Conclusion
The present study is primarily concerned with the contribution of Dalit MPs, in the formulation and influencing of public policies towards the upliftment of Dalits. We have chosen to study their role in the Parliament. Even though various studies have shown that the role of Parliament in policy formulation remains quite limited, nevertheless its significance in the overall process of policy formulation cannot be altogether ignored. The legislators are supposed to put forward the grievances and demands of those, whom they represent, and one cannot completely ignore the fact that some of them do raise their voices on the floor of the House. It is a different matter that only a small section of them do it consistently, a few others reluctantly, and the rest may just either support or oppose actively or passively those who consistently raise their voices.

Our study regarding the role of the Lok Sabha in policy formulation for Dalits reveals that, (i) Dalit issues are not only discussed but legislations are also passed for them in response to the discussions, and, (ii) both the Dalit and non-Dalit MPs participate during the debate and discussion. Though Dalit issues are debated and discussed in the Lok Sabha but its involvement merely modifies or extends existing Dalit policy paradigm. It enabled no alteration or shift in the paradigm as per the demand of times and circumstances.

An analysis of the recommendations of CSCT and NCSCT affirms that their reports address various issues on Dalits which can be utilised by the MPs in impressing upon the Government to formulate policies to uplift the Dalit masses as per the prevailing and emerging trends.

One of the important findings of the study is the prevalence of gaps at various levels viz., (i) between the reports of the Commissioner and the Commission and the perspectives adopted by the MPs, and (ii) between the perspectives adopted by the MPs on these reports and the Minister’s response to the reports, wherein even the assurances were not provided by the Government. There was hardly any response with regard to framing the new policies that are required in the present circumstances. Thus, we can say that the Government has two policies with regard to Dalits, one to formulate policies and two not to formulate policies.

The MPs used various rules under which Dalit issues were discussed in the Lok Sabha but their major emphasis had been on immediate concerns and primarily on the atrocities. In spite of atrocities having been discussed five times, there was no check on them. So the issue of efficient governance and sensitisation of civil society
was raised at last, where the transformation of caste system was emphasised and it was argued that without abrogating the caste, atrocities cannot be stopped.

Whether it was Motion, Rule 193 or Adjournment Motion, or amendments on Bills every time the MPs withdrew their proposals, giving a free hand to the Government to pursue its own proposals on Dalits. Even though while passing legislations, MPs' recommendations for amendments were not included in the Bills. The MPs seemed to be merely satisfied with the assurances given by the Government.

Thus, it is obvious that the Government handles the proposals of the MPs on Dalit issues in a rather casual manner and even the Dalit MPs fail to impress upon the Government to consider their proposals, seriously, and diligently.

The number of non-Dalit MPs frequently participating on Dalit matters was lesser in comparison to Dalit MPs but the quality of participation in terms of arguments and perspectives of Dalit MPs differs, little when compared with the non-Dalit MPs.

Deliberations by the legislators during discussion on the reports of the Commissioner and the Commission revealed articulations for increasing, (i) the funds for welfare activities, (ii) vacancies in various departments and fulfilling them, and (iii) scholarships for students, etc. Another significant aspect points to the fact that while in 1985 the concerns were for raising scholarships, funds and reserved vacancies, in 1994 the focus shifted to delay in scholarship and non-fulfillment of existing reserved vacancies. Constituency concerns even with regard to short-term objectives were absent. The legislators neither bother about lack of funds for developmental activities vis-à-vis Dalits in their constituencies, raised the issue of atrocities in their areas, in spite of the fact that MPs from states having atrocity-prone areas were present.

Though Members' were primarily concerned with short-term objectives, but long-term policy objectives received no less attention. Before the conferment of constitutional status to the CSCT, they kept raising this issue during the 1985 discussion. However, constitutional status of 1990 also did not satisfy them and they pushed for the Commission to be strengthened with adequate budget and staff for its proper functioning. Another aspect for the proper implementation of safeguards was related to the constitution of a separate ministry for SC/STs or to bring Dalit subject under the MHA. With regard to the containing atrocities, the legislators were not
happy with the PCRA, and felt ... the need for a more stringent act to punish the guilty of atrocities against Dalits and special courts with Dalit personnels in atrocity-prone areas, etc. Legislation of laws on land reforms to enable proper distribution of land to the landless Dalits, was another area of concern of the MPs.

With regard to compensatory discrimination they argued for a Special Recruitment Drive to fulfill the backlog in government jobs. In 1992, the Mandal Commission judgement on the withdrawal of SC/ST reservations in promotions attracted their attention. They earnestly took up the matter during the 1994 discussion on the Commissioner’s reports. However, the MPs have raised the adverse impact of the liberalisation process on Dalits and asked the Government to come out with the necessary Bill to safeguard Dalit interests.

While replying to the debate on the Motions on reports, the Government have been able to satisfy the Members by following a coherent policy towards the Dalit problem. In a 1985 reply to the Motion, the Minister of Welfare convinced the Members with regard to the existence of review committees at the state, district and Taluqa levels for the welfare of these groups. Members were also informed that the Ministry of Welfare was already working as a nodal agency so that polices are implemented. None of the two ministers who replied the debate in 1985 satisfactorily addressed the question of constitutional status to the Commission. It was merely reiterated in a clicked manner, that the matter would be looked into.

One of the issues raised by a majority of the MPs relates to the question of punishment to the officers involved in non-implementation of policies meant for Dalits. The Ministers neither told what is being done nor promised to come out with sufficient measures or a policy to check the conduct of the officials vis-à-vis Dalits. The responsibility was put on the state governments. Facts and figures were merely reeled out with regard to various schemes and allocation of funds for them. Such presentations by the government were done to merely dilute the attention of the MPs while replying to the Motion in 1994. But the Government was unable to provide figures for those erring officials who were responsible for indulged in non-implementation of backlog and the welfare schemes meant for Dalits.

Several policy issues like the need for legislation to ensure reservations in promotions, representation in private sector, promotion of scavengers to group 'D' services, providing share to tribals in newly created assets and reviewing the ongoing projects in tribal areas were ignored by the Government. Also the
constitution of the Commission to report on the Administration of Scheduled Areas and welfare of STs in the States were ignored by the Government. Even though some Members reminded the Minister in-charge of these issues, the latter preferred to reel off statistics, while ignoring the policy aspects.

The Government neither in 1985 nor in 1994 was able to satisfy the MPs who raised the issue of punishment to officers who did not implement the policies meant for Dalit upliftment. They wanted some assurance as no state government was paying heed to orders and guidelines issued by the Central Government. But on both the occasions, the Ministers both the times reiterated that they will see to it and had asked for clarification from the states. The discussion on the Reports of the Commissioner and the Commission reach that Dalit policies are indeed deliberated upon by the Lok Sabha. But the legislators emphasis is more often on strengthening the mechanism of policy implementation rather than pursuing representation of Dalits in 'untouched areas' such as private sectors, Supreme Court and High Courts, etc. One of the important issues raised by the Commissioner reports was to constitute a Commission to report on the administration of the Scheduled Areas and the Welfare of STs under Article 339, but the MPs failed to mention it during the debates. Though some questions on education were asked, but the issue of effectively providing the SC/STs with better educational facilities and thus making them self-reliant failed to find mention on the debates. Thus, there have been some gaps between the recommendations of the CSCT and the perspectives adopted by the MPs. At the same time only occasional demands are made for such provisions but not pursued by, and the MPs are more or less satisfied with the replies of the Ministers.

In such circumstances, the need to formulate policies in 'untouched areas' were usually ignored. Assurance for a time-bound programme for these to materialise remained a far cry. Even with regard to reservations in Central services other ministeries were brought in by saying that it does not come within the purview of Ministry of Welfare. When the legislators remind the government of its role of co-ordination to safeguard the Dalit interests, the ministers respond in a clicked manner, with "orders in specific matters can be issued" or "the matter will be looked into."

The reports of the Commissioner and the Commission for SC/STs, show that they provided sufficient feedback to the MPs and the governments to formulate
policies in view of emerging scenario and the recommendations were made not only to strengthen but also to alter the existing Dalit policy paradigm. Though the major emphasis on the reports of the commission has been on compensatory discrimination i.e. reservations in jobs and education, but the prime emphasis of the Commissioner's reports was on the proper distribution of land to the SCs and to protect the land rights of the STs, because majority of them it argued depend on land for their livelihood. This observation gets strengthened when we relate the remarks of Mandalsohn and Vicziany (1998) who argue that even if 100 percent quota meant for Dalits is fulfilled in jobs even then merely two percent of them would be able to come up in the life. But MPs especially the Dalit MPs, who should have utilised the reports to alter the policy paradigm on Dalits have miserably failed to discharge their duties and obligations effectively and conscientiously.

We also found that the constitutional status to the CSCT did not help much because the discussion on its reports did not take place in time. And the MPs did not raise the question of absence of discussion on the fresh reports.

Thus policy perspectives by the legislators show concern for strengthening existing institutional mechanisms and creating new ones for proper policy implementation. They also termed present policies of the government as inadequate, inefficient and offered alternatives. Broadly the policy issues the legislators have been concerned with are: stringent law to deal with atrocities, strengthening institutional mechanism of the Commission for SC/STs by providing it constitutional status, shifting the Dalit subject from the MHA to the MW, ensuring efficient land distribution for Dalits, fulfilling the backlog in government jobs, legislating in the light of Mandal Commission judgement for reservations in promotions, and providing reservations in private sectors in the light of liberalization process, etc.

Policy proposals of the Government relate to atrocities, constitutional status for SC/STs, reservations to Buddhist converts, constitution of National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, and, reservations in promotions. Regarding two major perspectives, one on land reforms and the other on reservations in private sector, no policy proposal came forth from the Government. Though in the 9th Lok Sabha, assurance was given to put this issue on land reforms under the 9th Schedule of the Constitution, but no legislation was introduced in this regard. The PCWSCT came
Legislators not only participated on policy proposals of the Government but also asked for amendments on the proposals. We have observed that the MPs were dissatisfied with implementation of the policies during deliberations on all the five Bills. They usually drifted away from the subject matter of the Bills, be it a debate on NCSCT or NCSK, and the interventions do not reflect on strengthening these mechanisms as institutions. Significantly related aspects were focussed more than the main themes of the Bill. For instance, asking for special tribunal for SC/ST employees on the lines of Central Administrative Tribunal, while discussing NCSCT Bill, representation of Dalits in judiciary, while deliberating upon NCSK Bill, and providing reservation in private sector and emphasis on OBC reservation during discussion on the 77th Amendment Bill. Thus the deliberations went off target and were devoid of focussed discussion on a particular Bill and this applies both to Dalit and non-Dalit MPs.

The MPs have been less active during proposing amendments to a Bill. In the case of Prevention of Atrocities Bill, no amendment was introduced by Dalit MPs whereas a non-Dalit MP introduced eight amendments, while passing NCSCT Bill, two Dalit and one non-Dalit MP moved amendments, during the SC order Amendment Bill, two non-Dalit and one Dalit MP moved amendments, no amendment was however, introduced, while passing of NCSK Bill. It was during 77th Amendment Bill that the Dalit and non-Dalit MPs were equally active for amendments.

If we look at the policy proposals of the Government in terms of Bills and Statements then it could be shown that the Government was more responsive during the 9th and 10th Lok Sabha as compared to the 8th Lok Sabha. There had been only one Bill that was passed in the 8th Lok Sabha, and it related to prevention of atrocities against Dalits. No policy statement was made during the 8th Lok Sabha. Our hypothesis that the Lok Sabha has become more active towards Dalits in the post-Mandal period stands correct. Even all the four PCWSCT Reports on policies were prepared in the post-Mandal period.

Legislators have been more active on three occasions - one, during NCSCT Bill, two while passing SC order Amendment Bill and three while passing of the 77th Amendment Bill.
Though MPs were more active in the post-Mandal period for amendments in the Bills but these amendments were not to strengthen the themes contained in them but rather for extending facilities to bring more groups within the framework of special safeguards. While passing of SC Order Bill in 1990 the major emphasis was to include Christian and Muslim converts in the SC list, it was the inclusion of OBCs in the promotional benefits that was the focus of the 77th Amendment Bill.

So far as responsiveness of the regimes is power in concerned, V.P. Singh Government was more responsive towards legislative deliberations as could be seen, when the NCSCT Bill was passed and many new clauses were added to the original Bill. At no other point of time the amendments introduced by the MPs were added to the original Bill.

Even the PCWSCT Reports had minor impact on Dalit policy paradigm. Although the reports were able to bridge some of the gaps left by legislative debates e.g. on private sector reservations and fulfillment of backlog (regarding which two separate Reports were prepared), but the government's response to these reports both poor and muted.. No substantive policy issue raised and recommended by the committee was tackled positively by the government. It shows that PCWSCT may try to bridge the gaps left by legislative deliberations but the government remains unaffected and unaltered on Dalit policy questions.

Thus, the role of Lok Sabha and especially of Dalit MPs in the process of policy formulation to alter Dalit policy paradigm remains insignificant. For instance, if the Prevention of Atrocities Act was passed, it was merely modification of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, and if the 65th Amendment was passed, it was an extension of powers of the already existing Commission for SC/STs. Yet again, establishing the National Commission of Safai Karamcharis was extension of the National Scheme for Elimination of Scavenging and Disposal of Night Soil. Moreover, four Acts were passed for the extension of facilities to few other communities by bringing them into the SC/STs list. And it had little or no impact on the safeguards for Dalits as such but favoured a few more deprived sections, with reservation benefits. Above all the 77th Amendment Bill passed was nothing but continuation of the same facility of reservation in promotions that was withdrawn by the Supreme Court in the Mandal Commission verdict.

In spite of frequent commission of atrocities during the period of our study, not even once the MPs moved a 'No Confidence Motion' against the Government. It
also indicates against apathy of the Government and the Parliament towards Dalit question. Quite surprisingly, no proper discussion took place on the burning issue of privatisation and liberalisation that was taking place in the country. Only once, a half-an-hour discussion on the subject was held, and as usual the Minister kept assuring the MPs that “we are committed to the welfare of SC/STs” but did not mention how the rights of SC/STs employees will be protected after the privatisation of Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking (DESU).

The concerns raised during Question Hour show the major emphasis on economic developmental aspects particularly on jobs in the public sector, and welfare schemes. The question of land distribution which has an adverse impact on the major chunk of Dalit population did not merit the concern of the MPs. The issue of social upliftment found some mention but here too atrocities attracted more attention than education, housing, health facilities etc.

There was no significant difference between the inquiries on the starred and unstarred questions. Even the starred questions could not elicit specific information except the one contained in the various reports of the NCSCT. No harsh facts were produced except showing how marginal improvements were made as compared to previous years. Moreover, the reply of Government to these questions was always clicked and stereotypical.

During the supplementaries as well, the MPs did not raise policy issues. They could not even persuade the Government to continue the schemes which had benefited Dalits and had shown a considerable success as was in the case of Kutir Yojna in Orissa. In another supplementary question on development of peripheral areas in and around the coal fields, and on the rehabilitation policy, the Members were satisfied with the Minister's response that the Government would come out with a fresh rehabilitation policy in case of tribals. They did not quiz the government, as to what were the basic components of the policy being proposed.

Based on the analysis of Question Hour a peculiar contradiction can be seen with regard to the implementation of schemes and programmes. The Central Government escapes its responsibilities by bringing the state governments in, and whenever new polices need to be formulated, it takes up the responsibility.

The questions on the review of reservation policy and reservations in promotions have been the major policy questions asked by the Members. Both of these questions were also asked by non-Dalit legislators.
Questions on atrocities were purely on implementation failures which asked the Government for follow-up, after recommending the state governments to check them. The information provided by the Minister mentioned merely about the number of atrocities committed, rather than the measures adopted to curtail them.

Two policy inquiries were made under starred questions namely, (a) reservation in admission in Public schools, and (b) representation of SC/STs as judges in Supreme Courts and High Courts. But no discussion was initiated by the MPs on the reply of the Minister who admitted the prevalence of poor representation of Dalits in the Supreme and the High Courts and non-existence of reservations in public schools.

Our argument thus holds forth the view that the legislators hardly raise demands on adequate representation of Dalits in the areas untouched by the original Dalit policy paradigm. Even if such demands are remotely raised, there is a lack of pursuance by them.

The substantive concerns of the legislators during the Question Hour largely show prevalence of phenomenal representation, where implementation of safeguards assumes importance. The demands are seldom in the direction to strengthen the implementation mechanism nor for new policies. Even if rarely there are demands to strengthen the implementation agencies, and for new policies to uplift the Dalits, these are not pursued vigorously. The replies of the ministers whether or not to come out with new proposals are not an issue which is discussed and debated further. Thus, the legislators seem to be generally content with the replies and even if sometimes they remain dissatisfied, they do not pursue their dissatisfaction to force the Minister to take proactive policy measures.

The socio-political profile of the MPs participating on Dalit issues had majority of the participants from SC/STs categories and belonging to the Congress Party. Even the MPs from a party whose leadership come from Dalits were not active during debates in the Lok Sabha. Majority of the participants had been well qualified, showing education making the Dalit MPs to be vocal and participative bringing sensitivity among non-Dalits to be involved on Dalit issues in the Lok Sabha. The participating MPs usually had a history of their involvement in the social and political activities and they were socially sensitive towards the marginalised sections. Previous experience also made the participants more participative and
concerned with Dalit issues. But, we find that the participation of the non-Dalits was more due to electoral compulsions.

Our analysis reveals that the MPs are neither committed to their Dalit constituents nor do they play a role in policy shifts, for the broader Dalit interests. They remain confined to the issues of implementation and thus there is no policy change in the Dalit policy paradigm due to Parliament's involvement in the policy-making process. The impact of recommendations of the NCSCT and MP's deliberations is limited to development and annexation of prevalent policies.

In the light of the above analysis, it is being recommended that the Parliament and especially the Dalit representatives in it need to impress upon the government to formulate policies in the areas, where they have no legal claims, such as public schools, judges in Supreme Court and High courts and above all in the private sector and proper implementation of land reforms. A regular discussion on the reports of NCSCT should ensue so that the MPs are aware of the present Dalit conditions and pressurize the Government to formulate policies accordingly. The MPs are expected not only to protest against the Government's attitude of neglecting their opinions but also to walk out of the House to register their resentment. The question Hour and discussion on starred questions in particular, is also required not merely on the question of policy implementation but for policy formulation as well. The PCWSCST should be made more policy-oriented so that it can also help in strengthening the demands in favour of policy shifts.

We have observed that the atrocities against Dalits are being discussed several times with hardly any check on their commission. In this regard, there is a need to fix responsibility on the concerned administrative apparatus and if no change takes place, then the Chief Ministers of the respective states need to be made accountable and if need arises the Article 356 should be imposed on the errant state. Measures should also be taken to sensitize society against prevalent attitudes through mass media and people egged to cherish civil society initiatives.

We have been able to assess: (i) what Dalit parliamentarians do in the Lok Sabha, (ii) how do they put Dalit issues on policy agenda, and (iii) what is the reaction of the Government on their proposals. However, the questions like why Dalit MPs behave in a particular fashion, and why the Government ignores alteration of Dalit policy paradigm needs to be analysed. There is neither a lack of interest as shown during the deliberations nor dearth of information on Dalit issues, as NCSCT
reports would suggest even then why policy shifts do not take place needs to be examined. One explanation for Dalit MPs not being able to pursue a radical agenda relates to the structural limitations of their representation through joint electorates. But, whether rigidities of the party leadership also influence their behaviour in a particular manner needs to be looked into by further research. Future researches can examine the validity of joint electorates as the reason for lack of Dalit MPs' abilities to pursue the agenda of radical changes in the policies.

We are convinced that the Lok Sabha being the representative body of the whole Indian society can put the need for social transformation on the national agenda by looking at Dalit question as a central problem of Indian social and political system to be tackled with efficient and responsive governance and civil society initiatives.