CHAPTER NO. 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY
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1. 1. INTRODUCTION

The social development of the world has been geared up in the last century. The social, economic and political movements and upheavals not only affected the traditional values but they challenged the moral values of the world. This milieu affected the developing nation like India too.

A large section of Indian population called as 'untouchables' was deprived of their basic, legitimate human rights to live in dignity. They suffered from many inhuman disabilities. Moreover, the factor that was most striking was the institution of 'untouchability'. The ex-untouchables (now designated as Scheduled Castes) occupied the lowest rank in the social hierarchy of Hindu caste system. They were the most oppressed and downtrodden of the Indian society. They were always exploited socially, economically, educationally and culturally too, by the upper castes.

After independence, the Constitution of India made certain provisions for the upliftment of SCs and STs. The government has laid down three kinds of arrangements for them. First, there is reservation of seats in the Parliament and State legislatures, secondly; reservation of jobs in the government and semi government services, lastly, seats have been reserved in the educational institutions especially in institutions of the higher learning such as colleges and universities for their social and educational advancement.¹ As a result, people
sought employment away from their rural exploitative system. Now persons of SCs are in a position to enter into non-traditional occupations in urban area.

1.2. Conceptual framework

The present study is an empirical study probing the occupational mobility among SC employees who have been working in a University and Government and non-Government aided Arts, Commerce and Science, B.Ed. and special B.A.B.Ed. Colleges in an urban setting. Many Sociologists and Anthropologists have brought out this aspect of the correlation between caste and occupation. On the one hand with regard to certain caste groups and at the same time the flexibility and facility for occupational mobility, which was structured with the caste system. This study discusses the inter-generational and intra-generational occupational mobility among three generations of SCs. In addition to this, the study is focused on the motivating factors, which have resulted into occupational mobility among SC communities.

1.2.1. Mobility

Different authors have defined mobility in different ways. Pitrim Sorokin first formulated the concept. He defined social mobility as “any transition of an individual or social object or value, anything that has been created or modified by human activity, from one social position to another”.

Barber says “the term social mobility has been in use for movement, either upward or downward between higher or lower social classes, or more
precisely, movement between one relatively full time functionally significant social role and another, that is evaluated as either higher or lower".  

According to Lipset and Bendix, "the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society positions, which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values".  

1.2.2. Occupation: - Occupation is one of the best indicators of class, because people tend to agree on the relative prestige they attach to similar jobs. Those at or near the top rung of the prestige ladder usually have the highest incomes, the best education, and the most power. The sociologists view work as an action performed with the object of achieving some particular objective. This gives two meanings. In the first place the player gets some satisfaction of his physical and psychological need. In the second place, it is not possible to draw a dividing line between play and work. The same activity may be a game for one individual and work for another. 

Many sociologists opined that; the occupation of a person reflects his social-cultural status. The sociologist conceived that, as the movement from one occupational category to another, their category consists with the manual to non-manual, semi-skilled to skilled and some rank consists with the social and cultural prestige. The occupational mobility in the present context refers to the transition from one occupation to that of another. This may occur in both different directions, horizontally and vertically.
1.2.3. **Inter-generational occupational mobility:** - In the inter-generational occupational mobility, it should be examined that, whether his/her father influences the occupational position of an individual. The occupation indicates that, whether a particular group or section of population is engaged in primary, secondary or tertiary occupation, which is positive index of development. In the inter-generational occupational mobility, the respondents have changed their occupation compared to the occupation of their fathers. [For details, see Miller S.M., (1960)]

1.2.4. **Intra-generational occupational mobility:** - In the intra-generational occupational mobility, one position or one point of an individual’s career is compared with another position or point.

1.3. **Transition of the Scheduled Castes**

1.3.1. **Vedic period 1400-600 B.C.**

The foundation of untouchability was laid in Ancient times. “The immigrant Aryans were very different from the non-Aryan dark people whom they found living in India. Aryans considered themselves superior and were proud of their race, language and religion. They considered non-Aryans to be non-humans or *amunshya*.” And “the non-Aryans were described as *Krishna Varna* or dark-skinned, *anasa* or without nose (snub-nosed) those who speak softly and worship the phallus.” The Aryan, white-skinned, making sacrifices and worshipping gods like *Agni, Indra, Varun* etc. were distinguishable ethnically and culturally from the *Dasas* or *Dasyus*, who were black-skinned and large number of *Dasas* were taken as slaves instead of being exterminated.” In the
later Vedic period (1400-600 B.C.) it resulted in the gradual withdrawal of the ruling race from all professions requiring manual labour and the generation of a spirit of contempt for industrial arts, which feel more and more into the hands of the Shudras. “The greater association of slave or Shudra labour with certain branches of industry, together with the growing contempt for manual labour brought the industries themselves low in the estimation of the higher classes, and made those engaged therein”.  

The idea of ceremonial impurity of the Shudra involving prohibition of physical and visual contact with him appeared towards the close of the Vedic period (1000-600 B. C.)  

“The Shudra was permitted to take part in certain ritual and yet excluded from several specific rituals as well as from the Vedic sacrifice in general”.

1.3.2. **Post –Vedic period**

The difference between the Vaishayyas and the Shudras was getting narrower day by day into the pre-Mauryan period (600- 300 B.C.) During the Ramayana and Mahabharata the condition of the Shudra had deteriorated. The social position of the Shudra underwent a change for the worse. With the complete substitution of society based on Varna during post-Vedic times, the members of the Shudra Varna ceased to have any place in the work of administration. The lawgivers emphasized the old fiction that, the Shudra was born form the feet of the God, and apparently on this basis imposed on him numerous social disabilities in matters of company, food, marriage and education amounting. In the several cases to his social boycott by the members of the higher Varnas
in general and the Brahmins in particular. This period also saw the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism as alternatives to the prevalent religious beliefs and practices. Gautam Buddha is very often complimented for refusing the caste system.

According to B.R. Ambedkar, the Shudras were belonged to the Kshatriya class in the Mahabharat period and later on they were brought to Shudra class.

According to Pillai, "Untouchability has its origin in hygiene first and then in religion." Ghurye concludes that, the idea of untouchability has been traced to the theoretical impurity of certain occupations. The early Pali texts often mention the five despised castes as the Chandala, Nishada, Vena, Rathakara and Pukkasa. They are described as having low families (nicha Kula) or inferior births (hina Jati), but Dharmasutras did not treat all of them as untouchables. Only Chandalas and Nishadas were considered as untouchables in later Vedic society collectively. "The untouchables were known as the Antyas or Bahyas i.e., people living outside villages and towns. Generally, the untouchables lived at the end of villages or towns or in their own settlements".

During the Rigvedic period itself two non-priestly (non-Brahmin) princes belonging to Kshatriya (Warriors) caste, Mahavira (540 B.C.– 468 B.C.) the founder of Jainism and Goutam Buddha (563 B.C. - 483 B.C.) the founder of Buddhism also revolted against the supremacy of the Brahmins.
1.3.3. Manusmriti period 200 B.C. – A.D. 200

The Manusmriti, desperately tried to revive the bygone golden age by re-establishing the ancient system of Varna hierarchy. “In this process women and Shudras were the greatest losers. It tried to assign each and every ethnic group, whether Indian or foreign a specific place in the Varna system according to his own criteria”.\textsuperscript{18} The Manusmriti accepts only the twice birth three castes: Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya, but the fourth, Shudra has only one birth. It says, “There is no fifth (Caste) \textsuperscript{19} to explain the existence of those who were not of the four castes. Manusmriti put forward the concept of mixed castes, which included those who were born out of inter-caste marriages”\textsuperscript{20}. They are called as Chandala and Sapaka. Therefore, Brahmin groups hated Chandala and Sapaka. Many of them tried to assign each and every ethnic group and followed the guidelines laid down by the Dharma sutras. The Smritis attributed to Yajnavalka, Brihspati, Narda and Katyayana followed the institutes of Manu.

The Varna hierarchy influenced the legal system, a great deal. Since Brahmans were placed highest in the social structure; they enjoyed the highest privileges. The life of a Brahman is given the highest esteem while the Shudras, the lowest. “Manu ordained that the mixed castes should live near well-known trees and burial grounds, on mountains and in groves but the Chandalas and the Sapakas should live outside the village. Fold vessels used by them were discarded forever. Their sole property consisted of iron and clothes of dead people and wandered from place to place”.\textsuperscript{21} Manu wanted to avoid all contacts between the Brahmins and untouchables. “Manu declared
that if Brahman had intercourse with Chandala or Antya women or took their food, he would lose his Brahmanhood. But if he did these things intentionally, he would be reduced to his status.”

In this way the period of the Aryan colonization reaching its completeness around A.D. 700 and continues till date. This long period was dominated, almost 1000 years. (A.D. 700-1700)

1.3.4. Muslim period

After the death of Harsha (A.D. 647) who was the king of Thaneswar, the dark days of Indian history began. Since A.D. 712 the Muslims came to India as travelers, traders and mercenaries. Their armies had over-run the entire country from Punjab to Assam and Kashmir to the Vindhyas. The Muslims settled firmly in India from the 11th century onwards. It is noteworthy that the position of the Shudra improved a great deal between 11th and 12th centuries. “As the Vaishyas came under the doctrine of ‘ahimsa’ giving up agricultural activities, the Shudras were nearer to Vaishyas. They toiled soil and also acted as caravan-leaders.” As a result, the Shudras gradually improved their economic condition. “Their lot further improved with the reformist movement like Jainism and Saivism, which welcomed them in their fold, in no way treating them as inferior to the Brahmans. But intellectually they remained rather backward, because higher education was largely restricted to the elite the Brahmans and Kshatriyas.” Later on the Portuguese occupied some parts of India in the early 16th century. It rises to fresh conversions of Hindus into Roman Catholics. When Hindu kings conquered the countries occupied
by Muslims or Portuguese rulers, those converts again reconverted into Hinduism. All these further increased the number of Castes. This period is very crucial for the Hindu religion because Islam affected many people were there, at that time.

“The Bhakti movement led by Acharya Ramanuj (1017-1200) Mahavacharya (1238) Vallavacharya (1479-1533) Kabir (1440-1518) Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Chaitanya (1486-1533) Tulsi Das (1532-1623) and many others did help check Islamisation of India. Under the Islamic influence many who had converted to Islam, like Harihar and Bukka, came back to the Hindu fold”. According to Lal Namdeva, Ramdas, Eknath, Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya and several other saints had Muslim disciples. Many of whom converted themselves to the Hindu Bhakti culture. Chaitanya openly converted Muslims to Bhakti Hinduism. In the pre-Mauryan period, the difference between the Vaishyas and Shudras were getting narrower day by day. The occupations of the two varnas were practically interchangeable. The general rule was that in times of distress each varna may fallow the occupation of that next below it in rank, “So the Vaishyas who were rigidly shut out from the occupations of the higher varnas, freely took to those of the Shudras. While the latter in distress were permitted to follow the professions of the Vaishya varna” (Yajnavalkya smiriti 1.120). Later on Shudras could be found in the professions of cattle-breeding and agriculture not only in exceptional circumstances but also at all times. (Kautilya Arthashastra, 1.3.) Thus in the medieval India the artisan classes, such as carpenters, weavers, potters, amiths, etc., who had in the Rigvedic society belonged to the Vaishya varna were
ranked as Shudras. The recognized professions of the Vaishya were four in number viz., agriculture, cattle-earning, trade and money lending (Yajanwalkya smriti, 1.119). Al-beruni, a visitor (London) to India in 11th century he describes, “the Vaishyas, like the Shudras were not allowed to hear it (i.e. the Vedas) much less to pronounce and recite it”. After that, the revival of the Maratha military power, however, in the 17th century arrested the process of disappearance of the Kshatriya Varna there. The stubborn resistance affords by the Cahndrasenani-Kayashtas-Prabhu in the 18th century foiled the Brahmanical efforts, though backed by the support of some of the Peshwas like Narayan Rao, to deprive them forcibly of the use of the sacred thread and to reduce them to the status of Shudras. 30

1.3.5. British period

The British period actually began with the inauguration of the East India Company (London) in A.D. 1599. But for the first 150 years the East India Company showed interest only in business and trade. Lord Robert Clive turned it into a militate power from 1744 A.D. onwards and the British established their own traditional form of government. But they could not have sympathy with the institution of the Hindus. “At that time they introduced a system of education, which did not demand, from the learners any change of religion. Ideas and behavior patterns, very different from those to which the people were accustomed, were thus presented as isolated from religion”. Meanwhile the Christian missionaries work which concerned with the various Indian traditions to evaluate and rethink their approach to the weaker section because Hindu society did not give any civil rights to untouchable people. Ghurye has noted
evidence that, in 1856 the Government of Bombay had to consider the case of a Mahar Boy, who was refused admission to the Government school at Dharwar. The principle involved in the case occupied the attention of the Government for about two years. The western education also brought about a change in the outlook of the educated youth who under the leadership of social reformers like Rajaram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) Swami Dayandanda Saraswati (1824-1833) Justice Ranade (1842-1901) Mahatma Jotiba Phule (1827-1890) Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) Dr. Ambedkar (1891-1956) and others introduced many social reforms including abolition of untouchability and they strove for the development of lower castes.

Beside this, their activities, the growth of towns, industries and introduction of railways, they established the hotels and eating-houses contributed to the relaxation of caste prejudices. These factors attacked on caste system. During this period new cities and phrases were coined to denote the Dalits. For example, for the first time the existence of the Depressed Classes was recognized in the text of the Act of 1919.35 According to Ambedkar, in the report of 1910 was the first time “the Hindu people were divided in three classes, viz. 1. Hindus 2. Tribes 3. Dalits”.36 In 1931 the census superintendent of Assam made a suggestion to change the title from the ‘Depressed Classes’ to the ‘Exterior Castes’. The argument for this suggestion was that, “it is a broader title, because its connotation does not limit itself to ‘outcaste’ people (which means people who are outside the caste system) on the other hand. ‘Exterior Castes’ would include those who had been cast out because of some breach of caste rules”.37
The Government of India (British Indian provinces) Act 1935 used the term ‘Scheduled Caste’ for the first time. Then the Government of India published a list of Scheduled Castes in 1936. In this order, 417 castes were listed but actually, there were 450 castes, treating each of the castes / sub castes etc., which are grouped together as a separate entity of them.

After that Mahatma Gandhi took up the work of redeeming the untouchables but the matter did not receive any momentum. Gandhiji called them ‘Harijans’ (Children of God) and organized a network of agencies, which worked for their causes.

1.3.6. Post Independence period

The SCs consist of those castes, which are included in a schedule of the constitution of India. The term ‘Scheduled Castes’ is defined in Article 366 (24) of the constitution of India as follows:

“Scheduled Castes mean such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under Article 341 (the President of India to specify the castes, races and tribes to be included in the list of Scheduled Castes in relation to a particular state or Union Territory, one such a list is notified with respect to any State or Union Territory.) to be Scheduled Castes for the purpose of this constitution”.

However, this is not the standard definition of Scheduled Castes.
The constitution (Scheduled Castes) order 1950 and 1951

The number of castes scheduled in the order of 1950 and 1951 increased to 821 (actually 927 castes) of them, only 22 (actually 25 castes) were considered scheduled for a part of the states.

1. The constitution SCs, order 1956

The number of castes notified as SCs under the orders of 1956 shot up to 1119 (actually, 1590 castes). A large number of them, as many as 704 (actually 1048 castes) were considered scheduled for a part of the states. This was because of merger of areas from the neighboring states and amalgamation of parts B and C states with part a state for formation of linguistic states in India in 1956.

The orders issued between 1956 and 1976 for the newly created states and union Territories like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Pondicherry listed 376 (actually 633 castes) SCs.

In the 1976 order 941 (actually 1492 castes) castes were figured. In 1976 the lists were amended mainly to remove area restorations in respect of most of the SCs. In the 1976 order there were only 25 (actually 27 castes) Castes, which were considered Scheduled for a part of the states.

The 1976 order did not cover the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territories of Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Daman and Diu, Chandigara,
Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi and Pondicheri, which were guided by the earlier orders. The number of Castes considered Scheduled in relation to these States/Union Territories was 141 (actually 200 castes). So, the total number of SCs in the States/Union Territories in 1976 was 941 (actually 1492) plus 141 (actually 200 castes) total 1082 (actually 1692 castes). [For the details about actual number of castes, given in the brackets, Please see Chatterjee S.K. (1996)]

After 1976 some orders were issued by the Government of India, which substantially enlarged the number of castes grouped within, by adding more castes as equivalent names and name of synonyms and sub-castes / tribes of existing SCs. and STs in different states. Regarding the criterion the point made by Ram Vilas Paswan needs to be noted. Paswan, who was the Union Minister of Welfare and Labour (May 1990) made the remark, while stating the objects and reasons for proposing to include Buddhist converts of SCs background in the list of SCs. He said,

"‘Neo Buddhist’ is a religious group, which come into existence in 1956 as a result of a wave of conversion of the SCs under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Because of Converting to Buddhism, they became ineligible for statutory concessions........ various demands have been made for existing all the concessions and facilities available to the SCs to them also on the ground that change of religion has not altered their social and economic condition. ....... As they objectively deserve to be treated as SCs for the purpose of various reservations, It is proposed to amend the Presidential Orders to include them there in".40
Therefore in May, 1990 the amendment was passed by parliament and therefore the ex-Mahar converted to Buddhism are called as Buddhists. “The Buddhists also get the same concessions alongwith the SCs belonging to the Hindu and Sikh religions are getting”.  

As per the census of India 1991, which shows the list of 499 communities of SCs. The SCs population constitute about 16 percent of the total population in India. 21 communities out of 499 are either clubbed or merged with their respective synonyms. As a result a list 478 communities, the numerically dominant communities are in each district. Therefore survey has projected 220 communities in all over India. (SCs population are not recorded in Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshdadeep, district wise population of the SCs are not reported in Jammu and Kashmir.). According to the 2001 census the total population of SCs of India is 1,66,635,700 and 16.2 per cent of the total population of India. The Table No. 1.1 shows detailed SC population in a state-wise order in various censuses. (For the details about the SC population in Maharashtra State, See Chapter No. 4)
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total SC Pop.</td>
<td>Percentage of SCS Pop. of Total Pop.</td>
<td>Total SC Pop.</td>
<td>Percentage of SCS Pop. of Total Pop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>5,774,548</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>7,961,730</td>
<td>14.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>7,950,652</td>
<td>14.11%</td>
<td>10,142,368</td>
<td>14.51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>1,825,432</td>
<td>6.84%</td>
<td>2,438,297</td>
<td>7.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1,895,933</td>
<td>18.89%</td>
<td>2,464,012</td>
<td>19.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>769,572</td>
<td>22.24%</td>
<td>1,053,958</td>
<td>24.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>381,277</td>
<td>8.26%</td>
<td>497,363</td>
<td>8.26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>3,850,034</td>
<td>13.14%</td>
<td>5,595,353</td>
<td>15.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>1,772,168</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>2,549,382</td>
<td>10.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>5,453,690</td>
<td>13.09%</td>
<td>7,358,533</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>3,025,761</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>4,479,763</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>16,376</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
<td>17,753</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>5,492</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>3,310,854</td>
<td>15.09%</td>
<td>3,865,543</td>
<td>14.66%</td>
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<td>Punjab</td>
<td>3,348,217</td>
<td>24.71%</td>
<td>4,511,703</td>
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<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>4,075,580</td>
<td>15.82%</td>
<td>5,838,879</td>
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<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>9,502</td>
<td>4.53%</td>
<td>18,281</td>
<td>5.78%</td>
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<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>7,315,595</td>
<td>17.76%</td>
<td>8,881,295</td>
<td>18.35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>192,860</td>
<td>12.39%</td>
<td>310,384</td>
<td>15.12%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>18,548,916</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td>23,453,339</td>
<td>21.16%</td>
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<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>8,816,028</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
<td>12,000,768</td>
<td>21.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>2,919</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uttaranchal</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNION TERRITORIES</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andaman and Nicobar Islands</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>29,073</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>63,621</td>
<td>14.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadra and Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2,011</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa, Daman and Diu</td>
<td>16,514</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>23,432</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>635,698</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>1,121,643</td>
<td>18.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>72,921</td>
<td>15.46</td>
<td>96,636</td>
<td>15.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>79,092,841</td>
<td>14.82</td>
<td>104,754,623</td>
<td>15.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
(1) Excludes Assam where census could not be taken in 1981.
(2) No castres were scheduled by the President of India for Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.
(3) Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Uttaranchal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh have been declared as states after the 1991 census.

Source:
The Constitution of India offered special provisions for the SCs. in education, employment and politics. Article 46, for instance, declares

“The state shall promote with special care the educational and economical interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”

1.4. Caste and occupation

However, the caste system is one of the unique features of Indian social structure and social life. On the one hand, the term is used to describe in the broadest sense, the total system of social stratification particular to India and on the other hand, it is used to denote three, perhaps, more or less distinct aspects of this total system, i. e. i. Varna, ii. Jati and iii. Gotra. Varna is not the same thing as jati the former repenting the four-fold division or groups of society.

Many Indian and foreign scholars devoted to caste study as Risley, Hutton, Bougle Celestin, etc. The Indian scholars Majumdar, Madan, Ketkar, Karve, Beteille, Ghurye studied the caste structure in India. About the caste and occupation the Ibbetson views that the fundamental idea, which lay at the root of the institution in its inception, was the hereditary nature of occupation. Toynbee says, the Depressed classes of India are typical example of Internal Proletariat, namely people who are in the society but not of the society. Srinivas defines, “caste as a hereditary endogamous localized group having a traditional association with an occupation and is graded in
hierarchy depending on the occupation though agriculture is common (in villages) to all castes from Brahmins to untouchables."\textsuperscript{54} Dumont's views that, "The caste system comprises the specialisation and interdependence of the constituent groups." \textsuperscript{55} Karve \textsuperscript{56} reviews that, association between caste and occupational structure closest by identifying some of the groups of occupational specialists and some caste designations indicating their occupations. However there are two conflicting views about the relationship between the caste system and its occupational choice. Ghurye views that, "the caste system not only assigns a definite occupation to each individual but also imposes certain restrictions on the change of occupation".\textsuperscript{57} On the other hand, the opposite viewpoint is that the caste system has been dynamic in nature. Ghurye has tried to show, during the Middle Ages and after that certain castes participated in a number of occupations.\textsuperscript{58} Hutton \textsuperscript{59} also mentioned that, the castes are derived from tribal or racial elements.

1.5. Caste and occupational prohibition

In the traditional period, the occupational structure was related with caste system. The relationship between caste and occupation was particularly closed in the case of Shudra people. The most unclean and least remunerative occupations were assigned to them. Nesfield\textsuperscript{60} views that the occupation is regarded as the exclusive basis of caste distinction.

The Sociologists and Anthropologists have brought out an aspect of the correlation between caste and occupation, on the one hand, with regard to certain caste groups and at the same time the flexibility and facility for
occupational mobility, which was structured within the caste system. Therefore, each caste followed its traditional occupation, which was prescribed to *Shastras* by the four *Varnas*. Ghurye's views, the caste system gave rise to hierarchical, gradation and social discrimination regarding privileges, marriage, social intercourse, choice of occupation, etc. Over the centuries, this has led to frustration and bitterness and inter-caste tensions within the system.

In this way the law of *Manu* which occupation prohibited to *Shudras* till 16th century. In the 17th century the *Marathas* were the military caste of the *Maratha*-country, formed into a caste from the cultivators, shepherds and herdsmen, who took service under *Shivaji Maharaja* and subsequent *Maratha* leaders. And the stubborn resistance offered by *Prabhu-kayastha* in the eighteenth century foiled the Brahmanical efforts. After that, "the *Maratha* and *Mali* who took up agriculture are spread all over *Maratha*-country and joined hands with *Marathas* in protesting against Brahmanic supremacy in the state".  

1.6. Awareness about caste discrimination among SCs in the British period

In the British period under the old regime of caste certain sections of Hindu society that were regarded as untouchables were devoid of many of the civil rights. Ghurye mentioned that, "in 1856 the Government of Bombay had to consider the case of *Mahar* boy, who was refused admission to the Government school at Dharwar". After that, "the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra was a protest movement against the political, economical and
cultural domination of Brahmins over non-Brahmins. It rose, when Jotiba Phule founded the Satyashodak Samaj in 1873.\textsuperscript{64}

Lower caste persons were recruited into armies of Peshwas and later into East India Company. “In the armies of Maratha chiefs, all the infantrymen were of lower castes and were treated with disdain”.\textsuperscript{65} Their military services, thus, opened up channels of vertical mobility for new occupations. Thereby, “they were exposed to western ideas and culture”.\textsuperscript{66} Industrialisation and urbanisation brought them new changes. The introduction of railways and buses, establishment of modern industries and labour market gave new occupation to lower caste. Morris Davis noted that, “in 1872, the untouchables percentage in Bombay mills was only one and in city their percentage was below 5 but by 1921, both in city and mill labour; were 12 per cent”.\textsuperscript{67}

The new occupational roles thus, provided upliftment for the SCs or lower castes. New occupations encouraged them toward education and lack of education was one of the factors, which restricted them to low occupations. After that the ‘All India Scheduled Castes Federation’ (AISCF) was formed in July 1942 and a conference held at Nagpur for the ‘Depressed Classes’\textsuperscript{68} and “the principles enunciated in the AISCF manifesto were rigorous, economical and political freedom, right to equality of opportunity, state responsibility to make every Indian free from want and fear, maintenance of liberty, equality and fraternity, redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class and of nation-by-nation and parliamentary system of Government”.\textsuperscript{69}
1.7. The efforts of social reformers

Since the time of Buddha, attempts have been made by the social reformers to purge the Hindu society of the evils of the caste system and uplift the social position of the lowest rank in the society. After Buddha, successive social reformers worked for cleaning the Hindu society of the effects of the caste system such as Ramamuj, great Vaisanava Acharya, Basava, Visavnanism, in the 11th and 12th century in Karnataka. Between 11th and 15th century Ramandanda, Kabir, Rohidas, Chaitany, Eknath and Tukaram tried to bring equality through the access of worship to God. These saints-poets of Maharashtra tried to show that there was no difference between a Brahmin and an untouchable in the kingdom of God. Sardar points out that, “the movement of the saints was mainly religious and cultural. It did not tackle the fundamental problems of social life; and it did not have the backing of economic struggles like that of the reformation in Europe. The ‘Varkari’ sect opened the way for the spiritual development of women and Shudras without touching the fabric of the caste system or the authority of the ‘shastras’.

In the 19th century new concepts such as ‘Social justice’ and ‘Political rights’ were brought by the Indian renaissance, which represented the dawn between the passing of the mediaeval age and the advent of the modern. The renaissance in Bengal produced two men, Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) and Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-891), who represented all the historical characteristics of the Indian Renaissance. The results of English education brought greater changes in the minds of educated Hindus than the pervious three thousand years. Therefore the rationalising effect of English
education gave rise to number of reform movements. The English educated people in India found that, "Indian society was organised on the basis of hierarchy, which was quite inconsistent with the high ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, thrown up by the French Revolution." Mujumdar has pointed out that most of the social reformers of the 19th century, like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshav Chandra Sen, Shivanath Shastri, Atmaram Pandurang, M. G. Ranade and Gopal Krishana Gokhale, (1866-1915) came from the highest Caste-Brahmin and Kayastha. The problems they attempted to solve were sati, infanticide, infant marriage, unrestricted polygamy, shaving of widows, widow-marriage etc. In fact these were really problems, which affected their mothers and sisters.

These social reformers who belonged to higher castes did not take up the cause of removal of untouchability and other manifestations of social inequalities, which concerned the lower rung of the society most. However, Patwardhan views that, "the Brahmin leadership did not fail essentially to initiate a radical change within the Brahmin community, to loosen its traditionalism and orthodoxy; nor did it succeed in creating a confidence about its intentions in the non-Brahmin castes". In this period the Brahmo and Arya samaj movements started in Bengal and Punjab. In Maharashtra such stalwart individual like Jambhekar, Lokhitwadi (G. H. Deshmukh), Ranade, Phule, Agarkar and Bhandarkar started it. The attempts to reform came from two distinct social groups, one from the Brahmins themselves, and the other from the majority caste groups of the non-Brahmin communities like the Kumbis, Malis and Marathas.
Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890) of Poona was the pioneer in the modern times of the movement calculated “to improve the condition of and to secure social equality to the erstwhile untouchable and unapproachable classes”.

Phule established the ‘Satya Shodhak Samaj’ in 1873 with the avowed aim of liberating the non-Brahmins from the strangle hold of the Brahmins, Priests and others. He opened schools for them. He called upon the people to revolt against Hindu caste gods and the degrading religious practices. He advocated “the principle of adequate representation for members of all castes in public services for the first time”. Meanwhile Shahu Maharaja started the reservation policy for Backward Classes and built the hostels for students in Kolhapur. In the same year Shivaram Janaba Kamble called conference of Mahars at Saswad (1902) and asked for their inclusion in Military and Police Services. He also fought against the Devdasi system prevailing among the Mahar and Mang castes. Vithal Ramji Shinde also silently worked and wrote much on untouchability and he started the “Depressed Classes Mission” in 1906.

Karmveer Bhaurao Patil followed the footsteps of Phule and started a boarding school for Mahars in Satara.

In this way, in Maharashtra the non-Brahmin movement virtually ended the supremacy of the Brahmins. The confrontation of two reform movements one which was initiated and led by Brahmins and the other initiated by the educated Marathas, Malis and other non-Brahmins created a climax of social change. This revolt of the untouchables in the form of struggle was mainly due to the realisation that the petitions and memorials are not adequate to move the Hindus. The role of the British–Indian law, which gave the untouchables the
rights to wear any kind of clothes or ornaments and to use public services such as wells, schools, buses, trams, railways. Public offices etc. However, proved to be vital in their upliftment in spite of these enabling legal provisions, the untouchables were denied the basic human rights and civic rights.

1.8. The role of Dr. Ambedkar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar belonged to the so-called lower caste in India. Hence, he suffered the agonies of caste discrimination in his educational and social life. He started many movements for the lower castes (Dalits) to make aware of their pathetic condition. He struggled for the equal rights to the lower castes in India. Therefore, his contribution played a vital role in the struggle of lower castes in Maharashtra. When Ambedkar returned from London in 1920, he started a weekly ‘Mooknayak’ (Leader of the Dumb) to voice the woes of the ‘Depressed Classes’ of India. Ambedkar had established the ‘Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha’ on 20th July 1924, through which he wanted to “light the fire of self-help and Self-respect among the untouchables and wished to bring all untouchables under one banner”. When the Bombay Government passed a resolution to the effect that the untouchable classes be allowed to use public wells and Dharmsalas in 1923, Dr. Ambedkar organised the untouchables to assert their legal right to take water from the Chowdar water Tank at Mahad in Maharashtra. In this connection, a conference was held during 18th to 20th March 1927 at Mahad. He addressed 10,000 delegates who attended to abandon their watans. After the conference Ambedkar led all the delegates to the Chowdar water tank at Mahad. “Ambedkar was finally successful in this democratic Satyagraha and won the case in the court”. The temple entry
movement, which started with the *Voikkaom Satyagraha* in 1924 in Travancore State, was spreading to different parts of the country. After the successful Satyagraha, Dr. Ambedkar launched the struggle for temple entry at *Parvati*, Poona in 1929 and *Kalaram* Temple at Nashik on 2 March 1930.

The British Government organised Round Table Conferences in London in 1930, 1931 and 1932. In these conferences Ambedkar represented the untouchables. The second Round Table conference, held in 1931, was very important. Gandhi who not only refused to consider a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes but also opposed any form of special representation involving reserved seats. But Ambedkar convinced the British Government, therefore the Government announced a decision regarding representation of untouchables with a separate electorate, which, it was hoped, would affect a compromise between the congress and Ambedkar. Gandhi’s response to this event was to enter a “fast unto death” on September 20, 1932, which resulted in what is known as the ‘Poona pact’ for the political representation. Actually the seats in the legislatures reduced up to 71 after Poona pact where as the British Govt. had given 148 seats to the Harijans.

The leaders of the Depressed Classes held a conference at Yewla (Nashik) on 13th October 1935 to review the political and social situation in the light of their fifteen years old struggle and the ensuing constitutional reforms. Then Ambedkar declared: “Unfortunately, I was born a Hindu untouchable I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu untouchable.” Dr. Ambedkar concluded that the only way to abolish untouchability and to get humane
treatment, equality and liberty was to leave the Hindu fold and Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party to guard the interests of the Depressed classes.

One of the most powerful messages of Dr. Ambedkar is abolition of caste. Dr. Ambedkar was invited for the conference organised by ‘Jat-Pat Todak Mandal’ of Lahor in 1936. The views expressed regarding inter-caste and inter-religious marriage, in the historical speech prepared by Dr. Ambedkar for the conference, were unbearable to the reception committee. Hence, Dr. Ambedkar was requested by the committee to make certain changes in his speech but Dr. Ambedkar denied to-do so. As a result the conference stood cancelled.

Dr. Ambedkar also started Marathi newspapers like ‘Mooknayak’, ‘Bahiskrit Bharat’, ‘Prabhuddha Bharat’ and ‘Janata’ etc., and propagated his philosophy of social and political equality. Ambedkar formed “All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF) in July 1942, in the conference held at ‘Nagpur’ for the ‘Depressed Classes’\(^{82}\) However, it could not become a powerful organisation through the country mainly because of lack of resources and the machinery necessary for making the organisation strong and powerful.

He realised the need of a good education institute for the Depressed Classes. So he founded ‘People’s Education Society’ and started colleges in Bombay and Aurangabad. He actively engaged in the drafting the Constitution of India, which was successfully passed in the Parliament in 1949. However, the Hindu
code Bill that he proposed in the parliament was rejected and therefore he resigned his ministry from Nehru’s cabinet.

Later he engaged himself in the thoughts of Buddhism and came out with the book entitled ‘Buddha and his Dhamma’ in February 1956. Finally as promised, he embraced Buddhism along with his wife and four lac followers on 14th October 1956 at Nagpur.

It is sure that the efforts of Ambedkar were necessarily responsible for the mass awakening of the Dalits. But other movements directed against the British rule also indirectly got affected. The hidden social discrimination, which has its origin in the traditions and degrading of the Indian people, received a greater shock with the mass conversion of SCs into Buddhism.

1.9. Post Ambedkar scene

Dr. Ambedkar, the main architect of modern India, a multifaceted and multi-dimensional personality. But he had set for himself the main task and the chief goal of uplifting and emancipating the millions of his untouchables from the ignorance, slavery and humiliation. He had vigorously pursued his philosophy of embracing equality, fraternity, liberty and justice on the basis of which he strived throughout his life. “He had also the vision for setting up a completely secular and democratic type of society, which could confer the human dignity on both men and women”. Therefore, he was called the leader of the Depressed Classes and the champion of the millions of dumb and down trodden people of the country.
Ambedkar tried to bring together Dalits and other oppressed groups of Indian society through a new political party namely ‘Republican Party of India’ (RPI). He made the constitution of the party and circulated to the leaders of the SCs, other Minorities and Backward classes. But unfortunately, he died in December 1956. Then Ambedkar’s followers formally founded the political party as ‘Republican Party of India’ in 1957 with the aim “to be defender of the interests of the Dalit classes, the Adivasis or Tribal, peasant classes, and the landless labourers”. 84 Its leader was N. Shivraj upto 1961, till his death. The next president of the party, “B. S. Gaikwad was sympathetic to the Congress party and a large number of RPI workers joined the congress during this period. The party gradually weakened”. 85 Several of the erstwhile leaders of the RPI such as Mr. D.T. Rupwate R.D. Bhandare and a few others joined the Congress party. In the North Mr. B. P. Maurya was the most prominent among the leaders of RPI. He was elected on RPI ticket in the first election. After the end of the first term, he joined the Congress. Rupwate was made the minister. Bhandare was elected to parliament and later on appointed as the Governor of Bihar. “Maurya was appointed as Minister”. 86 Then Mr. R. S. Gawai, who took over after the death of B. K. Gaikwad, recently Mr. Gawai is appointed as Governor of Bihar state. A fraction led by Mr. B. D. Khobragade was supposed to be independent. Another fraction led by Mr. B.C. Kamble operated in some parts of Maharashtra.87.

Meanwhile in the mid sixties of the 19th century, Indian political economy entered a period of stagnation and the educated unemployment began to soar. “At this crucial period, a young militant movement emerged among the Neo-
Buddhists and the SCs called the *Dalit Panther* (inspired by the Black Panther phenomenon in America), which had a radical-revolutionary image. The *Dalit Panther* was considered as a new force in politics of Maharashtra but it got disintegrated. "After the formation of BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) the other Party members Dalits were offered political offices at the mercy of political bosses of the parties led and dominated by the upper strata. But with the formation of their own political party (B.S P.) they started aspiring to become Member of Legislative Assemblies, Members of Parliament, Member of Legislative Councils and Rajya Sabha and even the Chief Minister of a State on their own without political patronage. And all this happened within two decades and during this period BSP shared political power in the largest state of the country four times i.e. (1993, 1995, 1997, 2000)" and Mayawati became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh four time. Presently Congress and other political parties are trying to ride on the back of Republican Party of India (RPI) in Maharashtra but “RPI is fragmented in number of fractions led by Dalit leaders like Prakash Ambedkar, the grandson of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, R.S. Gavai, Ramdas Athawale, Jogendra Kawade and so on. The BSP is also making its presence felt in Maharashtra especially in the Vidharbha region. In the rest of India also there is a dearth of Dalit leaders in Congress". Some political parties such as DMM, AIDMK, TDD, SP, BJD, RJD, SAD, AGP, etc, are some of the state political parties, which have ruled different states. And "more than forty four (44) Republican political parties are in existence in Maharashtra".
1.10. Summary

The condition of the Depressed Classes in India was very pathetic from the ancient period. It did not change in the Pre-independent India. The efforts of the social reformers like Jotiba Phule and Shahu Maharaj and others were praise worthy. Dr. Ambedkar accelerated the movement of their upliftment. The Depressed Classes were termed as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and later on as Dalits. Various political parties tried to give some kind of representation to them. They themselves formed their own parties, which later got split in different fractions. However, all emphasized on the educational and occupational mobility of these people.
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