempt to develop a new identity and use political means to improve their status. This development is best seen among the Chamar, leather, workers of Agra district who from the early 1800s had been attempting Sanskritisation under the influence of the Arya Samaj (Lynch, 1969 : 33).

In 1944-45, they formed the Scheduled Castes Federation of Agra, linked to the All India Scheduled Castes Federation of Ambedkar (ibid : 84). Th leaders realised that upward mobility through sanskritisation was a route closed to castes below the ritual barrier of pollution. As a result, the transitional period 1945-46 saw a marked change and their reference group of identity now became the SC community with whom they identified as part of the oppressed and untouchable section of the population and political participation within the new constitutional order emerged as a better means for entering the new power structures. These developments created a united Jatava front in U.P. prior to the 1946 elections. However, the newly created self identity was neither fully united nor clear when it came to political action. Thus
it was only a very small section of SCs in a few isolated areas in U.P. who experienced political mobilisation, the majority remained untouched (Lynch, 1969: 34).

2.8.2. The Scheduled Caste Movement and Protest During Post-Independence in U.P.

The foration of RPI in 1958 inaugurated a new and separtist phase in the S.C. movement in U.P., but it proved to be shortlived. The reasons for the brief existence of the RPI and its failure to mobilise the SCs in U.P. lie both within the S.C. community and the nature of the U.P. society and politics during this period. Three major factors were– lack of strong leadership, divisions among the leadership over the strategy to be followed and the ability of the congress as a broad-based dominant party to attract S.C. votes.

The Chamars/Jatavas formed the small educated urban elite who had taken the lead in mobilising the S.C. community and providing leadership. They were disliked and feared by the other groups lower in the Jati hierarchy, and lacking a strong leader they failed to unite the party. Moreover, the leaders were divided regarding the relationship of SCs with the congress party and the Hindu caste community as a whole. The issue was again that of separation versus integration. Studies of various districts show the existence of two main groups– the congress conservatives and the RPI politicians (Lynch, 1969:111).

Hence, while accepting thier SC status and sharing the socio-economic goals of their caste brethren, they preferred to co-operate
with the congress and oppose the RPI. In contrast, the leaders of the
RPI felt that a separate political party served the interests of the
community better. They tried to use their political positions in the local
government or state legislature to further the economic and political
interests of SCs and to raise awareness and a distinct sense of identity
within the community. Moreover, although the RPI had two clear goals-
to defeat the 'Brahmin' congress party and improve the condition of
SCs- its leaders were divided over the methods to be used, a good
example being the issue of reservation. The moderates thought it
necessary to continue the policy of protective discrimination for
sometime in order to help SCs improve their position in Indian society,
and believed they were dependent upon the larger society for their

Electoral data show that the radicals were right about reservation
not helping the RPI. Out of a total of 89 reserved assembly seats in
U.P. in the 1962, 1967 and 1969 assembly elections, the congress
obtained 55, 47 and 46 seat getting 61.80 percent, 55.81 percent and
52.69 percent of the votes respectively, while the RPI obtained 1 seat
in 1962, 1 in 1967 and none in 1969, which was barely 1.12 percent
of the votes (Singh and Bose, 1985 : 105).

Finally, the existing power structure in U.P., particularly in the
rural areas, in the first two decades after independence, did not allow
any space for the RPI to become a strong force, and it remained a
marginal party (Brass, 1985 : 15).
The 1970s can be described as a phase of integration and a hiatus between two periods of separatist political activity by SCs in U.P. Following the 1969 state assembly elections, the RPI and the SC movement as a whole lost its distinct identity and entered into a phase of long-term decline. During this phase SCs moved closer to the upper castes and the congress who were able to co-opt them and gain their support. The middle castes in the mid-1960s, due to mobilisation by their leaders and the economic gains from the Green Revolution, entered into politics with the formation of parties such as the BKD (Frankel, 1977: 108).

In U.P., between 1971 and 1977, a number of policies were designed to strengthen the congress base among the rural poor and the lower castes. The party under Indira Gandhi adopted a radical image and populist policies such as 'Garibi Hatao' and the 20-point programme. The breakdown of the earlier vote banks made it necessary to appeal directly to the small farmers and landless labourers most of whom are SCs (Zaidi, 1986: 101). Land ceiling was reduced to 18 acres of irrigated and 7.3 - 9.3 acres in the case of non-irrigated land per family. During the emergency, there was vigorous implementation of this measure in U.P., leading to many bigger landowners losing land. Special programmes were begun for the rural poor landless and small farmers and for SCs, house sites and land was distributed and wells dug for drinking water. Many of these schemes were carried out under central supervision to bring about a 'total rural regeneration'. By these policies, the congress was
able to capture and integrate SCs within the congress patronage and protection system (Pandey, 1974:80).

In the 1980s the SC movement in U.P. entered a new phase of separation from and hostility to the mainstream parties and the upper-caste Hindu community under the leadership of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Its emergence and establishment as an import and political force can be traced to two interconnected developments in the state. The first is the steady decay and infact a collapse of the 'Congress System' in U.P. (Stone, 1988 : 106).

The parallel development was a number of significant changes within the SC community in the 1980. The Green Revolution increased investment in agriculture while urbanisation increased employment opportunities on farms, brick kilns construction activities and rickshaw pulling in the cities. As a result, absolute dependence on landowness and old patron-client relations disappeared. Less prepared to suffer indignities. SCs gave up carrying and skinning of dead animals and adopted 'Sanskritisation' which reflected in their wearing or the sacred thread and abstinence from meat. The catalyst for change was education and spread of the electoral process while welfare programmes of the government, in backward areas particularly, had a negligible impact. Today, Chamars/Kureels Jatavas holding class I government jobs in U.P. compare favourably with those belonging to the Brahmin Kayasth or Vaishya communities. This changes created a small educated core in the SC community, who were in the vanguard of the new 'Dalit' assertiveness in the 1980s and 1990s (The Economic Times, 4 June 1995).
The movement's appeal broadened in 1980-1990 with the formation of an agitational using, the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4), which has a greater presence in rural areas. The BSP formed in 1984, is the political expression of this social action movement. In contrast of the other Dalit organisations, its formation appears deliberate, not reactive, and it has stayed out of many major Dalit struggles. Although it has emerged out of a social action group, it is not a religious or reform movement, it is definitely a political organisation whose aim is to capture power and use it to improve the condition of the SC community (ibid: 162).

2.8.3. The Scheduled Castes Movements and Protests in a Bahujan Party Phase

The fall of the SP-BSP coalition in June 1995 inaugurated a new Bahujan phase of the Dalit Movement in which two contradictory mobilisational trends are visible: coalition-building with upper-caste parties and a deepening of the movement at the grass roots level. These have, in the Short term, affected the 1996 Lok Sabha, October 1996 state assembly and the 1998 Lok sabha elections, and in the longer term are of importance to the Dalit movement (Pai, 2000: 280).

First, the BSP leadership, hostile to the SP, in its desire and impatience to capture power moved politically closer to the upper caste parties- Congress and the BJP- making it central to any coalition formed in the state; leading to 'Dalitisation' of UP politics (The
Hindustan Times, 1995). This decision marked its conversion from a movement to a party led by an opportunistic leadership. In June 1995, the congress welcomed the decision by the BSP to withdraw support to the SP-BSP coalition, but was not keen to support a BSP government. The BJP, in contrast, immediately offered support as it hoped, and a government was formed in June 1995 under the leadership of Mayawati. Although the formation of a Dalit government was an important landmark, due to constant friction between the two parties, it lasted only until 17 December, 1995. During this period, the BSP was deeply divided over the leadership's decision and its main support base- chamars and Pasis- were unhappy as the party was in the hands of OBCs, mainly the Kurmis who are supporters of the BJP (The Economic Time, 1995).

The BSP leaders were particularly keen to implement their programme of Dalit upliftment. In both 1995 and 1997, when in power, Mayawati had pursued Dalit oriented policies in the field of education, social welfare, employment generation and health for example, in 1995, the Mayawati government initiated the Ambedkar Razgar Yojana for Dalit women, which cost the of exchequer Rs. 60 crore, the outlay on health and family planning was raised but 50 percent of it was reserved for Dalits. In 1997, a number of educational schemes were begun (Directorate of Information' 1997). Between 1991 and 1997-98, 25,434 Ambedkar villages with development/welfare schemes were identified by the two BSP governments for which a separate department was created. By this programme, the party hoped to
improve the lives of 92 lakh SC/ST persons in the state. In 1997, realising that the government would last only six months, to ensure that all Dalit programmes be speedily implemented, the government posted Dalit officers in many Zillas and in 25 percent of the thanas. The leaders of the U.P. unit of the BJP were highly critical of these policies, and on assuming office in September 1997, the Kalyan Singh government stopped most of the Dalit-oriented programmes. The constant defections within all parties during this period reflected the social conflicts in society due to creation of new identities.

Pradeep Kumar (1999 : 17-23) has found that the BSP was actually interested is asserting that the low castes, now termed Dalits in U.P., were in no mood to accept the patronage of the caste Hindus. Any reference therefore to Gandhi's good will/sympathetic gestures towards the "Harijans" only infuriated the 'Dalit' leaders. Even the term "Scheduled Castes" popularised by the constitutional provisions for reservation, which had become a commonly understood nomenclature for these castes, was dropped in preference for "Dalits". This was natural for the kind of politics that the BSP was looking forward to. The term like "bahujan samaj", "Harijan", "Scheduled Castes" etc. denoted only social and administrative identities of these lower castes, and smocked of either patronage or affirmative action on the part of the state. In short, these were too "Soft" to be used in a political battle for assertion. The academics only fell in the trap and endlessly debated the history and genesis of these words, while the BSP succeeded in
galvanising a very large section of the Dalits to its political programme which precisely meant nothing more than voting for the BSP candidates in the Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha elections.

**Kumar (2000: 208-222)** he observes if takes the Dalit movement of U.P. as the basis then, we can see a new emerging face of Indian Democratic System and this face is "Representative Democracy" which is stepping towards "Participatory Democracy" and this all is the contribution of Dalit Movement. A decade ago, Dalits were represented by higher authoritative classes or some Dalit leaders nominated by them. But Dalits themselves have decided their agenda after the dawn of BSP in U.P. and have tried to govern in the three government of 1993, 1995, (for 4½ months) and 1997 (for 6 months) on their conditions. A Dalit woman Mayawati took decision on the basis of the policies of her 11 years old party for the first time in independent India after building a government in 1995 and 1997.

A second significant trend which would help the Dalit movement advance in U.P. much more than it politics of electoral mobilisation and coalition building, is a growing grassroots process of 'Ambedkarisation' in the countryside (Pai, 2000: 284-5).

On the basis of the writings and studies we find that—

1. In India the people belonging to the scheduled castes or the ex-un touchables have been struggling for centuries to free themselves from the stigmatised caste (untouchable) identity ascribed to them in the caste hierarchy.
2. Their struggle, directed against the various forms of injustice and exploitation.

3. Though the efforts to elevate them from their inhuman condition and protect their self-respect and dignity are very many and sustained over centuries, the numerous types of socio-economic disabilities that they suffer from and the social stigma attached to their untouchable identity.

4. The Hindu social system divides the people into inferior and superior castes and accords them lower and higher statuses respectively. It divides the Hindus into five major caste groups Brahmins, Kshatriyas Vaishyas, Shudras and Ati-Shudras or untouchables. The Brahmins at the top followed by the Kshatriyas Vaishyas, Shudras and Ati-Shudras or untouchables.

5. Nobody can change one's caste membership from the one in which he or she is born. Each caste in the past was supposesedly associated with a particular occupation which in turn determined the social and economic status of its members.

6. The second major problem that the untouchables or Dalits have ever faced is their state of powerlessness. Their powerlessness can be seen in terms of their deprivations of economic and political powers.

7. They were all assigned menial, defiling and filthy jobs with meagre or no income as stated earlier. The assumed jobs or occupations for them were sweeping, cleaning streets, scavenging, and carrying night soil, removing, skinning and hiding the dead animals, etc. This is one of the most important reasons
due to which they seldom dared to protest against the caste Hindus injustices and exploitation.

8. The other important reason due to which the untouchables could not protest against all indignities inflicted on them is that they were deprived of political power the power to rule over others.

9. Efforts towards ameliorating got of the scheduled caste date back to the sixth century B.C. starting with the Buddhist revolt against the unequal social order and caste discrimination.

10. The efforts of the neo-vedantic movements 19th century represented by institutions like the Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and prarthana Samaj, also opposed the practice of untouchability by contesting the scriptural sanction.

11. During the 1880s and 1890s, a small group of social reformers of the National Social Conference raised the problem of untouchability and pressed the Indian National Congress to take up the cause of untouchables.

12. The claim of Jatavs (Chamar) of Agra in Uttar Pradesh for Kshatriya status by end of the 19th century was also an attempt movement to imitate the life styles of upper castes as means to protest them selevves from the humiliation of untouchability.

13. The Adi-Dharm Movement of the Chuhras (untouchables) of Punjab was revolutionary in its aims and strategies which was founded in the early 20th century. The member of this movement demanded to be recognised as Adi-Dharmis and not as the Hindu untouchables.
14. The Satnami movement was another such movement founded between 1820 and 1830 by Sri Guru Ghasi Das, a Chamar from the Chhattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh.

15. Yet, the untouchables in some parts of the country resorted to conversion as a strategy to end their problem of untouchability. Being influenced by the Nadar movement of Tamil Nadu, the Ezhavas movement of kerala, the Pulayas the untouchable caste of Kerala protested against the inhuman practice of untouchability. They look shelter under the umbrella of christianity in large number during the 17th century for their physical, economic and social security.

16. The Ambedkar, Mahan by Caste did for the uplift and empowerment of the untouchables and his conversion in 1956 along with lakhs of his followers, since then the Dalits in Maharashtra and other parts of the country have been converting to Buddhism or neo-Buddhist.

17. The situation began to change with the advent of the British rule, though to a very limited extent under a capialist economic structure and liberal ideology with the change in the politico-legal structure. Movements by Dalits demanding rights, such as admission in school, walking on public roads, entering temples and dressing like caste Hindus were quite in number.

18. The Dalit movement under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar was actively involved in politics by the late 1920s.

19. In 1998, the Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra, Dalit-Sena of Uttar
Pradesh, Dalit Mahasabha of Andhra Pradesh and a Dalit organisation from come together and formed a federation. It demanded proper implementation of reservation policy.

20. The scheduled caste movement in U.P. came under the influence of Babasaheb Ambedkar, but it proved to be short lived, the reasons for the brief existence of the RSP and its failure to mobilise the SCs in U.P. lie both with in the SC community and the nature of the U.P. society.

21. June 1995 inaugurated a new Bahujan phase of the Dalit Movement in which two contradictory mobilisational trends are visible: coalition building with upper-caste parties and a deepening of the movement at the grass-roots levels.

22. The BSP leaders were particularly keen to implement their programme of Dalit upliftment, when in power, Mayawati had pursued Dalit oriented policies in the field of education, social welfare employment generation and health. This era is also gave rise to a number of protests by Dalits at the grass roots.