CHAPTER – VI

PHULE’S IDEAOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION
AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN SOUTH INDIA

This chapter deals with the impact of Phule’s ideology and social revolution on Kerala, Tamilnadu, Coastal Andhra and erstwhile Hyderabad state.

After death of Jotirao Phule the non-Brahman movement in Maharashtra was continued by Chatrapati Shahu (1874 to 1922), the descendent of Shivaji.

The most important leaders of the Satyashodhak Samaj passed away, one by one. This effected badly to the growth of movement. In 1890, Phule died. Satyashodhak movement lost it’s most influential spokes man and leader. The central body of its activities in Pune became so weak and in effect common line of action and co-operation was hot satisfactory. The famine conditions in Maharashtra also affected the progress of the movement. But the movement was not died out. It was till holding influence in many scattered villages.

The most consequential factor that gave an effective boost to the Satyashodhak Movement was Shahu’s sympathy and support to Satyashodhak Samaj. His support, both financially and ideological, encouragement, his policies and programmes all contributed, directly or indirectly, to faster the movement.

Shahu, when came to power in 1894, by variety of programmes and policies tried to uplift and liberate the backward sections of the society of Maharashtra.

Shahu tried to reduce the educational monopoly of the Brahman on one hand and to uplift the non-Brahman castes on the other. He
observed that Brahmans were dominant in the fields of education, religious matters and in governmental services. To reduce this Brahman dominance he adopted the following policies.

**EDUCATION:**

Right from beginning as a ruler, Shahu adopted the policies and programmes of promoting education among the non-Brahman. He observed that the non-Brahmans had traditionally been denied education and only by spreading education among them, their status could be raised. When Shahu came in power in Kolhapur state, the percentage of literacy among the Brahmans was $79^3$ and among the non-Brahmans it was only. His education promoting schemes oriented to uplift the non-Brahmans included:

a. Providing Scholarships to the non-Brahman students.

b. Encouragement and financial assistance to open hostels in the urban areas for the non-Brahman students.

Shahu started twenty hostels one by one for the *Shudras* and *Ati-Shudras* (non-Brahmans) during 1897 to 1921$^4$.

Shahu’s assistance was both financial as well as in a way of providing free land to the hostels. These 20 hostels in Kolhapur, inspired others to open hostels in other parts of Maharashtra like Pune, Ahmednagar, Nasik and Nagpur. Shahu also provided helping hand to them. Shahu’s view to start these caste based hostels was that the people were not yet prepared to over throw caste barriers, especially the parents of the students. They might not allow their sons to live along with the students of other castes. The another reason was that caste based hostels would get financial and worthing assistance from the leaders and social workers from these respective castes.
Shahu had sympathetic view towards women’s education. He believed in equality of men and women. He also emphasized the need of primary education. On 25th July 1917, he ordered for providing free and compulsory primary education in Kolhapur state, he sanctioned on lakh rupees for this purposes.

His progressive ideas and policies of education, upliftment of backward castes, scholarships for non-Brahman students, had its impact on the non-Brahman Movement.

The earliest seeds of Brahman and non-Brahman conflicts were laid when Shahu began to promote education to non-Brahmans and administrative advancement. The policy of offering employment and education to members of the rulers own community was in itself not radical and little different from that of the external Maratha states of Baroda and Gwalior, which also were a haven for Marathas. But in Kolhapur, the group whose interest was encroached upon were the Brahmans and they had strong social and caste ties in nearby British districts. Therefore, Shahu’s earlier efforts to appoint non-Brahman officials were not only resented by local Brahmans and attacked by the local press. The resentment and attacks were reflected as well in Bombay province newspapers. It seems to have been easy for the Brahman elite, given their overwhelming educational superiority, to believe that appointment of non-Brahmans could be only on the grounds of caste interest and not merit, even a liberal like Ranade, according to the biographer of Shahu was sceptical of the ability of the well qualified. Maratha, Bhaskarao Jadhav, “my question is if he work as well as you and I would do”. But behind the assumptions of states superiority were real concerns about economic position.

With the establishment of separate hostels and schools to the non-Brahman students, strength was increased. For example in 1894
the Brahman students were 2,522, non-Brahman students were 2,088, whereas in 1922 the non-Brahman student strength was increased, to the extent of 21,027 and where as Brahman students were 2,722 only\(^6\).

In 1902 Shahu forwarded his policy to promote non-Brahmans in the state administration by reserving 50% posts in the administration\(^7\).

With his planned and sustained efforts he increased the non-Brahman state officials of Kolhapur, in 1894 the percentage of the non-Brahman higher ranked officials in the Kolhapur state was 14.5 whereas in 1922 this percentage was increased up to 64.9\(^8\).

Shahu also took same decision to change the village power structure on 25\(^{th}\) of June 1918. In light of the above Shahu dissolved Kulkarni Vatans. This was the bold steps taken by Shahu to remove the hereditary rights of Kulkarnis in the Kolhapur state\(^9\).

Shau made efforts to eradicate untouchability and the practice of child marriages. He encouraged widow-remarriages, inter-caste marriages and registered marriages. All the legislative decisions, policies and programme forwarded by Shahu, reflected his reformative orientation. It was ideology of Phule provided inspiration to his reformative steps.

Since 1911, Shahu started promoting Satyashodhak activities. He encouraged to open branches of the Samaj in Kolhapur state. Shahu’s influence over the Kolhapur Satyashodhak Samaj was so prominent that it used to be known as Shahu Satyashodhak Samaj. With the increasing activities of Shahu Satyashodhak Samaj in Kolhapur, the centre of the movement transferred from Pune to Kolhapur.

In 1915 he passed legislation, that untouchables could take the water any where in his state, he also asked the untouchables to open tea shops and hotels\(^10\).
At the initial stage Satyashodhak activities in Kolhapur were centered at ranging religious ceremonies without the help of Brahman priest, 200 marriages and many other ceremonies were reported in 1912 and 266 marriages and total of 1513 ceremonies in 1913. In the next year i.e. 1914 the number of such marriages increased up to 299\textsuperscript{11}. With Shahu's encouragement, in this early stage, Bhaskarao Jadhav, A.B. Latthe, Dongree had traveled widely through the villages of Maharashtra to spread the messages of Satyashodhak Samaj, and to mobilize the peasantry. Emphasis was, of course, more on the point of education for the backward communities.

Shau not only encouraged the Satyashodhak activities but also financially assisted the leaders for spreading the ideology of the movement and to open its new branches at new places. Shahu always provided helping hand to the non-Brahman newspapers. Y.S. Phadke says that "it was because of Shahu's financial aid" Dinmitra (the only non-Brahman daily newspaper. In between 1910 to 1917) could survive\textsuperscript{12}. After 1917 many non-Brahman newspapers were started. Shahu helped almost all of them and even when these newspapers stood one against another, he mediated and resolved their tensions.

After Mahatma Phule, Shahu was the only person who influenced the Satyadhodhak movement any and by variety of ways and in turn shaped it.

First, by his policies, programmes and thoughts it was clear that Shahu had a deep, genuine interest for uplifting the backward castes including the untouchables. He might have been parallels to his ideology in the ideology of Satyadhohak Samaj. Second reason was hidden in Vedokta incident. In November 1900, a Brahman under Shahu's service, refused to pronounce vedic Mantras for him\textsuperscript{13}. He denounced Shahu as a Shudra and added that Shahu being a Shudra
had no right over Vedic Mantra, Shahu’s *Kshatriya* identity and in turn his right over *Vedic Mantras* was challenged. Shahu decided to fight against the Brahman forces to attain rights of *Vedokta* not only for him but also to all Marathas.

Shahu confiscated the *Inam* lands of these Brahman priest, who were employed by him and who refused his rights over *Vedokta*. Many Brahman forces outside the Kolhapur state, criticised Shahu’s for his stand. Lokmanya Tilak personally agreed Shahu’s right over *Vedokta* but his agreement was for the reason that he was a king and not for being *Kshatriya*. The *Kesari* a newspaper in Pune also criticised Shahu and in a way encouraged Brahman orthodoxy.

*Vedokta* episode led Shahu to follow anti-Brahman stance. He started promoting non-Brahman interests to counter Brahman hegemony. On one hand he tried to acquire *Kshatriya* identity, for the non-Brahman and on the other hand he started, by variety of means, to check Brahman dominance and the Brahman monopoly. This was the another link for Shahu’s closer association with *Satyashodhak Samaj*. He might have thought that with the help of *Satyashodhak Samaj*, it was easier to fight against Brahman hegemony and the Brahman orthodoxy.

**SREE NARAYANA GURU (1855-1928)**

Narayana Guru was a contemporary to Jotirao Phule and he too led low-caste protest movement in Kerala. He was born in the year 1855 in a Champalantha village near Thiruvanthapuram in Kerala, the “Avama” community of “Ezhava” (thiyya or Chovan) his father Ashan was a teacher, and mother *Kutti* a kind hearted women. With the help of generous patrons, his family could educate him. He became an expert in *Ayurvedam* and he was a scholar in Sanskrit, Philosophy and Hindu Scriptures. He wanted to be a teacher, but his family could not permit
him to teach *Paraiahs, Pulayas* and *Kuravas* the untouchable castes in Kerala. As an educated Youngman, he tried to protest against this discrimination, but his family could not listen. To register his protest, he left his home in search of Truth. During this period only the seeds of revolution were sworn in his mind.

He lived with the poor and ate the food given by untouchables. He discussed with Christians and Muslims regarding religious issues. He saw that the essential goodness of the human soul was stifled under the weight of unhealthy traditions and blinded by ignorance and superstitions. These are many retrogressive forces from which humanity is to be liberated. To find a solution he withdrew in to a forest for meditation. He says that *Varna* and caste system and its direct off shot, of untouchability as absolutely baseless, artificial and arbitrary. They are against the sprit of *Advaitha* and offend human dignity. So they must be broken down. People should not think, say or ask about caste. On further meditation he arrived at the logical conclusion that there is only one caste-Humanity, one religion- i.e. Humanism and one God i.e. the Universal spirit. He was family convinced with this principle. The same principle became the dynamic centre from which he must act. It is not an easy task to make the poor ignorant people to realize the presence of the Universal spirit within them. They have to brought together to organize, and educated them. The future Slogan for his social reformation as follows.

"Freedom through education
Strength through Organization"
the lost dignity and self-respect of the Avarnas by means of the entry into temples and education.

The Aryan temples were citadels of caste superiority and domination. The caste hierarchy was strictly kept up by prescribing approachable distances from the sanctorum, for each caste. The untouchables were not allowed even to come near the compound wall. But, offerings from them in the form of cash or kind were always accepted. Such shameless exploitation of the people by their caste superiority was to be met with in a telling manner. The answer lay in the founding of new temples which are open to all equally.

Narayana Guru made a calculated move in this direction. He constructed a Shiva Temple at Aruvippuram, which is about 40 kms. north of Trivendrum on the early morning hours of Shivarathri of 1888. It was an open challenge to the Brahman priesthood. In a caste-ruled society, an Avara Hindu, untouchable had performed the installation of deity\textsuperscript{16} defying all codes and norms. The Brahman priesthood could not stomach it. Their authority has so far been unchallenged. So a great Brahman scholar came to question the right of, an Ezhava who is Avara, to install a deity\textsuperscript{16}. The answer given by Guru has became famous that “This is not a Brahman Shiva, this is an “Ezhava shiva” The revolutionary spirit that prompted this reply need no explanation.

The Guru’s philosophy of the equality of human beings is captured in this motto displayed at the entrance to Aruvippuram temple.

This is model abode, where all men shall live
Without caste distinctions and religious rivalries
The temple at Aruvippuram grew in stature. More and more people came to worship. Guru talked to them patiently. He persuaded the people to form a society for the management of the temple, as a first
step towards unification of the people. A Gurukulam and a Sanskrit School also were started at Aruvippuram to give religious training to young men of the lower castes of society.

Sree Narayana Guru continued to construct and consecrate as many as 60 temples, throughout Kerala and in the neighbouring states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Sri Lanka also, they promptly display his messages.

"One caste, One religion and One God for man"
"Ask not, say not, think not Caste"
"Whatever may be the religion. Let man improve"

He is one of those rare persons who said that a temple building can be used for running a school. On the Social front, enthusiastic young Ezhavas like Dr. Palpu were trying for the upliftment and recognition of their community. The temple association of Aruvippuram was converted into Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP in 1903). The humble temple association became a great social force. The membership is opened to all the low caste, people. Its membership reached to 50 thousands. The mission main objectives are educating the low caste people by establishing Schools, Colleges and other educational institutions, literary organizations encouraged the literature on eradication of caste. He collected the donations from the rich and established hostels, libraries for low caste students.

The dialogue between Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru has become famous. Gandhiji complained that the lower caste Hindus are converting themselves to Christianity in order to get social privileges, and not no account of belief. Guru replied, 'In that case, the best way to stop them would be, to give them privileges' Gandhiji had no answer.
By this time, Swami's words have become law for his people. Through *Vivekodayam* a periodical by SNDPY, he struck at a number of Social Customs and ceremonies where money was wasted in feasting and festivities. He restricted the number of people to be present on the even of wedding to be ten. At the time of death, he advised fasting and mourning for ten days for the kith and kin of the deceased and to pray for the soul of the dead, rather than chanting unintelligence words by an ignorant priest. Feasting on account of death was strictly forbidden. He told the people to use the money to educate a poor man rather than wasting money on feast. Sree Narayana Guru advised to the temple management committee that he do not celebrate festivals spending money. Again and again Guru stressed the need for economy and economic independence.

Guru had advocated total abstinence from liquor even before Gandhiji included it in his programmes. He gave the message that 'Liquor is poison, do not make it, do not vend it, do not drink it'. The Ezhavas willingly gave up their traditional profession of toddy tapping and resorted to weaving along, which was made a respectable profession.

Guru said no religion is superior or inferior to another. All religions in essence, help man to evolve in to a perfect human being and lead him to salvation. All religions are equally good, and arguments about religious are meaningless. No one can defeat another. 'Such discussions and arguments will only increase rivalry and destroy the unity of the people. Understanding this fact clearly he formulated his message to humanity at large.

He was the first man in India to organise an All Religions Meet in February 1924 at Alwaye, the birth place of Shankaracharya. On the
entrance to the meeting hall was written “What ever maybe the religion, let man improve”.

“We meet here not to argue and win, but to know and to be known’ According to him, true religion should include the peace of Budha, the compassion of Christ and the brother hood of Mohammad

The theme of the Satyashodhak Samaj of Jotirao Phule and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam founded almost all on similar ideology by spreading education among Shudras and Ati - Shudras and condemned the middle man between God and Man such as priesthood. Both were thought of that education is only the key for social change.

PERIYAR E.V. RAMASWAMY NAICKAR
THE MAN, THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE REVOLUTIONARY

Periyar was born in Erode in Tamilnadu on 17-09-1879 in a Naickar family. There was perfect harmony between his thoughts, words and deeds.

It is necessary to study the conditions in Tamilnadu at the eve of birth of Periyar. Briefly, a miniscule minority of Brahmans had distorted religion, law and order, social and economic life to make themselves the masters of the land. Religion ruled the life of the people from birth to death and rationalism was brutally suppressed.

Varnashrama Dharma, the enemy of humanism was enthroned and caste consciousness divided society into countless groups, which led to the fighting for power and position. Inhuman laws of Manu were made the laws of the land and inhumanity was let loose on the people.

The Shudras were forbidden to seek education. Due to this they were made physical slaves of society. Rituals governed the life from birth to death and Brahmans lived on the fat of the land. Brahmans,
kshatriyas, and Vaisyas entered into unholy alliance and sucked the blood of the Shudras.²¹

From his very childhood he showed implacable opposition to Brahmins and Hindu Religion. As he advanced in age he equipped himself with deadly armour against the enemies of Dravidians and fought them tooth and nail and drove them underground. There they remained till he breathed his last.

At the tender age of five and six how Periyar broke every rule of the Brahman game. He ate and drank in the houses of low caste friends, Muslims and Christians. He took to it like duck to water Dravidian consciousness was brimful and overflowing unconsciously.

He was attracted and influenced by the non-Brahman movement and Justice Party. But in 1917 Periyar joined congress and was carrying bales of Kadhar on his head to sell it in cities and villages.

In 1924 Periyar participated in the Vaikam movement (Temple Entry Movement) in Kerala which started by Sree Narayana Guru Ramaswamy Naickar adopted the ideology of Narayana Guru. In 1924 the Cheranmadevi Scandal where high caste and low caste students ate in separate rooms brought Varnashrama ideologies to a crisis. Periyar and his colleagues put their foot down and stopped the inhuman practice²².

He brought of motion on reservation for consideration in Congress Annual Meetings in 1919, but the high castes managed to sideline it. Again in 1925 at Kanchipuram conference he brought the same reservation motion but it was not taken up. Then and there Periyar vowed 'my task in future is the demolition of congress. He left the congress party in 1925. In 1925 Periyar started Kudiarasu²³ paper to
educate the non-Brahmans to civic consciousness. He waged a bitter battle with Brahman press and held them at bay.

In 1927 he became Editor of "Dravidan" a Tamil daily newspaper and started popularizing Buddhist ideology and bitterly criticizing Hindu and Congress practices. He met Gandhi at Bangalore in July 1927 and raised many doubts. Gandhi failed to convince Periyar. From this time Periyar was like a man on fire. He had to save the Shudras from the Brahmans.

He condemned the Brahmanical literature like Vedas, Puranas, Ramayana and Mahabharathas also condemned the religious rituals and the priesthood. In 1929 Periyar started the self-respect movement. The main objectives of the movement were:

- Abolition of priesthood
- Condemned the caste system
- Compulsory primary education to the Shudras
- Widow remarriages
- Property right to women
- Reservation for untouchables in employment
- Condemned the Devadasi System

In 1929 Periyar went to Malaysia with Nagamai (wife). He covered the whole of Malaysia and delivered lectures with stress on 'Self-Respect'. In 1932 he went to Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Germany, France, England, Spain and Portugal met atheists and labour leaders broadened his outlook and convictions and returned to India to educate the Shudras for a head on collision with Brahmanism and capitalism. Together with Singaravelar the first communist of South India Periyar drafted "the Erode Plan" a truly socialist plan to wipe out Brahmanism and capitalism from the shores of India.
In 1933, Periyar started ‘Puratchi’ to educate the masses on the ideology and practices of revolutions. Whenever an idea took hold of him Periyar would jump into his rickety old car and go on a whirlwind tour, met the people and talk to them in their language. He would stop by the wayside for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

In 1935, Justice Party accepted Periyar “Erode Plan” which was Congress rejected it. Periyar started supporting justice party. In 1938, Periyar started movement against imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu. He raised the slogan ‘Tamil Nadu for Tamils’. He was jailed. Periyar was elected as President of Justice Party While still in Jail. On coming out he gradually changed Justice Party into “Dravidar Kazhagam” (D.K) and made it a mass-based movement on course for confrontation with Government.

In 1938 the Tamil Nadu Women’s Convention conferred on him the title of ‘Periyar’ even though he had been called Periyar from 1928. Periyar was a Champion of the rights and privileges of women. While Gandhi and Congress were suck in the mud and mire of “Manu Dharma” and making pretensions of support to woman, Periyar based on rational scientific ideas took a quantum leap and called for radical views on childbirth, contraception, celibacy, widowhood, health and mental vigour, Periyar was talking of test tube babies in 1943 long before scientific community took up the cause.

In January 1940 Periyar met Jinnah in Bombay. He took Dr.Ambekar with him. Periyar urged Jinnah to demand two separate constituent Assemblies. Muslims stood united and demanded Pakistan, in March 1940. The Shudras were divided and lived as slaved of a handful of Brahmans.
In 1945 Periyar started "the Black Shirts" Movement. He devised a black flag with a red circle. Black represented the social stigma and oppression of _Shudras_ and red, revolution to end oppression. He called on the Black Shirts to spread the ideology of 'Self-Respect' and defend the freedom of _Shudras_.

In 1947 when declaration of independence of India was made public Periyar called it a 'fraud' and called on the people to observe 15th of August the Independence Day as a day of mourning. He raised the say 'Dravidanadu for the Dravidians'.

In 1953 Periyar broke the idol of _Vinayaka_ and called for an end of idol worship. In same year i.e. 1953 Periyar went to Maharashtra and spoke in support of Republican Parties ideals. In 1956 Periyar burnt the picture of Rama and called on _Shudras_ to abandon ignorant beliefs in Gods. In 1965 Periyar burn Ramayana and called on the people to abandon Hindu myths and mythologies that helped to denigrate the greatness of _Shudras_.

He was a social revolutionary condemned the _Chaturvarna_ system and the Manu _Dhrama Shastra_ which created inequality and social degradation. He was influenced by the socialist ideology and he translated Karle Marx's communist manifesto in Tamil. He also condemned _Karma_ and _Dharma_ and Rebirth theory. He described Brahmans like capitalists without capital. God, Temple and Karma theory created by the Brahman for exploiting the non-Brahmans.

He said. "I have no attachment to God, Religion, Caste, Nationality and Language. My only attachment is to man, and humanity".

On 24-12-1973 Periyar breathed his last and no 25-12-1973 the body of Periyar was buried in Periyar Thidal, Madras.
Ramaswamy Naickar was the champion of the non-Brahman movement in Tamil Nadu. He was true follower of Narayana Guru and Dr.B.R. Ambedkar. He met both of them and supported their low caste protest movement.

**Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR - 1891 - 1956 AD:**

Mahatma Jotirao Phule lived from 1827 to 1890. Ambedkar was born in 1891. While there is no temporal overlap between their lives, their continuity, which is perhaps symbolic of the continuity in their life-missions, flows from identity in belief, attitudes and even temperament. They thus came to establish and lead a school of thought. This school indeed played a very significant role in the history of social reforms in Maharashtra. Dr. Ambedkar used proudly to proclaim that Phule was one of his three gurus namely Gouthama Budha, Kabeer and Jotirao Phule. He in other words took pride in carrying forward the legacy of Jotirao. The teacher and the disciple happened to be men of action who harnessed their total energies to promoting the cause they had made their own.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar dedicated his book *Who were the Shudras?* Inscribed to the Memory of Mahatma Jotirao Phule (1827 - 1890). The Greatest *Shudra* of Modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule. Jotirao Phule was more over a staunch radical thinker. One could say that he represented for his times the red colour in the rainbow of social reforms. As Dr. Ambedkar opted for walking on the Phule-path there emerged in the history of Maharashtra a remarkably distinct tradition. This tradition is quite relevant at present. And in fact it will never become irrelevant. The lives of Phule and Ambedkar are indeed notable beacons for all of us.
The life missions pursued by them are equally inspiring. The relevance of the Phule-Ambedkar school can be brought out by highlighting certain aspects of their teachings such as the philosophy of life; an outlook on nation-building process; the viewpoint regarding Dharma, the approach towards social transformation which they shared and which continue to be valid forever.

He undertook several activities like launching of newspapers, setting up of institutions, leading agitation for securing justice to Dalits, and so on.

B.R. Ambedkar born at Mhow (Madhya Pradesh) as the 14th child of Ramji Sakpal and Bheemabai on 14th April 1891. Ambedkar belonged to the untouchable Mahar Community of Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra. When Bhimrao was five, he was sent to a Marathi school in Dapoli. When his father came to Satara, Bhimrao entered the Government High School. Satara, in 1900, in the first standard. His name in the school was Bhiva Ramji Amavadekar. The original surname of his family was Sankpal. But his ancestors preferred to call themselves after ancestral village Ambavade which is in Khed taluka in Ratnagiri district. One teacher named Ambedkar in the Satara High School loved Bhimrao very much and often fed him. He was obliging and kind. As a mark of love and respect to this teacher, Bhimrao began to call himself Ambedkar and, throughout his life, remained grateful to this teacher who treated him so kindly during his school days. When Ambedkar went to the Round Table Conference33, this teacher had sent him a congratulatory letter.

Born as an Untouchable, Dr. Ambedkar had to face social ostracism and isolation and in early life he realized that a large section of his compatriots were denied their legitimate rights by the oppressive social customs. Equipped with an almost encyclopedic knowledge of
Hindu society in particular and human society in general, he began the task of reconstructing the Hindu society simultaneously by offering devastating criticism and suggesting possible ways for its reorganization. A pragmatist to the core, Ambedkar believed that the establishment of a democratic society in India would be possible only when the Untouchables and other depressed castes of society would be given the opportunity to enjoy basic human rights.

After a great humiliation and ill-treatment at native state of Baroda as Military Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda, he left and settled in Bombay as a Professor as Sydenham College. He started Mooknayak (leader of the Dumb) paper in 1929. It was the mouth piece of the propagating the grievances of the depressed caste. He attended first Depressed Classes conference in Nagpur in 1920 along with Shahu Maharaj, he attacked not only nationalist spokesmen, but also Vitthal Ramji Shinde, the most prominent non-Dalit social reformer claiming to lead the “uplift of untouchables”.

Ambedkar’s emergence into politics was cautious. He gradually gathered a team around him, of educated and semi/educated Mahar boys, as well as a few upper-caste sympathizers, forming the Bahishkrut Hitakrni Sabha in 1924. Ambedkar believed that education was only the key for social change in the country. He decided to spread the western education among the depressed castes. In this regard he started Bahishkrut Hitakrni Sabha. The main aim of the Sabha was establishing hostels, schools, libraries for the Untouchable castes.

Two events in Ambedkar’s life changed his early attitude and hope of winning equality for the Untouchables within Hinduism. The first was the conference of the depressed castes at Mahad (Maharashtra) in 1927. During the conference the members decided to put to test the resolution of the Bombay Assembly declaring all public place
open to untouchables by proceeding to the town pond Chowder Tank to drunk water. Ambedkar had not urged this, but it was he who led the procession of to the tank on the following day, stepped and first drank water. A rumour spread through Mahad that the untouchables were going on to the viseshwara Temple, and groups of caste Hindu rowdies attacked the conference delegates. Ambedkar urged restraint on the part of the delegates and convinced the Hindus that a temple entry was not planned. Five of the attackers were sentence to four months imprisonment and the chowder tank was ceremoniously purified by Mahad residents.

Once again Ambedkar, was called to Mahad on 25th and 26th December 1927 to discuss and decide. “The question whether we belong to the Hindu religion or not is to be decided by us once for all”. As the date neared, some residents of Mahad filed a suit against Ambedkar and three others and secured an injection temporarily prohibiting their use of the Tank. Never the less the conference met, and Ambedkar’s address this time condemned the inequality of Hinduism. At night, the “Manusmruti”, the Ancient Law book which sanctified deferential treatment towards Low castes, was ceremoniously burnt, rather than follows up this dramatic gesture with another Satyagraha to the Tank. Ambedkar heeded the court injunction and asked the conference to postpone its action. The conference ended with Ambedkar’s address, his first, to a special group of 3000 untouchables women, in which he asked them to dress well, educate their children and to combat drunkenness by not feeding their husbands if they had been drinking. Ambedkar won the case for the use of Chowder Tank water after a three year battle in the lower court. This was the first victory of Ambedkar of Hindus, ideology although the mahars were ready for militancy, but Ambedkar much preferred a fight
in the courts to a battle in the street. Mass action produced unity and courage, but unless gains were legalized and protected, the masses could do little. This belief can be seen in Ambedkar's role in temple entry movement that followed the Mahad efforts. In 1927 Amaravati, in 1929 Pune and in 1930 - 35 Nasik there were ever-larger temple entry movements. The Nasik Satyagraha involved thousands of Untouchables in a five-year fruitless attempt to enter the Kalarim Temple in that pilgrimage town. Although Ambedkar was seen as the inspiration of these temple entry attempt and his name was shouted by the marchers as they moved towards the closed temple doors. Ambedkar's role was to give courage and sense of protection. He saw the Satyagrahas however, as necessary efforts to unify the untouchables and make them conscious of their lack of rights. He had no faith in the Gandhian idea of a 'Change of heart' among caste Hindus, and indeed neither Gandhi nor the congress approved of these non-violent efforts to adapt the Gandhian methods to their needs. Ambedkar called off the Nasik Satyagraha in 1935, choosing a railway town near Nasik for his announcement, stating at the same time that he would leave Hinduism since it offered no sign of yielding equality either to plea or mass protest.

The second event was Ambedkar's open class with Gandhi during the second round table conference (1931) on the issue of reservations or separate electorates for the untouchables. Gandhiji had claims to the leadership of the untouchables, which Ambedkar opposed. No unanimous agreement was possible; no agreed formula could be evolved as regards the representation. And the Second Round Table Conference ended without any decision. Gandhiji on return to India had to face a severe crisis. Mass arrests were made and repression followed. Gandhiji was also arrested. In August 1932, Ramsay
MacDonald published his "Communal Award" giving separate electorate to the untouchables. As it would have disrupted Hindu society, Gandhiji opposed it, and launched a fast unto death to get it changed. Though Ambedkar was adamant on separate electorates for untouchables, he accepted joint electorate with reservation of seats at the intervention of Sapru, Jayakar, Malaviya and others. On 24\textsuperscript{th} September 1932, Ambedkar signed with Gandhiji the famous Poona pact, giving up separate electronic granted to the depressed castes by the Communal Award and accepting instead representation through joint electorates. During 1932-34, Ambedkar was a member of the Joint Parliamentary committee on the Constitutional Reforms. He was also a member of the Third Round Table Conference held in London in 1932-33\textsuperscript{40}.

"The confrontation over Gandhi's fast and the Pune Pact (1932) disillusioned Ambedkar once and for all about Hindu reformisms. It inaugurated his radical period which led to an announcement in 1935 that he was "Born as Hindu but would not die as Hindu". The Independent Labour Party (ILP), (a worker - peasant party) with a red flag was founded in 1936\textsuperscript{41}. Meanwhile the I.L.P. went on to become the biggest opposition party in the Bombay legislative council.

In 1938, the Congress party introduced a bill making a change in the name of untouchables i.e., they would be called Harijans. In this regard Ambedkar criticised the bill, as in his opinion the change of name would make no real change in their conditions.

In July 1942, Ambedkar was appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India as a Labour Member. He held this post till July 1946, despite widespread nationalist criticism. It was during this period that the Indian National congress had launched its Quit-India movement.
In September 1946, Ambedkar went to England to plead for constitutional safeguards for the untouchables after withdrawal of the British from India, which he visualised in the near future. He felt such safeguards could alone rectify the wrong done to the untouchables by the Cabinet Mission.

Ambedkar was always alert through the political turmoil. The elections to the Constituent Assembly were on the agenda, but in that stress and strain, he published his work on Who Were the Shudras? It was an enquiry into how the Shudras came to be the fourth Varna in Indo-Aryan Society.

In November 1946, Ambedkar was elected to the Constituent assembly from Bengal. In his first speech in the Constituent Assembly, he called for United India. In August 1947, he was appointed by the Constituent Assembly on the drafting committee, which elected him as its chairman. As chairman of the drafting committee he presented to the Constituent Assembly the draft Constitution of India, and piloted it at various stages by answering the criticisms from different quarters. Tributes were paid to his legal acumen, deep study of the constitutional problems and his resourcefulness, and he was called the “Architect of Indian constitution”.

On 15th August 1947, Ambedkar was chosen a Minister for Law in independent India’s first cabinet.

In September 1951, Ambedkar tendered his resignation from the Nehru cabinet, accusing the government of apathy towards the scheduled castes, expressing his differences with the cabinet on the Kashmir issue and India’s foreign policy and blaming Nehru’s policy towards the Hindu Code Bill. In March 1952, he was elected to the Council of States.
Columbia University at its special convocation on 5 June 1952 conferred the degree of LL.D (Honoris Causa) on Ambedkar. The citation said, 'The degree is being conferred in recognition of the work done by him in connection with the drafting of Indian’s Constitution. “Columbia University hailed Ambedkar as “one of India’s leading citizens, a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights”44.

Ambedkar’s leanings towards Buddhism became vocal after his participation in different conferences. In 1949, he addressed the World Buddhist Conference in Kathmandu (Nepal) on ‘Marxism versus Buddhism’. In December 1950, he attended the World Buddhist Conference. In July 1951, he formed the Bharatiya Baudhā Janasangh, and in September 1951, compiled a Buddhist prayer book Basuddha Upasana patha. In 1954, he was nominated a delegate to the World Buddhist Conference, which held at Rangoon. In May 1955, he founded the Bharatiya Baudhā Mahasabha. On 14 October 1956, he embraced Buddhism which is a historic ceremony in Nagpur. In November 1956, he went as a delegate to the World Buddhist Conference45, Kathmandu (Nepal), where he was hailed as Nav Buddha.

Ambedkar died on 6th December 1956. His death was mourned by lakhs as their personal loss.

Ambedkar was champion of Dalits of India and considered founder of the Dalit movements in India. Many Dalit Movements started on the path of Ambedkar in various parts of the country.

Both Phule as well as Ambedkar refused to be satisfied with the achievement of ordinary, mundane goals in their lives. The Ideal of serving the downtrodden strata of society was always beckoning to them to devote their energies for achieving that mission. Ambedkar
rightly stated in his speech delivered at Pune in 1942 on the occasion of the birth-anniversary of M.G. Ranade that a great man should have not only intelligence and sincerity but also the motivation to serve the downtrodden. In this respect, Phule was, no doubt, a great man and his disciple who followed his footsteps in the spirit of devotion also acquired the status of a great man. Both Phule as well as Ambedkar had a deep sense of satisfaction in their lives, because they never wavered or deviated from their path. Thus Phule, in his last illness, spontaneously uttered the following words in the conversation with Baba Padamanji. “I am sure that kind Almighty will embrace me affectionately after my death, as I have never wavered from my path”.

Throughout his life, Ambedkar underscored the significance of the pursuit of social democracy, because he felt that only such a pursuit would make political democracy meaningful. It was in the speech in the Constituent Assembly on 25 November, 1949 that Dr. Ambedkar ventilated his concern for social democracy. The audience heard then the following ringing words:

On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one-man and one vote, and one vote, one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one-man one value. How long shall we continue to
deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril”.

Phule and Ambedkar stressed the significance of uplifting low caste sections of Hindu society, because the tenets of liberalism had made a deep impact on them. It was this impact, which led them to pursue whole heatedly the mission to serve depressed castes. They felt that the caste system had brutally suppressed the life-springs of Dalits. Their diagnosis of the disease was right and their prescription of the remedy of liberalism was also right.

DALIT MOVEMENT IN COASTAL ANDHRA: (MADRAS PRESIDENCY)

Coastal Andhra shows another variation of the choices between autonomy and integration, as an independent Dalit movement began to emerge in the 1920s in a situation where agricultural commercialization laid the basis for a widespread rural movement.

Seven districts of coastal Andhra: Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari, Ongole, Guntur and Nellore and four districts of Rayalaseema Kurnool, chittor, Anantapur and Cuddapah were included in Madras Presidency during colonial rule. These were disparate regions, the backwardness of dry and sometimes drought-stricken Rayalaseema contrasting with the economic energy that made the coastal region one of the most dynamic centers of development in the Presidency. It was primarily in the latter that a Dalit movement emerged.

In these economic circumstances a considerable amount of social change, cultural ferment and political turmoil occurred. Christian missionaries, concentrating in the coastal districts, converted a good many untouchables mainly Madigas and provided educational
opportunities for many more. Hindu social reformers followed. Coastal Andhra was the site of one of the most radical elite-based reform movements outside Bengal. Veerasalingam Pantalu was the nineteenth century pioneer, beginning with a bold widow remarriage movement and taking up issues such as dowry, prostitution, corruption of officials, and removal of untouchability. He established the Brahma Samaj in Andhra and it was through this that the most important caste Hindu sponsorship of Dalit social advance took place. Early issues included not only education but acquisition of land; for instance, Government of Madras bill on education 1895, called the “Manga Carta of Panchama education”, provided for schools, hostels and giving Poromboke (‘waste’ lands) for institutional sites. By the early twentieth century the Brahma Samaj and other reformers were establishing ashrams for training untouchable cadre-including a Sevashram at Gudivada Krishna district, started in 1912 by Sir Guduru Ramachandra Rao which called the most well-known ex-untouchable activists of the time to work in all Telugu-speaking districts. Among those many were to be active later during the 1920s, including Sundru Venkaiah, Kusuma Venkataramiah, Kusuma Dharmanna and others.”48

The term “Adi-Andhra” arose in the post 1917 period when Dalits all over the south, influenced by the “non-Aryan” themes of the Dravidian movement, were identifying themselves as Ati-Dravidians, Adi-Andhras and Adi-Karnatakas, original sons of the soil. For coastal Andhra, the decisive year was 1917. At this time the reformer viz. Guduru Ramachandra Rao called a conference in Vijayawada which was labeled a “First Provincial Panachama Mahajana Sabha”, with his protege Sundru Venkaiah as Chairman of the reception committee. But on the evening of the first day, its president, a Dalit from Hyderabad named Bhagyareddy Varma, argued that the term “Panchama” was no
where found in the Puranas or other Hindu scriptures and that the so-called *Panchamas* were the original sons of the soil and they were the rulers of the country. The delegates then rejected this term and constituted themselves as the "First Adi-Andhra Mahajan Sabha". Resolutions were relatively non-controversial, appealing to the government to nominate *Adi*-Andhras to the local bodies and the Legislative Council, and to establish separate schools and wells in *Mala* and *Madigas* areas. But the delegates could not get accommodation in the town due to the caste barriers, during three days of the conference. The well-known Kanaka Durga temple was closed for fear of entry of *Adi*-Andhras.

After this conference practically every year it was held somewhere: The second conference was held at Gudivada in 1921 with Bhagyareddy Varma and Sundru Venkaiah again presided the conference; The third one held at Eluru in 1922, Bhagyareddy Varma and Devendrudu were Presidents of the conference; The fourth one was held at Guntur in 1924 Kusuma Venkatramaiah and Mutakki Venkateswarlu were Presided the session; The fifth was held at Anantapur in 1925 this session was presided by Bhagyareddy Varma. This time a resolution asked for the rights of untouchables to use water from common wells; The sixth session was held at Venkatagiri in Nellore district in 1926. This session was held under the Chairmanship of Devendrudu and Kamatam Shanmugan. The seventh session was held at Narsapuram, West Godavari. This session was held under the Chairmanship of Bhagyareddy and Gottimukkala Venkanna. The eighth session held at Vijayawad in 1929. This session was held under the Chairmanship of Prattipati Audinarayana and Vemulu Kurmayya and the Ninth session was held once again at Anantapur in early 1930 presided over by Devendrudu. Expect Anantapur session, all these conferences
were held in the coastal Andhra region. After a brief hiatus around 1930, Adi-Andhra conferences were again held throughout the coastal region for a number of years in the 1930s.

The decade of the 1920s remains one in which the lack of historical and written documentation and efforts to uncover the history of the Dalit movement in coastal Andhra have left large vacuums in knowledge. But the very spread of the conferences throughout the districts indicates a broad rural base to the movement. Due to the above conferences the people belongs to Adi-Andhras got awareness. So by 1931 the Census Report indicated that 838,000 people listed themselves as “Ma/a”, 665,000 as “Adi-Andhras” and 612,000 as “Madigas” in Madras Presidency. The consciousness of Adi-Andhra and the broad ideology of autonomy implied in it were becoming a significant social force in the Coastal Andhra region.

Following two conferences in 1930, “Adi-Andhra” organizing had come to a standstill for five years. The next initiative was that of the Gandhian: Congress “Harijan” organizing began with the formation of the Andhra branch of the Harijan Seva Sangh at Vijayawada in November 1932. Two caste Hindu reformers, K.Nagaswara Rao of Krishna district and M. Bapineedu, were its president and general secretary respectively. Two Dalits, Vemula Kurmaya (Krishna district) and Narachetty Devendrudu (West Godavari) were joint secretaries. Both had been active during the 1920s;

Then Ambedkar’s announcement of conversion from Hinduism in 1935 sparked another round of activity. Younger Dalits became energized, such as Eali Vedappalli (1911-71) of East Godavari, who organized a round of Adi-Andhra conferences in that district, and Geddada Brahmaiah (1912-50) who became secretary of an Adi-Andhra Sangham in 1935, organized a number of district conferences between
1938-1940 and edited *Adi-Andhra patrika*. Another publication, *Jayabheri*, was started by the well-known writer Kusumu Dharmanna (1898-1948) of Rajamundry. This became a sort of mouthpiece for the Ambedkarite group. Dharmanna also presided over many *Adi-Andhra* conferences in his district, and had made use of the Dalit overseas connections, travelling to Rangoon to collect money for his weekly. He later became inclined towards Islam and established connections with B.S.Venkatrao in Hyderabad. He was known as a powerful poet, writer and speaker, with one of his poem, "*Nalladorathanamu*" ("brown bureaucracy") becoming famous as a Dalit repay to a popular song, 'We don't want be ruled by white people'. Dharmanna asserted, 'We don't want to a country ruled by black lords'.

State level "*Adi-Andhra*" organising was resumed. In 1935 the tenth conference was organised at Rajamundry, inaugurated by M.C. Rajah and with one of the older generation leaders, Kusuma Venkatramaiah (who had earlier been associated with the Ramachandra Rao *Sevashram*) presided. This was evidently anti-Ambedkarite in tone and very little of any consequence came from it. The eleventh conference was held in 1936 and then the twelfth and final conference at Tallaveru in East Godavari in 1938 saw a confrontation between the young radicals and the more established organizers. The organizers, in a period of reformist stress on temple-entry, wanted a resolution for this, but the youth, led by Pamu Ramamurthy of East Godavari district, opposed it as a concession to Hinduism. Bhagyareddy, the invitee president of the conference, supported this opposition in one of his last public acts. The final resolutions included demand for reserved seats for untouchables from the panchayat level to the legislative councils; enforcing sanctions against those opposing the presence of untouchable children in schools; job reservations; formation of labour cooperatives.
and credit banks, and the demand for forest west-lands for Dalits. No mention was made of the agricultural wage issues coming up at the time.

But this was the last of the "Adi-Andhra" conferences. The largest section of Dalit leadership was getting absorbed into the Congress with its 'Harijan' terminology and its reiteration of a Hindu identity. The few who opposed this strongly such as Kusumu Dharmanna were discredited by their pro-Muslim stance. In many ways this reformist "Hinduisations" can be traced to the writings of Boyi Bhimanna, the young Dalit writer of East Godavai district who was described by some of the Congress Dalits as "our guiding spirit".

Bhimanna's first published writings, around 1936, described the inhuman conditions of village life, "highlighting the need for establishing a socialistic pattern of society". Then Paaleru ("A Farm Boy") published in 1940, showed Dalit village struggles and suffering at the hands of a landlord and unenlightened father; the way out is depicted as town-based education and service in the bureaucracy. Kooli Raju, written in 1941 and published in 1947, described the agricultural labourer movement in the villages, but had its resolution when a Dalit woman is elected as government head. Finally, Ragga Vasishtam (1940), described the marriage of Vasishta and Arundhati, emphasizing a 'strong casteless Hindu nation' and arguing that 'Hatijans are Aryans'. These writings depict the rural base of caste-class conflicts, but they show Hindu incorporationism and a middle-class reformist solution. This also seems to have been accompanied by an anti-Muslim orientation.

On the other hand, the militancy of lower-class Dalits was increasingly being expressed in communist agricultural labour organizing, in active struggles so patently lacking in the resolutions of the Adi-Andhra conferences. Many young Dalits joined the movement
from the early 1940s, including Guntur Bapaiah, Parasd Rao, M. Sriramalu (all of Krishna district), Koner Rangarao, R.A. Kottaya, Kandhi Kaithaya Nagabhushama, K. Mohan Rao (East Godavari) and M. Svarnavamanaya. Guntur Bapaiah became general secretary of the Agricultural Labourer Union (ALU) and K. Suryaprakash Rao became its president from 1941 to 1943. Even then the strong anti-Ambedkar stance of the communists aroused tensions. Suryaprakash Rao, for example, reports that his final alienation from the party came in 1944 when a resolution of the ALU described the Muslim League as a ‘political party’ but called the Scheduled Caste Federation a ‘communal organization’. He opposed this and circulated a dissenting note emphasizing the economic and social degradation of Dalits and the need for unity of the toiling masses, arguing finally that social upliftment was even more important than economic uplifement. He finally left the organization.

Although the communists initiated some anti-untouchability measures they provided no ideological alternative to the Congress in terms of absorbing Dalits into a Hinduistic reformism. Their universal acceptance of the term “Harijan”, in the face of the strong opposition to it not only from Ambedkar but also from organised Dalits everywhere, shows this. At an organizational level there was an unwillingness to accept any kind of Dalit autonomy; and at the level of culture and identity there was an inability to provide an alternative to the Brahmanic Hindu interpretation of Indian history.

Both Congress and communist opposition helped to create an anti-Ambedkar atmosphere in the coastal Andhra districts. Ambedkar’s preoccupation with Maharashtra organising before 1942 and then his involvement in Delhi also meant that little effort was made, in spite of the promise of radicalism shown in Andhra. After a visit to the Krishna
district on 30th September 1944, a branch of the Scheduled Caste Federation was formed under one Buldas Swamy, but it did not gain any strength. A local organizer, Ekambaram of Gudivada in Krishna district, recalls that Ambedkar's meetings put a major emphasis on self-respect, but that activities of the Federation were limited to fighting atrocities and celebrating Ambedkar Jayanti. In that period of turmoil, with an aroused mass of Dalits, this could not complete with the hard organising and the real economic issues being taken up by the communists or the patronage and co-operation offered by the congress. The independent Dalit movement of coastal Andhra faded away after the later 1940s.

In spite of being the centre of communist rural revolt and a fairly significant Dalit movement, the turbulent 1940s ended in Andhra with the establishment of hegemony by the 'bourgeois-Brahman' Congress. How do we assess this period?

The failure of the Dalit movement to go forward was inherent in the transition from the Independent Labour Party to the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF). During the 1930s Ambedkar had been in the leading edge of an all-India left wave, taking the initiative not only in regard to the problems of untouchables but in creating a worker-peasant based political alternative to the congress, carrying a red flag and organising militant struggles on social and economic issues. The failure of this effort, to a large degree due to the lack of response by broader left forces, led to a step backward represented by the SCF. This meant focusing on winning concessions for Dalits while independence was taken for granted. Going to the 'national' level and thereby relying on a series of local 'lieutenants' rather than trying to build an ideologically unified organization, substituting the organising of Scheduled Castes as such for efforts to forms a broad alliance of Dalits.
and non-Brahmans, workers and peasants; and substituting a programme of the resettlement of Dalits away from villages dominated by caste Hindus (the ‘separate village settlements’ demand) for a strategy of changing the rural socio-economic structure.

While Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism was accompanied by his own prolific reading and writing on ancient Indian history, this also used a rationalistic and abstract interpretation that contrasted with the way Phule had earlier used such important peasant symbols and myths as Bail Raja in his interpretation of history. Buddhism, in other words held an appeal for educated Dalit radicals, but little resonance among the Dalits masses. And this “non-government” of communists and Dalits with the vernacular tradition was happening at a time when Hindu fundamentalists, represented in Andhra Primarily by the Arya Samaj, were reinterpreting tradition from a Brahman, absorptive point of view, using Dalit writers and Dalit “Pandits” to instill a sense of participation in a Hindu identity through such figures as Vasishtha and Arundatiya.

DALIT MOVEMENT IN ERSTWHILE HYDERABAD STATE:

Another variation of the ‘autonomy-integration’ theme can be found in the specialized circumstances of Hyderabad state, where an active but fictionalised Dalit leadership with almost no rural roots emerged during the 1920s.

The Birth had set up Hyderabad as the largest state in the Indian subcontinent, but left it with a backward economy. The richer agricultural regions which the Nizam had earlier controlled-Berar (Vidarbha) and coastal Andhra were annexed to British territories. There was little development either of commercial agriculture or industry until after the First World War; education was limited,
especially for Hindus; land relations were backward and it may not be inaccurate to call the state the most 'feudal' in the Indian subcontinent.

Hyderabad state consisted of eight districts of Telengana (Adilabad, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal, Mahbubnagar, Medak and Nizamabad), five of Marathwada i.e. Bhir, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded and Osmanabad and three of the Karnataka (Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur); of these the Telengana region made up 47 per cent of the population and represented the largest linguistic unit.

In this narrow and communalized framework, a small but vigorous Dalit movement developed after 1910, based among Hyderabad Malas. This particular movement has the advantage of having its organisational history thoroughly documented by a later activist, P.R. Venkatswamy. Two men stood at the centre of it in the early period, Bhagyareddy Varma and Arigay Ramaswamy. Bhagyareddy (1888-1939) was originally Madari Bhagaiah, a steward for a Catholic family who educated him, who became involved with, and later employed by, the Brahma Samaj and took the name 'Bhagyareddy Varma' to emphasise the rights of Dalits to claim a high status, 'Varma' being Brahmanic and 'Reddy' indicating high status non-Brahman. His organising activity began in 1912 when he formed the Manya Sangham, with members including a building contractor, a confectioner-barker, the Superintendent of the Hyderabad public gardens and other employees, a disparate group which 'gives a sense of the emerging “Dalit middle class”, still without much education but, as a colleague described them, 'young and enlightened young men'. At the same time Arigay Ramaswamy, who had been an office boy, carpenter and ticker collector on the railroads, began a social reform group in Secunderrbad; and Madari Audia, the son of a butler, had started another Manya Sangham at Ghasmandy. All these organisations
stressed internal social reform: attempting to ban drinking of alcohol and meat eating at social functions, abolition of the Devadasi custom. This group also found itself in conflict with the traditional 'csste chaudhuris' or headmen of the Malas, and worked throughout the 1920s to reform this system, setting up alternative ‘courts’ to handle disputes outside the state’s courts and in the process to try to broaden caste customs 64.

As this emerging, party-educated Dalit middle class began to enter social life, the radicalisation among Dalits throughout south India brought with it identification with the ‘Adi’ ideology. It was Bhagyareddy Varma himself who presided over the momentous conference at Vijayawada in 1917 when the ‘Panchama’ identity was rejected and over a number of conferences after that. Nevertheless, in Hyderabad itself organising took up an ‘Adi-Hindu’ theme: four Adi-Hindu conferences were organised between 1912 and 1914, and gradually the main organisers began to use this terminology. In 1924 Arigay Ramswamy formed the Adi-Hindu Jatiyonnati Sabah; not to be outdone, Bhagyareddy transformed his Manya Sangham into the Adi-Hindu Social Service League. This became the main organization of the Dalits of Hyderabad, a feat attributed to his energetic organizing and ability to gain support from liberal Hindu sympathizers 65. Along with the traditional aims of internal reform ('removing social evils, establishing schools, societies, reading rooms, Bhajan mandalis'), the aims of the organisation included ‘removing ignoble appellations and spreading the identity of ‘Adi-Hindu’.

What exactly did the “Adi-Hindu’ identity connote? This term was spreading among sections of north Indian Chamars at this time claiming them to be exploited and conquered original inhabitants, and Bhagyareddy himself traveled to north India for some of the conferences, notably two in 1927 and 1930, which described the
‘depressed classes’ or Adi-Hindus’ as ‘descendents of the original inhabitants of this country who were rulers and owners of this land of their birth before the advent of the Aryans to the country

This was familiar anti-caste radicalism. But ‘Adi-Hindu’ could also leave space for identification as Hindus with simply the assertion added that Dalits could claim a high position within the total community, that they had been among the creators of the Hindu epics.

Bhagyareddy’s rejection of tradition was more radical. In treating untouchables as the original ‘sons of the soil’, in seeing Brahmans as outsiders pushing all the original Indians down to south India, he was said to have used the term ‘Adi-Hindu’ in a way in which ‘Hindu’ did not refer to religion but was given by foreigners to those living in India. He opposed temple entry movements generally, and at one of the important Adi-Andhra conference disputes in 1938 in East Godavari, refused to preside until all these agreed not to support a bill for temple entry then being introduced in the Madras provincial council by M.C. Rajah. He was also an ardent admirer of Buddha and celebrated Buddha Jayanti for the first time in 1913 and again in 1937, two years before his death. While politically inactive during the 1930s, he gave his support mainly to the Ambedkarite group of Dalits in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad Dalit politics was marked by intensive competitive struggles. During the 1920s these were primarily between Arigay Ramaswamy and Bhagyareddy Varma, founding rival “Adi-Hindu” organizations, rival reformed caste panchayats, with occasional physical confrontation and fights between the factions. During the 1930s similar battles took place between B.S.Venkatrao and Arigay Ramaswamy, and later between Venkatrao and Subbiah. While there were ideological - political differences embodied in these disputes, the personal competition for leadership is striking. In all of this none of the
Hyderabad leaders seemed to be in a position to organise any mass movement. During the 1930s, Ambedkar's movement was to attain some significant mass base in the Marathi-speaking regions of the state, while the communists won a foothold in the rural Telugu districts using some of the same issues the Ambedkarites were using in other terminology-opposition to *vethbegar* and land for the landless. But the Telugu-speaking Hyderabad *Dalit* leadership appeared aloof from this; when they went as *Dalits* to the rural areas in the 1940s they most often went to Marathwada and there had to speak the language of Ambedkarism; they had little organic connection of their own. Perhaps because of this, for all the initial impulse towards an autonomous *Dalit* identity, in practical political terms the main *Dalit* organisations and leaders of Hyderabad were to be divided, in later years, between Hindu (Congressite) and Muslim (pro-Nizam) orbits.

*Dalit* activities in Hyderabad began to gain in momentum, if not depth, than before the radical 1930s. A host of young educated *Malas*, a few *Madigas* and some Marathi-speaking Mahar and Chambhar youth in Marathwada stood behind new leaders.

Most prominent among these, dominating the scene for two decades and sometimes known as the 'Hyderabad Ambedkar', was B.S.Vnkatrao (ca. 1890-1953), originally Bathula Ashaiah. Returning to Hyderabad in 1922 after working in the engineering department in Pune, he managed to parley a position as overseer in the public works department into a small personal fortune. He was described as a powerful and magnetic speaker, dominating the movement through his personality as well as financial sponsorship. Venkatswamy gives him a more favourable verdict than any other leader of the period:

> He sacrificed his all in the cause of the community and died a pauper. He was
generous without calculations. He had a lovable individuality and a dynamic personality... Who ever dreamt that Ashaiah, a bonny boy of Bangaru Basthi, would be the future 'Hope' of the community and that his juvenile corpulent body would be the dynamic personality to capture the hearts of the downtrodden, who spontaneously conferred on him the popular title of 'Rao Saheb'.

Slightly younger than Venkatrao was J. Subbiah who was to head the SCF and become “Ambedkar's man” in Hyderabad. But subbaiah was the most unpopular of the group, described by Venkatswamy as dictatorial and opportunistic, wining and dining people like P.N. Rajbhoj (a “whiskey and ice-cream” culture) to maintain his position as head of the SCF: ‘By his deadly smiles, cruel kindness, obsequious courtesy and self-seeking and odious activities, through his faked-up organization, he earned the malediction of his community. Shyamsunder (1908-73), on the other hand, the most openly pro-Muslim of the group, was praised by Venkatswamy: born in Aurangabad, he evidently sought to exemplify the syncretic aristocratic Hyderabad culture, and though ‘considered a nightmare by his Hindu opponents, he truly carved a soft corner in the hearts of the Depressed Classes by his organising ability, lofty thoughts, magnificent courage, inexorable strength, polished manners and delicious humor’.

Ambedkar’s Depressed Classes Conference of 1930 and the events surrounding the Poona pact made little impact in Dalits in Hyderabad: the Congress initiative with the Harijan Sevak Sangh was also of little consequence, though Takkar Bapu visited Hyderabad in January 1933 to launch the state branch. Then came Ambedkar’s
decision to convert, described as a ‘veritable bombshell’ in stimulating massive discussions on conversion throughout the country. In the already conversion-tense atmosphere of Hyderabad it galvanized the Dalit community. Venkatrao, Arigay Ramaswamy and the entire youth group attended a Maharashtra Untouchable Youth Conference in January 1936 in Pune. Impressed by the ‘fire-eating speeches of the Maharashtra leaders’, they organised a Youth League of Ambedkarites with Venkatrao as president and Venkatswamy, one of the educated youth, as secretary. Its aims were to organise youth; to support Ambedkar in leading untouchables out of the Hindu fold; to enlighten people on the evils of Hinduism; to oppose conversion at present but search for a new democratic religion; and to organise a vigorous campaign on socio-economic disabilities. Bhagyareddy Varma supported the effort but without active participation.

The circumstances under which the Hyderabad State Scheduled Caste Federation was started are quite interesting. J.H. Subbaiah, the founder of the above organisation, was an undergraduate of the Osmania University, Hyderabad. He was also a Contractor and also the Secretary of the Ram Gopal Mills Worker’s Union in 1940. Subbaiah was a staunch follower of Dr. Ambedkar in his fight for the emancipation of Harijans. His ambition was to start a vigorous campaign for fight for the emancipation of Harijans. For that cause, he became the member of “The Hyderabad Depressed Classes Association” which was original known as the ‘Youth League of Ambedkarites’ formed at Secunderabad on 17-05-1936 with B.S. Vankat Rao, a Contractor and ex-Municipal Councillor representing Depressed classes, as President and on e P.R. Vankata Swamy as Secretary.

In May 1940, J.H. Subbaiah was Secretary of the Association. After taking in that capacity for about a Year he began to covet fame as
the biggest Depressed Classes Leader of Hyderabad. As he could not gain his object by remaining the Secretary of the Depressed Classes Association under B.S. Venkat Rao, he began to work, in April 1941, for the formation of a Central Organisation of the Adi Hindus to be known as "Hyderabad State Adi Hindu Maha Sabha". Differences and rivalry arose between him and B.S. Venkat Rao and eventually he assaulted Venkat Rao and was convicted to a fine of Rs.25/- by the Secunderabad Court. Subbaiah was considered to be disloyal to the Depressed Classes Association, was removed from the post of Secretary and also was expelled from the Hyderabad Depressed Classes Association. After his expulsion from that Association, Subbaiah worked with increased keenness for the formation of the Adi Hindu Maha Sabha, and succeeded in informing the body on 26-07-1974 with himself as President.

In July 1942 J.H. Subbaiah attended the All India Depressed Classes Conference in Nagpur and got in touch with Dr. Ambedkar. Subbaiah appears to have impressed Dr. Ambedkar by promising to call his organisation as the 'Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation' in the line with the name of the above All-India Body. Soon after his return from Nagpur, Subbaiah held a meeting on 26th July 1942 at Secunderabad at which it was decided that the Adi Hindu Maha Sabha should be called 'The Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation' (HSSCF). Regarding the work of HSSCF, it passed the following resolutions on the day of its formation itself.

- Requesting Government to give 1/3 representation to be Depressed Classes in the proposed expansion of the Executive Council.
- Demanding equal representation with Hindus in the Advisory committee formed under the constitution reforms in the districts.
• Demanding that effective steps should be taken immediately to put an end to “Begar”

• Urging Government to make adequate provision in the budget for the political, social and educational uplift of the Harijans.

The visits of Dr. Ambedkar to Hyderabad gave a decided fillip to the activities of the HSSCF. Dr. Ambedkar on his arrival at Hyderabad on 20.09.1994 patronised the Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation and he addressed the Scheduled Castes Federation at a meeting in Secunderabad. In 1946 also Ambedkar visited Hyderabad to participate in his Birthday Celebrations organised by HSSCF.

The activities of the organisation were not confined to the urban areas but also were extended to the rural areas. It’s Secretary, Manohar, shortly afterwards toured the Parbhani District. He presided over a meeting of the Parbhani branch of the Federation held in the local Dherwada on 22-10-44 and spoke on the need for opening new branches of the federation and working for the betterment of the Harijans. He also visited village Sirli on 25-10-1944 and set up a new branch of the Federation there. A public meeting was held by this branch on 12-11-1944 attended by about 2000 Harijans. Speeches were delivered and resolutions passed. They were (1) not to do “Begar” without wages and (2) get united and non-cooperate with those who called them untouchables.

A public meeting of the Depressed Classes was held at Jittur District Parbhani on 24-06-1945 under the Chairmanship of J.H. Subbaiah. Audience numbered about 300. Speeches were delivered stressing the need for the economic and educational advancement of the Harijans. Subbaiah in the course of his speech alleged that Government officials inflicted hardships on the Harijans and asked the
audience to bring all cases of complaints against them (officials) to his notice so that he might in turn bring them to the notice of His Excellency the President of the Executive council.

The Working Committee of the Federation, at its meeting held at Secunderabad on 3-9-1945 decided that as the Constitutional reforms were useless, it was futile to take part in the working of the Constitutional Reforms, announced by the Nizam's Government in 1939.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the Federation was held on 7-11-1945 at Secunderabad at which the following resolutions were passed: 1) Criticizing the proposals of the All India Hindu Maha Sabha to throw open temples to Harijans on 11-11-1945 as an election stunt intended to deceive the Harijans and requesting Government not to accept it as it might lead to breach of peace. 2) Requesting Government to appoint a Commission to enquire into the alleged oppression of caste Hindus on the Harijans in several parts of the Dominions.

Subbaiah also demanded that Government should earmark a special sum for the education of Harijans, give them adequate representation in Government Service and in the Executive Council, and give financial and other necessary help to Harijans to establish their colonies on waste lands.

At a meeting of the Working Committee of the Federation held on 2-12-1945 uneasiness was expressed over the possibility of some undertaking being arrived at between the Hindus and Muslims over the equal distribution of the seats in the legislature, leaving the Depressed Classes in the lunch. It was decided that propaganda should be carried on in this respect and Government be requested to fill the Depressed
Class seats in the legislature by election instead of nomination. It was decided to increase the membership of the Federation, which then stood at 3000\textsuperscript{79}.

Under the auspices of the Scheduled Castes Federation a public meeting was held in Ghasmandy, Secunderabad, on 20-01-1946\textsuperscript{80}. Sham Sunder presided. The audience numbered about 600. Speeches were delivered and resolutions passed. The following were the resolutions.

Demanding adult franchise, separate representation from the Hindus, grant of Rs.20/- lakhs for educational uplift and wastelands for colonization.

A public meeting of the Harijans was held at Karimnagar on 1-2-1946 \textsuperscript{81} under the President ship of Prem Kumar, attended by about 100 persons. Speeches were delivered by Subbaiah and others advising the Harijans to beware of the machinations of other communities and to organise themselves as a separate community form the Hindus. The usual demands of the Harinas for educational and other facilities were made and resolutions passed to the same effect. A branch of the "Scheduled Castes Federation" was established with Sidramaniah as President and Rajram as Secretary.

No doubt the demands of this organisation were not fulfilled immediately due to the stubbornness of the Nizam’s Government, its activities went a long way in developing Social consciousness among the Harijans in the region.

As described above the "Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation" under the stewardship of Subbaiah convened number of meetings and strenuously endeavoured to awaken the Harijans. By 1947, the membership rose to 5500. Branches of the Scheduled Castes
Federation were opened at Parbhani, Sirli in Parbhani District, Secunderabad, Vijapur in Aurangabad District and Karimnagar District. Subbaiah with a keen foresight, reformist zeal and human outlook worked hand to carve a honourable and prestigious status for Harijans in society. The Man who was himself a Harijan and who worked for the welfare of his fellowmen would be remembered forever in the annals of history. It is form the endeavours of such men, separate movements launched for the welfare of Harijans after Independence, drew sustenance and succour and proceeded forward with missionary zeal.

The Year 1944 was the turning point of the Dalits movement in coastal Andhra and Erstwhile Hyderabad state. Ambedkar's tour to Andhra region organized by Nandhanar Harichandra of Godavari district. On 28th September 1944 Ambedkar reached Anakapally from Culcutta and addressed a public meeting at municipal High School. From Anakapally to Vishakapatnam reached on 29th September 1944. From there to Ananthapur and Palakollu. In Palakollu meeting he said "If there are hundred reasons for the British to wage a war with German there are hundred more reasons for the untouchables to wage a war against caste Hindus". Again from there he marched to Kakinada and addressed huge gathering. The meeting presided over by Pamu Ramamurthy. Where he condemned Hindu Dharma Shastra's and the Caste system of India. From Kakinada he went Rajamundry, Elure, Gudivada, Nellore addressed the thousands of Dalits attended his meetings. At the same time he also visited Hyderabad and addressed the Dalits. Ambedkar's visits sow the seeds of the Dalit movements in both the regions. With the influence of Ambedkar many Dalit organisations were established.
FOOT NOTES

2. Sanjay D. Savale., Continuity and Change with in Non-Brahman Movement in Maharashtra, 1890, pp 32-33.

4. Ibid,
5. Ibid, p 40.
8. Ibid,
13. Ibid, p.233
15. Ibid, p.10.
21. Ibid,
23. Ibid,
24. Ibid,
27. Ibid, p.10.
28. Ibid,
29. Ibid,
On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one-man and one vote, and one vote, one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one-man one value. How long shall we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril".


48. Ibid, pp 114-115
He sacrificed his all in the cause of the community and died a pauper. He was generous without calculations. He had a lovable individuality and a dynamic personality. . . . Who ever dreamt that Ashaiah, a bonny boy of Bangaru Basthi, would be the future 'Hope' of the community and that his juvenile corpulent body would be the dynamic personality to capture the hearts of the downtrodden, who spontaneously conferred on him the popular title of 'Rao Saheb'.


72. Ibid, p.5.

73. Golkonda Patrika, 11th August, 1942, p.3.

74. Ibid, 25th October, 1944, p.3.


76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.p. 15

79. Ibid


81. Ibid

82. Ibid

83. Ibid