CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

'If Lenin was born in India, he would not have even let the idea of revolution come to his mind before he had completely buried casteism and untouchability'

– Dr. B R Ambedkar

India is quite undeniably the most stratified society in the world. Over and above huge income disparities, there are castes, religious, and community differences that are deeply engraved into everyday social relations.\(^1\) No doubt, the nature of caste and community interactions has changed over time, but considerations along ascriptive lines still remain important markers both at the public and private domains.

Estimates put the start of the caste system anywhere between 3000 B.C. and 1000 B.C.\(^2\) Even today it remains an important issue for Indian society with the Indian government’s proposals for caste based job quotas in the private sector and increases in caste-based reservations at institutes of higher learning. It is still an important determinant of people’s economic choices. Nehru acknowledged that the caste system was "wholly opposed to modern conditions and the democratic ideal".\(^3\) With widespread criticism the institution currently faces the persistence of this system of social stratification for 3000 years during periods of changing economic and social environments is puzzling.
The word ‘caste’ is derived from the Portuguese word ‘casta’ meaning race or breed. A ‘caste’ is hard to define and is distinct from the concept of race, class, ethnic groups, and tribes. The caste system is defined here as a form of social stratification that satisfies a given number of features and a caste (also called subcastes or jatis) is the smallest subdivision of society that has all the features of the system. The exact form of the caste system varied over time and place and is also more fluid than is usually thought.

Risley defines caste as “a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community.” It can also be defined as an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank of social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions.

It is widely argued that the following set of features define caste in its innate sense:

1. **Occupational Specialization:** Members of a caste usually followed occupations that the caste had a monopoly over. In addition, occupations were usually restricted to an ‘allowed’ subset. These restrictions were more to do
with what occupations caste members could not follow rather than what they had to follow.

2. **Purity Scale**: Occupations were usually ranked on a purity scale. Purity was also associated with self production restrictions the members undertook and the purity of occupations members undertook not to follow.

3. **Hierarchy**: There was a broad ranking of castes based on the occupations and the consumption patterns of its members. This ranking was local and fluid with changes observed over time and place. An individual’s rank was determined by the rank of his caste.\(^9\)

4. **Commensality**: Castes placed restrictions on eating and drinking with members of other castes. Actions like accepting food and drink took on a pure/impure value depending on the caste of the person this action was being undertaken with. The commensality restrictions on a caste usually were an indicator on how they ranked in the social hierarchy.\(^10\)

5. **Ascriptiveness**: A person’s caste was determined by birth. Caste membership could be taken away, by other caste members, for ‘violation of caste rules’. Marriage was also restricted to members of the same caste. Marriage within a group is termed endogamy.\(^11\)
At the start of the Manu Smriti, the occupations assigned to each caste are set out: “But in order to protect this universe He, the most resplendent one, assigned separate (duties and) occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet. To Brahmanas he assigned teaching and studying (the Veda), sacrificing for their own benefit and for others, giving and accepting (of alms). The Kshatriya he commanded to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasures: The Vaisya to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), to trade, to lend money, and to cultivate land. One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudra, to serve meekly even these (other) three castes. Of course, this theory does not exist anymore with the assertion of identities by caste groups placed at the base of the societal pyramid.12

The Brahmin class is essentially defined by its supposed priority (as the class created first by the creator god), by knowledge of the Veda, and by the monopoly this class holds on the operation of sacrifice.13 These traits justify the social position of the class vis-à-vis others: they are predominant because they are prior, and they claim to stand outside of the power relations that govern social life for others because of their superior knowledge and sole possession of the ultimate “weapons,” sacrificial techniques.14

There are, however, varying “degrees” of Brahmans, such as Kanya-Kubja, Tamil, Tanjore, and others who are part of numerous villages. These sub-castes,
called jatis, are very specifically endogamous, so that a Brahman is not only restricted to marrying another Brahman, but to marrying a woman of the same subdivision of Brahmans. Separation of these Brahmans from others is one of several indications of social status, which include material goods, social power or influence, and social skills. In modern India, economic competition and education are predominating, and the Brahmans occupy this position in both aspects.

Following the Brahmans are the Kshatriyas, or political rulers and soldiers. They were the ruling class and often times collaborated with the Brahmans as they reigned over their kingdom. The word ‘kshatra’ in Sanskrit means government, power, and dominion. Brahmans can live without rulers, but rulers cannot sufficiently execute their tasks without the aid of Brahmans.

Next are the Vaishyas, or merchants. A Vaishya's duty was to ensure the community's prosperity through agriculture, cattle rearing and trade. Though they were “twice-born” and economically strong because they controlled commerce, Vaishyas were denied a high social status, for which they resented the upper castes. One expression of this resentment was their support of the anti-Brahminical sects that developed around the 6th century BC, like Buddhism and Jainism.

Then come the Shudras, who are usually laborers, peasants, artisans, and servants. Shudras were thought to not have any special abilities and were considered only capable of serving as slaves to the upper three classes. Shudras enjoyed no rights
or privileges, and were not permitted to perform any sacrifices or homa, read or learn the Vedas or recite the mantras (prayer rituals). They were also not allowed to enter temples and could only serve the upper three castes as a slave, barber, blacksmith or cobbler. They too supported the anti-Brahminical groups that came about.²⁰

At the very bottom are those considered the “untouchables.” These individuals performed occupations that were considered unclean and polluting, such as scavenging and skinning dead animals and are considered outcastes. In some cases, the untouchables could face criminal charges if they polluted certain things with their presence. Since they were rated outside the caste system, they were destined to reside only in the outskirts of the village and were never an integral part of village community. Their services, however, were still essential to the health of the community and therefore still had to be part of the system in order to serve the upper castes.²¹

The purity scale was a central feature of the caste system. A leading anthropologist on the caste system, Louis Dumont, conceived of Indian hierarchy as “a purely relative non-competitive ranking oriented to a single idea of higher and lower”. Louis Dumont considered the relative opposition of pure and impure to be the defining characteristic that kept the caste system together. This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate, and underlies the division of labor because the pure and impure occupations must likewise be kept separate.
Occupations are ranked on the basis of purity. The key word being ‘relative’- the pure occupations are only so relative to the occupations at the lower end of the ranking.\textsuperscript{22}

In addition to occupations being ranked, castes were ranked too. The rank of a caste had two sources. The first was the number of services they could get someone else to provide for them. The more ‘impure’ services a caste would get someone else to perform for them rather than having to do it themselves, the higher the ranking of the caste.\textsuperscript{23}

The second source of purity that affected the rank of the caste was the occupation of its members. One section of a caste having taken up an occupation which is considered more respectable than those followed by other members of the caste, claims superiority on that account, refuses to let its women marry men belonging to other sections, and becomes a separate sub-caste.

Commensality was usually a means for people to keep track of the ranking of the castes. The ritual interactions which are said to be most significant for precise ranking are those which concern the giving and receiving of food, and the giving and receiving of a variety of honorific gestures and service. A change in hierarchy is accompanied by a change in commensal relationships. Commensal relations are based on a perceived ‘purity/pollution’ basis. Castes that are deemed to be more ‘pure’ find that their food is more readily acceptable and social interactions become easier.
Since hierarchy depends both on purity of occupation as well as income levels that need to be tied into a comprehensive ranking, this brings in a role for commensality restrictions. The commensality rules of the caste help people keep track of the hierarchy of the castes. Commensality rules include restrictions on who a person as a member of his caste can eat or drink with, whom he can accept food from and what kind of food he can accept. As the net impurity of the caste changes for reasons like income changes, this will change its ranking and this is made known to people by changing rules of commensality.\(^{24}\)

The ascriptiveness of the caste system is one of the most defining features of the system. However, historically, it was not always true that castes and occupations were hereditary. People could freely switch between occupations, but they were removed from their caste if they followed an occupation unique to another caste, and over time joined the caste that claimed the occupation as its unique occupation. In the early Buddhist times (prior to the 4th century B.C) people could freely switch between occupations and birth into a caste was not a constraint on occupation choice.\(^{25}\)

Endogamy was also not as important as it became later. Marriage within the class was no doubt regarded as preferable to marriage without it, but only personal prejudice and social convention stood in the way. This did change over time and the Greek visitor Megasthenes in 303 B.C. noticed that occupations were hereditary and marriages took places within castes.\(^{26}\)
According to Dumont, a pure hierarchy allows for economics and politics only surreptitiously, but only in the interstitial levels (Dumont 1988, p. 197). Otherwise, the hierarchy stands firm as its two poles stand in opposition to each other. At one extreme of this hierarchy is the Brahman (or the most pure), and at the other stands the untouchables (who are positively polluting). The castes in between are encompassed by this pure hierarchy, which is obsessively ranked on the purity/pollution principle.

There have been others before Dumont, such as Bougle (1958), Ghurye (1950), Leach (1969), Marriot (1976), and subsequently, Beck (1970), Milner (1994), and Moffat (1979) among others, who would concur with Dumont’s general position although they did not quite articulate their views in quite the same way. But the fact that castes were ranked in an undisputed hierarchy was unquestioningly accepted by all. And as castes were often linked to occupations, these too were ranked along the purity/pollution principle (Marriot 1976). If Leach (1969) could argue that competition between castes was unthinkable, then it was primarily because, in his scheme of things, each caste knew its place and abided by the overarching hierarchical order. The difference that Dumont made is that he provided the theoretical underpinning to all this by insisting that a pure hierarchy is a state of mind to which all those in the caste system willingly acquiesce. Whereas in the past this fact may have been taken as read and quietly assumed, Dumont was forthright about it for he thought that his understanding of a pure hierarchy provided the theoretical key that would explain why the Hindu genuflected spontaneously to the caste
hierarchy. As all castes are included within this all encompassing pure hierarchy, each caste ideologically participates in upholding the system as a whole (Dumont 1970, p.24).

Contemporary evidence indicates that caste identities cannot be straitjacketed within an unrelenting hierarchical grid where the status of the pure and the impure are empirically and unproblematically firm in their interactional nexus (see Gupta 2000a, pp. 54–85). In fact, this feature was noticed long ago by Senart, Bougle, and Blunt.27 For example, Senart (1930) argued that castes should be seen as units, and one should not rush into arranging them in a hierarchy.28 Even Bougle, who otherwise believed that hierarchy was an important characteristic of caste, nevertheless forcefully demonstrated that castes also mutually repel one another. That these two formulations were mutually contradictory did not strike Bougle with any degree of analytical force (Bougle 1958). Blunt was perhaps the most incisive of them all when he observed that “if the caste system was devised with the object of preserving ‘the purity of belief and ceremonial usage,’ it has been a singular failure” (Blunt 1960, p. 37). And yet, the dominant Brahmannical view so dominated the intellectuals that it was Dumont’s understanding of caste that swept Blunt, Bougle, and Senart under the carpet.

Caste System and Economic Structure

The caste system very much impacted the economic structure in the Indian village. The village was essentially a food-providing unit, where each family of the
craft or service caste was linked with one or more of the land owning-farmer-caste family. This system was known as the *jajmani* system, which survived in India up to the arrival of the British. There is a mutuality of relationship in a village community based on the exchange of goods and services between different castes.\textsuperscript{29}

Modern sociologists have listed the following castes in the colonial period. They are priest and teacher, bard and geologist, accountant, goldsmith, florist vegetable grower, rice grower, carpenter, ironworker, barber, water-bearer, shepherd, grain parcher, seamster, potter trademan, oil-presser, washerman, mat-maker, leather worker, sweeper and cess pool cleaner, Mohammedan beggar, Mohammedan glass bangle seller, Mohammedan cotton-carder, and Mohammedan dancing girl.\textsuperscript{30}

Each individual had a fixed economic and social status. Even the beggar, for example, had a fixed status. Giving alms to the beggar was considered as a religious duty so that it could be demanded as of right and each was related to others in employed-employer relationship. Basically, the same individual who was an employer in one relationship was the employed in another. It can be seen from the above list of caste distinctions that the web of economic stability and security that was provided by an individual’s respective caste and by those relationships the individual acquired through his or her occupation was essential to village live. The caste system is what drives these relationships and these relationships are one of the reasons the caste system stays intact.\textsuperscript{31}
Nor is it that status concerns in these multiple hierarchies are always linked to purity and pollution issues. They may also be associated with power and wealth, as among the merchant Jain castes, much more directly than what caste purists would have us believe. A general insensitivity toward this aspect of caste has led to the overvaluation of the Brahmanical version of hierarchy, both in scholarly works and in popular imaginations.

**Origins of Caste System**

Historically, it is believed that the caste system began with the arrival of the Aryans in India around 1500 BC. Of the many cultures that flourished in India, the literary records of the Indo-Aryan culture are not the earliest. They do, however, contain the first mention and a continuous history of the factors that make up the caste system. The Aryans came from southern Europe and northern Asia with fair skin that contrasted with the indigenous natives in India. When they arrived, their main contact was with the Dravidians. The only other culture whose records are dependable about the origins of the caste system are the Dravidians, but when that culture’s documents were put forwards, it had already been largely influenced by the Indo-Aryan tradition.  

Unfortunately, the Aryans completely disregarded their local cultures and began conquering regions all over north India. At the same time, the local people
were pushed south towards jungles of mountains in north India. The Aryans possessed a particular principle of social ordering called *Varna* Vyavastha, which was based on the four hierarchical divisions of function in society. They were placed in order of decreasing importance: religious and educational functions, military and political functions, economic functions, and menial functions (Velassery, 2). The Aryans organized themselves in three groups. The first group, Rajayana (later changed to Kshatriya) was the warriors, which was followed by the Brahmans, who were the priests (Daniel). These two groups constantly struggled for political leadership among the Aryans.

Eventually, the Brahmans became the leaders of the Aryan society. The third group consisted of the farmers and craftsmen, and was called the Vaishyas. The Aryan conquerors subdued the locals and made them servants. In this process, the Vaishyas became the landlords and businessmen of the society and the locals became the peasants and craftsmen.\(^{33}\)

As most of the societies in the world, India had a patriarchal system. Most of the time, the son inherited his father’s profession, which led to developing families, who acquired the same family profession for generations (Daniel). Later on, as these families got bigger, they were seen as communities, or *jat*. Different families who professed the same profession developed social relations between them and organized as a *jat* (Daniel).\(^{34}\) After a while, the Aryans who had created the caste system slowly began to add non-Aryans to their statuses. Different *jats* were integrated into the
various varnas according to their profession. Other foreign invaders of ancient India—Greeks, Huns, Scythains, and others—conquered parts of India and created kingdoms. These were integrated with the Kshatriyas.

Around the 6th century, many individuals of the lower castes who were getting fed up of suppression turned to Buddhism. Buddhism actually began as a reaction to the violence of Hindu society, including the brutality of the caste system. Buddhism concentrates not on the society, but on the individual, thus separating religion from the interests of the ruling and dominance. In Buddhism, one is no longer born into a position due to past injustice. Although Buddhism does see life as pain and suffering and reincarnation as a renewal of this suffering, there is a potential escape.35

The Buddha, himself born into the warrior caste, was a severe critic of the caste system. Buddhism utterly rejects any system of caste, and it actually reached high levels of support during the rule of Ashoka, who adopted the Buddhist concept of ahimsa, or non-violence, and its tendency toward greater equality. He ridiculed the priests who claimed to be superior, criticized the theological basis of the system, and he welcomed into his community people of all castes, including outcasts (Malalasekera and Jayatilleke). His most famous saying on the subject was, “Birth does not make one a priest or an outcaste. Behavior makes one either a priest or an outcaste”.36
Social Reform Movements

There have been many social movements throughout history that have dramatically changed the societies in which they occurred. There have been many failed social movements as well. In India, the reform movements started with mid-peasantry that hail from backward sections of society. Gradually, they spread to lower castes, particularly scheduled castes. The Bhakti movement, the Sufi movement, emergence of Sikh religion, Brahmo Samaj movement, Arya Samaj and others reflect the historical genealogy of social and religious reform movements in India.

From the late 19th century a number of European and Indian scholars started the study of ancient India’s history, philosophy, science, religions and literature. This growing knowledge of India’s past glory provided to the Indian people a sense of pride in their civilization. It also helped the reformers in their work of religious and social reform for their struggle against all type of inhuman practices, superstitions etc. Since they had become associated with religious beliefs, therefore most of the movements of social reform were of a religious character. The early religious movements in ancient India were the Buddhism and the Jainism. The school of Buddhism evolved in the eastern part of India in 563 BCE. More or less at the same time (in & around 550 BCE) another school, Jainism, with almost similar thoughts, was developing in the same part of India. The founder of Jainism, Lord Mahavira was a contemporary of Lord Buddha, the founder of Buddhism and even the Buddhist texts called Lord Mahavira 'an enlightened being'. In the sixth century BCE and the
preceding era, when both the schools of thought were developing and spreading their horizon, no rivalry seemed to have existed between them. This was because of the fact that both the religions almost believed in the same facts and philosophy of life. However, both differed on some of the views such as salvation and soul which led to their separate ways.\textsuperscript{37}

These social and religious reform movements arose among all communities of the Indian people. They attacked bigotry, superstition and the hold of the priestly class. They worked for abolition of castes and untouchability, \textit{purdah} system, \textit{sati}, child marriage, social inequalities and illiteracy.\textsuperscript{38}

When the British came to India they introduced the English language as well as certain modern ideas. These ideas were those of liberty, social and economic equality, fraternity, democracy and justice which had a tremendous impact on Indian society. Fortunately for our country there were some enlightened Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati and many others who were willing to fight and bring in reforms in society so that it could face the challenges of the West.\textsuperscript{39}

After Bengal, the most important region where the movement for reforms spread was western India. Bal Shastri Jambekar was one of the first reformers in Bombay. He attacked Brahmanical orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism. In 1849, the Parmahansa Mandali was founded in Poona, Satara and other towns of
Maharashtra. Its followers had faith in one God and they opposed caste system. At its meetings, members took food cooked by low-caste people. They favoured education of women and supported widow remarriage. Mahadev Ranade believed that without social reforms it was not possible to achieve any progress in the political and economic fields. He was a great advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. Two other great reformers in Western India were Gopal Hari Deshmukh Lokahitwari and Jotirao Govindrao Phule popularly known as Jotiba. They worked for the upliftment of women, took up the cause of women and downtrodden masses. Jyotiba with his wife started a girls school in Poona, in 1857. He also opened a school for the children of the depressed classes. Jotiba Phule was also a pioneer of the widow remarriage movement.40

In the southern parts of the country, Kandukuri Veeresalingam (1848-1919) pioneered the movement in support of widow remarriage and girls education in Andhra. Veda Samaj founded in Madras in 1864 advocated discarding of caste distinctions and promotion of widow remarriage and women’s education. It condemned the superstitions and rituals of orthodox Hinduism and propagated belief in one supreme God. Chembeti Sridharalu Naidu was the most popular leader of the Veda Samaj. He translated books of the Veda Samaj in Tamil and Telugu. An important movement particularly significant for the emancipation of the so-called backward and oppressed sections of Indian society was started by Shree Narayana Guru (1854-1928) in Kerala. In 1903 he founded the Shree narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) to carry on the work of social reform. Shree Narayana
Guru considered differences based on caste and religion as meaningless and advocated what he called ‘One Caste, one Religion and on God’ for all.\(^{41}\)

The most modern movement was the Theosophical Society. The Society was introduced to India in 1879 and its headquarters were set up at Adyar near Madras in 1886. Its influence spread under Annie Besant in 1893 who played an important role in India’s struggle for freedom. She and her associates advocated the revival and strengthening of the ancient religions of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. They recognized the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. They also preached the universal brotherhood of man. They helped to impart to the educated Indians a sense of pride in their own country. Annie Besant’s movement was a movement led and supported by westerners who glorified Indian religious and philosophical traditions. This helped Indians to recover their self-confidence.\(^{42}\)

The most notable of the Muslim reformers was Sayyid Ahmed of Rai Bareilly, in Uttar Pradesh. He attracted the Muslim artisans of the declining weaving towns of Allahabad and Patna finding a ready audience and giving the common people dignity and an identity through a common faith at a time of social dislocation. He realised that unless the Muslims adapted themselves to the changed circumstances of British rule, they would be deprived of all new opportunities for status and prosperity. He was highly impressed by modern scientific thought and worked all his life to reconcile it with Islam. He interpreted the Quran in the light of rationalism and
science. He urged the people to develop a critical approach and freedom of thought. He also warned against fanaticism, narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness.\textsuperscript{43}

The liberal, social and cultural movement started by Sayyid Ahmad Khan among the Muslims is known as the Aligarh Movement as it originated in Aligarh. The Anglo-Oriental College was the centre of this movement. It aimed at promoting modern education among Muslims without weakening the ties with Islam. It became the central educational institution for Indian Muslims. The Aligarh Movement was largely responsible for the Muslim revival that followed. It provided a focal point for the scattered Muslim population in different parts of the country. It gave them a common fund of ideas and a common language - Urdu. A Muslim press was developed for the compilation of works in Urdu.\textsuperscript{44}

Reforms also were started among Parsi and Sikh communities which led to emergence of educational institutions, youth and women hostels and general reforms in religious and cultural domains.

Because social movements have led to so many dramatic changes in societies around the globe, scholars have spent a great deal of time trying to understand where they come from, who participates in them, how they succeed, and how they fail. Much of what they have discovered is that social movements do not just happen; they require many resources and have many stages through which they develop.\textsuperscript{45}
Defining what, exactly, a social movement is can be difficult. It is not a political party or interest group, which are stable political entities that have regular access to political power and political elites; nor is it a mass fad or trend, which are unorganized, fleeting and without goals. Instead they are somewhere in between. Some characteristics of social movements are that they are “involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and they] share a distinct collective identity”.46

One of the earliest scholars to study social movement processes was Herbert Blumer, who identified four stages of social movements’ lifecycles. The four stages he described were: “social ferment,” “popular excitement,” “formalization,” and “institutionalization”. Today, the four stages are known as: Emergence, Coalescence, Bureaucratization, and Decline.47

Coming to dalit movements in India, the main issues around which most of them were launched in the colonial and post-colonial periods are confined to the problems of untouchability. They are predominantly anti-untouchability and human dignity movements. The other issues are the same as those related to agricultural labourers. They launched movements for maintaining or increasing reservations in political offices, government jobs and welfare programmes. Since very little attempt has been made to analyse dalit movements at the national level, no efforts have been made to evolve a typology of the movements.48
Ghanshyam Shah, however, classifies them into (1) reformative; and (2) alternative movements. The former tries to reform the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability. The alternative movement attempts to create an alternative socio-cultural structure by conversion to some other religion or by acquiring education, economic status and political power. Both types of movements use political means to attain their objectives.

The reformative movements are further divided into: (1) Bhakti movements; (2) neo-Vedantik movements; and (3) Sanskritisation movements. The alternative movements are divided into: (1) the conversion movement; and (2) the religious or secular movement. The latter includes the movement related to economic issues. In the context of dalit identity and ideology Shah has recently classified dalit movements into (1) movements within cultural consensus; (2) competing ideology and non-Hindu identity; (3) Buddhist dalits; and (4) counter ideology and dalit identity. The first three are based around religious ideologies whereas the last is based on class. Patankar and Omvedt classify the dalit movements into (1) caste-based; and (2) class-based movements.49

Social Conditions in the Colonial Era

The fluidity of the caste system was affected by the arrival of the British. The British brought with them their own traditional form of government, and as Christians, they did not have much sympathy for the Hindu institutions. During the
initial days of the British East India Company's rule, caste privileges and customs were encouraged, but the British law courts began to disagree with the discrimination against the lower castes. However, British policies of divide and rule contributed towards the hardening of caste identities. As British civilization multiplied in India, however, it was fatal for the members of different castes, affecting the beliefs they have about contact and “using the same instruments at the cost of traditional repulsion”.

For example, when the British government wanted to install a water system in Bombay, there was a great outcry at first from the upper castes. They could not believe that pure and impure, twice-born and Shudra, were going to be drinking from the same taps as themselves. This was, however, resolved by the panchayat, which is an assembly of five wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the village community. They claimed that the tax raise by the British administration for this canalization could be considered as reparation and that it would redeem the sins to which this sharing of taps would expose them to.50

Britain did not only affect the Hindu people by indirect means. A certain number of traditional caste-linked crafts were made impossible to make because of the large number of importing manufactured goods from the metropolis. Because of this, many weavers had to turn to agriculture. In other places, occupations that had been passed down from generation to generation had to be closed down because of newly opened factories. From these events, not only were occupations changed, but
the very social situations between the castes were affected. The three supporting pillars of the caste system – hereditary specialization, the sacred hierarchy, and mutual repulsion – were basically directly undermined by the British administration.

Also, the Moreley-Minto reforms of 1909 introduced separate electorates that gave a fillip to non-Brahman castes in their quest for self-respect. They now began to organize themselves as “Depressed Classes”. This gained momentum from 1917 onward, and various Depressed Caste Associations began in different parts of India. In fact, the concern for the lower castes and untouchables was evident in the colonial administration from the 1880s onward. This was initially with special reference to education, so that the poor would find a ladder to climb from “the gutter to the university”. 51

Nevertheless, such a policy also demanded the enumeration of backward classes. This process began from 1883 onward, and the list of castes included in it began to grow rapidly. As the backward class rubric also included the untouchables, there was a move initiated in Madras in 1917 to separate them for the rest for special treatment. 52

Third, British presence also made a difference as a number of laws were enacted to lessen the weight of untouchability that the so-called polluting castes had to bear. For example, the Madras Government passed the Removal of Disabilities Act in 1938; this was soon followed by Mysore in 1943. Thereafter, between 1943 and
In 1947 a number of states enacted similar laws to free those traditionally deemed as low castes from the incubus of traditional disprivileges.

In 19th century, English education which was imparted with the view to popularize the western way of living and thinking transformed the minds of Indians. The spread of western liberal education triggered the process of social and cultural reforms and helped develop scientific and rational attitude, which was due to the study of English literature, philosophy and science.

**Evolution of Caste and Dalit Consciousness**

India became a nation under the British regime. After four hundred years of Mughal rule, the British Raj brought in a lot of changes in India – whether it is administrative reforms or institutionalization of democratic process. However, one perpetual remnant that remained unchanged was the caste system. Prior to British, the stream of Sufi saints rejected the brahmanical system and injustice meted to Dalits but their focus was more making people aware of themselves and tried to take shelter in a seemingly egalitarian religion by terming God does not discriminate, He is one and omnipresent and omnipotent.  

Many in India who were oppressed (like the Shudras and the “untouchables”) joined anti-Brahmanical movements in order to take a stance against the discriminatory acts they were facing. Even in 1950, one of the primary reasons for the
conversion to Buddhism in India during the 1950s under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar was the caste system and the plight of the oppressed “untouchables” (Sekhon, 45). Conversion to Buddhism seemed to be believed as the only means of emancipation from the injustices associated with the caste system. This is where the term Dalit derived from; those termed untouchables referred to themselves as the oppressed people, and the term is used to denote both pride in their community as well as resistance to exploitation. Sometime the oppressed Shudra castes and tribal groups also refer to themselves as Dalit. These Dalit activists rejected being defined as Hindus and supported the movement against social and economic injustice.

But the real changes came in the 19th century when the approach of the leaders of deprived castes not only revolted against the values and thoughts imposed by the High Caste Hindus led by the Brahmins, but also an assertion in the belief of modernity which resulted in the democratization process in Europe, United States as well as Eastern European countries.

There were many movements and governmental actions that took place pre and post-independence in order to overcome and attempt to eliminate the inequalities and injustices associated with the caste system. After 1920, the non-Brahmin movement took a political colour. The political reforms announced by the Montague-Chelmsford Commission of British Government in 1918 and the subsequent grant of adult suffrage brought the non-Brahmins movement in to political arena. During the elections held in 1920, 1923, and 1926, several Non-Brahmins were elected to
provincial councils and a separate Non-Brahmin political party was constituted. In 1930, Gandhi viewed the *dalit* problem as a social one, whereas Ambedkar saw it as a political and economic problem created by upper castes. When Dr. Ambedkar became the first law minister in colonial India, he brought some legal reforms, which later on got incorporated into the Constitution.\(^{55}\)

The Census of India had started by the British in the late 19\(^{th}\) century, and in 1935, “the British Government of India came up with a list of 400 groups considered untouchable, as well as many tribal groups, that would be accorded special privileges in order to overcome deprivation and discrimination. Those groups included on this list came to be termed Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The British Government announced in 1932, the creation of communal electorates, i.e., separate seats and extra votes for Dalits and Muslims. An agitated Gandhi went on a fast unto death against separate electorates for Dalits. Faced with intense pressure from popular sympathy for an ailing Gandhi, Ambedkar compromised, giving up on the demand that Dalit voters be kept separate, but gaining reserved constituencies for the depressed classes. This Poona Pact of 1932 became the basis for providing reservations to the depressed classes in the Government of India Act, 1935 which in turn, became the template for the Constitution of India.\(^{56}\)

The Yadavs, Kurmis, and Koeris of North India formed the Triveni Sangh to contest the 1935 elections. Though they lost that round to the Congress, the Triveni
Sangh held and gradually increased its size. It incorporated other castes from similar backgrounds into its fold to form the Backward Class Federation.\(^{57}\)

In the 1970s, however, many leaders of castes considered untouchable started calling themselves “Dalits” (Sekhon, 48). The anti-caste Dalit movement began with Jyotirao Phule in the mid-19th century, and he started a movement for education and the upliftment of women, Shudra’s, and Dalits, and the movement spread to many parts of India. He also worked to abolish the idea of “untouchability,” which meant getting rid of restrictions on entry into temples, and finding a place for Dalits within Hinduism (Sekhon, 48). After 1910, however, Dalit leaders started focusing on distancing themselves from Hinduism and began to advocate for a separate electorate for the Dalits.

According to O’Malley, during the 1911 census enumeration, a number of castes objected to being placed at inferior levels in the hierarchy or wanted to be known differently from the traditional term assigned to them. Such petitions came fast and thick because the impression had gone around at that time that the census was not just about putting down numbers but also about assigning rank and prestige. Around this time caste associations, or sabhas, began to proliferate to press for higher status both in census records as well as in everyday interactions.
Historical perspective on Dalit movements

Dalit movements have not yet become a part of Indian historiography. Available studies on Dalit movement in India suffer from lack of historical and written documentation, providing scope for ambiguity. This is not to rule out the immense significance of few analytical and comparative studies on the subject. The journey from the Pariah, an “untouchable” whose very shadow was considered polluting, to the present day defiant Dalit, has been long, troubled, and painful. For the different communities, juridically encapsulated within the official category of Scheduled Castes, receiving recognition as equal citizens of a democratic republic is a project still waiting to be actualized.

Owing to their extremely dehumanized and degraded position in Indian society, dalits have always been a subject of interest for missionaries, anthropologists and social historians. At the early stage they were sporadic and fragmentary in nature. They mostly emerged as an outcome of missionaries’ travel records and personal accounts, official papers, district Gazetteers, ethnographic notes, census reports and such sources. Some early writings of officials, including Risely, Crooke, Enthoven, Sherring, Thurston, Rose, Russell, and Iyer, have contributed in furnishing a very rich account of the ethnic background, occupation pattern, and customary habits and practices of almost all important communities belonging to different regions of India of the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries.
Many authorities on caste in India were at some level or the other related to census operations. Regular estimations of Dalit populations in selected regions of the country by various governmental agencies provided some account of life and conditions of the Dalit populace. After a detailed caste and tribe wise denotation of the population of India in the 1931 census, with a considerable variation in there detailed tabulation and form. During the post-colonial period there emerged problem oriented studies on Dalits. Some of the major aspects included in these problem oriented studies were: Dalit social structure; socio-economic and other disabilities of Dalits; the impact of a deliberate development strategy of protective discrimination for their upliftment; and caste conflict.

Recent studies, therefore, clearly demonstrate that it is not as if castes are warming up to power considerations only after India became independent. The process of questioning established hierarchies through means other than war began with the establishment of British suzerainty in India. Caste and politics were always related, but the relationship was manifested differently at different periods of time. The establishment of democracy in independent India has introduced one major change in the way caste and politics interact, and that is by making all castes legally equal. It took some time for this legal equality to gain empirical momentum, but with the gradual dissolution of the closed village economy, the tempo has certainly become easily visible to the naked eye. This combination between law and economic change has allowed castes that were hitherto considered low to take the fight to the traditional superior communities and even to thumb their noses at established symbolic and ritual
systems. As Beteille rightly remarks, outside the domain of the family, caste is most active at the level of politics in contemporary Indian society.\textsuperscript{59}

Castes in contemporary India are not concerned about official rankings. Caste identities have evolved to a much higher level, and it is now a question of self over others and not self in relation to others. Thus, no matter which caste is in question, its involvement in politics is primarily to stake a claim to jobs, educational opportunities, as well as to positions of power in government bodies in direct competition against others. Unlike the agitations regarding the census operations in 1911 and later, caste assertions today are not just to feel good in an attributional way (see Marriot 1959) but to make it good in a highly competitive environment that disregards the interactional setting that the pure caste hierarchy recommends. The breakdown of the traditional caste system and the emergence of caste identities that energize contemporary caste politics can be explained in a variety of ways. Weiner believed that the repeated ideological exhortations of the Congress party brought an end to “the self-imposed barrier to protests by caste, that is, the acceptance of their place in the hierarchy”.\textsuperscript{60}

The decline of the traditional elite castes in Indian politics has been discussed quite frequently in academic literature. Rudolph & Heber characterized the newly ascendant peasant castes as “bullock capitalists” who challenged the hegemony of the traditional Kshatriya castes, such as the Rajputs and Bhumihars. To put the matter in perspective, it needs to be recalled that feudal landlordism, or zamindari, as the Indian
variant was known, was abolished after independence in India. This seriously undercut the economic and power base of the traditional rural elite, many of whose members also had an established urban foothold.

**Emergence of Dalit Politics**

The morphological features of contemporary agrarian structure inhibit cumulative inequalities and decisive dominance. It needs to be remembered that 85% of landholdings in India are below five acres and 63% below three acres. Given this ground level situation, owner cultivators can hardly be expected to behave like the power wielders of yore. In addition, a large number of rural people are seeking rural nonfarm employment. Today, 44.5% of rural net domestic product is non-agricultural.

In states such as Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, and Haryana, the number of nonagricultural households in rural India is above 50%. Even in the backward state of Bihar, 40% of rural households are nonagricultural. This has not only led to rural exodus, but even for those who stay back in the village, it is not agriculture that solely contributes to their earnings. The poorer villagers participate in a host of occupations that require a narrow band width of skills, ranging from construction labor, to coolie, to rickshaw puller, to vegetable seller. The better-off owner cultivator is also looking for nonagricultural outlets and tends to invest outside land, such as in transportation, shops, and various forms of mercantile activity.
Caste competition in politics should not lead us to believe that this is a restatement of the caste system. If castes are more overtly in conflict today, then it is largely because the caste system, as we knew it, has by and large collapsed in most parts of India. The obverse side of this collapse is the assertion of caste identities. Castes that could not project what they had always believed for fear of reprisal can now boldly assert their pride and status claims.\textsuperscript{61}

Dalits do not constitute a homogenous group. They contest for superiority among themselves. Middle class Dalits are more concerned about identity and often project themselves as indigenous people, Buddhists, and or another group. But the poor Dalit marginal farmer and landless laborers are more concerned about questions of economic exploitation, but these issues are not adequately attended to by their middle class leaders. For instance, Buddhism had not made a significant impact upon rural Mahar Dalits. Strict observance of Buddhist norms and a singular identification with Buddhism were more common among urban Mahars. No Dalit leader after Ambedkar paid any consistent attention to economic issues. Dalits are, however, very active when it comes to voting in elections. Over 60 % of the Dalit voters mobilize themselves on voting day – whether it is in Bihar or Uttar Pradesh.\textsuperscript{62}

**Ambedkar’s Role**

The Republican Party was founded by the legendary Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1957. He later led his people to renounce Hinduism and embrace Buddhism instead. It
is true that most of the votaries of the Republican party of India (RPI) belong to the Mahar caste because other formerly untouchable castes of the region, such as the Mangs, Matangs, and Chambars, have stayed away from it. In fact, they often veer toward supporting the Bharaiya Janata Party, which is, ironically, a right-wing Hindu organization. This is because many members of these other castes believe that the RPI is a vehicle of upward mobility for the Mahars alone. They have also desisted from becoming Buddhists.

Nevertheless, Babasaheb Ambedkar’s shadow looms large even today in the politics of the former untouchables. They resent the term “Harijan” (children of God) that Gandhi used for them as they consider it too patronizing. They would rather be known as “Dalits”, or the oppressed. Ambedkar was the first to use this term to denote the Scheduled Castes for its obvious combative edge.

Ambedkar, today, has been deified among the Buddhist Mahars of Maharashtra and has a similar iconic status to Buddha in many Mahar families. When Ambedkar converted to Buddhism, he made it clear in his vows that he did not consider Buddha to be an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu as many Hindus claim. Nor did he follow any of the rituals of Hinduism and abided strictly by the Buddhist code. Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism was a highly symbolic political act that helped fuse Dalit antipathy toward Hinduism and, at the same time, that enabled them to leverage their new identity to great political advantage.
Ambedkar’s death anniversary in 1981 provided the occasion for Kanshi Ram to inaugurate the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti. In its attempt to attract as wide a range as possible, the Samiti also called out to Muslims to help fight the privileges of the traditional elite castes.63

Rise of Dalit movement in Hyderabad State

The roots of Dalit movement in the present day Andhra Pradesh lied in Hyderabad during the early decades of twentieth century. Hyderabad witnessed a radicalized autonomous and urban based dalit movement, where their neighbouring coastal Andhra dalit movement emerged a decade later but with a broad rural base. Each gained inspiration and strength from the other, and both organized their movement centred on “adi” ideology. But the only difference between these two regions was: Andhra dalits remained with a linguistic suffix to their ideology (Adi-Andhra) where as the Hyderabad Dalits chose a geographic-suffix (Adi-Hindu). It was during this period, 1906-46, that Dalit leaders rebelled against: the servile status within a feudalized agrarian economy; their segregation and lack of access to social and civic amenities by caste-Hindus and caste ideology that conferred an inhuman status to the Dalits.64

However, an examination of the historical process of evolution of Dalit consciousness, evolution and growth of Dalit democratic revolution and a shared identity reveals a significant break with the earlier reform movements, both in terms
of ideology and organization. It mounted a serious attack on the notion of caste hierarchy and sought to create popular unity based on rationalism and humanism. The Dalit movement expressed the new-found solidarity among the lower communities and their determination to struggle to escape the ascriptive and hereditary fixation of occupation and appropriate the emerging form of newer power structures.65

The Dalit movement ideologically fought for structural changes in the society whereas the other caste-Hindu movements such as Kamma and other caste Mahajana Sabhas aimed only at changes within the existing social structure. In other words, unlike the social/caste reform movements among upper castes, which were essentially moderate in nature and meant to effect minimal changes, the Dalit transformative movement sought to challenge the established unequal social order, the value system and the patterns of dominance within a rigid caste order. The liberation ideology formulated by the Dalit intellectuals in colonial Andhra was aimed at the destruction of caste hierarchy, discrimination and oppression.

It also sought to organize the Dalit masses for achieving socio-economic and political equality. In view of growing democratization, their increasing importance and their involvement with various political circles, Dalits were naturally inclined to build up organizational strength for achieving political power for their progress. As a result they established their own organizations to put forth their political demands. The Dalit movement emerged out of certain historical processes of interaction of various socio-structural conditions in the society. Thus, the Dalit liberation movement
in Hyderabad established several organizations through which they organized Dalits to strike squarely at the decaying practice of untouchability.66

The later phase of the colonial rule witnessed the emergence of a new force in the Nizam’s dominion. The increasing evidence of the growing consciousness of the outcaste groups, culminated into proliferation of organizations throughout the region. Emergence of conscious assertive as well as politically active neo-class of outcastes was one of the fundamental developments of the period. Since the beginning of the twentieth-century numerous social organizations provided a source of direction channelizing the discontent and outburst of the outcastes. Another significant characteristic during this phase was the centrality endowed to issues of temperance, itself evidence of the influence of the Arya Samaj and the Brahma Samaj ideology on the emerging outcaste intelligentsia. Bhagya Reddy Varma (1888-1939) laid the foundation of the Dalit movement in the region. He was actively associated with the caste-Hindu organizations especially the Brahma Samaj, which were to have a decisive impact on his own ideology and agenda of action. Yet his organizations maintained an autonomous outcaste identity in juxtaposing to the caste- Hindu organizations that were keen to incorporate outcastes within their fold of influence.

The Dalit movement in Hyderabad dates back to 1906, when Madari Bhagya founded an organization called the Jagan Mitra Mandali67 and started the work of awakening social consciousness among the so-called Untouchables. He arranged regular Harikatha Kalakshepams during or at the end of which Bhagya Varma spoke
eloquently, telling the Dalits that they were the real and original inhabitants of the country and that the others have migrated from central Asia for their livelihood and that the main cause of their backwardness was their ignorance and illiteracy.

Mandali members gave due recognition to Buddha’s movement against the Vedic dharma, the Varna system, and offering animals to appease deities, and preached vegetarianism. BuddhaJayanti was celebrated every year on Vaisakhi poonima day. Later, Bhagya Varma formed Manya Sangham to eradicate social evils.

Arigay Ramaswamy (1885-1973) stood at the centre of Dalit activities in Hyderabad State and Andhra regions. Madari Adiyya, a son of a butler, had started another Manya Sangam at Ghasmandy. Arigay Ramaswarny founded Suneetha Bala Samajam, and carried on his activities in Kummonaguda, a locality in Secunderabad, where he lived. He exhorted his brothers to abandon liquor and eradicate the Jogini system and preached against animal sacrifice and child marriage. Though Ramaswamy had faith in Achal Siddanth and Brahma Samaj, he firmly believed that Dalits were separate from Hindus. He formed an Adi-Hindu Jatiyonnati Sabha in 1922, with Konda Venkataswamy as president and J. Papayya and Arigay Ramaswamy as vice-presidents and J. Papayya as its secretary.

Soon after the Madras government accepted appeals of Dalits to be called with their regional name prefixing Adi, i.e., Adi-Andhra, Adi-Dravida, etc., the Manya
Sangam, established in 1911 by Bhagya Reddy Varma was renamed Adi-Hindu Social Service League in 1922.

In 1931, on the eve of the Second Round Table conference, a special political session of the (Ninth) All-India Adi-Hindu Conference was held at Lucknow. Bhagya Reddy Varma presided over this conference in which representatives from all-over India participated. The most significant resolution of the conference was recognition of Dr B R Ambedkar as the sole and true representative to speak on behalf of 9 crore of Adi-Hindus (Untouchables) in India, a resolution which was passed unanimously.68

The 1920s and 30s witnessed factional struggles among the Dalits. It was stated by many Dalit organizers that the so-called sympathizers of depressed classes tried to create divisions among untouchables, who were later used to spread false propaganda, and disturb Dalit conferences.69 By the later part of 1930s, Hyderabad Dalit politics was marked by competitive struggles. Divisions in the movement, the founding of rival Adi-Hindu organizations and rival reform caste-panchayats produced occasional physical confrontations and fights between factions during 1930s.70 B. S. Venkatarao71 had difference with Arigay Ramaswamy and later with Subbaiah. Bhagya Reddy Varma was condemned by rival organizations for being partial to the cause of Malas and creating fissiparous tendencies within the movement. The recognition to this dimension of the Adi-Hindu movement was the emergence of independent association by the Madigas which also received caste-Hindu assistance. The Arundatiya Mathunga Sabha and the Arundatiya Mahasabha became the
organizations of the Madigas who put forth their demands independently of the other communities.

Dalit organizations in Hyderabad were split into six groups working simultaneously until the late 1940s. Dalit masses became more confused with the British announcement of transfer of power in February 1947 and Hyderabad issued a declaration of independence on 11 June 1947. This set off increased factionalism and ferments among the Dalits. The biggest groups were still the Scheduled Castes’ Federation led by Subbayya and the Depressed Classes Association led by Venkata Rao. The DCA accepted the constitutional reforms, and SCF, along with the Congress and Communists rejected them.

One of the significant developments of the period in the Nizam’s dominion that was to reproduce crucial repercussions during the post-colonial phase was the divide between the Malas the Madigas. The inability of leaders to overcome their prejudices, lack of a comprehensive policy to cement the widening gulf between the two communities hampered the development of the Dalit moment.72

Review of Literature

This article looks at the colonial model of surveillance of ‘criminal’ communities deployed in Hyderabad state, and specifically at the colonial state’s construction of the ‘dacoity’ of the Lambada tribe. The colonial construction of Lambada dacoity was framed in terms of caste, religion and race, and reinforced by European notions of nomadism and criminality. The author shows how dacoity was associated with the community through extensive anthropological studies, census reports and surveys sponsored by the colonial state. Morphological traits such as the Lambadas’ claim (like many other adivasis and lower caste groups) to martial (Rajput) lineage, their religious practices, their occupations, and their past history of wartime pillaging were used by colonial administrators to fix dacoity as the hereditary practice of the Lambadas. On the contrary, the author claims that dacoity among the Lambadas was a result of the destruction of their longstanding livelihood practices, forced settlement and the distressing situation caused by recurring famines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871 and the stigmatization of the whole community restricted their movement and eventually led after the famines to a steep increase in crime in the state between 1916 and 1921. The policing techniques of the colonial state also varied from the Nizam’s in using finger printing, extradition, surveillance, registration of criminal tribes, anthropometric classification, etc. As a result, many Lambadas were forced to settle and become peasants, agricultural labourers or factory workers.

This article examines the history of communal violence in Gujarat by focusing on the growth and development of the Arya Samaj in the state between the years 1895 and 1930. Though the founder of the Arya Samaj, Dayanand Saraswati was from Gujarat, his first followers were Punjabis brought to Gujarat by Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda to carry out educational work among Untouchables. The Arya Samaj attained popularity in Gujarat only after mass proselytization among the Untouchables by Christians. Its main followers were the urban middle-classes, the higher farming castes and gentry of the Koli caste who joined the movement for various reasons, including upward social mobility, religious unity, and so on. From 1915, after the return of Gandhi from South Africa, many followers had drifted to the Gandhian movement until Gandhi’s arrest and imprisonment in 1922. Gandhi was closely associated with the Arya Samaj movement though he never extended it his unqualified support. Gandhi’s imprisonment and the Muslim revolt in Malabar in 1921 brought about a rift amongst leaders of the Congress and ultimately led to the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1923, the revival of quiescent Hindu organizations and the revival of ‘shuddhi’ propaganda by the Arya Samajists. The riots of 1927-28 are also alleged to be the result of incitement by leading caste Hindus of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. The author also examines the changing profile of the Bohra Muslims of the region, their economic growth as an aggressively enterprising community in the 20th century and their relationship with other Hindus and Muslims.

This article reflects on the ethnographic work of C. Von Führer-Haimendorf. Between 1940 and 1949, Führer-Haimendorf had carried out a series of studies of various tribes of Andhra Pradesh – the Chenchus, Konda Reddis and Raj Gonds – using a holistic and multidisciplinary approach within an essentially evolutionary perspective. His studies have proved useful for administrative purposes. Pingle goes on to describe specific details of Führer-Haimendorf’s work and of his stay with each of these tribes, where he followed their lifestyles and shared in their hardships. In the course of his fieldwork he also functioned as an activist for the tribes, advocating and implementing land reserves for the Chenchus and a schooling system for the Gonds to protect them from external exploitation. He was also the Advisor to the Nizam’s government for tribes and backward classes. In sum, Führer-Haimendorf was not only an administrator with close access to government officials, but also played a strong part in the implementation of tribal policy.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay’s *Caste, Culture and Hegemony* addresses both the status of caste as an analytical category and caste politics, as it stresses the centrality of caste in Bengali Hindu social formations and reconstructs the ways in which caste has shaped the operation of power in Bengal. The keystone to the volume is the body of argument developed in chapter one. Ostensibly, this chapter surveys the development of the power structures that shaped Hindu society in colonial Bengal,
but in reality this chapter offers a reading of the production of hierarchy that roams from the Gupta period through to late twentieth century politics. Bandyopadhyay shows that the hegemony of high caste groups was remarkably durable throughout this period and that political reform, social change, or status and power.


In this book, Sekhon describes India in its modern state and how the history of the country has shaped it into what it is today. She provides insight on the history of the country, its religions, its social stratification system, its economic status and role in the global economy, gender relations, its political institutes, and social changes that have taken place in India. The book will aid me in retrieving information on India’s history, its complex caste system, and how religion, economic, and politics play a role in shaping the stratification system of India.


Dumont does a brilliant job in going into the depths of the caste system and specifically the Indian caste system. He discusses the definition of the word “caste” and continues to explain the necessity and undeniable need to have the caste system in relation to Hinduism in India. He also explains the caste system and the role it plays in the division of labor in the Indian society. This book will really help me dive into the Indian caste system and will provide me with an overall and deeper view into the many aspects of the caste system and its effects on India today.

This book highlights the diversity of different parts of India in terms of kinship ties and marriage and the relationship of these cultural constructs with the caste system. The authors focus on Bengal, Tamilnadu, North India, Kashmir, and West India, as well as providing information on the great plights the “Untouchable” Chudras face. This book does a very good job keying in to the individual’s perspective in India and why the caste system is accepted on an individual level. One of the most interesting parts in this book is the fact that it explains the various languages of India and how these languages include words that dominantly allude to hierarchy. I will receive tremendous help from this book in looking in from a perspective that is normally not looked at from when viewing the caste system. It will provide me with many angles to write a more wholesome research paper.


Velassery provides a detailed explanation of what the caste system ideology is all about and connects it with the concepts of religion and human rights. He then focuses on the Indian perspective of the caste system and looks at “the issue of Human Rights as a contemporary mode of the ancient metaphysical wisdom built of reflection upon what it means to be Dharma and the ways of existing according to Dharma”. He expresses the importance of this Dharma to Indians and how it
contributes to wide acceptance of the caste system in India. This book will also provide me with a deeper perspective of what the caste system is to an Indian on an individual level.


In this book, Smith dives into the various aspects of division found in the caste system like food, gods, time, animals, and even seasons. The book goes into detail by describing how everything in the universe is classified from an Indian’s point of view in relation to the Hindu religion. It also describes the origins of the caste system that have derived from cosmogonic myths, which carry considerable weight. They explain what could not otherwise be known; they relate how things were “in the beginning” and how this relates to why things are the way they are now. The time of beginning is considered the “time of perfection”.


This collection of essays provides a detailed explanation of the Indian caste system as well as some interviews and feedback from Indians who support and oppose the caste system. Bougle discusses the caste hierarchy and priesthood, and includes the effects of the caste system on race, law, economic consumption and production, and literature. What I found very interesting about these essays is the discussion of how the caste system was affected through the Buddhist revolution and
under the British administration. I will be able to use this information to talk about how India today has been shaped by the history of not only the caste system but the reformation of it from various outside influences.


In this book, Béteille does an excellent job giving the reader a detailed view on the physical structure of the village in India and an easy to understand explanation on the caste structure. He also highlights the economic organization of the caste system and social class, as well as an overview on the distributions of power within the caste system. This book will help me be able to tie caste, power, and economic organization together in order to get a better understanding of their relatedness.


This book gives a very thorough description about the characteristics of the caste system and the nature of caste-groups, as well as a historical walkthrough of how the caste system came about. Ghurye goes into the relationship between race and caste, the origins of the system and even focuses on caste, sub-caste, and kin. This book will aid me in receiving a thorough background of the system and will also give me insight on the caste system during the British and how politics plays a huge role in the shaping of caste.

Hutton gives us a detailed description of how caste plays a role in different parts of India. He covers its structure, its sanctions, and its functions in the daily lives of Indians, including endogamous units of society, the avoidance of pollution through water, and the use of temples. He also talks about the traditional origins of the caste system. This book will guide me through the vastly diverse cultures found in India and how the caste system differs in these villages.

Ashutosh Varshney's *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life* provides a third theory that seeks to explain ethnic violence in India. Varshney's book attempts to address the role of civil society in Hindu-Muslim riots. He distinguishes himself from other contemporary civil society theorists by testing specifically the effects of *interethnic* civic engagement, especially in the form of associations, on ethnic conflict in India. This distinction is important as Varshney believes that intra-ethnic networks of civic engagement can have the opposite effect of escalating rather than restraining ethnic violence.


For anyone familiar with debates about Dalit identity and agency, the positions of Mohandas Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar usually represent polar opposites: One seeking reform within Hinduism, the other beyond it. That ‘Babuji’
and ‘Babasaheb’ could fruitfully dialogue and transform one another is one of the many insights of D.R. Nagaraj’s The Flaming Feet and Other Essays. The original edition of The Flaming Feet was published in Bangalore in 1993 (South Forum Press). This second edition reprints the essays contained in that earlier volume and adds later essays that Nagaraj wrote until his death in 1998, at the age of 44 years. This edition, very ably edited by Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi, is a foundational work for considering issues related to the Dalit movement as well as the tensions brought about by modernity in late 20th century India. In his foreword to The Flaming Feet, Ashis Nandy recalls that Nagaraj characterized himself as a ‘Left Gandhian’, an appellation that Nagaraj also applied to his dialogue partner and fellow Kananda writer, U.R. Ananthamurthy (p. xiii).


Social movements hasn't been a popular topic with researchers, making up less than 3 per cent of all studies in history, political science, sociology and anthropology sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) up to the mid-nineties. The research has had an 'institutional' or 'government' skew, in that, the study of the politics of the masses has been largely ignored. There are reasons of history behind this, but what has been consistently lost sight of is the fact that in the absence of an understanding of the politics of the masses, the functioning of the state can be understood only partially.
This volume is a revised and enlarged edition of the author's review of literature on social movements in India, first commissioned by the ICSSR. After careful deliberation on the 'ideal' definition of a 'social movement', the author adopts for this volume the loose idea of 'non-institutionalised collective political action striving for social and political change'. On the basis of the socio-economic characteristics of participants and the issues involved, this volume makes a nine-fold classification of social movements: peasant movements, tribal movements, dalit movements, backward caste movements, women's movements, working class movements, students' movements, middle class movements and human rights and environmental movements (added in this edition).


While Social Movements have emerged throughout the history of Indian Society and Culture, Their Study in a Sociological Framework is recent. This book is the first of its kind to bring together twelve empirical studies of diverse social movements in different parts of the country. The first edition of the book literally went unnoticed for lack of ideological rigour. Subsequently, it was lapped for its wide ranging coverage of diverse movements with emphasis on the caste factor.

The author traces the evolution of socialist thought within the confines of the national movement for freedom from colonial rule. What emerged as the moderate group in the Congress gradually leaned towards centre-left socialist movement. Earlier, socialists operated within the organizational set up of the Indian National Congress, but eventually they were expelled from the party for holding ideology that was distinct from the Congress. Then emerged the social movement on its own right and fought for the cause of common masses. In particular, the peasant and women movements have been highlighted in this book. Besides, there is also emphasis on the movement of marginalized sections of society.


Social movements coming out of poverty and penury have not been dealt with seriously by sociologists in India. This book is an attempt in that direction and looks at the various facets of poverty. Public action includes not only what government does for the public, but also what public does for itself. It includes what people can do by demanding remedial action and through making governments accountable. With the decline of Nehruvial model of development and the emergence of market economy, new movements are coming up from the bottom involving the poor, marginalized and the peasantry. Policy failures in eradicating poverty give immense scope to question the capacity of the governments to govern or the firmness of state institutions in implementing poverty alleviation policies.

There are two Indias: the caste and class elite who hold all power and make up 10 to 15 percent of the population, and everyone else. *Averting the Apocalypse* is about everyone else. Arthur Bonner, a former *New York Times* reporter with long experience as a foreign correspondent in Asia, conducted interviews over many months while traveling almost 20,000 miles within India seeking out the underclass and social activists who together are beginning to mobilize for social change at the bottom of Indian society. Working in areas torn by violence, Bonner offers a terrifyingly accurate portrait of a society bloodied by decades of unequal social structure and the absence of a civil society and political mechanism capable of responding to the exploitation of the poor and weak. Bonner finds that India’s inability or refusal to address its debilitating social structure may be the precursor to an apocalyptic social upheaval unless heed is paid to the social movements that his first-hand investigation reveals.

Rudolph and Rudolph's *Modernity of Tradition* (1969) is one of the earliest works on the political development of India. The authors discussed in detail about the role of caste associations in the modernization, and horizontal and differential mobilization. One important point, which is emphasized by the writers is that changes in the culture, structures and public functions of caste are necessary but not sufficient conditions for its democratic incarnation. A profound change in the nature of human
Caste in Indian Politics (1970) is edited by Rajni Kothari. The work is, basically, an empirical study of the role of caste in Indian politics. In the introduction Rajni Kothari offers a theoretical framework to understand the role of caste in the modern democratic political system. He adopted the liberal democratic theoretical approach to study the changing nature of the caste in the age of electoral politics. He observes that the democratic, for that matter any type of politics will not operate in the vacuum, but require a social base. In Indian context the caste system filling the gap, i.e. providing the social base to the functioning of the democracy. In this work there are number of essays on political mobilization of various castes in various states in the country, such as the Nadars in Tamil Nadu, factions between Kammas and Reddies in Andhra Pradesh, the Kshatriya Mahasabha in Gujarat, and other essays.

Competing Equalities (1984) by Marc Galantar traces the historical evolution of the legal framework of the compensatory discrimination policy for the socially, educationally disadvantaged people, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes. It explains the origin and extension of the reservation policy in India from the Dalits to economically backward castes. According to him the deliberate interest in introducing the reservations is that the socially and educationally disadvantaged can nourish their accomplishments and enlarge their capabilities until the day that the protective barrier can be lowered and the special protections
abandoned. The author elaborately discussed Constitutional provisions relating to reservations with illustrations of the Court cases.

Frankel and Rao's commendable work on the state politics in India is *Dominance and State Power in Modern India-Decline of a Social Order* (1989). The work covers political changes, political process and impact of policy rather than the institutions and individuals. According to the writers the rigid Indian social system started declining with the beginning of the democratic era. These essays also analyzed the changing power structure and sharing of power by the new castes/communities who started playing a significant role in the process of modern politics. Most of the writers have a consensus on the factors, such as numerical strength and possession of the land in determining the democratic politics.

The Politics of Accommodation Caste, Class and Dominance in Andhra Pradesh is an article in the above work. According to Ram Reddy the policy of accommodation is strategy for the colonial and post-colonial rulers in the state. In the area of Madras presidency the colonial rulers accommodated the growing elites, in the post-independent period it is the politics of patronage and populism perpetuated the provincial dominant caste rule by accommodating the emerging elite from the backward castes, lower castes and other sections. This process of accommodation prevented the political consolidation of the backward castes in specific and other lower castes in general to form an alternative political platform.
**New Social Movements-Empowerment of the People** (1993) edited by Ponna Wignaraja (ed): The work deals with human development and participatory democracy as core values of the contemporary social mobilization, it is grass roots subaltern marginalized communities as the social bases. All these communities got their own historical, socio-economic, political, cultural specificities, which are manifest in mobilization and for the paradigm shift in the developmental strategy and participatory democracy. Another aspect in the search for new paradigms is to identify the fundamental nature of the process of social change itself: Is it 'big bang' type of revolution results from a sharpening of contradictions or more commonly they are preceded by marginal reforms and incremental change? Both the processes can be observed in reality. There may be other intermediate processes and transitional pathways to social change, as the new movements are located in various political spaces.

**Dalits and Democratic Revolution** (1994) by Gail Omvedt is an important work on the lower caste movements during colonial period in Nagapur, Hyderabad, Andhra, Mysore, Bombay presidency etc. The author claims to understand the lower caste movements in a more creative than the official orthodox communists. In this work the author analyses the three trends, which were represented by Congress and Gandhi against the colonial rule, the Communists anti-feudal and Ambedkar against the caste system in the country. In her view Ambedkar's path of liberation of the lower castes is overthrowing of the Hindu religious ideological hegemony. Ambedkar tended to see economic and social oppression as separate structures, taking up cultural
change as the way to challenge Hinduism and socialism as the way to overcome economic exploitation.

Simon Charsley in his article “Evaluating Dalit Leadership: P R Venkatswamy and the Hyderabad Example” says the dalit movement in Hyderabad and Secunderabad that had such promising beginnings in the early 20th century was soon beset by factionalism and division that developed among its leaders. His paper draws on an exceptional and event-filled record of those times provided by one of the movement's protagonists, P R Venkatswamy in an attempt to explore the local situation during those decades, the leadership of the time and the predicaments they faced. Our Struggle for Emancipation is a seminal work of Venkataswamy on the dalit movement in Hyderabad state.

Scope of the Study

The present study aims to bring into focus the social movements that occurred in the erstwhile state of Hyderabad with emphasis on the contribution of social reformer Arigay Ramaswamy. He (1885-1973) lived in Hyderabad state which was linguistically divided into three broad regions that is Telangana, Marathwada and Karnataka. The present study also deals with the socio-economic and political conditions that existed in the region during the period. Sometimes it is essential to study the important events which took place in other regions that had great impact on Telangana Dalit movement.
Objectives of the Study

Broadly keeping in mind the survey of literature discussed above, the present study aims at analyzing the contributions of Arigay Ramaswamy to Dalit movement and raising consciousness among the Dalit of Telangana region under the autocratic rule of the last Nizam in the dominions of Hyderabad state. The study also deals with various factors that are responsible for mobilization among the Dalits. The following are the main objectives of the study:

- To trace the evolution of social reform movements in India during the colonial period with emphasis on Hyderabad state
- To study the socio-economic, cultural and political conditions that existed under the Nizam rule
- To study the context of Dalit movements in Hyderabad state and the consequent social reform activities of various leaders and organizations
- To examine the role of Arigay Ramaswamy’s in raising dalit consciousness in the Telangana region of Hyderabad state

Hypotheses of the Study

- British colonial era paved the way for social reforms in the marginalized sections of society in India
Leaders from backward classes began to assert their socio-economic, cultural and political identities at federal and provincial levels

Social reform movements were divided in the erstwhile state of Hyderabad due to patronage politics by the Nizam

Arigay Ramaswamy was instrumental in taking up social reforms cutting across political and caste lines

Methodology

The present study is based on primary and secondary data. The scholar relied on the period newspapers, books written by contemporaries, auto biographies, biographies and other historical accounts. The Gazettes which are available with Andhra Pradesh State Archives were great help in the process. The scholar also relied on interviews with people who were aware of the social movements and have significant knowledge of the work done by Arigay Ramaswamy.

Organization of the Study

The present study has been organized into five chapters, a brief of which is given below:
Chapter-I: This deals with the emergence of the caste system in India and the modern social movements aimed at emancipation of depressed classes in the country, objectives and methodology of the study.

Chapter-II: This article deals with the socio-economic-cultural conditions in Hyderabad state.

Chapter-III: This chapter deals with the political conditions and social movements during Nizam rule.

Chapter-IV: This deals with the life and work of Arigay Ramaswamy with emphasis on his social reform movement and political activities.

Chapter-V: This forms the concluding part of the study.
REFERENCES


6. Viewed at any given moment caste appears fixed and immutable, but this is by no means the case. The process of change is slow and imperceptible, like the movement of the hour hand of a watch, but it is nevertheless always going on. (Gait 1913) p. 371.


That said, within each caste there are many further subdivisions into exogamous groups called gotras. These are usually groups of people that claim to descend patrilinearly from the same ancestor, and the gotra name is usually the name of that ancestor. Members of the same gotra are not allowed to marry each other, Frietas, Kripa, *Op.Cit.*, p.7.


38 *Ibid.*, p.120.


58 *Ibid*.


*Ibid*.


Bhagya Reddy as the founder of the Mandali is subject to conflicting opinion, see P.R. Venkatswamy, *Our Struggle for Emancipation*, Vol. 2, University Art Printers, Secunderabad, 1955, p.3.


Originally his name was Batiula Ashaiah. He was born to parents in the domestic service of the Europeans, was a resident of Ghasmandy, Secunderabad. His youthful robust and hefty body earned him the colloquial nickname of ‘Dobbs’ (Bulky) and he was commonly known as Dobba Ashaiah, but in the later part of his life he was mostly known as B.S. Venkat Rao. He worked in the public works Department of Nizam’s Government, and later appointed as an Mat. Recruiting Officer in the Nizam Sagar.


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