Chapter I

Social Landscape of Telangana and Caste Practices

Introduction

This chapter will examine the social shaping of the region of Telangana, the variables and processes that structure the internal characteristics of its social landscape and how they reflect their symbolic and material dimensions. A region is not simply a piece of land with demarcated borders; it is also a product of the society formed by the people residing within these boundaries. Michael Pickering argues that, “While the physical landscape did not structure the symbolic dimensions of the social and religious institutions, it did structure the material dimensions and spatial characteristics of their associated landscapes”.¹

Bhangya points out the importance of understanding of the social landscape; he says, “Social landscape of the region is important to understand the social practices and social position of communities in India. The identity of the region is, indeed, strongly rooted in its social landscape and vice versa”.²

Telangana is the 29th state of India formed on June 2nd, 2014 with 10 districts: Adilabad, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Khammam, Mahaboobnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Rangareddy and Warangal. These were part of united Andhra Pradesh for 58 years from 1956 to 2014. These in addition to Aurangabad, Beed, Nanded, the Parbhani districts of present Maharashtra and

¹ Michael Pickering, The physical landscape as a social landscape: a Garawa example, Archaeology in Oceania, Vol. 29, No. 3, Social Landscapes (Oct., 1994), pp. 149-161
Bidar, Gulbarga, Osmanabad and the Raichur Districts of present Karnataka were part of the princely state of Hyderabad, ruled by the Nizams for 224 years, from 1724 until 1948. The princely state of Hyderabad merged with the Indian union through military operation (Operation Polo) in September 1948. The Indian Armed Forces invaded the State and overthrew its Nizams.

Right from the Nizam’s rule to the merger of the Hyderabad state (Telangana region) in the Indian union, the formation of Andhra Pradesh and its continuation for 58 years of the rule of the dominant Brahmin, Reddy, Velama and Kamma castes has strengthened their socioeconomic and political base, by occupying all the political, administrative and judicial positions in the Telangana region. The present Telangana state rule is continuation of earlier conditions without any fundamental changes in the socioeconomic and political spheres. Feudal dominant castes continue to rule in Telangana villages without any interruption. In places where there are no Reddy and Velama feudal castes, the other dominant castes, which are officially listed as BCs, the backward classes occupy the role of the feudal Reddy, Velama castes and suppress the untouchable communities. The traditional caste hierarchy continues in all spheres of life in Telangana including both the public and the private space, and nothing is free from caste.

Caste and its evil social practices have remained intact and have reconfigured in today’s Telangana. If we look at the socioeconomic conditions of the untouchable castes, from the Nizam’s Rule to Andhra Pradesh to the present Telangana state rule, there is no considerable change in the situation of these castes. The life of Dalit communities has in fact worsened. The majority of Telangana Dalits are situated outside the mainstream socioeconomic processes, and many subsist below the official poverty line. They are subject to widespread caste discrimination and practices of untouchability.
that limit their economic base and mobility, the consequence of which is that they are disadvantaged in their attempts to access opportunities for socio-economic development.

The history of progressive Dalit movements in the Telangana region goes back to over 100 years old. Ever since 1906, when Bhagya Reddy Verma formed the Jagan Mitra Mandalı there has been no dearth of Dalit assertions by various names and forms. Nevertheless, there has been no freedom from old discriminatory caste practices. In today's Telangana, 99% of sanitation workers, sweepers, manhole cleaners, child labourers, street children, beggars, sex workers and rag pickers come from Dalit communities. One would not be wrong to assume that feudal caste practices have been reconfigured to adjust and complement liberal value systems in the times of modernity in Telangana.

This chapter is divided into eight sections 1) Telangana's caste system, 2) Feudal and Brahmanical – the dual nature of caste system 3) Caste based communities in Telangana, 4) The untouchable communities of Telangana 5) Caste organisations and political negotiations 6) Telangana dalits blocked by caste 7) Caste practices forcing Dalits to scavenging slavery.

1.1. Telangana’s Caste System

The practises of caste vary from region to region, caste as a Hindu hierarchy and religious notions of purity and pollution have resulted in the

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3Bhagya Reddy Verma was a great humanist and social reformer in the Hyderabad state. He started Jagan Mithra Mandali in 1906 and named it as Manne Sangham in 1911, eventually in 1917 renamed it as Adi Hindu Social Service League ("Original Hindu"), a social organization, to bring awareness against untouchability and evil caste practises in the caste society. Apart from his political activities across the country at the time, He also started to educate Dalit children from his own expenses. In a short span of time he able to run, 25 centres with 2000 students. (Bhagyodayam, Maadari Bhagyareddy Verma life Sketch and Mission, M.B Goutham, translated by Jagan Reddy, Samanthara Book House, 2009)
establishment of traditional social institutions of inequality, discrimination and untouchability. It is a story shared by the whole of India. The caste system in Telangana is feudal and agrarian in nature. During the pre-independence Nizam’s rule, the landed gentry in Telangana systematically oppressed Dalits through various methods and practices. The same discriminatory practices continued in newer forms in post-independence Andhra Pradesh as well as the newly formed Telangana state. Historically, Telangana has had a feudal caste system, as Bhangya Bhukya says,

“The Reddy and Velama feudal system combining Brahmanic values had evolved different caste practices in the Telangana region. Besides the untouchability, the Dalits of Telangana were subjected to Vetti (free labour), bhagela/jeetham (forced labour) and Jogini (temple girl) practices. These practices forced Dalits into a perpetual subalternity”.

Bhangya describes the Telangana region from a social and historical perspective, he says,

“Telangana has been basically a region of adivasis, nomads and pastoral communities and service and artisans castes. The geographical setting of the region, indeed, provided home to many such communities. It has occupied almost the centre of the Deccan plateau. The Sahyadri hills that run along the north were home to rich forests. Karimnagar, Adilabad, Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda and Mahaboobnagar districts were particularly covered largely by forest. These forests were found at the source of the rivers Godavari, Krishna, Tungabhadra, Manjira, Maner, Wardha and Pranhita. Adivasi and pastoral and service communities such as Gonds, Rajgonds, Kolams, Nayakpods, Kondareddis, Koyas, Chenchus, Gollas, Kurmas, Waddiras, Madigas, Mudiraj, Goudas and Munnurukapus began their civilisation in these forests. The nomadic Lambadas and Mathuras who had occasionally been visiting these forests from the medieval period for cattle grazing and exchange of goods were also settled in these

\[4\] Bhangya Bhukya, p.4
forests permanently. The hills, forests and rivers shaped the social and
economic life of these communities significantly. The social and
economic life of these communities had taken a tragic shape under the
Reddy and Velamas feudal system during the medieval period and the
same has been continuing down into the twenty-first century.\(^5\)

Murali Manohar agrees with the observations of Bhangya that the
Reddy and Velama feudal system has ruined the socio-economic life of
pastoral and artisanal communities of Telangana. He says,

–Historically, from the beginning, Telangana region (Hyderabad State)
has been retaining its different characteristics from the coastal Andhra
region. The native artisan castes, Dalits, Adivasis and other
intermediate castes led an independent social life for a long time. This
trend has continued until the migration of dominant castes in to the
Telangana region. When the dominant caste groups entered into the
Telangana region with the pretext of attending to the needs of Nizams
or for the establishment of their cultural hegemony, it led to
disturbances in the life of the Telangana people and destroyed their
independent living, and as a result, the native Telangana life has been
subjugated and has lost its special characteristics\(^6\).

As argued by both of the above-mentioned scholars, the feudal caste
systems with Brahmanical values have emerged as an undemocratic social
tradition that influences the public and private institutions of Telangana today.

### 1.2. Feudal and Brahmanic - Dual Nature of Caste System

Caste has been in existence for centuries in different forms across the
Indian subcontinent. The codification of Manu’s Code (Manu Dharma Shastra
or Manava Dharma Shastra) was the first step towards the institutionalisation
of these hierarchies. Wendy Doniger observes,

\(^5\)Bhangya Bhukya, p.7
\(^6\)K. Murali Manohar, *Telangana Sadhikaratha*, Bhangya Bhukya, ed., *Praja
Telangana Udyama Alochanalu*, Hyderabad, Peoples Telangana foundation, 2008
―Discrimination based on caste was firmly established by the 2nd century CE with the writing of the Law Code of Manu. Manu’s Code was one of the most influential of the Hindu Dharmashastras, law books listing not only edicts but also instruction on how to live purely and piously. All laws in Manu’s Code were caste based, with the severest punishments prescribed for Shudras, and the lightest for Brahmins. Interestingly, the Code contains no formal discussion of outcastes or untouchables. The Code became a “standard source of authority” in medieval India.”

Manu’s codes had become the authority in medieval India; and afterwards they were institutionalised and reinforced in to the state apparatus and the judiciary through the British colonial rule. Kositsky observes the same as above that the Chaturvarnya system of caste hierarchy that puts Brahmins on the top was reinforced through the British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. He says,

―The early British views on India were shaped by the debates between conservative non-interventionists such as Burke, and Protestant-inspired interventionists such as James Mill. Burke took a Natural Law view of India in which the “peaceful and orderly polity” was anchored in the caste system. Each Indian had a place in the structure, and each performed a task useful to society”.

The British colonisers found in the caste inequalities a natural social order for their own political interests. The untouchable communities have historically been the victim of caste system throughout India; however, the forms of untouchability and discrimination vary from region to region. As Bhangya Bhukya says, “In India, region and its ecology are crucial in shaping

8 Sasha Riser-Kositsky, The Political Intensification of Caste: India Under the Raj, Penn History Review, Volume 17 Issue 1 Fall 2009, p.5
the caste culture as well as the relation between the castes”\textsuperscript{9}. It is the feudal caste system in Telangana, which fosters a Brahmanical cultural influence. As Bhukya puts it,

\begin{quote}
The Reddy and Velama feudal system combining Brahmanic values had evolved different caste practices in the Telangana region”\textsuperscript{10}. Telangana is a part of south India, which is also known as a Dravidian region. James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden also make an observation similar to Bhangya Bhukya. They argue, “Dravidian social order was based on different eco-regions rather than on the Aryan varna paradigm, although the Brahmans had a high status at a very early stage”\textsuperscript{11}.
\end{quote}

In the early period, Brahmins and Brahmanism had strong roots in the Dravidian regions as well, as Syed Siraj Ul Hassan observes,

\begin{quote}
For ages the Andhra Brahmins have been renowned for learning and self restraint. Kumari Bhatta, who was a violent opposer of the Buddhists, Shankaracharya, the great vedantic reformer, Ramanujacharya, who was the first to inculcate Bhakti doctrine, Madhwhacharya, the founder of dwaitism, Vallabhacharya, who originated the worship of Balagopal or the infant Krishna; and other champions of Brahmans were all Andhra or Dravida Brahmins”\textsuperscript{12}.
\end{quote}

In addition, in the history of south India, the Brahmans adopted positions of power, leaving their priestly professions a side. For example, in the Qutub Shahi and Nizam‘s Rule, they were the feudal lords, Zameendars, moneylenders, moneychangers, village accountants etc. Some Brahmins such as Deshmukhs, Deshpandeys and Patels were hereditary farmers holding

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{9}Bhangya Bhukya, p.4
\textsuperscript{10}Bhangya Bhukya, p.4
\textsuperscript{12}Syed Siraj Ul Hassan, The Castes and Tribes of HEH the Nizams Dominions, The Times Press, Bombay, 1920, p.125
\end{flushleft}
permanent tenures, or they were merchants and government servants. As observed earlier, Brahmins have always aligned with the forces of power. In the colonial era they aligned with British rulers and during the Nizam’s rule, the Brahmins were with the Nizams and with the feudal landed gentry. Thus, it can be seen that historically, their location in the society was aligned with the rulers/ruling classes.

1.3. Caste Based Communities in Telangana

Initially, every caste was an endogamous unit and was a tribe. Those who were exposed to the Hindu Brahmanical religion have now become part of Hindu society. As of now, there are 6500 castes and more than 50,000 sub-castes. The government of India classified all castes into four social groups as Forward castes, backward class communities, Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. There are several hundred castes in Telangana.

The government of Telangana has recognized 60 scheduled castes (See Annexure-II) and 33 Scheduled tribes (See Annexure -III) to be eligible to receive Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes certificates. The government has declared 112 backward class communities (Annexure-IV) to be eligible to acquire caste certificates from the government authorities, by order from the Thahsildar (Mandal Revenue Officer), RDO (Revenue Divisional Officer) and the District collector. The SC, ST and BC castes together form 265 castes. Some of the small endogamous units of these castes might have been missed in this list.

The dominant castes in Telangana include the Brahmans, Velamas, Reddys, Komati, Kammas, Kshatriyas and Kapus. In the Scheduled Castes‘

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13 Syed Siraj Ul Hassan, pp. 99-133
15 G.O.Ms.No.5, Date:08.08.2014.scheduled castes development (poa.a2) department, Government of Telangana
16 Backward Classes Welfare (OP) Department, G.O.Ms.No. 16. Dated:11.03.2015, Government of Telangana
17 K Srinivasulu, Caste, Class and Social Articulation in Andhra Pradesh:
list, Madigas and Malas are the educated and employed sections within the Dalit communities who are popularly known as Dalits to the public and the media. The rest of the 58 Scheduled castes are the most marginalized within Dalits. Some of these communities have been living as beggars and rag pickers in the towns; and as agricultural and manual laborers in the villages. It is difficult for the most marginalized castes within untouchables to even get a scavenging job because of their immobility. According to the Scheduled Tribes list, Lambadas and a few other Adivasi communities have achieved little progress in education and employment. The other 30 scheduled tribes are not visible to the public sphere because of their socioeconomic and educational backwardness.

In the list of backward class communities, only a few castes are economically and politically dominant. Few individuals in Gouda, Yadav, Perika, Padmasali and Mudiraj are as powerful as the Reddy Velama feudals. Where there are no Reddy Velamas in the Telangana villages; these individuals act as like Reddy Velama feudals and suppress Dalits. The Chakali, Mangali, Kummara and other Most Backward Communities (MBCs) share the same humiliation that Dalits encounter from the forward castes.

1.4. The Untouchable Communities of Telangana

The communities listed as scheduled castes are untouchables because they suffer untouchability from the rest of the communities. The term “untouchability” should not be understood only in terms of physical proximity; it is to place these communities below the rank of other communities in the caste hierarchy in all matters. When it comes to work, the most undignified kinds of labour are assigned to them. This practice of untouchability exists in all fields, academics, politics, market economy, the government administration etc. in all fields; untouchable communities are shown their ‘proper place’ as lower human beings. This is how untouchability manifests itself.

The Constitution of India, through article 17, abolished "untouchability," with the aim that the dominant castes could no longer legally force Dalits to perform any "polluting" occupation. However, this legal tenet is less powerful than the social tenet of caste that has been in existence for centuries in India. Ambedkar therefore said, "Indians today are governed by two different ideologies. Their political ideal set in the constitution affirms a life of liberty, equality and fraternity. Their social ideal embodied in their religion denies them." The untouchable communities are then forced to remain as scavenging workers, sweepers, manhole cleaners and leatherworkers. The members of scheduled castes are threatened with physical abuse and social boycott for refusing to perform demeaning tasks.

Historically, the occupations of Telangana dalits include performing vetti (free labour) carrying dead animals, skinning them, bearing letters of communications for dominant castes, sweeping and cleaning village roads, village offices as well as private places. They also have to maintain the irrigation facilities, weave leather ropes, and make leather buckets for hauling water from wells and other leather articles used in husbandry. The Madigas for instance are involved in stitching chappals with leather, beating drums for marriages, deaths and other ceremonies, announcing public orders by beating drums apart from all the other menial work in the villages.

This situation remains without much change in the lives of untouchable communities. The migration and the anonymity of the urban environments have, in some cases, resulted in upward occupational mobility among Dalits, but the majority continues to perform their traditional functions as municipal sweepers and manhole workers. The discrimination in seeking other forms of employment, has kept these practices and their hereditary nature alive in modern urban spaces.

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19 Syed Siraj Ul Hassan, pp, 409-438
1.5. Caste Organizations: Politics and Negotiations

Caste itself is an organization of people by birth, and the elders of the caste are the natural leaders to look after the welfare of their caste people. According to this tradition, every caste has their caste organization and caste heads at the village level. Nevertheless, all castes have felt the need of organizing their castes beyond villages to the levels of the state or to the nation, according to the needs of the modern times. This move originated in the 19th century when the feudal Brahmanical castes organized themselves to consolidate their strengths in the spheres of politics, education and business. The result of such caste mobilizations is so visible today that they disproportionately occupy the higher positions in all fields. It is the upper middle class of the dominant castes, who organized themselves under the caste organizations. Things would have been entirely different if dominant castes established schools and hostels for the poor and weaker sections, in the process empowering the latter this phenomenon has resulted in the strengthening of the caste system itself, which has "naturally" placed untouchables in the lower social locations.

Communities established hostels for their caste students. Reddy Jana Sangham was established in 1911 and started hostels for students from their community. This was followed by the other dominant castes in the Telangana who then organized and established hostels for their caste students. The Arya Vyshya Sangham, Kamma Sangham, Velama Sangham (1950), Perika Sangham, Mudiraj Sangham, Gouda Sangham (1951), and Padmasali Sangham also started their hostels. These hostels, apart from accommodating their students who have come far from their homes to study, also act as a communication center to/for the community. The elders of that the respective castes visit the hostels on occasion and the students are introduced to the politics, practices, rituals, gods etc. of their castes. Such attempts by the dominant castes have certainly contributed towards the institutionalization of the caste system.
Simultaneously, Bhagya Reddy Verma, a Dalit social reformer of the 19th century, belonging to the Mala caste (Manne), made a similar attempt. He established the Adi Hindu Social Service League and started schools for Dalit children. These schools were later taken over and maintained by the Nizam’s government. However, this attempt did not lead to the establishment of a hostel for the Dalit students. Had it been so, a hostel would have been a primary step towards the educational, political mobilization of Dalits in Telangana. However, Gandhian and Congress politics destroyed the Dalit political assertions by co-opting the then Dalit leaders.

Out of the total 112 backward class communities, only 5 to 10 dominant communities have started hostels; other 100 communities have not started any attempts in this direction yet. The government has established social welfare hostels for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the most backward class communities. However, these social welfare hostels are poorly maintained, without water, electricity, and at most times, they are crowded with large numbers of students.
The roles of caste organizations are not limited to educational activities. They participate in political and economic activities as well, but they are part of the hidden agenda of all caste groups because it involves

Screenshot images of websites of caste organizations in Telangana

Community interests. The fact remains that caste organizations sincerely work for the development of their own castes. This is lacking in the case of Dalits and the most marginalized and backward class communities. It
is the wealthy, educated political families of those dominant castes who have carried out such interventions for their own castes, because of the accumulated wealth and accrued social capital. This has been made possible only because of their social location/position in the caste society. There is neither such accrued social capital, nor wealthy and educated families with any sort of political commitment in Dalit and marginalized communities to carry out such interventions.

The dominant castes in Telangana who have established their caste organizations\(^20\) have now made their presence on the internet. All have their own websites, making it very easy for anyone to find his/her caste association with one click.

1.6. Telangana Dalits: Blocked By Caste

Telangana has a sizeable Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. The SC population is 54.3 lakhs and the ST population is 32.8 lakhs, which constitutes 15.4% and 9.3% percent, respectively, of the total population. Within the state, there is a wide variation in the percentage of SC and ST in the total population across districts. While the SCs are distributed throughout the state, the STs are concentrated in the hilly forest areas of Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad districts. The SC and ST populations in Telangana are spread across all the districts but there are some districts where they are concentrated. Hyderabad has the least concentration of SC population at 6.3% of the total district’s population; on the other hand, Karimnagar has the highest concentration of the same, at 18.8%. The concentration of STs is highest in the Khammam district with 27.4% of the district’s population

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belonging to the ST category; Hyderabad on the other hand has the least concentration of STs at 1.2%.²¹

Feudal caste practices in Telangana have resulted in pauperising Dalits and other marginalised communities due to their lower caste status in the caste hierarchy. Amarender Reddy and MCS Bantilan says

—More than 10% of the rural population in Telangana lived in poverty in five out of ten districts. The Telangana region has a larger share of scheduled castes and tribes, whose socio-economic conditions are inferior to the dominant caste population. Arguably, Telangana development has been held back by the long overhang of feudal casteism”.²²

There are 10,761 Revenue Villages and 10,128 Inhabited Villages in the Telangana state. Like in any other region, the construction of villages in Telangana has taken place according to caste lines. YB Sathyanarayana has observed,

—Since the wind always blows from west to east. Houses are built in ascending orders of the caste hierarchy from east to west – Shudras, Vyshya, Kshatriyas and Brahmins. The houses of those belonging to the productive castes (Shudras) cluster together and towards the east, and finally is the Agraharam, the Brahmins‘ dwellings – the beginning of the village”.²³

Madiga, Mala other untouchable families are not part of the village. They were allowed to build their huts/houses in the east side of every village, because the dominant castes believe that if Dalits lives on the western side of the villages, the air flowing in will be polluted. Therefore, one‘s caste location decides his physical location that regulates the economy as well as the political

²¹ Data has been sourced from Telangana State Statistical Abstract May 2014, available at - http://www.telangana.gov.in/Pages/State_Profile.aspx
²² A Amarender Reddy and MCS Bantilan, –Regional Disparities in Andhra Pradesh, India” ICRISAT; 2012
life of the village. The untouchable dwellings do not carry the name of the village; they will be called with their community names, such as Mala vaada, Madigavaada etc.

Since Dalit colonies are not part of the village, no government service or relief is easily accessible to Dalits. The primary health center, gram Panchayat, post office, police station, public wells, ration depot (PDS), bank, school, Mandal revenue office and bus stand etc. are located in the main village. Whenever Dalits visit these government institutions, they have to wait to avail the services, until dominant caste individuals finish their work. Moreover, Dalits require special permission to enter private places such as grocery stores, barbershops, tea stalls and temples. In some places, Dalits were allowed to these places only at specific times and specific days. A postman, if he is not a Dalit, instead of visiting the Dalit colonies, usually sends word to the addressees to whom the letter is to be delivered to come to the post office and collect the letters.

The hotels and tea stalls in Telangana villages continue to maintain the two-glass system with separate glasses for Dalits, which Dalits are expected to clean after having tea. This practice of two-glass system has now been replaced with plastic cups in some areas of Telangana, where Dalits will be given tea in plastic cups, which will be thrown out after use. However, in many villages in districts of Telangana still maintain the two-glass system, especially in places where Dalits have not questioned it and remained habituated to the practice.

If Dalits have to visit places such as the Gram Panchayat, police station, primary health center, they have to remove their footwear to enter the offices. If a Surpanch position is reserved for Dalits, the dominant castes in the villages choose their servant (Paleru/Jeethagadu) as a proxy contestant, spend money in his name, and ensure his election as Sarpanch. This ensures that the dominant castes continue to enjoy the powers. The Dalit Sarpanches are not even allowed to sit in the gram Panchayat, while the dominant caste employer takes all the decisions. The Surpanch is there only for thumb impressions or signatures.
Dalits do not have their own lands, and graveyards, and access to the main roads / highways. They have to cross the villages, and the paths, which are used by the dominant castes in the villages. This situation creates many tensions in the lives of Dalits, as dominant castes ask Dalits not to cross their dwellings at specific times. Dalits are also prevented from wearing footwear while crossing in front of the houses of dominant castes.

In the schools of Telangana villages, dominant caste teachers never attend government schools that are located in the Dalit Vaadas (untouchable's dwellings). On occasion when a Dalit vaada does not have a school and Dalit children are forced to attend the school that is located in the main village, they are expected to sit separately. They are not allowed to use the common drinking water facility in the village with the children of other dominant castes. Several cases have been reported in newspapers in Telangana that mid-day meals have been refused by children of dominant castes because a Dalit cooked it. Those dominant caste children learn such practices from their parents, who further instruct them not to share their food, play or mingle with Dalit students. A majority of Dalits try to escape this horrifying situation. Some enlightened Dalit youth have been attempting to question such caste inequalities and discriminations and fight back with all available means. Some Dalit youth have joined the Naxalite movement to fight all these caste practises and discrimination, although the latter has not understood the caste question. However, at the time, it is the only available platform to fight against caste. Some older generations Dalits continue to be habituated to caste practises. However, large numbers of Dalits and Dalit families have been migrating to the Gulf countries, and to towns and cities such as Hyderabad and Mumbai in search of livelihood and a dignified life.

Below tables from 2011 census, help us to understand the population of scheduled castes and their socioeconomic situation. Only 7.33 percent of Dalits has liveable houses and so on
District wise Scheduled Caste Population in Telangana\textsuperscript{24}

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>488596</td>
<td>242844</td>
<td>245752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>95330</td>
<td>371074</td>
<td>178798</td>
<td>192276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Karimnagar</td>
<td>194097</td>
<td>709757</td>
<td>352481</td>
<td>357276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Medak</td>
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<td>537947</td>
<td>266413</td>
<td>271534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
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<td>247927</td>
<td>124313</td>
<td>123614</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rangareddy</td>
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<td>328011</td>
<td>324031</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>356099</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nalgonda</td>
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<td>318359</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5432680</strong></td>
<td><strong>2704932</strong></td>
<td><strong>2727748</strong></td>
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Living condition - Status of scheduled castes in Telangana State -
The total Households - 1449379 \textsuperscript{25}

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<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Good house</td>
<td>562276</td>
<td>8.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Liveable house</td>
<td>975860</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dilapidated houses</td>
<td>88757</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Only one room households</td>
<td>620687</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Without any source of drinking water</td>
<td>30080</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Without treated water source</td>
<td>828103</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Without latrines</td>
<td>930465</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Without bathing facility</td>
<td>953717</td>
<td>5.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Without drainage facility</td>
<td>681938</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Without electricity</td>
<td>178007</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Without banking services</td>
<td>798377</td>
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<td>Without radio</td>
<td>1329551</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Without TV</td>
<td>758077</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Without internet</td>
<td>1426019</td>
<td>8.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Without landline telephone</td>
<td>1403838</td>
<td>6.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Without mobile phone</td>
<td>618752</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Without cycle</td>
<td>1949797</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Without motorcycle/scooter/moped</td>
<td>1262299</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Without car/jeep/van</td>
<td>1426181</td>
<td>8.40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, caste discrimination has been found to exist even in the
gulf countries because the dominant castes from Telangana in specific and
India in general have formed their caste organisations, and caste based

\textsuperscript{24}Census 2011
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid
religious institutions in countries, where they have settled. The urban and city space in India is not a caste free social geography. Dalit students in urban spaces face caste based discrimination in every educational institution in Hyderabad and in the country. Four Dalit students have committed suicide due to caste-based discrimination in Hyderabad within a span of few years, from 2008 to 2011. Moreover, all over India, 18 Dalit students have committed suicides. Academic institutions are not a separate social entity; they are an integral part and extension of society. They are supposed to be a democratic space, which are expected to accommodate Dalit students; instead, they continue to discriminate Dalit students and force them to commit suicides. What then would be the fate of uneducated rural Dalits who migrate to the city of Hyderabad for their livelihood?

Many Dalits and members of marginalised communities have migrated from villages to big cities such as Mumbai and Hyderabad. More people have migrated to Hyderabad, as it is the state capital of Telangana. The migrated poor from Telangana villages live in the slums. The total slum population is 19, 51,207, which accounts for 28.65% of the total population of GHMC. The total number of households in the slums is 4.06 lakh. There are 1476 slums in Hyderabad out of which 1179are notified & 297 are non-notified. The total slum area is 80.45 Km, which is 12% of the total GHMC area. The total population of Telangana state is 3,52,86,757. The scheduled caste population in Telangana is 5432680accounting for 16.3 percent of the entire population. However, Dalits are over represented in the slum dwelling population in

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26) Senthil Kumar, PhD, School of Physics, University of Hyderabad on February 23, 2008. 2) S Amravathi, national level young woman boxer, Centre of Excellence, Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, on November 4, 2009. 3) Bandi Anusha, B.Com final year, Villa Mary College, Hyderabad, on November 5, 2009 3) G.Varalakshmi, B.Tech first year, Vignan Engineering College, Hyderabad, on January 30, 2011
27) Anoop Kumar, A list of dalit students committing suicide in last four years in India’s premier institutions, Insaf-International South Asia forum, available at - http://www.insafbulletin.net/archives/972, seen on 29th September 2015
29) Census 2011
Hyderabad at 20 percent. The other communities in the Hyderabad slums are those of the OBC at 50.56 percent and scheduled tribes at 4 percent\(^{30}\).

There are many slums in Hyderabad where only Dalits lives. Malas are highly concentrated in Chinthal Basti, while Madigas and Lambadas are in Addagutta Basti and Singareni colony respectively. Caste-based slums are in fact the continuation of village caste practises of untouchability in the modern city space. A majority of Dalits and other marginalised communities live in the slums. Slum dwellers are vulnerable to many diseases and dangerous situations. As observed by Chandramouli,

---A Slum has been defined as residential areas where dwellings are unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light, or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to safety and health”.\(^{31}\)

Dalits are untouchables in the villages and untouchables in Hyderabad too. They were untouchables centuries back and they are untouchables even today in the era of globalisation. As I mentioned above, Dalits constitute a majority of (90\%)\(^{32}\) scavengers in the villages and in urban areas such as districts, the Assembly, and Mandal head quarters, small towns and the state capital of Hyderabad. Amongst Dalits in Hyderabad, a majority are Madigas (80\%), and within Madigas, a majority are Madiga women (90\%). The Madigas who are not accepted in the urban scavenging profession remain in the villages as drumbeaters and agriculture labourers. Very few of them own lands, while very few of these lands are cultivable. Compared to the Madigas, the Mala community are found less in number in the scavenging profession (5\%). A majority of Malas are agricultural labourers in the agricultural lands of

\(^{30}\) *Slum Free City Plan of Action*, for Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, p.32
\(^{32}\)Percentages calculated with the data provided by the officials in the GHMC (Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation) and through the employees of town Panchayats and municipalities in the districts of Telangana. Also the field observations through interview with the scavengers support the existing data mentioned above
dominant feudal caste landlords. The remaining 5% of scavengers are from the Lambada, Muslim and most backward communities such as the Chakali (Rajaka - washer man), Mangali (barber) etc. communities. The dominant castes such as those of the Brahman, Reddy, Velama, Komati and the dominant BC communities not found in the scavenging profession anywhere in Telangana.

The fact that most of the Madigas and Malas are found in the scavenging profession does not mean that it is a hereditary profession for them. It has been forced hereditary through the sanction of the caste system that places them at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. In the Telangana villages, Dalits were asked to sweep the village roads and remove dead animals amongst other derogatory forms of occupations. The Madiga community in particular beat drums for the marriages, deaths, festivals and social occasions. Stitching leather footwear, making agricultural equipments with leather are the caste occupations assigned to the Dalits. Therefore, when it comes to the urban spaces, they continue to be employed in only the filthy and menial jobs in the government state apparatus. Most Dalit employees are also in contractual positions without any of the legal benefits that a government employee is supposed to get. In the private sector, places of employment include construction sites, private industries, and retail shops such as grocery stores, shopping malls, clothes stores, and medical shops, nursing homes, and the catering industry where they work 12 hours a day with or without any weekly holidays. Moreover, a majority of auto drivers, security guards, attendees and peons in private institutions are Dalits.

All the above-unorganised workers considered as labour by the communist frontal organisations to mobilise them and their problems represented in a labour point of view. However, those organisations not recognising the reasons why those Dalits condemned doing these menials works. The truth behind Dalits being vulnerable to accept such livelihood options is their lower caste status in which they have been born. Caste is a social disaster that restrains the socio-economic mobility of the untouchable
communalities. Sukhadeo Thorat and Catharine S. Newman observe the same; they argue,

"Since access to source of income and economic reward under the caste system is determined by unequal assignment of rights, the result is an income distribution generally skewed along caste lines". 33 It is not that caste system determines only economic positions but that their entire life is shaped by the that caste system determines, the entire life as the Sukhadeo Thorat and Catharine S. Newman further says, "De to the hierarchical and graded nature of the caste system. Entitlements to civil, economic and educational rights of different castes narrower as one go down its hierarchical ladder".34

The caste system and its ideological practises are hurdles for the socio-economic development of the untouchable communities. It acts as a block for the development of the marginalised communities. The economic development of SC/STs depends on their access to the market; the market is and was controlled and regulated by the caste system, which by default prevents SC/STs from accessing it. Here is the substantiation on the corporate sector:

"The empirical results show that caste diversity is non-existent in the Indian corporate sector and nearly 65% of the Indian corporate board members are from one caste group – the forward caste – indicating that it is a small and closed world. In the corporate world, social networking plays an important role. Still, the Indian corporate boards belong to the "old boys club" based on caste affiliation".35

33Sukhadeo Thorat and Catharine S. Newman, Blocked by Caste, Economic Discrimination in Modern India, Oxford India Paper Backs, New Delhi, 2014, p.11
34Ibid, p.8
35D Ajit, Han Donker, Ravi Saxena, Corporate Boards in India, Blocked by Caste? Economic & Political Weekly, August 11, 2012 vol xlv ii no 31, p.39
1.7. Caste Practices Forcing Dalits to the Scavenging

Every caste in Telangana is a distinct entity; has their own system of practices, food habits, and musical instruments, way of conducting ceremonies of birth, marriages and deaths, ways of dressing and their own means of living. However, many of those caste-based rituals are discriminatory and untouchability in several forms against Dalits. Child marriages, killing dalits in the name of witchcraft etc. are common practices in Telangana.

Several inhuman caste practises are prevalent in Telangana. Untouchability is practised against Dalits in more than one hundred forms. The list of in humanities extends from the village to the cities and has now become a global phenomenon. The National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) conducted a survey and identified more than 100 untouchability practises that are prevalent in the country (See Annexure-V). Below is a list of a few practises of untouchability on Dalits, based on work and descent in the hands of dominant castes.

1.7.1. Few Untouchability Practises

- Prohibition from eating with dominant caste members,
- Prohibition from marrying with other caste members
- Separate glasses for Dalits in village tea stalls, (two-glass system)
- Discriminatory seating arrangements and separate utensils in hotels
- Segregation in seating and food arrangements in village functions and festivals
- Prohibited from entering into village temples
- Prohibited from wearing sandals or holding umbrellas in front of dominant caste Jogini - Devadasi system - the ritualized temple prostitution of Dalit women
- Prohibited from entering dominant caste homes
- Prohibited from riding a bicycle inside the village
- Prohibited from using common village path
- No access to burial grounds or Separate burial grounds
• No access to common/public places and resources (wells, ponds, temples, etc.)
• Segregation (separate seating area) of Dalit children in schools
• Prohibited from contesting in elections and exercising their right to vote
• Forced to vote or not to vote for certain candidates during the elections
• Prohibiting from hoisting the national flag during Independence or Republic days
• Sub-standard wages
• Bonded Labor
• Face social boycotts by dominant castes for refusing to perform their “duties”

1.7.2. Atrocities on Telangana Dalit Adivasis

Social Activist and president of Mala Sankshema Sangham, Battula Ramprasad filed a petition under Right to information act 2005 to know the status of atrocities on Dalits in newly formed Telangana state. The information received from the officials is shocking because since its formation, Telangana State has witnessed attacks on Dalits, which have been increased by four-fold. 688 cases were registered between January to June in 2014, following the formation of the state a total of 2,879 cases were reported under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocity Act. What is more interesting is that Hyderabad, which is considered to be a global city, tops the list with 706 cases followed by Karimnagar district 489, Nalgonda 409, Mahaboobnagar 378, Khammam 224, Warangal 205, Adilabad 176, Medak 145, Nizamabad 104 and 92 cases in Rangareddy district. The increase of atrocities on Dalits is a sign that with the formation of new Telangana state the feudal dominant castes morally strengthened and committed atrocities on Dalits

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB),1,694 cases of crimes on Dalits, and 569 cases of crimes against Adivasis were registered

in 2014. The crimes listed include IPC crimes with SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, IPC crimes without prevention of SC/ST atrocities act and Protection of Civil Rights Act, among others. The rate of cognisable crimes on (per one lakh population) Dalits is 31.2 in Telangana. When it comes to Adivasis, the rate of cognisable crimes is 17.3. Women is the major targets within Dalit-Adivasi communities. They face a high incidence of sexual crimes. 87 cases of rapes, 65 cases of assault with intention to outrage modesty of Dalit women were registered; and 13 sexual harassment cases were reported. There are a greater number of cases, which remain unreported and unregistered.

Untouchability is the worst form of abuse of the human dignity of Dalits. It has forced Dalits to migrate to urban spaces, where they have to adopt any work and make further compromises for livelihood. Therefore, all scavenging workers in the municipalities are Dalits. A study conducted by the National Campaign for the Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) reveals the seriousness of the practices of untouchability. The said survey was conducted in 565 villages in 11 major states of India. They make obvious that the cruel and illegal practice of untouchability is highly prevalent in modern India:

According to the study,

--In as many as 38% of government schools, Dalit children are made to sit separately while eating. In 20 percent schools, Dalits children not even permitted to drink water from the same source. Shockingly, 27.6% of Dalits are prevented from entering police stations and 25.7% from entering ration shops. 33% of public health workers refused to visit Dalit homes, and 23.5% of Dalits still do not get letters delivered in their homes. Segregated seating for Dalits is found in 30.8% of self-help groups and cooperatives, and 29.6% in Panchayat offices.

37Nikhila Henry, A.P., Telangana account for 12.6 p.c. of crimes against Dalits, data show, The Hindu, newspaper, 29th August 2015
In 14.4% of villages, Dalits were not permitted even to enter the Panchayat building. In 12% of villages surveyed, Dalits were denied access to polling booths, or forced to form a separate line. In 48.4% of surveyed villages, Dalits were denied access to common water sources. In 35.8%, villages Dalits were denied entry into village shops. They had to wait at some distance from the shop, the shopkeepers kept the goods they bought on the ground, and accepted their money similarly without direct contact. In teashops, again in about one-third of the villages, Dalits were denied seating and had to use separate cups. In as many as 73% of the villages, Dalits were not permitted to enter non-Dalit homes, and in 70% of villages, non-Dalits would not eat together with Dalits.

In more than 47% villages, bans operated on wedding processions on public (arrogated as upper-caste) roads. In 10 to 20% of villages, Dalits were not allowed even to wear clean, bright or fashionable clothes or sunglasses. They could not ride their bicycles, unfurl their umbrellas, wear sandals on public roads, smoke or even stand without their head bowed. Restrictions on temple entry by Dalits average as high as 64%, ranging from 47 % in UP to 94% in Karnataka. In 48.9% of the surveyed villages, Dalits were barred from access to cremation grounds.

In 25% of the villages, Dalits paid lower wages than other workers did. They were also subjected to much longer working hours, delayed wages, verbal and even physical abuse, in 37% of the villages, Dalit workers were paid wages from a distance, to avoid physical contact. In 35% of villages, Dalit producers were barred from selling their produce in local markets”.  

Apart from untouchability, Telangana Dalits also subjected to other inhuman caste practises. As Bhangya Bhukya writes, “Beside the untouchability, the dalits of Telangana were subjected to *vetti* (free labour), *bhagela/jeetham* (forced labour) and *Jogini* (temple girl) practices. These practices forced dalits into a subalternity…” The other forms of caste practises are bonded labour, Vetti, Devadasi and killing Dalits on the name of witches.

1.7.3. Bonded Labour

Bonded labour is a form of slavery that originated from the feudal caste system in Telangana. All untouchable castes are the victims of this practise. Babu Mathew argues,

— The bonded labour system is one such. It is something, which is lesser known and it, is less recognised partly because it is camouflaged within the wider evils of the caste system itself. To begin with, it is interesting to note that not all Dalits may be bonded labour but almost all bonded labourers are Dalits, especially when it comes to the agrarian sector. It is therefore not just a form of economic exploitation. It is very much a social form, a cultural form and may even be considered a political form”.

Bonded labour continues to persist in the agriculture sector and has spread into other sectors as well. A bonded labour earns a meagre amount of Rs. 5000 per annum. That means he earns only about Rs. 400 per month i.e., about Rs. 13 per day. With this scanty amount, an agriculture labourer and his family are expected to subsist on this amount. The annual payment in case of child-bonded labour is Rs. 3000. All bonded labourers are Dalits. Young boys

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40Babu Mathew, forward to _the understanding and eradicating bonded labour in India_, compiled by Kiran Kamal Prasad, Jana Jagruthi Prakashana, Bangalore, 2008, p. 5
are expected to bear the family burden at an early age. No government scheme, including free compulsory education, reaches them. The agriculture sector, which is mainly dominated by big landholders, opts for commercial crops instead of encouraging the crops that are consumable by human beings. Bonded labourers in Telangana are forced to work for more than 18 hours in a day. Their work begins as early as 4 am in the morning, with the removing of the manure of the livestock that belongs to his feudal master, followed by an entire day's work at the fields. His day ends at 9 in the night with feeding the cattle.

Bhangya Bhukya describes this as,

“Another practice attached to dalits was bhagela (Bonded labour) or Jeethagadu. It is difficult to translate precisely what these terms mean. It signifies a sort of bonded labour with limited freedom. A large number of dalits were employed on these terms. Every landholder maintained a number of Jeetagallu depending upon the land area and workload. This institution had been in existence for a long time in the state. Remuneration was generally yearly and in kind, besides interest-free advances on occasions such as children's marriages and festivals, and for daily needs like clothing and guntachutta (a kind of cigar). The practice was that once a Jeethagadu registered with a landholder it was difficult for him to extract himself; sometimes the bond extended to his children. Each landlord would have ten to fifty bhagelas—the larger the number of bhagelas, the higher their status and influence in society. Pratap Reddy of Ghanapur village of Mulugu taluka in Warangal district had forty-three bhagelas on his one thousand or more acres of land”.

This practice of bonded labour is continues today in Telangana even after there were efforts by the Dalit social activists of Hyderabad that forced the Nizam to bring a legislation to eradicate bonded labour in 1923 and

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41Bhukya, p.7
in 1944\textsuperscript{42}. This was followed by the Special Act by the Government of India in 1976 the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act. The programmes of eradication of bonded labour did not take place as envisaged in the law except in places of very few government administrators who have been personally interested in the cause. According to the statistics of 1982, provided by Balagopal\textsuperscript{43}, there were 13,422 bonded labourers identified in Andhra Pradesh, out of which only 8,620 were provided with a rehabilitation package of Rs 1869, although the Act requires the amount to be Rs 4000. However, the state government has spent very little for the rehabilitation of each bonded labourer; make it difficult to come out of the clutches of the feudal landholders. According to the guidelines of the Indian Institution of Public Administration, every bonded labourer should receive Rs 20,000 as rehabilitation package enabling them to buy at least an acre of cultivable land.

Dalit social activist Charles Wesley has studied the aftermath of the introduction of the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act in 1976. According to him,

—The landholders who were harassing Dalit families for generations with the practice of bonded labour learnt about the rehabilitation package awarded to labourers on release of bonded labour. They used this opportunity to make more money. Some landholders produced their bonded labour before the local Thahsildar and took the money, while retaining the latter in earlier conditions of bondage. Some landholders have even produced Dalits who were not in bondage to get this money”.\textsuperscript{44}

Because of the non-implementation of programmes for the eradication of bonded labour, this practise spread into sectors apart from agriculture sector. Bonded labour has taken various forms in different sectors.

\textsuperscript{42} Bhukya, p.20
\textsuperscript{43} K. Balagopal, Dalitha, essays on Dalit Identity and assertion, Perspectives, Hyderabad, 2011, p. 19
\textsuperscript{44} Charles Wesley Meesa, Interviewed by Karthik Navayan in Hyderabad on 18\textsuperscript{th} October 2015
in urban areas. Bonded labourers in cities work in conditions similar to that of bonded labourers in villages. The modern bonded labourers in the cities work as sanitation workers, manhole workers with municipalities and domestic servants in houses, in Kirana shops, hospitals, and other private institutions.

1.7.4. The Child Bonded Labourers in Hyderabad

According to the recent estimates, around 40,000 households in the city of Hyderabad employ children as domestic workers. At least 15-20 child domestic servants are employed in any multi-storied apartment in a city. They are otherwise invisible to the outside world. As the employers go out to their offices, these child labourers are locked inside the apartments with no hopes of dreaming about their own future.

Most of these children hail from drought affected rural areas and are from Dalit families, who are subjected to severe oppression and exploitation. They are then exported to the urban areas by traffickers for purposes of domestic enslavement in the cities. Girl children are the most vulnerable. They hail from the poorest of the poor in the drought prone rural areas. Traffickers promise their parents good money, food and clothing for the children. However, once the child is brought to the city as domestic servant, they turn them into slaves of rich families and leave them to face the inhuman workload, torture, rape, sometimes even murder. Often such children go ‘missing’ and many are even found in jails on false charges of thievery. Among the type of families that seek and employ Dalit girls as child labour are mostly those that hail from the middle classes with secured Government jobs. Moreover, the kind of wages and salaries they dole out to the toiling girls is a paltry monthly sum of Rs. 200 or on occasion Rs. 300/- a month.45

1.7.5. Vetti System

Vetti system is another form of feudal caste practice. It is different from bonded labour. Bonded labour is where an individual and his family remain in bondage to a feudal landholder for generations to meet the demands of a small debt. Vetti is a practice where all communities in the village are expected to provide services and products to the feudal landholder families free of cost.

Puchalapally Sundaraiah has explained this vetti practice as,

—in Telangana *getti* system was an all-pervasive social phenomenon affecting all classes of people, in varying degrees. Each harijan (Harijan is the word used by Gandhi to address untouchable communities, however, in today’s context the word harijan is considered as a derogatory term and avoided using it by Dalits and by the governments) family had to send one man from the family to do *getti*. In a small hamlet (palle), each house will send one man. Their daily job consisted of householdwork in the house of the Patel, patwarimali-patelori Deshmukhs, to carry reports to police stations, taluka office (Tahsil); keep watch on the village *chavadi* and the poundage. Besides these, there used to be more work for them whenever an officer came to the village *chavadi*. In the village Chillakuru, 16 harijans used to do *getti* daily. They used to collect wood for fuel from the forests and carry post*.46

Sundaraiah further says,

—the harijans, who carried on the work of cobblers, tanning of leather and stitching shoes, or preparing leather accessories for agricultural operations, for drawing water from wells or yoke belts for plough

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46Puchalapally Sundaraiah, *Telangana Peoples struggle and its lessons*, Desraj Chadha, on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), 1972, Calcutta, p. 21-24
cattle, or for draught bullocks, were forced to supply these to the landlords free of cost in exchange of other agricultural produce. Certain other backward communities, like boyalu, bestalu and chakali (watermen) were forced to carry on their shoulders, men and women of the landlord families. Toddy-tappers had to tap toddy and set apart 5 to 10 trees for exclusively free supply to the landlords' families. Weavers had to supply clothes to the landlords' household servants. The carpenters and blacksmiths were to supply agricultural implements to the landlords free and also carry out free repairs. Watermen were forced to wash clothes and vessels in the houses of the Deshmukhs and village officials.

Potters had to give the necessary pots to the officers and landlords. Barbers had to do daily service in the houses of the Deshmukhs and during the night were required to press the feet of the landlord and massage his body. Shepherds were forced to give sheep from each of their herd on every auspicious function in the landlord's house or on all village festival days. The merchants in the villages had to take turns to supply, by orders of the police Patel, all the commodities including good ghee to any officer who came to the village. Villagers, especially the poor who had no other goods to supply were forced to supply fowls. The peasants were also not spared of vetti. They had to till the lands of village officials and landlords before they could take up work on their own fields. Moreover, until the landlords' lands were watered, the peasants would not get water for their fields. Agricultural labourers had to work in the fields of officials and landlords without any remuneration and then only see to their own livelihood needs. These various forms of forced labour and exactions were extracted not only by the landlords but also by all the officials, petty or high, either living in the villages or when they came on tours or on special visits.

The worst of all these feudal exactions was the prevalence of keeping girls as "slaves" in landlords' houses. When landlords gave their daughters in marriage they presented these slave girls and sent them along with their married daughters, to serve them in their new homes. These slave girls were
used by the landlords as concubines. Thus, the *vetti* system had made the life of the Telangana people one of utter degradation and of abject serfdom. It had ruined man's self-respect completely.\(^{47}\)

This situation existed in Telangana until a few decades ago. Due to the interventions of Communist and Naxalite parties, there has been some change in the situation. However, most of the feudal landholders have entered the domain of politics. They have even infiltrated the Naxalite and Communist parties, claiming to be representatives of the people. The marginalised communities have become the foot soldiers of these political parties and serve them free of cost without any personal benefit to their families, by involving them in all kinds of works, from tying banners to distributing pamphlets and mobilising the masses for party meetings. This may be compared with the modern forms of vetti. This practice of vetti has not been eradicated completely but has its presence in the rural Telangana until now. Dalits who are employed with the Gram Panchayat and Mandal revenue offices are treated in a manner similar to Dalit vetti workers. There are thousands of such workers in the roles of Safai, Sunkari, Neerati and Kavalikadu, Sethu Sindhu workers, who are not on the payrolls of the government and have been working for decades on the very small amount of Rs 600 or Rs 1000 per month.

1.7.6. Devadasi

Devadasi, Jogini, Parvathi, Thayamma, Mathamma, Murali and Basivi are the different names of the practices of temple prostitution in Telangana, where young girls from Dalit communities are dedicated in the name of god as sex slaves by the dominant caste communities of the village.

The Devadasi or Jogini system is one where a girl, at a very tender age, is married to a local God or Goddess. Following the marriage, she is not allowed to remarry and have a husband in the typical sense of the term, but has

\(^{47}\)Puchalapally Sundaraiah, p.21-24
visiting partners. The relationship with the partners is usually maintained sequentially. However, there are exceptions to this. The Jogini bears children with her partners. The Jogini and her children usually stay in the same house with her parents. Over time, variations have emerged in the Jogini system.

Different scholars have adopted different theories to explain the origin of the Devadasi system. Jamanadas argues that the present Devadasis are the degraded Buddhist nuns of ancient India. He says,

> Jogan Shankar observes that, none of the numerous theories provides explanations satisfactorily that trace the reasons for the origin of the Devadasi system. However inadequate they may be, they help us in our inquiry, so he gives the list of such theories: One, the custom of dedicating girls to temples emerged as a substitute for human sacrifice, being and offering to the gods and goddesses to appease and secure blessings for the community as a whole. Two, it is a rite to ensure the fertility of the land and the increase of human being and animal population on the principle of Homeopathic magic. Three, it is part of phallic worship, which existed in India from early Dravidian times. Four, Sacred prostitution probably sprang from the custom of providing sexual hospitality to strangers; and if the living mortal wives of a deity offer such hospitality, prosperity would bind to result. Five, the Devadasi cult simply represents the licentious worship offered by a people, subservient to the degraded stakes of the priestly class. Six, the Devadasi system is a deliberately created custom in order to exploit lower caste people in India by upper castes and classes.  

Jamanadas agrees with the sixth point of Jogan Shankar and argues that the origin of the devadasi system lies in the fall of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent. –The Devadasi system is a deliberately created custom in order to exploit lower caste people in India by upper castes and classes as: (a) the

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upper castes have influenced the establishment of an order of prostitutes who are licensed to carry on their profession under the protective shield of religion. 
(b) The establishment of such system facilitates them the access to low caste women to fulfil their carnal desire. (c) The setting up of such a system can destroy the lower castes' sense of self-respect in a society, Jogan Shanker believes that the other theories cannot explain why only Bahujan girls have been becoming Devadasis and not the others. Therefore, his theory of exploitation of lower castes by the upper castes is very sound. But it is the effect of Devadasi cult, and not the cause, as we will see later’.  

He also argued the same in another book titled *Tirupathi Balaji was a Buddhist Shrine* where he says,

"In certain castes the system of offering at least one daughter from the family was rampant in almost all families of the caste. It is well known that 95% of the Devadasis today belong to the caste of Untouchables, who were of course Buddhists originally. The system was present in almost all parts of India, though in South, it was more prevalent. These dancing girls and their male counterparts had different names in different parts of the country, and the important point to note is that the pair was, and even today is, considered not as husband and wife but as brother and sister, the relation that existed among the Buddhist nuns and Bhikshus”  

He further says,

"The Devadasi system started around the ninth or tenth century after the fall of Buddhism, during the so called 'Rajput period'. Many Buddhist temples were converted to Brahmanic ones during the period. It was the Buddhist system of at least one girl or a boy from each house to join the Sangha. The Bhikkus were killed; some ran away to foreign lands, some accepted Brahmanism and became low grade

49 Ibid
Brahmins. Then what happened of these bhikunis? We know that during the last phase of Buddhism, it was Vajra Yana, which prevailed. In later stages of this religious system, the importance of women in the religious practices had increased. As a matter of fact all tantras, Hindu as well as Buddhist, used women as media, in their religious practices. The system of untouchability had started during the late Gupta period, around the fifth or sixth century. How did the untouchable girls enter the sanctum sanctorum after this? These girls must have been present in the temple service before the system of untouchability started and some of the Buddhists, residing outside the villages and refused to stop eating beef of a dead cow, were condemned to be untouchables, as explained by Dr. Ambedkar. It is, therefore, our opinion, that today's Devadasis are the degraded Buddhist nuns of ancient India.\textsuperscript{51}

Despite the attempts and legislations during the Nizam’s period and in post independent India, the system of dedicating Dalit girls to village deities has been continuing. P R Venkat Swamy explains, “Jogini/Murali (devadasi) was another heinous practice in the Dalit communities, explains the specific situation of this system. Unmarried Dalit girls were dedicated to local goddess and they were being used by the caste-Hindus. This practice existed from the medieval period. Joginis were leading a disgraceful life of prostitution”.\textsuperscript{52}

There were attempts by Dalit social reformers to eradicate this inhuman system of Devadasis. Bhukya has explained,

“The Dalit reformers also made a serious attempt to liberate their community from Jogini/Murali (Devadasi) practice. Bhagya Reddy founded an organisation called Adi-Hindu Murali Nivarana Mandal to stop this practice. With the help of the state, he had largely suppressed this age-old practice. However, some conservative families were still

\textsuperscript{51}K Jamunadas, Devadasis Were Degraded Buddhist Nuns, available at - http://www.ambedkar.org/buddhism/Devadasis_Were_Degraded_Buddhist_Nuns.html, seen on 23\textsuperscript{rd} October 2015

\textsuperscript{52}P.R. Venkat Swamy, Our Struggle for Emancipation (Secunderabad, Universal Art Printers, 1955), pp. 24–26
practicing it. Arigay Ramaswamy had fought against this practice tirelessly. He raided dedication ceremonies in Hyderabad and stopped them. He also encouraged Dalits to marry Joginis, and many Joginis were married”.53

There were attempts from the government to curb the practice of Devadasi. The Government of Andhra Pradesh brought legislation in 1988 called the Andhra Pradesh Devadasis (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1988. However, it was impossible to implement because of several reasons including the understanding of the issue of Devadasis. The administration, disproportionately occupied by dominant Brahmanical individuals, never implemented the schemes and the legislation in the right spirit. The Devadasi system therefore continues to be rampant in the Telangana districts. According to the news report, –A report submitted by one-man commission recently, the two states together have about 80,000 Devadasi women. This was much over the estimated number of the AP social welfare commission, which put the figure at 24,273.

Undivided AP government by the then chief minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy appointed the commission headed by Justice Raghunath Rao, a former judge, has found that the age-old social menace is prevalent in all districts in both the states. He submitted the report on Devadasis recently stating that about 80,000 women still follow the system. The Commission in its report said that though the AP social welfare commission had submitted that there are 24,273 Devadasis, Karimnagar-5,861, Nizamabad-5,666, Mahbubnagar-2,879, Warangal-1,059,Medak-1,145, Adilabad-906, Hyderabad 740, Rangareddy231, Nalgonda-40, the actual number could be more.”54

53Bhangya, p.20
After dedication of girls as Devadasis, she is publicized to the clientele consisting of business persons and rich landlords. The one who “deflowers” her has rights over her for the rest of her life. He can leave her any time. She is then forced to lead the life of a cheap prostitute at urban brothels, by the time, she becomes an old woman her market value reduces and she is thrown out of business. She is then home to a number of diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and ends up in some village corner, deserted, discarded, disliked and dying.

In a recent study conducted by Nirmala Tammineni on the prevalence of the Jogini, system in Mahaboobnagar District of Telangana reveals that, apart from caste, the economic status of the family is also the reason for the prevalence of the Jogini system. The report says,

“Caste and Class play a significant role in thrusting Jogini system on people. Poverty and parents’ inability to get their daughter married has forced them to take the route of Jogini. This is more prevalent among Scheduled Caste communities, particularly the Madigas. With the Jogini system imposed upon by the society, traditionally on SC communities and particularly the Madigas, they have in some sense absorbed it as part of their culture and as a way to move out of poverty. Further, instead of having an unmarried daughter at home, which increases her level of vulnerability in the society, the parents believe that it is better to convert her into a Jogini. The Jogini system gives some implicit social standing to the woman particularly if she happens to meet good and responsible partners”.

It must be noted that Dalit families are poor because the village political economy places them at a lower status and deny them opportunities for their economic development.

The modernity of the Jogini system is that it has become part of village politics. The dominant caste leaders and landholders of the village play the

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role to perpetuate the Jogini system for their own interests. An International Labour Organisation study found that,

—In few cases, a lady (she may or may not be a Jogini) in the village is believed to be possessed by Goddess/God and the villagers believe that during that possession she speaks the words of Goddess/God. The woman behaves as if she is in trance, dances to drums etc. During this time, the woman will announce the name of a girl who the Goddess/God wants to be dedicated to her/him. Then the family makes that girl a Jogini in an elaborate ritual, which is also unacceptable in several ways. This method of announcing a Jogini has been exploited in many ways. Usually the name of a good-looking young girl from the most vulnerable community such as that of a SC Madiga is announced. She is then available for all in the village and is mostly exploited by upper caste men. There are no instances where the so-called God possessed woman announces the name of an upper caste or upper class girl. This method of making a Jogini has become very rare or non-existent now because it involves a form of public pronouncement. With Anti-Jogini system laws in place and with increased awareness, girls are converted into Joginis quietly rather than publicly”.

Though there are laws in place prohibiting conversion of girls into Joginis, some cases go unnoticed. The levels of awareness among all communities about the Jogini system are high but the police and administrators act as mute spectators, so that the dedicating as Jogini has not completely halted. Girls are still being converted for one or more of the above stated reasons. Further, the law is not strictly implemented and the guilty are not punished.

Even if a Jogini woman of this generation has not engaged in sex trade, she is still looked down by the society as she is branded along with other Joginis that are engaged in sex trade. Further, she cannot escape the pestering

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56 Tammineni Nirmala, p.3
of men, who want to have a physical relationship with her. Children of Joginis find it difficult to get marriage alliances. Those who agree to marry children of Joginis are necessarily from economically weaker sections, thus limiting the choices of economic betterment for the latter.

In addition to the above, Joginis may face discrimination from their own children. As the children grow up, they question the mother about her practices. The situation worsens when the children are married. In many cases, particularly Joginis of the earlier generations are known to give up her relationship with the partner after her children have grown up. This means she will live alone without a companion for the rest of her life. Instances of sons and daughters-in-law abusing their Jogini mother-in-law, both verbally and physically are also known. The Joginis then very vulnerable, made so not only by society but by her own children as well.

Sex trade and/or engaging multiple partners combined with alcoholism have created a less conducive environment for Jogini children. They are called names and ridiculed in the society. Younger Joginis are educating their children and considering putting them in hostels, so they can stay away from the environment at home.

1.7.7. Killing Dalits on the Name of Witchcraft

Killing Dalits and branding them as witches is another part of the feudal caste system in Telangana. Many Dalit women and men have been killed in the name of sorcery, because of their vulnerable status in the village political economy. If we look at this situation, literacy does not appear to make a difference to people’s beliefs. Even the educated endorse superstitions to sustain the caste system in villages and use these beliefs, as a tool to eliminate assertive and land owned well to do Dalits families. (See Annexure –VI - List of Human sacrifices and killings, attacks on the name of witchcraft - 2010-2012).

Stoning to death, parading naked, tonsuring, urinating in the mouth, burning with beedi and cigarettes, burning alive, teeth extractions, drawing out
eyeballs are different modes through which Dalits are tortured and killed, especially for resisting the village caste hierarchy. An old Dalit couple was brutally killed after being paraded naked in the village of Ullithimmayipally of Chegunta Mandal in Medak district of Telangana in May 2010. In a family of five members, the old couple lived with their son, a married daughter and a son-in-law. The old couple prayed to the killers and touched their feet to spare them. They were brought to the centre of the village after being paraded naked. The killers wanted to burn them alive, but some of them advised that burning them alive in the village centre would bring bad luck to the village, so the couple were brought back to their home, who by now was unconscious. Firewood was brought and the couple were set to fire, alive.

Two Dalit families were caught in a property dispute; the village dominant castes decided the case against the victims’ family. They did not agree to the judgement of the dominant castes, who then decided to teach a lesson to the said family. The village dominant castes began harassing the family on a daily basis. Their only unmarried son was killed by the village dominant castes. Fearing for their lives, the daughter and the son in-law deserted the old couple, the village and their whereabouts are unknown. Following false allegations of sorcery, and diseased cattle, some of the Dalit families also supported the fraudulent claims of the dominant castes. This effectively isolated the old Dalit couple and led to their brutal killing.

In another case, a Dalit woman Jangamma was paraded naked and burnt alive before her own children in Mahammadapuram village of Nampally Mandal of Nalgonda district of Telangana. Jangamma’s children pleaded with the dominant caste people to spare their mother, but she was mercilessly burnt alive before them. These are only a few cases but these kinds of incidents are taking place in hundreds every year. 175, 179, 123 and 212 people were killed in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. All of them are Dalits and
marginalised communities people have been killed by the feudal dominant castes in the Telangana villages. 57

The village society is the main unit of India’s unequal social order as Ambedkar observed, “The Hindu village is the working plant of the Hindu social order. One can see there the Hindu social order in operation in full swing”.58 The atmosphere in a village society has not been conducive for change right from Ambedkar's time. Some people in the villages have been exploiting the superstitious beliefs of the common people. There are social, political, economic, and psychological and health related reasons connected to superstitions such as Banamathi, Chillangi etc. Most of the victims of oppressive practices are Dalits. 90 percent of people who are killed in the name of Banamathi (Witchcraft) are also Dalit Bahujan. Killing dalits in the name of Banamathi is a part of caste-based oppression. Dalits are kept uneducated for centuries but how Can an illiterate Dalit chant Sanskrit mantras? How is it possible? On the other hand, is it possible for a Brahmin who captured Sanskrit and education since ages?

1.7.8. Women Are the Worst Victims

In most cases, Dalit Bahujan women are the worst victims of caste oppression. A Dalit Madiga woman belonging to Kannepalli village of Luxettipet Mandal, Adilabad district was killed by dominant castes in 1990. They accused her of being a sorceress. They did not even spare her husband and children; the entire family of 5 members was killed, her son, aged 16 years, Tandra Gopal, who was a student in class 10 reached home the same evening and was killed with the rest of the family in the night.59

In some cases, if women had properties in their names, the village dominant castes have instigated their own family members against those

57 Digambar Kamble, Samatha Sainik Dal – South, Interview by Karthik Navayan, in Hyderabad on 28th October 2015  
58 Ambedkar quoted in Surindar S Jodka, Nation and Village Images of Rural India in Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar, Economic and Political Weekly August 10, 2002, p. 3344  
59 Tirupathi, Kannepalli villager, interviewed by Karthik Navayan 4th August, 2015 in Luxettipet
women, projecting them as sorcerers, and killing them. In other instances, Dalit women were sexually exploited by the village dominant castes. If some of them refused to yield, they were branded as sorcerers, paraded naked, and later killed. In one instance, a Dalit family head was killed in the name of practicing witchcraft. The actual reason was that he refused to vote for a particular party. The superstitions are used as oppressive methods against Dalits and Dalit women. There are several interconnected social, political and economic causes for the continued existence of these superstitions.

People from marginalised communities in rural Telangana are dying of minor diseases due to lack of proper medical facilities. Illiteracy and ignorance are adding to the problems. If somebody in a family gets ill, there is a tendency among ignorant villagers to suspect the family's immediate enemy. Suspicions about their enemies having practised sorcery sometimes leads to a sort of mass hysteria, and even murder in rural areas. It appears there are psychological reasons for the inferiority complex engendered by caste oppression, which affects the behaviour of many Dalits in the villages.

Ilamma (60) belonged to a Scheduled Caste (Mala) community. She had a husband, a daughter and a son. The entire village (Jukal village, Chityala mandal, Warangal district in Telangana region) believed she was a sorcerer and held her responsible if the buffaloes stopped giving milk, or if children fell ill. In the year 2000, villagers boycotted her family. In due course, her daughter-in-law, also started projecting Ilamma as a sorcerer, probably because she felt the old woman was a heavy burden to feed, and held her responsible for her father's death. Ilamma left the village and went to her sister's place in Bethikal village, Huzurabad Mandal, in Karimnagar district. After three years, one night in 2003, the village suspected that Ilamma had placed lemons before a few houses. The villagers, reportedly, searched Ilamma's house and found some lemons and turmeric powder in a bag. The furious villagers made her eat human excreta; they accused Ilamma of wandering around the village, at midnight, on amavasya and pournami days. As of now, there is nobody to feed Ilamma. She can't toil. She is still alive like

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60Mukka Ilaiah, interview by Karthik Navayan on 21st October 2015 in Hyderabad
a living corpse with torn clothes and hunger in Sirsapally of Huzurabad Mandal. So many Ilammas are being victimized by the negligent attitude of caste society. Certainly, no women belongs to dominant castes would have subjected to such treatment by the village society.

If the accusations of villagers were true, there could be some psychological health reasons behind her behaviour. She may be suffering from some mental illness. However, there is no one in the village, who could analyse and explain these things to the people. Official in the village Panchayat, Hospital or Revenue department do not have any understanding of these things. Civil society and the government have that responsibility but they could not discharge because of they treat Dalits as untouchables and lower human beings who can be allowed to suffer. Still society's and state administration's eyes remain closed.

Killing Dalits in the name of sorcery is one kind of violation of human rights. Bihar state government recognized the necessity and brought the Prevention of Witch Practices Act -1999. Rajasthan Women's Commission chairperson Pawan Surana proposed to the state government to enact a similar legislation. The law in Bihar punishes a person who brands anybody as a sorcerer with imprisonment. Similar legislations need to be brought in all the states including Telangana. In 2003, a private member bill was introduced in Rajyasabha by Bimba Raikar the Women and Girls (Prevention of Stripping, Teasing, Molestation, Branding as Witches and Offering as Devadasis) Bill, 2003 However, now the Bill, the entry under `Status' column reads, "Lapsed on Rajya Sabha."

Naxalite Movement is strong in Telangana area for more than half a century. However in every village of Telangana, killings and atrocities in the name of sorcery have occurred. There is a need any progressive movement to rectify the mistakes and relentless efforts should be made to foster cultural enlightenment in the village communities.

The one legislation that is available to punish the charlatans who deceive people is The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable
Advertisements) Act, 1954. If this act is properly implemented, most Babas, Swamijees, fake hermits would end up behind the bars. However, some people in the government are encouraging such Babas and Swamijees and this act is not sufficient to solve all the problems. Therefore, there is need for a special legislation at the national level.

The High Court of Andhra Pradesh delivered a sensational judgment on 3rd October 2007. The details of the case are: In Thimmapur village, Sangem Mandal, Warangal district on 2nd August 2000, all the villagers caught KolkanuriYellaiah, Kolkanuri Rajamma, Merolla Upakantha, Velpula Narsamma, and Settiboina Ilumallu. All the five were beaten brutally and later burnt alive alleging that all of them were practicing witchcraft. Warangal district court dismissed this case on 9th June 2003 stating that there were no proper evidences. Police appealed to the High Court. The Division bench consisting of Justice K.C.Banu and D.S.R Verma gave their verdict: life sentence to 19 accused, leaving others as innocent. At least 19 killers were punished. We have to appreciate the efforts of the police in this case. If they show the same enthusiasm in each case, more such incidents can be prevented.

If government really has the political will and commitment to prevent killings in the name of sorcery, it should launch a continuous campaign against this superstition. It is well and good if it creates a permanent mechanism for that at state level. The Departments like police, revenue, education and health should organize special programmes against these practices. Every Panchayat should take up special programs. The government should take up preventive measures and allocate adequate funds.

All the killings in the name of sorcery have happened due to the negligent attitude of the government. Most of the attacks are being committed against Dalits. Hence, cases against perpetrators can be booked under Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act – 1989, and preventive measures can be taken. However, cases are being registered only under IPC and not under SC/ST (POA) Act, thus helping the culprits. The government should launch a continuous campaign against these superstitions.
This can be actualized only if people and government, with a strong political will, work together.

The practice of untouchability and other caste-based discriminations, killings of Dalits in Telangana is day today phenomenon is the result of caste ideology that operates as a state apparatus in all sectors of government be it judiciary, police, revenue administrations. Caste system, its hierarchal power relations and cultural practises have become part of government protocol in Telangana and that is the strength of the perpetrators of the atrocities on Dalits, without such state support it is impossible for dominant castes to continue the suppression of a Dalits. The caste system classified certain people as lower, and assigned them menial jobs in the traditional caste line. Therefore, by default, the marginalised communities continue to be in lower social hierarchy in government structures. They were excluded, denied the access to power and entitlements and remained as marginalised to the sanitation work in the all the municipalities in the state.

It is the caste practices and discrimination that produced the 100 percent sanitations workers from Dalit communities, it is not only because they born as untouchables, it is because of caste operates in day today political economy in the Telangana society. Untouchability in Telangana was at its peak, the ex untouchable communities denied access to education and wealth, they forced to work as bonded labourer without any pay for generations, and they did not have access to water bodies. S R. Shankaran says,

I have seen untouchability being put into practice, despite constitutional and legal commandments to the contrary. I can even now recall the image of Dalit women sitting on the banks of a water tank with a pot in her hand, waiting for someone to 'pour' water from the tank into her pot, since, being an untouchable, she was forbidden from entering the tank and collecting the water herself. I have been appalled at the manner in which derogatory suffixes are attached to the names of people from untouchable community to depict their lowly status in the caste hierarchy. I have personally seen the exploitation of bonded
labourers, many of whom bonded for generations for repayment of partly sums taken as a loan from landlords. I have seen fear writ large on the face of Dalits while in the presence of big landlords, known as Doras in the Telangana area and have felt intensity of social oppression donated by the expression ‘I am your slave‘ I touch your feet’ which was the compulsory conventional salutation with which untouchables were called upon to address people belonging to the so-called upper castes”. 61

The discrimination, poverty is leading high migration of Dalit according to a rough estimate by Baddi Hemanth, who lives in Mumbai as the editor of Telangana Today:

―About 23 Lakh people migrated to Mumbai from Telangana region during the last three decades. Out of them 10 lakhs people belongs to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes--four lakhs Mala, five lakhs Madigas and 1 Lakh other scheduled tribes and about 50 thousand Lambada tribes. All of them are construction labourers, out of 10 lakhs SC STs in Mumbai only 2000 people having own house and rest of the people live in rented houses or as a pavement dwellers‖. 62

The old feudal caste system of Telangana continues today in new forms in all spheres of life. A feudal capitalist system emerged in place of feudal caste system. The village feudal castes have emerged as a contractors of civil works, wine shops at the same time they invested in the establishment of educational institutions. The majority of them are the political leaders in all mainstream parties, which maintain caste statuesque including the Naxalite, and communist parties, which did not talk about the unequal caste structure and its socioeconomic dimensions. The total strength of MLAs in the Telangana assembly is 119 out of which 41 MLAs belongs to single

61 SR Shankaran , forward to _My Father Balaiah_, written by YB Sathyanarayana, HarperCollins, 2011,p. XII
community; Reddy caste which constitutes only approximately 6 percent of total population of Telangana and those 41 Reddy caste MLAs represent different political parties

There is a history to this state of affairs. The Reddys were the first feudatories in Telangana under the Qutub Shahi rulers of Golconda and later the Nizams. They advantageously aligned with the primary rulers, at the same time maintaining their own hegemony over their provinces. This combined with the fact the Reddys ruled Coastal Andhra, made them the dominant community in the state. They were powerful financially because possessing large amounts of land. After independence and formation of Andhra Pradesh, they of course dominated the state political scene.

Throughout undivided state of Andhra Pradesh, Reddy community entirely dominated the Congress Party. The powerful chief ministers, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy and Kasu Brahmananda Reddy ruled the undivided Andhra Pradesh State between 1956 and 1971. Therefore As it is appearing today, The Reddys in the state assembly are approximately 28 percent between 1957 and 1967 the Reddys are 28%, in the Assembly. In the initial stage, Andhra Pradesh and Hyderabad had Brahmin Chief Ministers but after 1956, the wheel of power changed hands completely and came under the Reddys’ control. It was not just the Congress party; the Left too including the extreme left was under their leadership like Tarimela Nagi Reddy, Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy and Bhimireddy Narsimha Reddy. The Reddys being in the leadership of the Telangana armed struggle in 1940 to 1950, they benefitted enormously by occupying the Nizams lands. Soudaaruna a Bahujan activist

63 The Qutub Shahi dynasty Ruled kingdom of Golconda. This dynasty spanned 171 years in the history of South India that covering present Telangana region between 1512–1687
64 Tarimala Nagi Reddy (11 February 1917 – 28 July 1976), often called "TN", was a communist politician from Andhra Pradesh, India. He was born in a wealthy family in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.
65 Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India. He was a member of the 12th and 14th Lok Sabha of India. He represented the Nalgonda constituency of Telangana.
66 Bhimireddy Narsimha Reddy was member of the Communist Party of India, which led the peasant struggle that is famous as the Telangana Rebellion. The Communist Party of India led the rebellion under the banner of Andhra Mahasabha
argues that “Telangana armed struggles is the struggle of small Zameendars to grab the lands under the big Zameendars on the name of Bahujan Kouldars (tenant)”67. Except the dominant castes, no SC ST BCs have lands out of this Telangana armed struggle.

The feudal and Brahmanical caste system with its discriminatory practices is a social disaster the Dalits. The above explained caste practices are the reason for the terming Dalit communities as scavenging communities. There is not much difference when it comes to the castes in the villages and in the cities. The situation is worsening day-to-day

**Conclusion**

The present chapter explained the feudal and Brahmanical nature of Telangana caste system. Caste practises that discriminate Dalits, and restrains their development in any form by denying the opportunities and forcing them to continue in the age-old caste forced occupation as modern slavery that is scavenging. Wherever Dalits questioning and raising voice against the oppressions, they were attacked and killed. It is to be noted that the feudal caste system is reconfigured in modern day Telangana and continuing its discriminatory practises in modern forms in modern institutions. The state apparatus in Telangana practise caste ideology in day-to-day administration on the name of practise and usage. Those are the reasons for underdevelopment Dalits in Telangana. They were remained as untouchables though there were several efforts for their development from themselves and from state interventions in independent India, the failure and non-implementation of reservations is major reason in the list. The next chapter, caste and modernity in Telangana will explore the modernity and caste in Telangana and discuss how the caste practises have taken different forms and continuing their discriminatory nature consequently institutionalising caste hierarchies in modern institutions placing Dalits in only menial jobs.

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