2.1 INTRODUCTION:

The word *POURAKARMIKA* originated in 1972 in conference in Delhi in the month of September by Sri Basavalingappa the then Minister of Municipal Administration changed the name to pourakarmikas as they were called as sweepers or the pourakarmikas or by their caste names and it is on *March 14th the day has been celebrated as the pourakarmikas day*. In the absence of authentic history about origin, functions and features of pourakarmikas as a such-caste of scavenger as a such-caste of untouchables, there are different interpretations and point of views about it scholars are divided on different issues related to it. In such a situation neither it is possible to reject the interpretation nor to accept it scientifically. However, in the light of this confusion and state of affair, in this very chapter an attempt has been made to trace their origin meaning, situation at a global level, names in different parts of the country, occupation social and economic status and bargaining power.

2.2 ORIGIN:

The Bhangi do not have any written history. Their legends and oral traditions also do not take the researcher too far. As a result it is difficult to discuss about their origin in scientific approach. However, attempts have been made in this area. Shyamal (1991) by making efforts have recognized a set an explanations. These are mythological, historical, ethnological, Anthropological, conversion and ex-communication and invasion. Categorization of this interpretation is based on works done by different scholars. Let us examine these explanations in detail.
**BHANGI:** Bhangi is an Indian caste even though they are exterior of traditional Jati also treated as Untouchables. Bhangis are traditionally restricted to the two job functions of cleaning latrines and handling dead bodies (both human and animal). "Toilet Cleaner" is also called as manual scavengers and they have to carry it away in a bucket on their head. Efforts have been made to improve sanitation systems in India, including laws that ban the construction of dry toilets. However Bhangis continue to work in their traditional roles and they continue to face considerable social barriers. They are also known as a Bhangia, Mehter, Mehator, Halal Khor and Halal-kheo, etc. The Term Bhangi has been derived from the Sanskrit word Bhangi meaning hemp; it seems to be an allusion to their drinking habits. The Bhangi was described as representative of the Chandalas of Manu, who is said to have descended from the union of a Sudras and a Brahman woman. The Bhangi were traditionally associated with scavenging, sweeping, basket-making, etc. With the widespread use of septic latrines and other modes of public conveniences, the practice of carrying head load of night soil has perceptibly declined now in many parts of urban India. (K.S.Singh, 1999, oxford university press New Delhi, pp, 235)

### 2.3 HISTORY AND ORIGIN:
According to their traditions, they are followers of Mehtar Ilyas. The Mehtar took to sweeping as an occupation, after he was summoned to the heavens, where a meeting of prophets was occurring. He wanted to spit, but was unable to find a spittoon, so spat upwards. The spit fell on the prophets, and God as a punishment made him sweep the spit. His descendents were cursed to live their life as sweepers. The Mehtar was one day approached by a Sufi saint, who asked him why he did not wear a coat. The Mehtar replied that as a sweeper, he did not need a coat. The saint commanded that he wear a coat, and the Mehtar went to an open a pitcher, but was unable to do so. So the saint said, use my name, and you will be open the pitcher. And out of the pitcher came a young boy who was named Lal Beg. The community claim descent from this boy. In
Bihar, the Lal Begi claim descent from the saint Balmiki, and originated in Rajasthan. They are distributed in the urban centres of Jharia, Dhanbad, Sindri, Katras and Chas.

The community has undergone a major split. Sections of the Lal Begi have embraced Hinduism, and now are known as Balmiki. As Balmiki, they have obtained scheduled caste status. The exact religious status of the community remains in a flux, with some members taking Hindu names to obtain the advantage of scheduled caste status. Most Lal Begi has remained Muslim, and follows the Hinduism. They have also set up a caste association, the Hasnati Biradari. In Bihar, the community consists of number clans such as the Bhiwal, Pandit and Chamria. They are employed by the municipal authorities as sweepers. A small number are now employed as daily wage labourers. The community is now divided between Hindu and Muslim sections, and boundaries between the two groups is hardening. In past, the groups intermarried, but this is no longer the cases. They speak the various local dialects of Hindi, with very few having any knowledge of Urdu.

**HALALKHOR:** The Halalkhor are a Dalit Muslim community, found in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in India. They are mostly Shias. The Halalkhor are also known as Shaikhra or Shahani in Bihar and Muslim Bhangi and Mehtar in Uttar Pradesh. The word *Halal Khor* literally means those who eat Halal food. According to their traditions, their ancestor was trained by the Prophet Mohammed to prepare a basket, and use it for scavenging, while the females of the community were trained to sweep. The community is traditionally associated with sweeping and scavenging, and are descended from the Hindu Bhangi community who converted to Islam. Initially they were Sunnis, but are believed to have converted to the Shia sect in the 18th century. In some states in North India, they have backward caste status. They are divided into two sub-groups, the Kampu and Shaikada. The communities are found throughout Uttar Pradesh, and speak various dialects of Hindi such as Awadhi. The Halalkhor of Bihar is Muslim sweepers, and are also known as
Mehtar, Bhangi, and Halalbegi. They are found throughout Bihar, and speak a number of dialects. According to traditions, they are Muslim converts from the Hindu Bhangi caste. The Halalkhor of Bihar is split on sectarian lines between Shia and Sunni. There is no intermarriage between these two sects. Many Halalkhor in Bihar are employed as sweepers by the various municipalities in Bihar.

Many have also emigrated to Mumbai and Kolkata, where they are employed as day labourers. The Halalkhor often face discrimination from the other Muslim castes, and are one of the most marginalized Muslim groups in Uttar Pradesh. Like other communities, they have a traditional caste council, known as the biradari panchayat. This caste council is involved in resolving disputes within the community. There are now growing demands for the community to be granted Scheduled Caste status, which is currently restricted to Hindu Dalits only.

**BALMIKI/VALMIKI CASTE:** Balmiki caste people are rulers/Mulnivasi of India. Balmiki caste people were forced to do dangerous scavenger/cleaning job. They were not paid enough money for their dangerous work. Now a day’s men/women are working as a sweeper in municipalities of all state of India. These municipalities harassing them because they had been working as a temporary sweeper since 10-20 years. Their salary paid late after 3-4 months. Without money they are unable to educate their children. Balmiki men/women doing sweeping/cleaning work in private houses/kothi on very less monthly wages Rs 500/- . They had been working as a scavenger/sweeper work in every state of India but, they had been given different bad caste names in different states of India. They were treated untouchables and harassed by both general castes and depressed castes. Due to Baba Saheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Constitution of India, 5-10 percent Balmiki people had gotten education and doing respectable job in Government and private sector.

**DOMAR:** Domar, Total population, 31,000 Regions with significant populations, India, Languages Awadhi, Khari boli, Hindi, Religion-Hinduism
Related ethnic groups - Bhangi, Hela, Turahiya, Lal Begi, Bansphor. The Domar are a Hindu caste found in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. They are also known as Mehtar and have scheduled caste status. According to the traditions of the community, they trace their origin to Rajah Harishchandra, who on an occasion is said to have disguised himself as a Dom at a funeral pyre in Varanasi. The Domar are very likely to be of Bhangi origin, and many are still employed as sweepers and scavengers.

They are found mainly in eastern Uttar Pradesh, principally in the districts of Kanpur, Raebareli, and Allahabad, and speak the Awadhi dialect. The Domar community are said to have originally consisted of seven divisions, the Domar proper, the Turahiya, the Lal Begi, the Hadi, the Bansphor, the Dusadh and the Dhanuk. All these are now distinct communities, and strictly endogamous. The Domar, like other Hindu communities practice clan exogamy. They are Hindu, but are rarely visited by Brahmin priests, and have their own religious specialist. The Domar are a landless community, providing the bulk of the agricultural labourers in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Many urban Domars are employed as cleaners in hospitals. The Domar remain one of the most marginalized communities in the Awadh region. They live in multi-caste villages, but occupy their own distinct quarters. As a Dalit community, they often suffer from societal discrimination. Each of their settlement contains an informal caste council, known as a biradari panchayat. The panchayat acts as instrument of social control, dealing with issues such as divorce and adultery.

**CHUHRA:** The sweeper or scavenger, and hence the out-caste, par excellence of the Punjab, whose name is popularly supposed to be a corruption of Sudra. Thus a Chamar is, probably by origin, a Chura who works in leather, but the Chamars appear to form almost a distinct caste, though both the castes are placed in the same rank and lumped together in the popular phrase Chuhra-Chamar as a domestic he is ironically styled Mihtar or 'chieftain' as a worker in leather he is called a Dhed as a weaver he is styled a Megh. The churahs relations to other castes vary considerably. They are distinctively superior to
Sansis, from whom alone they will not eat in Nabha. But in Gurgon they are said to look down on the changars of Dhias, who are makers of winnowing sieves and they are said to refuse food from the Dhanak's hands also, though their claim to superiority.

2.4 MYTHOLOGICAL:

Under the mythological category of explanation view mentioned in Hindu Dharma Shastras are taken into account. The most relevant and frequently quoted story of the origin of the Bhangi caste in the Dharma Shastras and the Smritis refers to them as the Chandala. According to Manu, Chandala is declared to be born from a Brahman mother and Shudra father, whose occupation was conveyance of corpses and acting of public executioner (Sagar, 1975: 9, Crook, 1896 Vol I: 261). Jati Vivek (Gunarthi 1950 : 175) gives him a less respectable peoligree, for he is also said to be the off spring of Musalia father (Shudra who pound grains are called Musalia) and a woman of fisherman caste whose occupation is to clear the streets, every morning and evening, remove the night soil, and receive the Corpses. Jati Bhaskar (Gunarthis, op.cit.) further said that Bhangi is said to be the son of Dom. Also, according to Osnash Smriti he is supposed to be the off - spring of Chandala father and Vaishya mother.

Besides this mythological explanation, the Bhangis living in different parts of the country have their own story to tell about their origin. For instance, Crooke (1974: 261) conducted study on Lal Begis of Banaras. The common legends, about their origin, as told by the head of them are the following:

1. In the city of Hastinapur lived the five Pandavas, whose mother's sister had one hundred and one sons. The Pandavas quarreled with their cousins, who were all killed. In order to celebrate their victory, the Pandavas invited their Gods to a banquet, but the Gods refused to come on the ground that the Pandavas had killed so many of their Brahman kinsmen. The penance imposed upon the Pandavas was that they should be dissolved in the snows of the Himalaya. They agreed to this, but as
they were starting one of their cows died. They did not know how to dispose of the carcass, as it was as in to touch it. So the other four conspired to include their brother, Nakula, to perform the hateful duty. They addressed him like this: "Good lad, remove the carcasses and we promise not to excommunicate you".

He obeyed and did the carcasses under some leaves by the bank of a stream. But when here turned his brothers refused to admit him until he brought some mango wood to perform the fire sacrifice (homa) and while he was away in search of it, they started on their journey to the Himalaya. When Nakula found himself deserted, he returned to the place where he had buried the dead cow and swept, when blessed by the Almighty, the cow was restored to life. So Nakula lived on the milk of the cow in the jungle until he grew up, and then the cow died. As he was lamenting her loss, a voice came from heaven, "Do not grieve! You, Balmik, are destined to be the progenitor of those who makes fans (sup) and sieves (Chhalni) from the hide of the cow. These you will sell and teach the world the art of grinding and sifting flour for bread ". Thus, Nakula or Balmik became an ascetic, and taught people the art of making bread, so he was called Supach Bhagat from the sup or winnowing fan, which he invented. Here, it may be incidentally remarked that Supach appears to represent the Sanskrit "Svapaka" or "dog - Cooker", who in early Hindu literature is one of the most degraded classes, and is ranked with Chandala. When he had accomplished his mission, here tired from the world and entered the hole of a snake. When Rama was on his journey to LANKA in search of his wife Seeta, he halted near the place. The smoke of his fire disturbed the holy man, who came out in arrange, and the followers of the hero worshipped him in the form of Banbhisur, “the lord of the ant - hill ". When Balmik heard of the capture of Sita he was consumed with rage and began to kill every Brahman who came within his reach. He started
for Prayag (Allahabad) and halted somewhere near Gopiganj in Mirzapur district and hence he was called Chandala. Parameshwara took pity upon him and in order to save his soul, sent Guru Nanak from heaven, who won his confidence by narrating to him all the events of his past life. He then asked Chandala, "Go and ask your wife if she is willing to lay down her life for your sake". She refused and Chandala was so disgusted with the world that he turned his thoughts to Parmeshwar and settled down at this place as an ascetic and from him the place was called Chandal garh, the present Chunar. He was known by the Muhammadans as Gada or “the mendicant” and the hillock on which he lived is known as Gada Pahar to the present day and is one of the places of pilgrimage of the Bhangis. Remembering the sins of his life, no one would touch Chandala, so Guru Nanak brought him to the Triveni, the sacred junction of the Ganga and Yamuna, at Prayag. There he told him to stand in the water and utter the words "Rama! Rama! ". But all he could say was, "Mara! Mara! (“Stricken! Stricken!”). So Nanak went to Chandala's wife and told her that as long as she lived, her husband had no chance of absolution. Hence, she consented to die for her husband’s sake and by the mercy of Parmeshwar, she and her husband were able to reach to heaven. She left two sons, Kalu and Jiwan. In those days Raja Kesava reigned at Kashi. A relative of his who bore a bad name character, died and no would remove his corpse. The servants of the Raja suggested that this duty might be imposed on the sons of Chandala. The Raja sent for Kalu, who consented to perform the task. In return for his service he was given the menology of burning all the bodies on the Banaras burning Ghat. He married a poor Woman and in default of issue, adopted two sons to follow his profession. In time he came very rich and then he succeeded in making a slave of Raja Hari Chand. He was so God-fearing that he used to pay daily the expenses of the marriage of a poor Brahman's daughter. One day, as he was hunting,
a poor Brahman asked him to pay for the marriage of his daughter. The story reached to that extent that the Raja sold himself to Kalu to pay money to the Brahman. Raja he came slave of Kalu. Eventually, Kalu went to heaven a long with the Raja but the elder brother of Kalu, Jiwan remained here. The Bhangias are the descendants of that Jiwan.

2. According to another story La1 Beg was the son of king of Ghazi. Being old and childless, the king devoted himself to the service of the Saint Dadagir Jhonpra, who blessed him with four sons on condition that he should receive the eldest. But La1 Beg, the eldest, was so lovely that the king tried to passion his second son to the saint. But the latter refused the exchange and threatened that if 1al Beg was not made over to him, he would strike him with dumbness. So the king was obliged to keep his word and made over the prince to the saint, giving him kingdoms and palaces. When the prince came to the saint, the latter discovered his desire to rule. He sent him back and presented him with the wonderful cup which gave him all he wished. La1 Beg succeeded his father as the king of Ghazni and with the aid of the cup, worked such miracles that he was deified after his death.

3. According to another story, in the beginning there was Chaos; the Almighty who created Balmiki and he was placed on duty to sweep the stairs leading to the heavenly throne. One day God, out of compassion, said to Balmiki "Thou art getting old; I will give thee something to reward thee". Next day Balmiki went as usual to sweep the stairs and there, through the mercy of providence he found a bodice (Choli). He brought it to his house and laying it aside attended to his other work. By the omnipotence of God, from this bodice was born a male child. When Balmiki heard the voice of the child he went to the foot of the heavenly staircase and said - "Almightily God! A son has been born from the bodice given to thy servant". He was told in reply - "This is a Guru given up to thee ". Balmiki then said that he had no milk for the child.
He was directed to go home and whatever animal crossed his path to get it to nurse the child God said that he had created out of La1 Beg, and his name should be Nuri Shah Bala. Balmiki descended from heaven as Guru to this earth and saw a female hare (Sassi) suckling her young. He caught and brought her with her young ones, and La1 Beg drank her milk, and was nourished and grew up. From that day sweeper are forbidden to eat hare. The Almighty declared La1 Beg to be the Guru, and that, in every house a temple of two and half bricks would be reared to him, and for this reasons a temple is built in front of the house of every pious sweeper.

4. According to another legend one day Lord Shiva became very drunk, and the procreating principle escaped from him. Parmeswar took it in his hand and assumed the form of a Mars, put some of it in the ears of Anjana, and so Hanuman was born. He then rubbed some of it on a red stone, and La1 Beg sprung forth. Then he rubbed it on a Sarkanda reed, whence came Sarkandnath. Then on some cow dung, whence came Gobarnath. And lastly he washed his hands in a river, where a fish swallowed some of the principle and brought forth Machhandranath, the preceptor of Guru Gorakhnath.

5. Yet, according to another account of sweeper hagiology, Lal Begs father was a Mughals and had no children. He heard that Balmik, who could help him, was living in a jungle not far from him, so he prayed to him and had in due time a son, whom he named La1 Beg. About this time the Pandavas were making a great sacrifice (Jag) which they could not complete and as a sin had told them that the sacrifice would be useless Balmik came to complete it. So one of them mounted a heavenly chariot and found Balmik in the jungle covered with leprosy; he took him in his chariot and brought him to a sacrifice. Draupadi had prepared all the food necessary for the sacrifice and distributed it to all present. Everybody, but Balmik had a taste of the thirty dishes in turn,
but Balmik collected all his share together and gobbled it down in two and half mouthfuls. Now, properly, the sound of a shell (shankha) from heaven ought to have been heard for every grain of food eaten before the sacrifice was properly completed. But now only two and a half sounds were heard, when Balmik consumed his share. The reason for this was that Draupadi was angry because Balmik could not eat. However, as a sound had been heard, the sacrifice was considered complete. After this Balmik gave power to a Beg over all Hindustan, and ordered all the sweepers and scavengers to worship him (Crooke, 1974). Enthoven (1975) perceived Bhangis as the descendants of a Brahman sage who carried away and buried a dog that died in the midst of a Brahman assembly. By citing Hindu books he said that they are the offspring of a Shudra father by a Brahman widow. Their traditional founder is Suparnakha who belonged to one of the eighty four castes. These the God Ram once invited to a feast given by his wife Sita who had cooked different dishes with her own hands. Suparnakha, instead of eating each dish separately, mixed all the dishes in to own mess and ate it in five mouthfuls. Annoyed by this want of manners Sita said to him "You will hence forth eat. Food and mixed with dirt, you will live on the refuse of food thrown in to the street you will take to the lowest callings, and instead of associating with you, people will shun you". Hence, because of accusation from Sita Bhangi came in to existence. These are few among many legends, myth and stories about the origin of Bhangis. Since, all these are based on Supra-empirical facts; therefore, it cannot help us to reach to any objective conclusion.

2.5 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

There are certain historical accounts which help us to trace the origin of Bhangis. The Chinese traveler Fah-Hain visited India during 400 A.D. He has briefly mentioned about the untouchables in his accounts. Quoting his views,
Ambedkar (1977) said: "The people are very well off, without poll tax or official restrictions. Only those who till the royal lands return a portion of profit of the land. If they desire to go, they go, if they like to stop, they stop. The kings govern without corporal punishment, criminals are fined according to the circumstances, lightly or heavily. Even in cases of repeated rebellious they only cut off the right hand. The king’s personal attendants, who guard him on the right and left, have fixed salaries. Throughout the country the people kill no living thing nor drink wine, nor do they eat garlic or onion, with the exception of Chandala only. The Chandalas are named "evil men" and dwell of apart from others. If they enter a town or market, they sound a piece of wood in order to separate themselves, then men knowing them avoid coming in contact with them.

In this country, they do not keep swine or fowls and do not dealing cattle; they have no stumbles or wine shops in their market places. In selling they use cowrie shells. The Chandalas only hunt and sell flesh". On this basis it seems that the term 'Bhangi' was not used during that time. This description only gives it lea about the conditions of untouchables.

Yuan Chwang, another Chinese traveler travelled in India during 629 A.D. He stayed here for 16 years. He traced scavengers and said that like other groups from Chandala category their habitations were also marked by a distinguishing sign. They were forced to live outside the city and they sneaked along on the left when going about in the hamlets. Hence, according to his observation scavengers were in existence during this period. According to Dr.Ambedkar (1977: 199) also the concept and practice of untouchability and the system of scavenging is a historical phenomena it were not in existence either before 200 A.D.

2.6 ANTHROPOLOGICAL:

According to Shyamlal (op. cit) with some confidence, it may be said that original group of aboriginals were the four fathers of the Bhangis and untouchables of modern India. In order to justify arguments he has cited the
views of several scholars. For instance, according to Ghurye (1957: 120-21). "Taking the Brahmin of the united Provinces as the typical representatives of the ancient Aryans we shall start comparisons with him. If we turn to the table of differential indices we find that shows smaller differential index as compared with the Chuhra and the khatri of the Punjab than with any caste from the United Provinces except the Khatri. The differential index the Khatri and Chuhra is only slightly less than that between the Brahmin and the Chuhra. The Brahmin of the United Provinces has closer physical affinities with the Chuhra and the Khatri of Punjab than with any caste from his own province except the very high caste of the khatri. The Brahmin is as much akin to the Chuhra as the latter is to the khatri of the Punjab." On this basis it appears that. There was a time when both the Brahmin and Chuhra (Bhangi) were one and the same people. But how Bhangi became different to Brahmin, the author kept mum on this issue.

This interpretation was rejected by Ambedkar. According to him (Ambedkar. op. cit: 55-56) Bhangis were the subjects of the Aryans. They were the original population of India who were conquered by the Aryans. They were assigned the task of clean in y and scavenging. They had no option but to accept it because they were dependent and such - servant.

According to Pathak (1991: 37) Scavenging in India has been in existence since the time immemorial. It was done by a particular section constituting a caste or sub - caste in the Indian caste system. The sacred scriptures, he says, throw some light on the existence of a system for the disposal of night soil and accordingly, the existence of a particular caste to do scavenging work since the he ginning of the civilization. To illustrate the point he says that the reference of 'Slaves' (war captives) in the sacred literature in deep points out the origin of scavenging in India. The reason being that war captives (the Dravidians conquered by Aryan invaders) were assigned to perform such dirty works as disposal of dead animals and human excreta. The legitimacy to the contention is lent by the fact that one of the duties for slaves
enumerated in *Naradiya Samhita* was to dispose of human excreta (Nagar, 1980:9).

There is yet another section of ethnological scholars who are of the opinion that certain classes were unable to maintain their identity and prestige with changing order and consequently they have sunk to the lowest level. Perhaps this conclusion is drawn on the basis of certain gotra names: Chauhan, Solanki, Gehlot, Parihar, Rathore and so on. These are the surnames of Rajputs and Brahmin Gotras and are also found among the Bhangi. To quote Ambedkar (1977:82). “As I have said, if totem, kul and gotras have any significance it means that those who have the same totem must have been kindred. If they were kindred they would not be persons of different races”. If these analogies are correct then, again it would be quite logical to say that the Bhangi at one point of time did belong to a high social stratum.

But Shyam Lal (op.cit) is of the opinion that due to variety of reasons a section of upper caste people were out casted. In the due course they accepted scavenging occupation.

But why these out-casted people accepted this occupation? Did they accepted it as per their choice or they were forced to accept it? Unfortunately the author is silent on this issue. He also found that the same high caste people converted themselves to Bhangi caste in different parts of Rajasthan. Form the ancient Indian history, he added, we also know that subjugation of tribe after tribe has been a recurring phenomenon in India. These movements have occurred over wide areas and over limited portion of the country of the country as well. Indian history fully illustrated these facts and we may picture influx of rising and falling tribes and classes under separated foreign and local waves of conquest. But then what were the social consequences. “The force of class struggle always determined the status of class or in its ossified form, caste”. To give an example, people of Bengal who, after the downfall of the Hindu rule, did not accept either Brahmanism or Islam but stuck to their old mode of worship became the untouchables of today.
But according to Malkani (1960: 137). The history of Bhangi is not very old. To quote him: “Bhangi is essentially a recent product of urban life, first created as an occupation by Muslims and later on in British Rule, made into hereditary caste”. On the basis of above explanation one cannot reach to an objective conclusion about the origin of Bhangi. But it seems that the Bhangi, as a caste or occupation, were not in existence since the beginning of the Varna system. In fact it is an outcome of historical forces, be it acculturation, ex-communication, conversion, defeat in war and so on.

2.7 SCAVENGERS AT GLOBAL LEVEL:

Pourakarmikas are found in many countries of the world. In fact the concept has been applied to refer to people engaged in various activities involving the handling of waste products. For example; Blincow (1986) recognized four categories of pourakarmikas.

There are

a. The destitute who scavenge mostly for direct consumptions;
b. Self employed by them for other than wages;
c. Wage laborer, employed in public or private services for enterprises, of varying scales;
d. Owner workers who are members of cooperative organizations. While Blincow’s categories are useful in highlighting the wide variety of employment structures in what may be broadly referred to as the refuse handling sector he does not point out an essential distinction between different groups that handle wastes; a distinction based on the labor process itself.

Because of its different categories there are different meanings of scavengers. It refers to garbage collectors, to Junkmen, to chemical agents that neutralize or remove un desired substance, and to habitual consumers to refuse or carrium (Webster’s Seventh collegiate Dictionary). The modern word “SCAVENGER” is back information from “Scavenger”, which is from the Middle English” “Skawager”, form “Skawage”, from old Northeast French,
“Escau wage” an inspection. Skou wage, or scavage was a toll or duty levied on goods sold by non-resident merchants in London and other towns and presumably also in France. As an inclination of its antiquity, it was described in 1676 as an ancient toll or custom and references go back to the early 14th century. A scavenger was a municipal officer charged with the collection of the toll and later (by the mid 16th century), also with the task of keeping the streets clean. By the end of the 16th century, the term scavenger was in use, both for the officer in charge of cleaning streets and also for persons employed to clean streets, privies and churches. In the 19th century “Scavage” took on general meaning of cleaning out, scraping dirt from streets and cleaning rivers, and scavengers were those persons charged with, or hired for these tasks. From the end of the 16th century, scavengers were applied to creatures who habitually freed on waste or decaying matter. From the mid 16th century figurative uses include one who does dirty, one who collects filth, and a dishonorable (oxford English Dictionary).

Historically, scavengers have been from low social groups, Gypsies, immigrants, semi-criminal elements. Untouchables and other low castes and outcastes (Blincow, 1986).

Refused workers on the other hand usually drive some status from their formal associations with municipalities or legal contractors and may enjoy the legal status of civil servants, employee or small business person. Studies on social and economic conditions of scavengers have been conducted on different parts of the world. For example; Bisbeck (1978-79), Gerry and Bisbeck (1981) analyzed the conditions of scavengers in Columbia. According to them because they are engaged in production of commodities form waste materials, therefore, they have low status and in market relations they are placed at a disadvantageous position. Their study had considerable influence on third world urban studies as a clear case of exploitative linkages between formal and informal sectors. His analysis however, suffers from a confusion of terminology and concepts. The title of its 1978 article nearly novitiates the
need for comment. In self employed proletarians in an informal factory: The case of Kaji’s garbage dump, he argued that scavengers are in fact a kind of casual proletariat working in a kind of casual factories desk the dump. According to him the garbage pickers work for the factories but are not employed by them. They are self-employed. They work on piece rate basis and exploitation is in the hands of industrial consumers. He further said that scavengers do not sell their labour power, they sell products which they themselves have produced. He further said that each picker is paid according to the weight or the value of is piece work, as is nearly every other thing in chain of recuperative activities (p.1176).”

A study was conducted in a city of Indonesia in order to know the structural roots of scavenging. Under the regime of Suharto three conditions were created to modernize the scavenging work. These were; (a) marker for secondary materials has been met through the growth of modern industry, especially in the cities of java by continuing profession of small scale manufacturing enterprises utilizing recovered materials and by the government allocated monopolies that lead to artificially high prices on basic virgin raw materials; (b) The existence of wastes to meet the industrial demand for recovered materials has been fulfilled with the rapid expansion of the urban middle and upper classes, whose consumption habits more and more come to resemble those of industrialized world urbanites and whose demand for western style living is being met with a combination of domestically produced and imported goods.

As all changes in consumption pattern are reflected in the composition and quantity of waste produced, there is a continuing enrichment of Indonesian urban solid waste, with increasing quantity and variety of paper, metals, plastics, glass and post consumer goods in the waste in the stream (c) A pool of people willing to scavenge has been met as a result of the displacement associated with rapid social change and the concurrent depolitisation of the peasantry. Agricultural modernization programmes and increasing
rationalization of production among the larger landholders have brought new machinery, new seeds, new agrochemicals and new relations of production to village Java. In as much as a “Moral economy” ever no ward in the villages of Java, in which better off both peasants with sufficient lands, as of the landless and near landless, providing lad, other means of production and protection from the state (Breman:1980). The new relations of production are clean disadvantages to poor peasants. Although poor peasants obligations to their patron to assist them in times of need (Scott, 1985). In general, there has been a breakdown of institutions of sharing and redistribution of wealth and an increase in exclusionary labour arrangements, landless, poverty and the gulf between the rich and the poor.

The development of relatively inexpensive transportation and communications has provided the means for landless and near landless peasants to migrate, either permanently, seasonally, or daily to cities in search of work. The less fortunate among the impoverished migrants arrive in the city with few marketable skills or social ties, no capital and practically no opportunity to get work either in industry in legitimate service sector occupations. Along with them are others, both from villages and cities, who are also willing to scavenge. These include the mentally unstable, the physically handicapped, ex-convicts, petty criminals, prostitute and people who are escaping arranged marriages or other confining circumstances. In short, the growth of industries of all size, and the concurrent growth of consumerism, create a demand for, as well as a supply of recovered materials; while the increasing gap between rich and poor in the cities creates a situation in which produces of high quality wastes live in close proximity to people who are willing to perform the degrading work necessary to convert those wastes in to raw materials.

There are several types of scavengers in Indonesia. This typology is based on location where scavengers work, the kind of material which they seek, place of their residence and relationship of scavengers with their receivers. The primary difference between scavengers who work at the dumps and those who
work within the city is social. Most of the city scavengers come from village. They were landless labourers in their village. They see their present profession as a means of avoiding complete destitution. Therefore for them scavenging offers a lettered umbrella against the harsh climate of the city. There are three types of city scavengers. These are streets scavengers, water scavengers and cigarette pickers. Majority of them are street scavengers. The condition of all the three is pitiable in the city. On the basis of analysis of literature pertaining to scavengers from other parts of the world, also it appears that they are divided and sub-divided on the basis of their work and therefore, social and economic status. However, one common point between the Indian scavengers and the scavengers mentioned above is that they all command over social status.

**.8 DIFFERENT NAMES OF THE POURAKARMIKAS:**

There are different terms in Hindi to refer to the English word “Scavenger”. In English it refers to those who are engaged in cleaning, carrying and disposing of night soil. In Hindi this category of population is known by different terms in different parts of the country in the historical period. For example, according to sherring (1974: 6) the Bhangis are grouped under seven categories in Benaras. They are: Shaikh, Hela, Lalbegi, Ghazuri Raut, Binapari Raut, Hari and Bansphor (Bamboo-cutter). The shaikhs are Mohemedans; the Helas are distinguished from the rest by not touching dogs, an important distinction, in the eyes of the castes, because the cleaning and feeding of dogs is one of the usual duties that it performs. Many gentlemen keep Mehtars solely for this propose. Moreover, the Helas will not eat food left by all people, only that left by Hindus. The Lalbegis and Ghazipuri Rauts will eat food left all at the tables of Europeans, as well as the leavings of Hindus. There are many members of the first four sub-divisions in Benars.

The Dinapuri Rauts agree in taste with the Helas, in selecting the food of Europeans and therefore, keep themselves quite apart from the Ghazipuri Rauts. There are no families of Haries in Benaras, but there and there one may
be found engaged in some this area they are known by terms like Mehtar, Bhang, Halalkhor, or Chuhra.

For example, according to Sherring (1974:6) the Bhangis are grouped under seven categories in Benaras. They are: Shaikh, Hela, Lalbegi, Chazipuri Raut, Binapari Raut, Hari and Bansphor (Bamboo-cutters). The Shaikhs are Mohemedans; the Helas are distinguished from the rest by not touching dogs, an important distinction, in the eyes of the castes, because the cleaning and feeding of dogs is one of the usual duties that it performs. Many gentlemen keep Mehtars solely for this purpose. Moreover, the Helas will not eat food left by all people, only that left by Hindus. The Lalbegis and Ghazipuri Rauts will eat food left at the tables of Europeans, as well as the leavings of Hindus. There are many members of the first four sub-divisions in Benaras. The Dinapuri Rauts agree in taste with the Helas, in selecting the food of Europeans and therefore, keep themselves quite apart from the Ghazipuri Rauts. There are no families of Haries in Benaras, but here and there one may be found engaged in some menial calling. He also said that in other parts of this area they are known by terms like mehtar, Bhang, Halalkhor, or Chuhra. Sir H. Elliot (1970) gives the following list of the sub-divisions of the Mehtars; Baniwal, Bilparwar, Tak, Gahlot, Kholi, Gagra, Sardhi, and so on.

According to Crooke (1974) the last census classifies them under five main sub-castes; Balmiki, derived from the tribal saint whose legends have been always given Dhanuk, Hela, Lal Begi and Ptharphor (Stone breaker). The detailed census lists supply not less than thirteen hundred and fifty-nine sub-castes of Hindu and forty seven of Muhammadans Bhangis. Most of these may be grouped under two categories viz; first those connected by name at least with some tribe or occupational and well known caste. Such are the Bagri, Bais, Baiswar, Barwar, Chadda, Chauhan and others. Second take their names from their places of origin, such as the Antarbedi, Bhojpuri, and Ghazipuri and so on.
According to Enthoven (1975) in Gujarat, Bhangis are known by terms like Halalkhors, Olgana, Barvashias, Metariya, Jamphoda and Mela. Also, in Deccan and Karnataka they are known as Halakhors.

According to Roy Burman (1961) in the old published literature, the word Chuhra has been used for the sweepers of the plains of India. Chuhra seems to be a community from which a number of other low castes have sprung up. According to Hutton (19) “The Chuhra has been held to be remnant of an aboriginal tribe, but in point of fact his physical type differs but little from that of other inhabitants” He further said that “when he turns Sikh becomes a Mazhabi and when he turns Muslim he becomes a Musalli.” In urban sophisticated circles they go with other names. Among all these names Bhangi is more common.

Burman (op. cit) said that Bhangi alone or along with some of the synonyms. Has been included in the list of SCs in almost all the states of northern India, but even today i.e. 1961 they are considered to be at the lowest rung of the social ladder and the higher castes avoid their contact acceptance of food and water from them is a taboo for almost all the other castes.

In Short, the Bhangis are scattered throughout the country and in different parts known by different names (Fuchs: 1981). The Most common name for them is Mehtar which literary means “Prince” or Leader. It is not known how this name has been acquired though they are considered the lowest. And most despised caste of north India (Chaudhary: 1988). Another name for sweeper is Bhangi. This name might have come from their habit of taking Bhang, the intoxicating hemp olant (Crooke: 1966, Elliot: 1970). But others reject this speculation (Mishra: 1936). The Bhangis according to him are the descendants of the Chandala who is said to have been a Shudra and born to a Brahman mother. To some, Bhangis are those who were expelled from society (Ghurya: 196): Chauhan: 1967). Thus, it is apparent that there are different speculations to explain the origin of Bhangi.
2.9 OCCUPATION:

It is beyond the scope of this work to trace the nature of relationship between the scavengers and their occupation during the ancient India. However, due to various reasons, Bhangi has been in the scavenging activities. But this is a broad generalization. This is because there are different sub-castes of the Bhangis and all of them were not involved in Scavenging. Describing about the scavengers and their occupation in Punjab, Ibbetson (1974) said that socially they are the lowest of the low, even lower perhaps than the vagrant Sansi and the gypsy Nat and as a rule they can hardly be said to stand even at the foot of the social ladder, though some sections of the tribe have mounted the first one or two steps. Their hereditary profession is scavenging, sweeping the houses and the streets, carrying to the fields and distributing manure and in cities and village houses, where women are strictly secluded, and removing night soil. They keep those impure animals, pigs and fowls; they and the leather workers alone eat the flesh of animals that have died of disease or by a natural death. Together with the vagrants and gypsies they are the hereditary workers in grass and reeds, from which they make winnowing fans and other articles used in agriculture.

According to Crooke (1974), in these provinces their occupation is to remove filth, to sweep the houses and roads, to play on the flute or tambourine (Shahnai daf) at marriages and other social occasions. They also conduct what is called the roshanchauki at marriages or when solemn vows (Mannat) are made. Some of them are noted for their musical ability. The Hela makes winnowing fans and sieves (sup and Chhalni), and some of the shaikhs are collectors and suppliers of leeches. The Bansphor makes baskets, mats etc. The Dhanuks are flowers and watchmen. They serve in the bands of native princes and their women are midwives. To the west of the province the Dhe's a class of Lal Begis. Act as Hangmen and killers of parish dogs. The Dhanuks and Bansphors will not remove nigh-soil and the Shaikhs will not do this work at public latrines.
Their implements are the broom (Jharu) and the rub bone of the ox (Panja) with which they scrap up filth. Many of them are the hereditary priests of Sitala and arrange the offerings of pigs released at her shrine; others serve Bhumiya and similar local and Goddesses.

According to Enthoven (1975) most Bhangis, both men and women, are scavengers and night soil carriers. They also sweep the roads, winnowing the dust in the hope of finding fragments of gold and silver, make baskets and other bamboo work and bury dead animals, some serve as trackers, messengers and letter carriers. They also serve as night watchmen, town-criers, drummers, trumpeters and hangmen. A few Bhangis cultivate in addition to their regular work. In North Gujarat, except the dragging away of dead cattle, all menial village work falls on the Bhangia. Besides sweeping the roads and carrying away all dead animals, except cattle the Bhangia watched shews the road, arranges for supplies and points out boundaries. In municipal towns as scavenger men earn Rs. 8 to Rs. 20 a month and women Rs. 5 to Rs. 10. The winding sheet or cloth that covers the deceased is given to the Bhangia. In the case of the rich this covering is a worked shawl worth Rs. 50 to Rs. 100. The Bhangia also gets the pot in which fire has been carried before the corpse when, as is not uncommonly the case with the rich, the pot is made of metal.

Russel and Hiralal (1915) have intensively documented involvement of scavengers in different occupations. They observed that sweeping and scavenging on the streets and in private houses are the traditional occupations but they have others also. In Bombay they served as night watchmen, drummers, trumpeters and hangmen. Formerly the office of hangman was confined to sweepers, but now many low-caste prisoners are willing to undertake it because the hangman is given different concessions. In the central provinces the hangman was accompanied by four or five other sweepers of the caste Panchayat, the idea being perhaps that his act should be condoned by their presence and approval and he should escape guilt. In Bundelkhand
Sweepers are employed as grooms by the Lod his and may put everything on to the horse except a saddle – cloth.

They are also the village musicians and some of them play on the rustic flute called Shahnai at weddings and receive their food all the time till the ceremony lasts. The Chamars of Bundelkhand will not remove the corpses of a cat or a dog or a squirrel and a sweeper must be obtained for the purpose. When a sweeper has to enter a house in order to take out the body of an animal, it is cleaned and whitewashed after he has been out In Hoshangabad an objection appears to be felt to the entry of a sweeper by the door, as it is stated that a ladder is placed for him, so that he presumably climbs through a window. Or where there are not windows, it is possible that the ladder may protect the sacred thresholds from contact with his feet. The sweeper also attend at funerals and assist to prepare the pyre; she receives the winding sheet when this is not burnt or buried with the corpse and the copper coins which are left on the ground as purchase-money for the site of the grave. In Bombay in rich families the winding sheet is often a worked shawl costing from fifty to a hundred rupees. When a Hindu widow breaks her bangles after the death of her husband, she gives them including one on two whole ones, to Bhangia women (Bombay Gazetteer).

Ibbetson (1974) said that the sweepers are no doubt derived from the primitive or Dravidians tribes and as has been seen, they also practice the art of making bamboo mats and baskets, being known as Bansphor in Bombay on this account. In Punjab, the chuhars are a very numerous caste, being exceeded only by the Jats, Rajputs and Brahmans. Only a small proportion of them naturally find employment as scavengers and the remainders are agricultural labourers and together with the vagrants and gypsies are the hereditary workers in grass and reeds. He further said that they are closely connected with the Dhanuks, a caste of hunters, flowers and village watchmen being of nearly the same status. It has been seen that Balmiki, the patron saint of these weepers, was a low caste hunter and this gives some reason for the
superposition that the primary occupation of the chuhars and Bhangis were hunting and working in grass and bamboo.

After independence a study was conducted by Jayakar (1992) to examine social, economic and religious conditions of scavengers. About their occupation he found that they were engaged in seven activities. These were sweeping road, carrying water, driving ox-cart, collecting truckers refuse, drain cleaning, working as Chaukidars and peon, occasional employment and employment in anti malaria department. Before undertaking this investigation, the author was persuaded that economic security is one of the least factors in their present culture. The writer was about to pursue this assumption, but evidence seemed to lead elsewhere. He quotes the following findings of Goil (1948): “The objective of more income is to support or to achieve security, justice, culture, educations and all the personal and social satisfactions that enter into winning the final objective of human effort – better living. The idea of the present enquiry started by observing the trend of the sweepers in relation to the community in general and municipal authorities and the government in particular their dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs, their demand for increase of wages, their cry for justice and impartiality “.

The author found that the available means of livelihood and employment (mentioned above) had brought occupational changes and the people are forced to move from one place to another where jobs were available. The author has also described a day of a typical sweeper. According to its “He gets up at 4.30 a.m. or at least by 5 a.m. As soon as he raises all the family members are up. He washes his face, prepares tea and drinks it, joins a small company and goes to his respective area. The Havaldar or Jamadar or mate (group leader) meets the sweepers and takes their attendance. He then goes to his oxcart to remove refuse. Or, why may wait for the truck which comes to pick him up, or he may go along the drains, putting oil in pounds where mosquitoes may be breeding. As soon as the covers his specific area of work, he may sit or move here and there. Then at 11 a.m. the Havaladar comes to take
attendance. Then he goes home. As soon as he reaches home he helps to cook the food and hurriedly eats. He may have to go back to his or her work area about two and a half miles away.

In the afternoon, after giving attendance, he may be put in a group and taken to do work elsewhere. At about 5 p.m. attendance is taken once again and then he goes to his home”.

Wiser (1932) has included the Bhangis among the village servants of “Kam karne wale” (Kameens). Their responsibility to their jajamans consists of cleaning cesspools and privies and sweeping the roads, in front of the houses. The villagers do the sweeping within their own homes like so many of the menial services performed in the villages the heaviest load of the work falls on women. They clean privies daily and cesspools and drains once or twice a week. Sweeping of the roads in front of the houses is done by the males. But they do it only on special festive occasions, when there is a general cleaning up of Jajman’s house. To this is often added the sweeping of the threshing floor before the freshly harvested grain is brought in. The Bhangi males are also occasionally called upon by their jajmans to act as night watchmen when the jajmans stay outside the house overnight. They are also frequently called upon to act as messengers.

The author studied the nature of work of the scavengers in both Bhiwai and Mathura. It was found that Mathura the work is restricted only to scavenging and sweeping; at Bhiwani other menial jobs which are generally rendered by the scavengers in villages, still exist. In Bhiwani the scavengers cleans the latrine and remove the night soil to the pail depot. In addition, they (women) sweeps the roof of the house, the premises and the cattle shed; she also removes the cow dung either to the Path ware or to the roof of the house itself. In some rich and respectable families she even prepares dung cakes (p.6) In short, the scavengers in both the areas were engaged in sweeping, drain cleaning and water carrying activities. They are also cart men, tractor sweeper, Zamadras and trencher. In all these activities they are the full time
workers. The author also studied attitude of scavenger towards the occupation of scavenging as well as their work under the terms and conditions determined by custom.

Regarding the former question respondents from both the settings said that they considered it to be a dirty occupation but they were sticking to it, as they had no alternative. So as far as the customary rights were concernedly though under the municipality system new laws were introduced and the customary rights were eroded but the scavengers had no respect for the new development. It is true that the scavengers were not enthusiastic about their profession but at the same time they were jealous about their customary rights. Many of them were not in favor of conservancy services being completely taken over by the municipalities.

The reason given by they were the following:

1. Customary right of scavenging is a sort of property which most of the scavengers have acquired by inheritance. Like any other property the scavengers feel attached to this property.

2. Most of the requirements of the scavengers are met by the customary payments in kind. Daily they get bread from the households served by them and on special occasions they get clothes and sweets. Frequently their women are not required to cook food in their households. They, therefore, get more leisure.

3. It the conservancy services are municipalized, the orphans and the old women will find it difficult to earn anything. The customary system gives protection to them.

4. Some people feel that their daughter and daughter-in-laws are safer as independent workers. If they work as municipal employees they are likely to be exposed to many corrupt influences.

5. The intimate personal bounds between the scavengers and their patron-clients are also mentioned by some scavengers as important reasons why the traditional pattern should continue. In many cases, the scavengers
are looked upon as family members of their patron clients. In case of
difficulties they can look upon their patron-clients for help and support.
In case of municipalisation of scavenging service, this personal
relationship will disappear.

Hence, due to variety of reasons large number of scavengers who were
in the caste occupation preferred their customary rights on this work. But the
attitude of the educated scavengers, leaders of caste association and the
municipalities’ people towards continuation of customary services were
different. There were only a few educated persons among the chuhars.
Education did not promote much change in their attitude towards the
occupation of scavenging under customary system. At both the place a few
males, after receiving some education had taken non-scavenging occupation
but the female members continued to work as scavengers under customary
system. So as far as the leaders of the caste association were concerned they
had no clear idea about it. They (eared that if customary rights are eroded it
may lead to unemployment among a large number of females. Even the
municipalities were not in favor of complete erosion of the customary system
by the new system introduced by the municipalities. There were there reasons
responsible for this. These were:

1. They feel that they do not have enough financial resources to give
   compensation to the scavengers.
2. If the scavenging services are completely municipalized, the
   municipalities would have to employ more staff which would involve
   extra expenditure.
3. To meet the expenses, the municipalities would be required to lay
   conservancy taxes. Collection of these taxes would again add to the
   responsibilities of the municipalities.

Hence, it is apparent that though formal attempts were made by the
municipalities to regulate the operation of scavengers by the customary right
holders, these attempts have not been much effective.
2.10 SOCIAL STATUS OF THE POURAKARMIKAS:

It is difficult to make distinction between social and economic conditions of the pourakarmikas in historical perspective. It is also difficult to argue that their social status was low because they were poor or vice-versa. But it is beyond doubt that in the Varna and Jati hierarchy their position was almost at the bottom.

Because of their placement at the bottom in the hierarchy they performed those activities which command almost no social prestige. In other words, it may be said that because they were in the less valued occupation, therefore, they acquired low social status. Further it had its negative impact on their economic, political and educational development. But as stated earlier, the pourakarmikas were divided and sub-divided into different sub-castes. All these caste groups were involved in different hierarchically arranged occupations. As a result, different groups and categories of pourakarmikas had different status. But the common point was that in the hierarchy of total occupation in the traditional Varna system their place was almost at the bottom. This argument may be substantiated with the findings of various empirical observations.

According to Russel and Hiralal (op.Cit.) the sweeper stands at the bottom of the social ladder of Hinduism. He is considered to be the representative of the Chandala of Manu, who was said to be descendant of a Shudra father and a Brahman woman. Risley rightly said that: “It was obtained that the Chandala should live without the town; his sole wealth should be dogs and asses; his clothes should consist of the cerecloths of the dead; his dishes should be broken pots and his ornaments rusty iron. No one who regarded his duties should intercourse with the Chandalas and they should marry only among themselves. By day they might roam about for the purposes of work, but should be distinguished by the badges of the Raja, and should carry out the corpse of anyone who died without Kindred. They should always be employed
to slay those who by the law were sentenced to be put to death, and they might take the clothes of the slain, their beds and their ornaments.”

Russel and Hiralal further said that the sweepers cannot be touched, and he himself acquiesces in this and walks apart. In large towns. He sometimes carries a kite’s wing in his turban to show his caste, or goes aloof saying poise, which is equivalent to a warning. When the sweeper is in company he will efface himself as far as possible behind other people. He is known by various artifacts which he always keeps.

But it is lucky to see a sweeper in the morning, especially if the has his basket with him. In Gujarat Kiraparam (Bombay Gazetteer) writes about the scavenger in the following fashion. “Though he is held to be lower and more unclean, the Bhangia is viewed with kindlier feelings than the Dhed (Mahar). To meet the basket – bearing Bhangia is lucky, and the Bhangia’s blessing is valued. Even now if a Government officer goes into a Bhangia hamlet he men with hands raised in blessing say: May your rule last forever.” A sweeper will eat the leavings of other people, but he will not eat in their houses; he will take the food away to his own house. It is related that on one occasion a sweeper accompanied a marriage party of lodhis (cultivators), and the lodhis who was the host was anxious that all should share his hospitality and asked the sweeper to eat in his house; but the sweeper to eat in his house; gave him to eat, so that it might not be said that anyone had declined to share in his feast. Nevertheless, no other caste will accept food or water from a sweeper and only a Chamar (tanner) will take a chilam or clay pipe – bowl from his hand. The sweeper will eat carrion and the flesh of almost all animals and also the leavings of food of almost any caste.

Greeven (1894) said: “only Lalbegis and Rawats eat food left by Europeans, but all eat food left either by Hindus or Muhammadan; the sheikh Mehtars as Muhammadans alone are circumcised and reject pig’s flesh. Each sub-caste eats uncooked food with all the others, but cooked food alone.” From Betulit is reported that the Mehtars will not. Accept food, water or tobacco
from a Kayasth, and will not allow one to enter their houses (Russel and Hiralal, 230)

According to Malley (1932: 145), however, all the sub castes of scavengers were not equally pollutant for the others. It was only in the case of actual scavengers that bodily contact involved pollution. Describing the status of scavengers who were actually involved in cleaning night soil, the Census Report of Punjab (1911) said: “Till recently, a sweeper walking through the streets of the larger tows was supposed to carry a broom in his hand or under his arm-pit as a mark of his being a scavenger and was expected to shout out “Bacho, Bacho” (look out) with a view to preventing people from being polluted”.

It is true that throughout the history scavengers and their sub-caste occupied low social status but on certain occasions because of the scare and indispensable roles, they occupied high social status. History is full of such examples. According to Russel and Hiralal (p. 232) during an eclipse the sweepers reap a good harvest; for it is believed that Rahu, the demon who devours the sun and Moon and thus causes an eclipse, was either a sweeper or the deity of the sweepers, and alms given to them at this time will appease him and cause him to let the luminaries go. Or, according to another account, the sun and the moon are in Rahu’s debt, and he comes and duns them, and thus there is the eclipse, and the alms given to sweepers are a means of paying the debt. According to another account in Gujarat as soon as the darkening sets in, the Bhangis go about shouting, Garhandan, Vastradan, Rupadan or gifts for the eclipse, gifts of clothes gifts of silver (Bombay Gazetteer).

“Kolenda Studied the Chuhars of Khalapur. She found that most of the sources of power except the magical power were possessed by the upper castes. For the service of magician the upper castes had to depend on scavengers. When the former were attacked by the ghosts it was the latter that were approached to rescue. And for that service they were paid respect on the occasion besides monetary payment. She further added that the sweepers were
also the caretakers for some of the Goddesses associated with smallpox and other diseases. Thus, on Monday, the sweepresses all received a bowl of flour from all their clients in the name of the smallpox goddess, and at the yearly writing for the smallpox Goddesses, the sweepers receive the offerings given by other villagers.

Census of India (1961: 3) also found that “Because of the monopolistic nature of the work, the Bhangi is frequently in an advantageous position in his dealings with the jajmans. He can threaten to leave the jajmans to sell his right of serving the jajmans. In the village community it is considered very derogatory for a jajmans to be the subject of such a sale. In caste of dispute between a Bhangi and his jajmans the word Bechana (sale) is enough to unnerve the latter and make him accept the claims of the Bhangi.”

Malley (1932: 134) said that the despised caste whose members work as scavengers and sweepers are particularly strict maintaining established rights and in doing so, often tyrannize over their employers. A quarrel with the necessary menial, who does the dirty work of the house, removes night soil, etc; frequently puts of private householder in a quandary as no other sweeper will agree to work for him. There is similar difficulty when municipal scavengers go on strike. The conservancy work is at a standstill till the scavenger come to larms or, as sometimes happens, a new staff of scavengers of a different caste is imported.

Berreman (1979: 237) analyzed the status of the scavenger and the leather workers in a comparative manner. To him sweepers are essential to the functioning of the growing city. They are its only sewage and garbage collection system. Their despised occupation assures them a vital role. The city has grown faster than their numbers and people of other groups are unwilling to do their defiling work. Therefore, virtually all of them are employed. Most sweepers’ families have the guaranteed income of municipal employment supplemented by the less reliable income of employment in private households. Perhaps most importantly the municipal employees are effectively unionized,
with a professional bargaining agent and the viable threat of strike against their common employer always available. As a consequence, these people are reasonably secure, though not prosperous. The difference in outlook between sweepers and leather-workers look very much like a difference in personality. Sweepers as a group are self confident, optimistic and outgoing people. They would generally volunteer to talk, speaking valuably about their work, caste discrimination, or whatever might come up. Leather workers, on the other hand, are characteristically dependent and evasive, exhibiting feelings of insecurity and inferiority in out-group interaction. Sweepers reported taking consistent advantage of the compensatory legislation for the untouchables, and they could cite relatives and acquaintance from among their number who had achieved success in the army, the civil service and in institutions of higher education. Among leather workers to whom such legislation is equal applicable, and for whom such opportunities are by low equally available, the opportunities were unknown and almost none could cite people of their group who had achieved significant social or economic movement by these routes.

2.11 JATI, OCCUPATIONAL BASIS OF CASTE AND THE DALITS:
Although the Hindu society is divided into foul" broad social divisions, i.e. Varna, the actual functional units of Indian society are not varnas rather much smaller closed groups, locally called Jati or caste which is based on birth and heredity of a person (Srinivas, 1962: 63-69, Mathur, 1964: 66; Lynch, 1974:74). The Jatis or castes play a vital role in the society within the ideal scheme of social values. One of the major factors of caste is that it is very commonly associated with a traditional occupation. It is sanctioned by religion and the society. In the past violation of practice of any such occupation used to cause punishment and subsequently severe harassment. So, the ancient law-giver's prescription of occupations for different castes or varnas, at the wider level, used to be strictly practised. While the Brahmans were assigned divinity and six duties of studying, teaching, sacrificing, assisting others to sacrifice,
receiving alms and receiving gifts to the end that the Vedas might be protected; the Kshatriyas were assigned strength and duties of studying, sacrificing, giving alms, using weapons, protecting treasure and life, to the end that good government should be assured; the Vaishyas were allotted the power of work and the duties of studying, sacrificing, giving alms, cultivating, trading, and lending cattle to the end that labour should be productive; and Shudras were given the duty of serving the three higher varnas (Buhler, 1979: 199 quoted in Hutton, 1969: 149).

Thus, castes are normally distinguished by their traditional occupations as each caste practices its traditional callings and hence "enjoys certain degree of cultural, ritual and judicial autonomy" (Srinivas, 1954: 24). This indicates a clear-cut caste hierarchy and defines the position of castes through the base line notion of super-ordinate or sub-ordinate ritual sanctity of caste occupations and thus it has made some castes economically prosperous over some others. But the Panchama, who came into being from mixed unions, were outside the Varna organization, and the low-givers had no concern for them in specifying their caste occupations and hence they had to take up occupations that involved dealing with dirty and unclean jobs, like scavenging, doing leather work, removing dead cattle from the village, removing human excreta and so on and so forth. They were, therefore, looked down upon as a profane group coming in contact with whom was defiling. As a result they were to live in separate colonies outside the village ritual boundary and fulfilling their purposes among themselves and confirming their relations to themselves only (Kuppuswamy, 1986: 224; Ghurya, 1969: 55). In no case they were allowed to take up the professions of Varna orders. They were even debarred from attending and observing the religious ceremonies of the four varnas, for which they had to lead a life of their own that was several degrees away from being ritually pure and hence prestigious. Persons from Varna orders considered it improper to deal with them and even to touch them as the idea of purity and pollution had been a major characteristic feature of untouchability since remote past in
traditional caste system all over the rural India. (Hutton, 1963: 149-69; Kuppuswamy, 1969: 223-225).

In addition to the practice of unclean and polluting jobs, sustained maintenance of dirty and unclean food habit that included consumption of beef, that too carcasses or even meat of many low grade creatures, like snakes, rodents, birds, and various insects by such groups reduced their status to such a low level in the society. Thus, the Indian traditional caste norms, based on the concept of purity and pollution cause some people superior to others leading the latter being discriminated against by the former. (Dr.R.P.Mohanthy, 2003, Dalit Development and Change an Empirical Study. 1-3).

2.12 OCCUPATIONAL ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY:

According to Mr. Rice the origin of Untouchability is to found in the unclean and filthy occupations of the Untouchables. The theory is a very plausible one. But there are certain difficulties in the way of its being accepted as a true explanation of the origin of Untouchability. The filthy and unclean occupations which the Untouchables perform are common to all human societies. In every human Society there are people who perform these occupations, why were such people not treated as Untouchables in other parts of the world? The second question is: Did the Dravidians have nausea against such callings or against persons engaged in them?

On this point, there is no evidence. But we have evidence about the Aryans. That evidence shows that the Aryans were like other people and their notions of purity and impurity did not fundamentally differ from those of other ancient people, one has only to consider the following texts from Narada Smriti to show that the Aryans did not at all mind engaging themselves in filthy occupations. In Chapter V Narada is dealing with the subject-matter of breach of contract of service. In this Chapter, there occur the following verses:

1. The sages have distinguished five sorts of attendants' according to law. Among these are four sorts of labourers; the slaves (and the fifth category of which there are) fifteen species.
2. A student, an apprentice, a hired servant, and fourthly an official.
3. The sages have declared that the state of dependence is common to all these but that their respective position and income depends on their particular caste and occupations.
4. Know that there are two sorts of occupations; pure work and impure work; impure work is that done by the slaves. Pure work is that done by labourers.
5. Sweeping the gateway, the privy, the road and the place for rubbish, shampooing the secret parts of the body; gathering and pililthlg away the leaving of food, ordure and urine.
6. And lastly, rubbing the master's limbs when desired; this should be regarded as impure work. All other work besides this is pure.

Thus have the four classes of servants doing pure work been enumerated. All the others who do dirty work are slaves, of whom there are fifteen kinds. It is clear that impure work was done by the slaves and that the impure work included scavenging. The question that arises is: Who were these slaves? Were they Aryans or non-Aryans? That slavery existed among the Aryans admits of no doubt. An Aryan could be a slave of an Aryan. No matter to what Varna an Aryan belonged he could be a slave.

A Kshatriyas could be a slave. So could a Vaishyas. Even a Brahmin was not immune from the law of slavery. It is when Chaturvarna came to be recognized as a law of the land that a change was made in the system of slavery. What this change was can be seen from the following extract from the Narada Smriti. In the inverse order of the (four) castes slavery is not ordained, except where a man violated the duties peculiar to his caste. Slavery (in that respect) is analogous to the condition of a wife." Likewise there were restrictions in the society to perform their own duties which was called as the varnas, hence the Shudras were considered as untouchables due to their duties performed and this untouchables were in the society are considered to be called as the Pourakarmikas in the contemporary times in the cities of India, and their
duties are to clean the human waste, sweeping public places cleaning toilets, cleaning the animal excreta etc and they belong to some of the castes called as the Chuhra, Mehtar, Mazhabi, Lalbegi, Allalkore etc, in northern India: Hari, Hela, Dom, Senei, Balmikis, Safaikarmacharis, Jadumails etc, in eastern India: Mukhiyar, Thoti, Chachati, Paki, Relli, etc, in southern India and Mehtar, Bhangi, Halalkhor, Ghasi, Olangna, Zadmalli, Barvashia, Metariya, Jamphoda, Mela, etc in western and central India. Some of them started returning as Adi Dravida, Adi Dharni, Adi Karnataka and Adi Andhra.

These communities are invariably placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy as well as Dalit sub-caste hierarchy. And the castes which perform the works of pourakarmikas are Madiga, Golla Madiga, Madurai Madiga, Mahar, Madar, Minumadar, Vodda, Bhovi, Holeya, Dombari, Koli, Channavolaya, Cheluvadi, Mochi, Lumbad, Koraga etc. Which has historical evidence and they have been kept away from the society. And these pourakarmikas stay in groups and some colonies with their own customs and traditions and there was and a new society is formed which can be seen in all parts of the country. Hence these pourakarmikas are been identified with different names in the different parts of the country which is their hereditary in nature.

It is a euphemism India could not do without – manual scavenging or “carrying the night soil” are terms used to delicately refer to the practice of removing human and animal excreta using brooms, small tin plates, and baskets from dry latrines and carrying it – on the head – to disposal grounds some distance away from the latrines who are called as pourakarmikas or the Safai Karmacharis. This “job” is for Dalit, mainly for women and young girls. The “tools” used are brooms, small tin plates and baskets, and true to the perverted logic of caste, the manual scavenger, the person who does the cleaning and carrying of other people’s refuse, becomes the “polluter”, someone to be kept at bay, at the margins of society and unworthy of dignity and respect. The Bhangis in Gujarat, the Pakhis in Andhra Pradesh, and the
Sikkaliars in Tamil Nadu, Pourakarmikas in Karnataka, continue to carry other people’s filth on their heads and are perceived as untouchable. These communities feature at the bottom of the caste hierarchy in India and also the hierarchy of Dalit sub castes. They live in segregated settlements in the outskirts of their villages, and are denied access to the local temple, religious community events, hotels, public water taps, and are excluded from interpersonal social relations. Manual scavengers are exposed to subhuman conditions of work, working amidst unbearable dirt and stench.

In Karnataka Madiga castes have been involved in sanitary work, the Madigas who were migrated from neighboring Andhra Pradesh the districts of erstwhile Bellary of Madras province, Chittoor, Kurnul, Anathapur and Nellore. These districts were frequently subjected to famines and draught. During such periods these people who were agricultural laborers had to suffer great hardships. Naturally they had to migrate to some places where they could get livelihood options. As Karnataka is geographically close to Andhra Pradesh and prosperous they all came to area to earn their livelihood. For two reasons they could easily get a footing in Karnataka. Firstly because the local schedule castes were unwilling to do this degrading work. Secondly as these immigrants could not get any other kind of work they readily got absorbed in this profession. The present sanitary workers in Bangalore belong to state of Andhra Pradesh who subsequently continuing in the sanitation work in spite of other doors kept open to them.

The British administration was attracted by the institution of castes in India partly for political reasons and partly for the scientific interest evoked by its ubiquity and uniqueness. On the basis of census data, Risley, the Commissioner for 1901 Census, classified castes into seven main categories according to their social standing and ranked the jatis in the local hierarchy and Varna affiliation of each. The ranking of jatis and castes by the census created an unprecedented situation. Whatever their de facto status, most of the communities at the lower rung of the caste ladder felt that it was a good opportunity for social climbing.
by laying claims- to higher status and registering a higher ranking in the census documents to have an official stamp, Indicative of their higher social origin. Thus was set in motion a process of social mobility whereby a caste claimed a higher social status by sanskritising its religious beliefs and rituals, if necessary. A number of caste associations were formed and overnight honorific caste names were adopted, showing descent from Brahmins or Rajputs etc.

The scavenging castes which were known by different names in different States like Bhangi, Balmiki, Chuhra, Mehtar, Mazhabi, Lal Begi, Halalkhor etc. in northern India; Hari, Hadi, Hela, Dom and Sanei etc, in eastern India: Mukhiyar, Thoti, Chachati, Pakey, Relli etc, in Southern India: and Mehtar, Bhangias, Halalkhor, Ghasi, Olgana, Zadmali, Barvashia, Metariya, Jamphoda and Mela etc. in Western and Central India; also made an effort to get united and have a common name. In 1911 census some of them started returning Adi Dharmi, Adi Dravida, Adi Karnataka and Adi Andhra. Hutton, in 1931 estimated the population of various scavenging castes to the extent of 20 lakhs in the undivided India. After independence, census in 1961 estimated their population to be 8.2 lakhs. The number of pourakarmikas who were engaged in the removal of night -soil was 3,86,725 which can be projected as 6.18 lakhs for 1981. The Task Force constituted by the Planning Commission had estimated the number of pourakarmikas in respect of Scheduled Castes for the year 1989 as 4.0 lakhs.

2.13 POURAKARMIKAS IN THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF INDIA
i) SCAVENGERS IN NORTHERN INDIA:

The sweepers and scavengers of Northern India go under various names. The most common name is that of 'Mehtar' which is really a title meaning 'prince' or leader. To quote an example, the head of the ruling family of Chitral State (now in Pakistan) is called 'Mehtar of Chitral'. Another name for this caste is Bhangi. The term Bhangi is derived from the Sanskrit word Bhangi meaning hemp; it seem to be an allusion to their drinking habits. Others derive the word Crow Bhangi, meaning broken. This would however, only fit those
pourakarmikas who split bamboos and plait mats and baskets. In Punjab the pourakarmikas are known as Chuhars. This name probably comes from Chura jharna, to sweep scraps. Another name common in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh is Balmiki or Lal Begi. These are the names of two great saints, the first being a Hindu and the other a Muslim. The other names are Hela, Hari, Hadi, and Bhumali. They are also called 'Halalkhor'. There are certain other castes also doing the work of scavenging such a Doms, Dumras, Dhanuks, Bansphors etc. In Nepal sweeper caste include Pores, Chamis and Halahulas. But one thing is very clear that all of them stand at the very bottom of the social ladder and are regarded as very unclean both by the Hindus and Muslims. Col. Tod calls them the very refuse of mankind.

Crooke, W (1896) writing about this community states that the name Mehtar was commonly applied to the servants of the Emperor Humayun. Another title for them is Halalkhor, one who eats what is lawful, one whose earnings are legitimate. This euphemistic title is said to have been introduced by the Emperor Akbar. They are also known as Khakrob, or "sweeper of dust" and Baharwala, one who is not admitted into the house. Another euphemistic name for them in the Punjab is Musalli, "one who prays". From their religion and patron saint they are sometimes known, collectively, as Lalbegi, which is really the name for one of their sub-castes.

Crooke's ethnographic notes on the Tribes and Castes of the North-Western India' are based to a large extent on the 'Knights of the Broom' by R. Greeven he states that "the modern Bhangi is apparently the representative of the Chandala of Manu, who is said to be descended by a Shudra from a Brahmani woman. He ordains that they must live without the town, whence the name Antavasin or Antevasin, 'one who dwells near the boundaries'. Their sole wealth must be dogs and asses; their clothes must consist of the cerecloths of the dead; their dishes must be broken pots, and their ornaments of rustly iron, No one who regards his duties must hold any intercourse with them, and they must marry only among themselves-a prohibition which takes us back to the
very beginning of the caste system. By day they may roam about for the purpose of work, be distinguished by the badges of the Raja, and they must carry out the corpse of anyone who dies without kindred. They should always be employed to slay those who by the law are sentenced to be put to death, and they may take the clothes of the slain, their beds and their ornaments. The term Chandal is now-a-days used only in the sense of contumely, and the so-called Chandalas of Bengal invariably call themselves Namasudra, and "with characteristic jealousy the higher divisions of the caste apply the name Chandala to the lower, who in their turn pass it on to the Dom".

The word Chandala, which, if it really comes from an Aryan root, may be connected with, Chanda, in the sense of 'evil or mischievous', was possibly the designation of some of the meaner non-Aryan or Dravidian race who were at an early time reduced to servitude, and compelled to perform the vilest functions of the Aryan commonwealth, but the term Bhangi can be applied to any definite ethnological unit is more than doubtful. Many of the special duties of the Chandala of Manu, such as the conveyance of corpses and the task of acting as public executioners, are now vested in the Dom and his kindred; with whom the Bhangi, as we now see him, is doubtless closely allied. But the modern names seem to imply that the present organization of the caste may have been contemporaneous with the early Muhammadan conquest, and there seems reason to believe that the tribe, as we now find it, is mad & up of a number of different elements.

This is corroborated by the divergent physical appearance of the race. Some Bhangis have the dark complexion, stunted figure, and peculiar dark flashing eye which is so characteristic of the Dom. Others, again, are of a much taller form and fair complexion; this may be perhaps accounted for partly by the fact that their admittance as servants into the higher class families facilitates illicit connection with superior race, and partly that the tribe habitually recruits itself by the admission of outcastes from the superior tribes. It has also been suggested that the names of some of their sub-castes point to the supposition
that the caste may be made up of menials attached to various Rajputs, Jat, or Musalman tribes; the Haris, with the Haras; the Dhe with the Dhe Jats; and the Rawats with the higher tribe of the same name. But of this there is no distinct evidence.

About their caste organization, Crooke states that "the last census classifies them under five main sub-castes, Balmiki, derived from the tribal saint whose legends have been already given; Dhanuk, which though allied to the Bhangis, has been treated as a distinct tribe; Hela, Lal Begi, and Patharphor, or 'Stone-breaker'. One list from Benares divides the caste into nine endogamous sub castes, Shaikh, Bela, Lal Begi, Ghazipur Rawat, who traces their origin from Ghazipur, and takes their name from the Sanskrit raja-duta, or "royal messengers" Hanri or Hari, who appear to be so called because they pick up bones (Sanskrit hadda) and other rubbish, Dhanuk, Bansphors and Dhe of these according to the Benares account the Lal Begis have their headquarters at Amritsar and Delhi; the Rawats at Agra, Manipur, Meerut, Ghazipur and Dinapur; the Shaikhs at Mirzapur and Delhi, and the Helas at Calcutta. The detailed census lists supply no less than thirteen hundred and fifty-nine sub-castes of Hindu and forty seven of Mohammedan Bhangis." Of the Benares sweepers, Greeven writes: in Benares, only the Lal Begi, Shaikh Mehtar and Hela, with a few Rawats, are found. All sub castes, including Lal Begis, who acknowledge a Musalman hero, claim to be Hindus, with the exception to the Shaikh Mehtars who call themselves Mohammedans. These pretensions are, however, equally rejected by Hindus, who exclude them from temples and by, Musalmans who exclude them from mosques.

The distinction between Lal Begis and Shaikh Mehtars is purely religious, and an elaborate legend admitting the common origin has been invented to explain why Mazhabis, who are Lal Begis converted to Nanakshahi doctrines, do not object to eating with Shaikh Mehtars, Only Lal Begis and Rawats eat food left by Europeans, but all eat food left either by Hindus or Musalmans". Further he goes on to say: "the religion of the sweepers is a
curious mixture of various faiths. Some, as we have seen, profess to be Hindus, others Musalmans, and other Sikhs. But though these two latter religions avowedly preach the equality of all men, they refuse to recognize sweepers as brethren in the faith. In Benares the Rawats are said to be as bad Hindus, as the Shaikhs are indifferent Mohammedans.

And the Chaudhari of Helas could say only that he professed the Hela religion. But the experience of the last Punjab census has shown the impossibility of classing their beliefs under any one definite creed. Some ninety five per cent of the Chuhras of the Province did, it is true record themselves as professing some religion which might be assumed to be peculiar to them, such as Lal Begi, Balmiki or Balashahi; but, as Mr. Mac lagan observes: "While there is no doubt that we should be complying with Hindu feeling in excluding the Chuhras from the list of Hindus, should we also exclude the Chamar? And, if the Chamar, why not the Sansi? And should the Gagra, the Megh, and the Khatik follow? And in fact where is tile line to be drawn? In the absence of any clear decision on His point, it will be best to adhere to the present system and include all as Hindus". At the last census of these Provinces, 2, 65,967 persons recorded themselves as votaries of Lal Begi. To the east of the province many are worshippers of the Panchon Pir. To the West Shikh Saddu and Gurunanak are worshipped. Guga or Zahir Pir is again held in high respect by the sweepers of the Western Districts. They consider that he cures the blind, lunatics, and leapers, and has the power of bestowing off spring on barren wives. His shrine is a small, round building with a courtyard and flags hung from a neighboring tree. On the shrine is laid a leaf platter containing a chip of the wood of the pilu tree (Careya arborea), flower of the Karil or caper bush, and some bajra millet.

The tomb is then rubbed with sandalwood, and this substance is considered a cure for various diseases. A goat is sometimes offered at a neighboring shrine known as Gorakhnath Ka Quila; and every Lal Begi erects in his house a standard (nishan) in the form of a trident (trisul) in honor of Zahir Pir. In the eastern parts of these provinces, where distance overcomes the
zeal for pilgrimage, it is usual for the Bhangis to carry round the sacred symbol of the Pir in the month of Bhadon, and raise contributions". "Ghazi Miyan, again, is favorite objects of worship by Bhangis They have corrupted the standard legend of the saint into a mass of extraordinary hagiology. According to one version Mamal and her father Sarsa fled from Delhi to Ghazni on account of the tyranny of Prithvi Raja. There Salar Sahu married Mamal and Sarsa managed to persuade Sultan Mahmud to attack Prithvi Raja. His tomb at Bahraich is a favourite place of Bhangi pilgrimage, The Dafali priests of the tomb perform all the rites, One of them wears the figure of a horse on his waist; Others follows him in a wild dance, singing the praises of Shah Madar. All this is in commemoration of the marriage of Ghazi Miyan, which is said to have taken place the day before his martyrdom." "Bhangis, again, have an army of local deities, such as in Lucknow, Kale Gora, Baram Gusain, Narsinha, and Buddh Prasadi. They believe largely in various evil spirits, the Bhut, the Deo, the Bir, the Rakshasa, and the Churel. They observe if Hindus, the festivals of the faith, such as the Diwali, Ghazi Miyan-ka-byah, the Basant, Id, and Muharrarm, which are all observed by the Lal Begis of Benares; while the Gazipuri Rawats celebrate the Pachainyan.

the Diwali the Dithwan, the Khichari, the Holi, and Ghazi Miyan-ka-byah, The Helas observe the Holi, the Moharram, and the marriage of Ghazi Miyan, and the Shaikh Mehtars, the last, with the ordinary feasts of Islam. The common oaths in use are Parmeswar qasm, and Khuda qasm, The Lal Begis also swear by their patron saint. They plaster a place with cow dung, place a vessel of water inside it with a copy of the genealogy (Kursi), and the person swearing faces the Kaba and swears with the work in his hand". Writing about the social rules, Crookes says that "Among the Hindu Bhangis of Lucknow, the women cannot wear the bodice (angiya).

Chemisette (Kurti), or gold ornaments and do not bore the nose for a ring. Muhammadan Bhangi women do not wear gold ornaments or sky-blue (asmani) or lac bangles (churi). The use of brass ornaments is considered
unlucky, but those of alloy are ailing owed. They prefer earthen to metal cooking vessels, and no Bhangi will plant the tree or the bamboo before his door. The elder brother cannot touch the wife of his younger brother and he can eat with no women but his own sister. If the touches a Dom he must purify himself before doing any other work. He will not eat food, touched by a Dom or Dhobi and the husband and wife will not mention each other by their names. Of all tribes the Dom, though he is admitted to be akin to the Bhangi, is held in particular abhorrence. Their rules of food vary with the religion they profess. Thus, Shaikh Mehtars will not eat pork, and some of the Hindu Bhangis will not eat beef. The Helas profession to eat the bearings of only high caste Hindus. No Bhangi, it appears, will eat monkeys, uncelven footed animals, Scale less fish, crocodiles, lizards, Snakes, jackals, rats or other vermin. The Lal Begis salute in the from Ram! Ram! Yadallah! And Hardam Allah! To elders, they say Salam or Satnamko Brahmins they salute with Maharaj Palagan.

The Ghazipuri Rawats and Helas salute everybody with Ram! Ram! With the exception of Musalmans, to whom they say Salam or bandagi; and Palagan to Brahmins. Shaikh use the word Salam only". Writing about their occupation, Crooke states that "their occupation is to remove filth, to sweep the houses and roads, to play on the flute or tambourine (Shan aidaf) at marriages and other social occasions. They also conduct what is called roshanchauki at marriages, or when solemn vows (mannat) are made, some of them are noted for their musical ability. The Hela makes winnowing fans and sieves (sup: Chhalni), and some of the Shaikhs are collectors and appliers of leeches. The Bansphors makes baskets, mats, etc. The Dhanuks are fowlers and watchmen. They serve in the bands of native princes. And their women are midwives, to the west of the Province the Dhe’s a class of Lal Begis, act as hangmen and killers of pariah dogs.

The Dhanuks and Bansphors will not remove night-soil, and the Shaikhs will not do this work at public latrines. Their implements are the broom (Jharu)
and the rib bone of an ox (panja), with which they, scrape up filth. Many of them are the hereditary priests of Sitala and arrange the offerings of pigs released at their shrine; others serve Bhumiya and similar local godlings. In some places Bhangis are true village menials and receive a patch of rent-free land or some allowances at harvest in return for their services. In our cities, particularly in places like Mirzapur, where they are not numerous. They are such given to combination among them. They resent their settlement of new members of the tribe and allot the houses of the residents into certain beats (halqa, llaqa) each of which is served by a Bhangi and his wife. They call the occupants of such houses their "parishioners" (jajman) and fiercely resent the intrusion of any strange Bhangi within the beat; in fact most of the cases which come before the council relate to dispute of this kind.

Speaking of the scavenger community of Punjab Ibbetson (1916) says: "Socially they are the lowest of the low, even lower perhaps than the vagrant Sansi and the gipsy Nat, and as a rule can hardly be said to stand even at the foot of the social ladder, though some sections of the clan have mounted the first one or two steps. Their hereditary occupation is scavenging, sweeping the houses and streets, working up, carrying to the fields, and distributing manure, and in Cities and village houses where the women are strictly scheduled in removing night-soil. They alone of all classes keep those impure animals, pigs and fowls; and they and the leather-workers alone eat the flesh of animals that have died of disease or by natural death. Together with the vagrants and gypsies they are the hereditary workers in grass and reeds, from which they make winnowing pans and other articles, used in agriculture". He further adds that "the Chuhra or Bhangi is the sweeper and scavenger par excellence of the Punjab is found throughout the Province except in the hills. In the frontier Chuhras and Kutanas who have returned themselves as Jats. He is one of the village menials proper, who receive a customary share of the produce and perform certain duties."
In the east of the Province he sweeps the houses and village, collects the cow dung, pats it into cakes and stacks it, works up the manure, helps with the cattle, and takes them from village to village. News of a death sent to friends is invariably carried by him and he is the general village messenger. He also makes the chhaj or winnowing pan, and the sirki or grass thatch used to cover carts and the like. In the centre of the Province he adds to these functions actual hard work at the plough and in the field. The Chuhras who have become Sikhs are called Mazbi and Rangreta. They often marry with the Lal Begi or Hindu Chuhra. They make capital soldiers and some of our regiments are wholly composed of Mazbis. The Rangreta are a class of Mazbi apparently found only in Ambala, Ludhiana and the neighborhood, who consider themselves socially superior to the rest. Almost all the Chuhras west of Lahore are Musalmans, and they are very commonly called Musalli or Kutana, the two terms being apparently almost synonymous, but Kutana being used in the south-west and Musalli in the north-west. H.A. Rose in the Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Provinces (1919) states that, Mazbi means nothing more than a member of the scavenger class converted to Sikhism. The Mazbis take the pahul, wear their hair log, and abstain from tobacco, and they apparently refuse to touch night-soil, though performing all the other offices hereditary to the Chuhra caste.

Their great guru is Tegh Bahadur whose mutilated body was brought back from Delhi by Chuhras who were then and there admitted to the faith by Guru Gobind as a reward for their devotion. But though good Sikhs so far as religious observance is concerned, the taint of hereditary pollution is upon them, and Sikhs of other castes refuse to associate with them even in religious ceremonies". "One of the bravest of the generals of the Gurus was Jiwan Singh, a Mazbi, whose tomb is still shown at Chamkaur in Ambala. He fell at its siege in 1705-06. During the Muhammadan persecution of the Sikhs they dropped out of notice and failing a supporter in the place of Guru Gobind, they never
came to the front as a class, although Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a great admiration for their bravery and enlisted them freely.

Being afraid, however, to form them into separate corps, he attached a company to various battalions. They were, however, looked down upon by the other men and naturally became discontented. When the Punjab was annexed, the Mazbi was a dacoit, a robber and often a thug. In this capacity he was generally styled a Rangretha. The latter are a class of Mazbi apparently found only in Ambala, Ludhiana, and the neighborhood who consider themselves social superior to the rest. The origin of their superiority, according to Sir Denzil Ibbetson's information, lies in the fact that they were once notorious as highway robbers! But it appears that the Rangrethas have very generally abandoned scavenging for leather-work, and this would at once account for their rise in the social scale. In the hills Rangretha is often used as synonymous with Rangrez, or Chhimba or Lilari, to denote the cotton dyer and stamper, and in Sirsa the Sikhs will often call any Chuhra whom they wish to please Rangretha, and a rhyme is current Rangretha, Guru Ka Beta, or "the Rangretha is the son of the Guru". The Mazbis have social distinctions among themselves. The descendants of the true Mazbis who rescued Tegh Bahadur's body are strictly speaking, the only as or real Mazbis, but the term is applied loosely to more recent converts. Recent converts are looked upon more or less with a critical eye and are termed Malwais. This term was probably a geographical distinction at first, but is now merely a caste one.

It takes some generations to make a Mazbi but how many he cannot say. Much depends on circumstances and on the strictness of the convert's adherence to the faith as to when he may be admitted' to an equal footing with a true Mazbi. For this reason the as Mazbi is scarce and his physique is falling off. Until quite lately he was never found in large numbers in any special locality except for the purpose of work on a new canal or railway. Two or three Mazbi houses are attached to Jat villages where they work as laborers. Grants of land have however, been made in Gujranwala to pensioners of Pioneer
regiments. The Mazbi gotras are numerous and many of them are the same as those of the Jat, doubtless following the family or group whose hereditary servants they were. In their customs too, at weddings, etc., they conform to a great extent to those prevalent among the Jats”.

**ii) SCAVENGERS IN CENTRAL INDIA:**

Writing about the Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India (1916) Russel and Hiralal states that in this province they generally confine themselves to their hereditary occupation of scavenging, and are rarely met with outside the towns and large villages. In most localities the supply of sweepers does not meet the demand. The case is quite different in northern India, where the sweater’s castes the Chuhra in the Punjab, the Bhangi in United Provinces and the Dam in Bengal are all of them of great numerical strength. With these castes only small proportions are employed on scavengers work and the rest are laborers like the Chama’s and Mahars of the Central Provinces. The present sweater caste is made up of diverse elements and the Mehtar, generally applied to it, is a title meaning a prince or leader. Its application to the caste, the most abject and despised in the Hindu community, is perhaps, partly ironical; but all the low castes have honorific titles, which are used as a method of address either from principle, as the Hindus say, that you may call an ass your uncle if you want him to do something for you.

The regular castes of sweepers in northern India are the Bhangis, whose name is derived by Mr. Crook from the Sanskrit bhanga, hemp, in allusion to the drunken habits of the caste. In support of this derivation he advances the Beria custom of calling their leaders Bhangi or hemp--drinker as a title of honor in Mr. Greeven's account also, Lal Beg, the patron saint of the sweepers, is described as intoxicated with the hemp drug on two occasions. Mr. Bhimbhai Kirpam suggests that Bhangia means broken, and is applied to the sweepers because they split bamboos. In Kaira, he states, the regular trade of the Bhangias is the plaiting of baskets and other articles of split bamboos, and in that part of Gujarat if a Koli is asked to split a bamboo he will say, "Am r to do
Bhangia's work? The derivation from the hemp-plant is, however, the more probable. In the Punjab, sweepers are known as Chuhara, and this name has been derived from their business of collecting and sweeping up scraps (chum-jhurna) similarly, in Bombay they are known as Olganas or scrap-eaters.

The Bengal name Hari is supposed to come from haddi, a bone; the Hari is bone-gather, and was familiar to early settlers of Calcutta under the quaint designation of the 'harry-wench'. In the Central Provinces sections of the Ghasia Mahar and Dom castes will do sweepers work and are therefore amalgamated with the Mehtars. The caste is thus mixed constitution and also forms a refuge for persons, expelled from their own societies for social offences. But though called by different names, the sweeper, and community will most provinces appear to have the same stock of traditions and legends. The name of Mehtar is now generally employed, and has therefore been taken as the designation of the caste." Russel and Hiralal give a brief account of the occupational pattern of sweepers. They have recorded that sweeping and scavenging in the streets and in private houses are the traditional occupations of the caste, but they have others. In Bombay they serve as night watchmen, town-criers, trumpeters, and hangmen. Formerly the office of hangman was confined to sweepers, but now many low- castes prisoners are willing to undertake it for the sake of the privilege of smoking tobacco in jail which it confers. In the Central Provinces the hangman was accompanied by four or five other sweepers of the caste Panchayat, the idea being perhaps that his act should be condoned by their presence and approval and he should escape guilt.

The hangman received ten rupees as his fee, and of this five rupees were given to the caste for a feast and an offering to Lal Beg expiate his sin. Sweepers are, as a rule, to be found only in large villages, as in small ones there is no work for them. The caste is none too numerous in the Central Provinces, and in villages the sweeper is often not available when wanted for cleaning the streets. The Chamars of Bundelkhand will not remove the corpses of a cat or a dog or a squirrel, and a sweeper must be obtained for the purpose.
These three animals are in a manner holy, and it is considered a sin to kill anyone of them. But their corpses are unclean. A Chamar also refuses to touch the corpse of a donkey, but a Kumhar (potter) will sometimes do this he declines a sweeper must be fetched. When a sweeper has to enter a house in order to take out the body of an animal, it is cleaned and whitewashed after he has been in.

In Hoshangabad an objection appears to be felt to the entry of a sweeper by the door, as it is stated that a Jadderis placed for him, so that he presumably climbs through a window. Or where there are no windows it is possible that the ladder may protect the sacred threshold from contact with his feet. The sweeper also attends at funerals and assists to prepare the pyre; he receives the winding-sheet when this is not burnt or buried with the corpse, and the copper coins which are left on the ground as purchase money for the site of the grave. In Bombay in rich families the winding-sheet is often a worked shawl costing from fifty to a hundred rupees. When a Hindu widow breaks her bangles after her husband's deal she gives them, including one or two whole ones, to a Bhangia woman. A letter announcing a death is always carried by a sweeper. In Bengal a funeral Could not be held without the presence of a Dom, whose functions are described by Me Sheering as follows: "on the arrival of the dead body at the place of cremation, which in Benares is at the basis of one of the steep stairs or Ghats, called the Burning Ghat, leading down from the streets above to the bed of the river Ganges, the Dam supplies five logs of wood, which he lays in order upon the ground, the rest of the wood being given by the family of the deceased.

When the pile is ready for burning a handful of lighted straw is brought by the Dom, and is taken from him and applied by one of the chief members of the family to the wood. The Dom is the only person who can furnish the light; for the purpose; and if for any reason no Dom is available, great delay and inconvenience are apt to arise. The Dom exacts his fee for three things, namely, first for the five logs, secondly for the bunch of straw, and thirdly for the light".
It is a further recorded that during an eclipse the sweepers reap a good harvest; for it is believed that Rahu, the demon who devours the sun and moon and thus causes an eclipse, was either a sweeper or the deity of the sweepers, and alms given to them at this time will appease him and cause him to let the luminaries go. Or, according to another account, the sun and moon are in Rahu's debt and he comes and duns them, and this is the eclipse; and the alms given to sweepers are a means of paying the debt. In Gujarat as soon as the darkening sets in, the Bhangis go about shouting, Garhandan, vastradan, Rupadan or gifts for the eclipse, gifts of clothes, gifts of silver.

iii) SCAVENGERS IN WESTERN INDIA:

The Bhangis are divided into different social units at various levels such as territory, religion, occupation, descent, etc. R.E Enthoven in his Tribes and Castes of Bombay (1910) reports that "Bhangis or Bhangias Ares found in almost every district of the Presidency and Native states. In Gujarat, they are known as Halalkhors, Olgana Barvashia, Metariya, Jamphoda and Mela and in the Deccan arid Karnataka as Halalkhors. As a cause of scavengers and sweepers they are the dregs of Hindu society, and contain an admixture of outcastes who, have fallen to this level owing to offences against the social code of higher castes. Being open to continual recruitment in this fashion their customs are confused and uncertain. Bhangia is generally supposed to mean broken". In the Deccan, the Bhangis are divided into Bhasods, Chajgadis, Helas, Lal Begis, Makhiyars and Sheikhs. Of these, Lal Begis and Sheikhs eat together but do not inter-marry and are considered higher than the other four, who do not inter-marry or eat together. Sheikhs profess to be Musalmans, and Lal Begis are half Hindus and half Musalmans.

Many Bhangis in the northern part of the Presidency appear to be immigrants from the United Provinces. It seems probable that in many cases Bhangias originally came to this Presidency as camp followers with the armies from the north. According to Enthoven "Most Bhangias, both men and women, are pourakarmikas, and night-soil carriers. They also sweep the roads,
winnowing the dust in the hope of finding fragments of gold and silver, make baskets and do other bamboo work, and bury dead animals, cattle excepted. Some serve as trackers, messengers and letter carriers. A letter telling of a death was formerly brought by Bhangia. They also serve as night watchmen, town-criers, drummers, trumpeters, and hangmen. A few Bhangias cultivate and addition to their regular In North Gujarat, except the dragging away of dead cattle; menial village work falls on the Bhangia. Besides sweeping the roads carrying away all dead animals, except cattle, the Bhangias watches, shews the road, arranges, for supplies and points out boundaries. In municipal towns as Pourakarmikas men earn Rs. 8 to Rs. 20 a month and women Rs 5 to Rs 10”.

In Goa the 'Bhangui' are represented in a very small number. The ancestors of the Bhangui of Goa have migrated mostly from the Bombay Presidency and Rajasthan about a hundred years ago they are found mainly in Panaji. During 1971 census there were the Bhanguis in Goa. They constitute an endogamous group. The division of the community is through the surnames such as Waghele, Parmar, Multani, Goher, Chavan, Nandrekar, Chatribin and Chavaria etc. Many of them have given up their traditional occupation of scavenging. In Rajasthan, the Bhangis use clan name as their titles. Their women are called Bhangan by the local people. Munshi Hardyal Singh in his The Castes of marwar (1894) writes that the Bhangis or Sweepers are the lowest caste and are regarded as very unclean by the Hindus. They are employed in sweeping and removing night-soil. They also make chhaj or winnowing pans.

They are very rarely found in the country and abound chiefly in large towns. The Bhangis are also called Lal Begis, Khakrobs, Halalkhors and Mehtars, which name are accounted for by Sir Elliot: "Bhangi probably from their drunken Habits from bhang Lal Begi from their object of worship: Khakrob from persian khak, earth and rob sweeping Halalkhor, from Persian Halal, lawful, and khor, eating, because everything is lawful to them as food,
Mehtar from Persian Mehtar prince, said to have been applied to them in derision”. He further adds that "in Marwar there are two divisions of the Bhangis viz the Loharis and the Multanis who intermarry with each other. The chief peculiarity with the Bhangis of Marwar is that they never eat food, if invited in a public feast, though they will readily accept the leavings of other guests, It IS said that when on the demise of the late Maharaja Takhat Singh, all the people of Marwar were fed (the ceremony being known as Sher-Sarni the Bhangis alone could not be induced to fake part in it unless offered with the golden broom and basket or jharu-tokra”.

iv) SCAVENGERS IN SOUTHERN INDIA:

In Southern parts of the country most of the sweepers and scavengers are migrants from the Northern India, with the exception of Pakey, Paraiyans, Sanei, Ghasi, Mala Korar, Malkana or Zadmali etc. There are others also engaged in this profession like Lingayats, Kuruba, Mudaliars, Adi- Karnataka, Adi-Dravidas, and Adi-Karnataka etc. Syed Seraj Hassan (1920) writes that the Lal Begis of the Nizam's dominions have seven groups, who neither eat together nor intermarry. These are the Hele, Malkane, Chhichhade, Dumar, Chhajgode, Bhadeye Dassan and Makhyar. They also have a number of exogamous groups, such as Phatrod, Sanakat, Kanderas, Surawals, Gaikwad, Samwan and Kanderia. Their traditional occupation of carrying night-soil is now being abandoned. They are engaged as sweepers and scavengers and most of them are employed in the municipalities; Sweepers and scavengers in India are known by various names, the most common among them are Mehtar which, ironically, means prince or leader. The head of the ruling family of Chitral State, now in Pakistan, is called the ‘Mehtar of Chitral’. Another name for this caste is ‘Bhangi’, a derogatory term. Bhangi is derived from the Sanskrit word bhang, meaning hemp; it seems to be an allusion to their drinking habits! Bhangi also means, “Broken”.

This describes the pourakarmikas who split bamboos and made mats and baskets. In Punjab, pourakarmikas are known as Chuhras and Ghana, one who
sweeps scrap. Another name in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh is Balmiki or Lalbegi. These are the names of two great saints, the first being a Hindu and the other a Muslim, which denotes their presence in both the communities. Other names are Hela, Hari, Hadi, Bhumali and Halalkhor. Some other castes also do scavenging, such as Doms, Dumras, Dhanuks, Bansphor, Mazhabi, Mukhiar, Thoti, Chachati, Pakey, Relli, Ghasi, Olgana, Zadmali, Jamphoda and Metariya, etc. But whatever their names, all of them are at the bottom of social ladder and are regarded as unclean, both by the Hindus and Muslims. Col. Todd calls them the “refuse of mankind”. Pourakarmikas are really a working community belonging to different racial and social groups. Most of them were forced to doing such degrading jobs.

The variations in their physical features show that the members of various castes have joined this profession, at different points of time, due to economic compulsion, defeat in battle or just by birth. Stephen Fuchs (At the Bottom of Indian Society) has pointed out that “the endogamous sub-sections of this lowest of all low castes, are not without a certain social gradation.” Within the scavenging castes, some sections are superior to others, whose social status is determined, according to the origin of the section, or according to the nature of work. The lowest place is occupied by those carry night soil.

**v) SCAVENGERS IN KARNATAKA:**

The government of India (Scheduled Castes) order, 1936: As Bhangi. In the district of Bijapura, Dharwar, North Karnataka and Belgaum. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) 1950: As Bhangi. In the district of Bijapura, Dharwar, North Canara and Belgaum. Also as Mehtar. In the districts of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lists (modification) order, 1956: As Bhangi, Mehtar, Olgana, Rukhi, Mulkana, Halakhor, Lalbegi, Balmiki, Korar or Zadmali in the districts of Bijapur, Dharwar, North Canara and Belgaum. Also as Mehtar. In the districts of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1976: As Bhangi, Olgana, Rukhi, Malkana,
Halalkhor, Balmiki, Korar, and Zadmali. Throughout the State. Status of the caste in 1931 Census: As Bhangi or Halalkhor. Depressed Class. In the districts of Bijapur, Dharwar, North Canara and Belgaum. Also as Mehtar. Depressed Class in the Districts of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur.

vi) POPULATIONS OF POURAKARMIKAS:

During 1931 census, J.H. Hutton estimated the total population of various scavenging castes in undivided India which works out to be 19,57,460-10, 38,678 males and 9, 18,782 females. However, during 1961 census, their population was estimated to be 8.2 lakh, 40.20 % of which belonged to scheduled castes. This means over half of the persons pursuing the job of sweeping and scavenging were from non- scheduled caste category.

This was due to the fact that many of the pourakarmikas have converted themselves into Christianity, and therefore, ceased to be the members of scheduled castes despite continuing their scavenging job. Besides, there were many Muslim pourakarmikas in states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh etc. Likewise, many persons of tribal groups perform the job of scavenging. However, no reliable estimates of the Christian, Muslim and tribal scavengers have been made (People's Commission, 1998).

To overcome the problem, Planning Commission constituted the Task Force in 1989, which submitted its report in 1991. Accordingly, the population of pourakarmikas was estimated to be 4, 00, 999 – 3, 33,779 in urban areas and 67,220 in rural areas forming respectively 83% and 17%. Sex-wise distribution showed that there were 2, 06,612 males and 1, 27,167 females in urban areas, the later constituting about 35% of total pourakarmikas. A rapid survey was carried out by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Govt of India also to identify pourakarmikas and their dependents as also to ascertain their attitude towards alternative trade/occupations. It revealed that there were 7, 36,114 pourakarmikas in the country, notwithstanding the complaints of non-inclusion of many scavenging families in the survey. Taking into account the number of non-scheduled caste pourakarmikas and growth of population of
Pourakarmikas since 1989, the People's Commission on Abolition of Scavenging came out with a rough estimate of scavenging population in India as about 8 lakhs. The manual scavenging of night soil is expected to continue till dry latrines will remain in use. The condition of scavenging population is determined mainly by the quality of toilets and availability of flush arrangements. It is estimated that 750 million people out of total population of 950 million in 1991 either defecate in open fields or use dry privies, which are required to be cleaned manually. As regards urban population is concerned, about one third either had access to water born toilets connected either to sewerage system or a septic tank. In contrast, only 3% rural population has access to sanitary toilets.

The Task Force set-up by Planning Commission also estimated 76.4 lakh dry latrines in the country – 54 lakh in urban areas and 22.4 lakh in rural areas. During 1991 census, 23.70% households had toilet facilities in the country and over three fourth households had no toilet facilities. Data also showed that 58.15% urban households in 1981 and 63.85% in 1991 had toilet facilities. In contrast, only 9.40% in the rural household in 1991 had toilet facilities. Further, more than half of the urban household in 177 districts and more than one-third of urban households in most of the Indian states and UTs had no toilet facilities. (People's Commission, 1998) The traditional system of service latrines in urban and rural communities has been a most importance source of insanitation and pollution in various ways. The bucket latrines are judged to be unsuitable for replication.

**Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers 2007:** The total number of manual scavengers and their dependents across the country was 7, 70,338, according to the survey reports received from the states. Out of that number, 4, 27,870 people had already received assistance under National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of scavengers 1992 (NSLRS) and 3, 42,468 were yet to be rehabilitated.
National Commission for Safai Karmacharies, 2005: According to the 1991 Census, people belonging to the Scheduled Castes numbered 13.82 crores, making up 16.5% of India's population. The manual scavengers were estimated to be around 6.76 lakhs. Even after 58 years of Independence, this social group continue to handle human excreta and their socio-economic conditions remain far below the satisfactory level. This is undoubtedly a blot on our country. The number of dry latrines in the country is estimated to be around 54 lakhs in urban areas and 24 lakhs in rural areas.

National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers 1992: The central government identified 7, 97,112 people to be emancipated from the tradition of manual scavenging and rehabilitated.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment:
8 6.76 lakhs Manual Scavengers in 2002-03.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, January 18, 2010: Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) was introduced in January 2007 with the objective of rehabilitating remaining manual scavengers and their dependents in a time bound manner. Under the scheme, identified beneficiaries are provided loan at subsidized rate of interest and credit-linked capital subsidy for self employment projects. By the end of year 2009, a total of 69,137 persons had been provided loans for taking up alternative occupations and about 13700 intended beneficiaries were yet to be covered by the scheme, according to the states' progress reports. Efforts were being made to cover by March 31, 2010, the people who were yet to be benefited.

Garima Abhiyan and Maila Mukti Gatbandhan, 2010: Based on the surveys that they conducted in some states, they estimate the number of people engaged in manual scavenging across the country to be 3.5 lakhs.
Yet in the villages where sanitation is a less vital issue where sweepers are entirely dependent upon high caste landowners for their livelihood and where their numbers are often greater than required by the demand for their work, they are a typically deprived and depressed group no better than of leather workers. In rural areas where leather workers have not yet felt and acute competition from commercial shoes, those who follow that occupation are somewhat better off than sweepers, for their job is slightly less defining cleaner, and the market for their work some that more profitable. In city and countryside sweepers are theoretically comparable in status at the bottom of this rigidly stratified society. Fate has treated them differently as times and technologies have changed. In short, on the basis of survey of some of some of the literatures cited above, it is apparent that the researchers and analysts have only explained their origin, names in different parts of the country, their low social and economic status, their caste occupation and so on so far as occupational mobility is concerned it has hardly drawn their attention. This maybe primarily because the cases of occupational mobility were very few in the past. But today, due to variety of inputs form the society, there is occupational diversification among them. In this study, attempts have been made to comprehend different dimensions of occupational mobility.
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*Source: Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, 2010-11*
### Table 2.2- CONTRACT POURAKARMIKA

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<th>Sl.No</th>
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</table>

Source: Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, 2010-11

### Table 2.3- EQUAL WORK TO EQUAL PAY

<table>
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<th>Sl.No</th>
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<tbody>
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Source: Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, 2010-11.
CONCLUSION:

In this chapter namely the historical background of the pourakarmikas, the aim of the researcher his to find out the comprehensive information about pourakarmikas and the sections of similar professions. After acquiring a handful of information the people who are engaged in the bottom most work of the society are named differently in different parts of world. In particular these people are sectioned as the untouchables and assigned the work from ancient times. It was compelled them to be in the same profession for centuries it acquired a name that is simonized with pollution.

In another angel the anthropological and historical background of these people are also studied which gave the researcher great insight to understand the real cause and nature of the present day problems of pourakarmikas. It is found that this section of the people were not born separately but was very much the core part of the society. But in later part of the history when civilization grew for the functioning of the society the population was divided in to sections with a respective profession to followed.

After centuries this practice the different groups of people are identified with their profession as a separate group so is the case with scavengers today. It is essential to go into the details of historical, mythological, anthropological, etc details to make a better study of pourakarmikas certainly this study helped in further part of the research. Even to the policy makers it is important to understand this section for formulating better policies and plans for uplifting of the scavenging community.