Chapter - 1
Introduction to the Study

1.1. Introduction:

History is not only the study of the past events and the battle between the kings. But it is a study of human beings altogether. Farmers are backbone of the Indian society. Indian economy development depends upon the farmers. Before the Independence of India the status of farmers was very precarious in the society due to the domination of the upper class Zamindars. After the Independence of India our Government has given preference for the development of agriculture. The government also took steps for the welfare of the depressed class farmers. When the “Bhoodana Movement” started at the same time the condition of the lower class in rural and urban areas was well below poverty line, and it was responded well for the progress of depressed class farmers.

Succeeding to the Bhoodana Movement (1951), the Government has brought Land Reforms Act and as a result, the excess lands of the Landlords was taken over and distributed to depressed classes. Still due to their social status since immemorial days, the position of depressed class farmers is very poor; still they are suffering from many problems in the society. The terms ‘Depressed Classes’ used here to denote the scheduled castes.

The term Scheduled Castes refers to a list of castes prepared in 1935 by the British Government in India. But during the ancient period and medieval period they were known as ‘Panchamas’ (fifth group), ‘Chandalas’ (heathens or outcastes) and ‘Antyajas’ (lowest class) and during the British period they came to be called first as ‘Depressed classes’ (dalit jatis) or Exterior Castes (avarnas), later as Harijans (Children of God) as ‘Scheduled Castes’(castes listed in the Government Schedule). An examination of how these terms appeared at different periods of history reveals how the so-called untouchables
were subject to various types of humiliations before they came to enjoy the same social and economic privileges along with the other castes in India.¹

During the British period, the ‘Avaranas’ were first designated as ‘Depressed Classes’ later as ‘Exterior Castes’ and finally as ‘Scheduled Castes’. The term ‘Depressed Classes’ was introduced sometime late in the last century in British official records. The Census of 1901 identified some castes suffering from disabilities and classed them as ‘Unclean castes’. However, the various official and non-official reports started identifying the ‘Unclean Castes’ as ‘Depressed Classes’. To identity the ‘Depressed Classes’ as ‘Depressed Classes’ the term ‘Untouchables’ was first used by the Maharaja of Baroda before the Depressed Classes Mission of Bombay in 1909.

The Census of 1911 tried its best to list of the castes which suffered from social, economic and religious disabilities to include them under ‘Depressed Classes’ but in vain. However, the Census report of 1931 listed out 31 castes and called them ‘Exterior Castes’ in preference to ‘Depressed Classes’. In 1932 the words ‘Depressed Classes’ and ‘Exterior Castes’ were officially defined as the ‘Untouchable’.²

Even after achieving Independence in 1947, the Constitution of India has used the word ‘Scheduled Castes’. The term ‘Scheduled Castes’ has not been defined anywhere in the Constitution. Article 34 of the Constitution reads as follows: “Scheduled Caste” means such castes, races or tribes parts of groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under Act 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purpose of the Constitution of India. The President of India has powers to issue the list of the Scheduled Castes order of 1950 after consultation with the Governor of any State.
Notwithstanding this officially approved designation of ‘Scheduled Castes’, the term ‘Harijan’ has become so much popular that both the terms ‘Scheduled Castes’ and ‘Harijans’ are now a days used as synonyms in all official and non-official records in India. Most generally speaking the Scheduled Castes or Harijans today suffer somewhat diluted social, economic and other disabilities against the very rigid disabilities that were suffered by the during the British times. The scheduled castes are engaged in caste based occupation, which was considered impure and only a few of these castes are engaged in agriculture. Government has formulated many policies and social welfare schemes for the development of the scheduled castes. As their occupations were treated as impure, Government has allotted agricultural lands to many of the Scheduled Castes and helped them to get the benefits from these schemes. Though, scheduled castes engaged in agriculture, majority of these farmers have small or marginal land holdings. The problems of depressed classes are manifold and the farmers of depressed classes are not exception to the same. These farmers are facing poverty, indebtedness, illiteracy, unawareness about social welfare schemes, caste based discrimination, in few areas, even untouchability, etc. As such, the present study focused on the socio-economic position of the depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district.

The meaning of the terms used in the present study revealed that, farmer is a person one who engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials. The term usually applies to people who do some combination of raising field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock. A farmer might own the farmed land or might work as a labourer on land owned by others, but in advanced economies, a farmer is usually a farm owner, while employees of the farm are known as farm workers, or farmhands.

Some of the scholars have their own sight on the concept of the farmers. The western education will help us to describe the concept of farmer. ‘Kisan’,

‘Raitha’ is often translated as ‘Farmer’ or ‘Peasant’\textsuperscript{4} which is ambiguous and used differently by different authors or variously by the same author different studies.

According to Oxford English dictionary the work ‘Peasant’ or ‘Farmers’ means, a countryman, or a rustic. The chambers dictionary refers to it nearly the same tone. Thus a ‘Farmer’ means as agriculture laborer who tills and cultivates the land in the rural side either as owner of land or the just working a land lord. In a way, he is a farmer working on agricultural farm and living on it or within the proximity.

According to Krober, he defines the farmers is cultural perspective. He claims peasants constitute part society with part cultures. They are differently rural in relations to market towns. They farm a class segment of a larger population. They political economy, the self-sufficiency tribal population, but local units retain much of their old identity, integration and attachment to soil and cults.

Shanin, defines that “The peasantry consists of small agriculture producers who, with the help of simple equipment and the labour of their families, produce mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of obligations to the holders of political and for economic power”\textsuperscript{5}.

According to Wolf, asserts that “the Peasant is a rural cultivator who raises crops and livestock in the country side. At the sometime he is not a farmer or agricultural entrepreneur. The Peasant does not operate on enterprise in the economic sense. He runs household compound society. He produces the ceremonial fund and the funds of rent. A farmer not only till his land but his practice of agriculture and his whole social life is very much linked with each other”\textsuperscript{6}. 
Later, Firth found the term farmer primarily an economic referent and observed that the primary means of livelihood is cultivation is cultivation of the sol. He also identified similar characteristics with other small scale producers such as fisherman, craftsman and included in his conception and claimed they are the same social class, the agriculturists often members of the some families. The critics of theses conceptions passed of what larger society; with what were complex cultures are peasants as part.7

Gulbarga district in Hyderabad-Karnataka is backward region and majority of the scheduled castes are living in the district. Of which, considerable population of the scheduled castes is farmers. Hyderabad Karnataka region which was ruled by the Nizam’s rulers and it became freedom in 1948 with the help of police action. In the liberation moment of Hyderabad Karnataka Gulbarga district played vital role and finally became independent on 17th September 1948. The region covers districts like Bidar, Gulbarga, Yadagiri, Raichur, Koppal, and Bellary. Gulbarga district is ruled by the Nizam’s and was developed for some extent.

Gulbarga district is located in the northern part of Karnataka and situated in Deccan Plateau and the general elevation ranges from 300 to 750 meters above mean sea level. It has seven talukas namely, Aland, Afzalpur, Gulbarga, Chincholi, Chittapur, Sedam, Jewargi. It is also characterized by black cotton soil, expanses of flat treeless surface, a range of hills covering a surface of about 60 miles and same lower belts following the main rivers. In this district agriculture is the main economy as it contributes 31.7% of district income and provides employment to 67% of the population.62% of the total area is under cultivation of various crops like Jowar, Tur, Bajra and Paddy. The district has different culture and people. The Scheduled Castes are continued their work in the society in ancient and still it is observing in some of the villages. They are suffering many problems like, caste discrimination,
injustice, exploitation, poverty and illiterate. So, the present study is made to know the socio-economic, cultural and political conditions of the depressed class farmers. Agriculture is often unproductive because of lack of irrigation facilities and the difficulty of cultivating on hill slopes where erosion has impoverished the soil. Due to the lack of education they are facing such kind of problems. For out coming from these problems they have to get education. Constitution of India has provided some of the provisions for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes in and around India. Though the efforts were made to improve the conditions of depressed classes after independence, still their conditions are not improved or developed.

The study is focused on the conditions of Scheduled Castes like, Banjara or Lamani, Bhangi, Bhovi or Waddar, Dhor, Holeya, Kuruma or Korama, Madiga, Mochi or Samgar or Chamar or Cobbler. These castes are depressed and discriminated by the upper castes and the untouchability in past six decades. The constitution of India has been provided constitutional provisions for the welfare and development of depressed class farmers or Scheduled Castes farmers. But still they are illiterate, negligent, poor, suppressed, depressed in society and discriminated by their castes in the district. To sum up, their position is vulnerable in the society. Hence, to assess the historical developments of the depressed classes and present position of the depressed class farmers, the present study is made.

1.2. Significance of the Study:

Before the independence of India, depressed class farmers position very backward due to the domination of the upper class people, and they faced lot of problems in society. After the Independence of India, government has taken steps for the welfare of the depressed class farmers. Still depressed class farmers are facing many problems as landlessness, illiteracy, poverty, poor housing, poor health, etc.
For these reasons, the present research study was chosen to explore the conditions of depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district. Moreover the region under this study is one of the most backward areas of Karnataka State. Hence it becomes most important to throw light on the life and conditions of backward class from a subaltern point of view. There is need focus on the socio-economic problems of the depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district. For this purpose, the present study is proved as significant.

1.3. Statement of the Problem:

The present study is made on the position of depressed class farmers of Gulbarga district to explore the socio-cultural, economic and political conditions and government welfare schemes of both State Government and Central Government in particular. Hence, the present study is stated as “Position of Depressed Class Farmers of Gulbarga District in Post Independent Karnataka (1947-2008)”.

Gulbarga district is a basically backward district of Karnataka state which existed in Hyderabad Karnataka region. The district is basically proved that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes farmers are very poor in condition which they required to improve their status in society. In India generally, the depressed class farmers of Gulbarga district especially they are backward therefore, the research is intended to study their conditions. Generally, the farmers of the district are poor in agricultural activities due to limited landholdings and poverty in Gulbarga district. Government has made some of the welfare schemes for the development of depressed class farmers. At present, the co-operative societies, commercial banks, directly made them to participate in agriculture sector. But, unfortunately many of the depressed class farmers is not getting properly the government facilities which made for them.
1.4. Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study is to understand the present socio-economic, political, cultural conditions and welfare programmes of depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district. Particular objectives of the present study are:

1. To know the historical background of Gulbarga district;
2. To study the development of depressed class farmers in Karnataka in general and Gulbarga district in particular;
3. To throw light upon the socio-economic, cultural and political conditions of depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district;
4. To examine the government schemes and welfare programmes for the development of depressed class farmers;
5. To study the constitutional remedies for the welfare of depressed class farmers; and
6. To suggest policy measures for further implementations.

1.5. Hypotheses:

Some of the tentative hypotheses are formulated as under:

1. Majority of the depressed class farmers are poor;
2. The caste based culture of the depressed class farmers is rich;
3. The caste based discrimination, social inequality, poverty, illiteracy, small landholdings, negligence, etc are few of the problems of the depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district;
4. Though government formulated welfare schemes and policies for the development of depressed class farmers, due to illiteracy and unawareness, they are not used by these farmers; and
5. Indebtedness and small landholdings and consequent lower output has made the depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district more poor.
1.6. Sources and Methodology:

The study is made on the basis of both primary and secondary sources. The macro aspect of the study is based on the published and unpublished works on the subject, reports of government and expert bodies. In-fact reports, records, budget documents, bulletins, gazetteers, census reports, prepared by both central and state governments along with the constitutional provisions are the main primary sources; the primary data was collected through the field work that is personal interviews with depressed class farmers. Secondary data was collected from various published books, journals, research works, magazines; articles are referred from different libraries and general libraries etc. In addition to the above information print and electronic media including the information available in various websites has been used extensively.

After the collection of sources on the Gulbarga district which is related to the history, culture, caste system, religions, etc. the researcher interviewed the depressed class farmers to narrate the development of socio-economic, cultural and political conditions since the post independent Karnataka (i.e., 1947). For the purpose of collection of primary data, interview schedule was used and depressed class farmers were chosen. As the population of depressed classes is large, the researcher was selected total eight (08) depressed class farmers and the respondents are selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method. The communities covered include (1) Banjara or Lamani (2) Bhangi (3) Bhovi or Waddar (4) Dhor (5) Holeya (6) Kuruma or Korama, (7) Madiga (8) Mochi or Samagar or Chamar or Cobbler. It is noted that 50 respondents from each of these communities were selected to collect the primary data. Hence, the total number of respondents is limited to 400 from these eight (08) depressed class farmers of Gulbarga district. The education, occupation, family background, etc. were considered while selecting the respondents.
This study is based on field level investigation done among the Scheduled Castes farmers in Gulbarga district. The method used is broadly descriptive and analytical. After proper editing and coding, the data collected during the field work were processed electronically. In this study, wherever average estimates are taken for the detailed explanation of the table.

1.7. Limitations of the Study:

The Gulbarga district has vast geographical area and 23% of the population of the district belongs to scheduled castes. As such, it is not possible for the researcher to survey and interview all the depressed class farmers in the district. Hence, the present study is based on sample survey. Further, there are many aspects such as socio-economic, political, cultural, educational, religious, etc from which the depressed class farmers have suffered since immemorial days. It is not possible to cover all the aspects. It is noted that there are more than 101 communities listed in the scheduled castes, and it is not possible to survey all the castes. Hence, the present study is explored only socio-economic position of the depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district. Further, due to large population of depressed class farmers belonging to different communities, total 400 depressed class farmers of selected eight communities were surveyed with the help of interview schedules.

1.8. Chapterization:

The present research report is structured into total seven chapters as under.

The first chapter is designed under the title “Introduction to the Study.” The chapter gives the brief information of background to the research topic. Here significance of the study and the research problem is discussed. The objectives of the study are clearly mentioned. Some assumptions are stated as hypothesis in this chapter. Further, the sources and methodology is
discussed. The limitations are mentioned clearly in the chapter. Finally, the scheme of chapters is mentioned.

It is essential to find out the research gap in the present study area. For that purpose, it is needed to analyze the secondary literature already published in the research area. For this purpose, the collected literature is reviewed in second chapter under the title “Review of Literature”.

The third chapter is discussed under the title “Depressed Classes: An Overview”. The chapter includes history and development of the depressed classes and status of depressed class farmers in Gulbarga district of Karnataka State. Therefore, in this chapter the history and development of depressed classes and status of farmers is explained in detail since ancient times in general and post independent Karnataka in particular.

The fourth chapter is focused on “Agrarian Problems with reference to Depressed Classes”. The chapter included agrarian problems and national welfare schemes and as well as welfare schemes for government of Karnataka for the development of the depressed class farmers.

The fifth chapter is “Universe of the Study”, which covers the brief historical background and the culture of the district. It included the different rulers, kingdoms, cultures and communities of the district. Further, the chapter covers the socio-economic background, human development, geographical traits, rain fall and land use, basic infrastructure, educational infrastructure, demography, SC and ST population, social indicators, cropping pattern, commercial crops.

As discussed above, the present study is based on primary data collected from the depressed class farmers. The collected primary data on present position of the depressed class farmers is analyzed and discussed in sixth
chapter under the title “Analysis of Data and Findings from the Study”. Here the chapter covers socio-economic conditions, political position, educational and cultural conditions of depressed class farmers since independence.

The seventh chapter is “Summaries and Conclusion”. Here, the chapters mentioned are summarized and suggestions are given for the overall development of the depressed class farmers. Further, the study is concluded.

Apart from the above fixed seven chapters, appendix is given at the end followed by Bibliography and Interview Schedule. The books, magazines, research papers and journals, government reports, gazetteers, etc. those are used and relevant to the present study are listed in appendix-1 under the title ‘Bibliography’. The Interview Schedule used to collect Primary data is given in appendix-2. The third appendix includes the photographs of the depressed class farmers of Gulbarga district who engaged in agriculture.
1.9. Notes and References: