CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: Historians have given less attention to the ideologies and organizations of Low Caste Social groups of India who always after developing productive culture through the ages in light of the development of science and technology from times immemorial. Another factor responsible for the neglect is the fact that the leaders of low caste social groups took little or no part in the freedom struggle which insisted to drive away the foreign rule, but they were more interested in protesting against hegemony and exploitation of upper caste in Indian society. In part, this relative neglect arisen from the very magnetism of the Nationalist Movement and the personalities that led it, and of the cause that they championed with such favour. Difficulties of evidence have also contributed. It has always been notoriously difficult to document 'Popular' political or ideological activity, in societies where the great majority of the population lack even the most basic skills of literacy. In the light of the above ideologies of the low castes and movements country who worked on Indian society faced the problem of Vernacular language of India.

More specifically, we may note the lack of studies of peasant movements, working class organizations, or broad scale anti-caste movements. Although peasant rebellion and unrest has been important in modern Indian history and although peasant support for the national congress was crucial to the success of the national movement, these have been inadequately studied. Some recent studies on peasant movements have begun to appear but understanding of the role and development of peasant unrest in the colonial or modern Indian context, and the occasional efforts to do have made little impact on the field.
Finally, while there are many studies of castes and caste movements, these are almost all described either in isolation or with a conservative emphasis that focuses on status uplife, “Sanskritisation”, and the emulation of higher castes as the primary aspect of lower caste activity. Tradition supporting modernity continues to be the primary motif and elements of rebellion, rejection of tradition, and opposition to appear caste dominance are neglected.

In night of the above Phule, one who ignited cultural revolt against the socio-economic and cultural evils popularized by the Brahmanism and Brahmans since their settlement in Indian in general Maharashtra in particular. It can be considered as non-Brahman movement was the first organized attempt of the middle and the low castes in Maharashtra including the untouchables, for the negation of conventional inequalities, exploitative Hindua social order which dominated by the Brahmanism and Brahmans and for creation of an egalitarian society by following wider universalistic goals of freedom, equality, humanity and social justice. In view of the above, it can be considered as a major cultural revolt, having socio-economic and political dimensions and implications. The movement led by Phule was not only targeted against the Brahman domination which had continued since ages and which was further strengthen under British rule, but also against all inequalities exploitative and Pseudo religious tendencies. The non-Brahman movement insisted over all upliftment of Stri (Women), Shudras and Ati-Shudras who were the most deprived sections of the Indian society through the ages in general Maharashtra in particular.

The study of Jothi Phule’s movement against the non-Brahman is however is not a totally new subject, but the non-Brahman movement both in Maharashtra and in Madras had already been studied by several scholars from a variety of perspectives including sociological
approach. But in this study a part from ideology, organization and movement led by Phule and its impact on Kerala, TamilNadu, Coastal Andhra and erstwhile Hyderabad state also discussed and narrated the course of movements led against Brahmanism and Brahmans who popularized socio-economic and cultural evils, in above mentioned states were analysed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The objectives of the study are to find out the nature of the Socio-economic and cultural status of people of the Western Indian Society which provoked the emergence of personality of Jothirao Phule, one who ignited cultural revolt in 19th century of cultivate the equal social relations in society. The reforms that were initiated by the state during the same period in Eastern Indian could not registered the objectives of the programme and more over reforms in Eastern Indian consolidated the unity of hegemonic culture in India. This period witnessed turmoil due to socio-economic and cultural unrest, which finally turned into Cultural revolution. A portrayal of these changes that were taking place in society had been attempted in this study. This study is an attempt to analyse the different aspects of these transformation critically. Moreover it aimed to relook the early career of Jothirao Phule, contribution to social awakening emergence of Satyashodhak Samaj and peasants movement and also mass protest against inequality.

METHODOLOGY APPLIED IN THE WORK: In the present research work Methodology is of great significance as it touches the past played by Jothirao Phule in the social upheaval in Maharashtra. In order to assess the dedicated service of Jothirao Phule for the well being of the low caste people in the society which intturn hastened for the formation of a separate movement in Maharashtra, descriptive and analytical
methods are applied. Objectivity in historical writing followed in this dissertation to arrive at an unbiased conclusion.

**DELIMITATION:** The study mainly touches on the 19th century which marked the significant social changes in the history of Maharashtra. The area of research starts with the early career of Jothirao Phule and ends with his disappearance in the political arena. This is a period of historical importance for the birth of a non-Brahman movement in Maharashtra and to limit or control the inequality in the society. The area is located in the south western part of the Indian sub-continent.

**HYPOTHESIS:** The causes and course of popular movement generally end up with the attainment of Political, Social and Economic rights and privileges for the welfare and progress of humanity. The ultimate gain in the form of efforts taken by Jothirao Phule the historical end of most revolutions and independence movements. The rise and growth of non-Brahman movements, peasant movements extra are viewed in this perspective. The study seeks to prove or disprove the above hypothesis framed on the basis of preliminary observations made with published and unpublished sources related to this subject of study.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE:** The works which were written by Jothirao Phule himself and his various collections are utilized for the study. D.Keer and S.G. Malshe’s (eds) in their work Sarvajanik Satyadharsna pustak dealt with religious approaches of Phule in general. Their author work entitled Satya Shodhak PujaVidhi highlights the Rites and ceremonies used by Satyashodhak Samaj. gulumagiri edited by the above said authors emphasized the existence of Serfdom in the peasant society. Sheta Karyacha Asnd is the another editorial work form the same writers examine the cultivators whip-cord. P.S.Patil’s magnum opus reveals the untold miseries and unspeakable harships of the untouchables of Maharashtra. The unpublished and approved
dissertations such as Gall Omvedt's cultural revolt in a colonial society and another study namely Brahman Movement in western India (1873 to 1930) are pioneering work which exhibits the peasant movement in the society. Thus all the above mentioned scholarly research works do not throw proper light on the activities of Johirao Phule. Hence there is need to examine his dedicated service mainly based his original records and documents particularly on Jothirao Phule.

SOURCES FOR THE STUDY: The source materials used for writing this dissertation are both primary and secondary. The records, particularly the letters, Journals and newspapers published at the time now kept at National archive of India are used.

PLAN OF THE STUDY: The First chapter deals with introduction in which the nature of the historians and their attempts towards various aspects of Indian society and the significance of social movements were discussed. Apart from the above objectives, the methodology.

The Second chapter highlights the nature of the social structure of Maharashtra society in 19th century in which social status of each caste, their privileges and duties of each castes has been presented.

The Third chapter described Phule’s child-hood, education and the impact of Maharashtra society on him.

The Fourth chapter analysis the ideology of Phule. In implementation of his ideology what was his planning, organizing and participation in low caste protest movement are discussed.

The Fifth chapter emphasizes the Satyasodhak Samaj which was established by the incitation of Phule and its activities such as low caste protest movements in Maharashtra.
The Sixth chapter explains in detail about the influence, impact of Phule’s ideology and social revolution on Kerala, Tamilnadu, Coastal Andhra and erstwhile Hyderabad state.

The Concluding chapter summarizes the pinpoints and highlights of the entire study. Research findings of the scholar, issues and problems in the study area, suggestions and recommendations of the researchers and scope for further research on the topic were analyzed. For analyzing the specialized area of research genuine footnotes along with the Bibliography is appended at the end.
FOOT NOTES


2. P.S. Patil., The life of Mahatma Jotirao Phule Chikhali, 1927 (Marathi).