2.1 PRELIMINARIES

Laxman Mane, born on 1st June 1949, is a social activist who comes from Nomadic tribe – The Kaikadi community. He shot into fame with the publication of his book *Upara (An Outsider)* which highlighted the problems of Nomadic tribes. He virtually rescued them from obscurity bringing the problems posed by their social and economic condition to the attention of social leaders and placed them firmly on the social and cultural map of Maharashtra. “In 1982, he was awarded a two – year fellowship from ‘The Ford Foundation’ for writing a book on the life of the Nomadic tribes in contemporary Maharashtra. Based on the fieldwork done during this fellowship, he wrote his second book *Band-Darwaza (The Closed Door)*. Mane served as an Acting President of the ‘Indian Institute for Research in the Development Problems of Nomadic and Denotified Communities, Satar; General Secretary of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Samata Pratishthan and Senator of Shivaji University, Kolhapur. He is the President of the ‘Bhatakya ani Vimukt Jamati Sanghatan, Maharashtra and a Founder Member of Yeshwantrao Chavan Pratishthan Maharashtra. His *Upara* won ‘Sahitya Akadami Award.”


Laxman Mane’s *An Outsider [Upara]* is a confession of suffering without fear. It has unmasked the poverty and highlighted it without shame. He never felt fearful or shameful of it? He is not responsible for his pathetic struggle. He never felt disgusted to say naked reality imposed upon him. His struggling and rebellion is not wrong. Those who feel that Mane has done wrong, must carefully observe his silent suffering, honouring him pain and pathos. It is his brave deed to speak against his slavery imposed upon him and his caste, which resulted in his inhuman suffering. His journey of life recorded in this book is a rising map of humiliation. Hunger moved him from place to place. His community is yet unstable. He fights for permanent residential address and human rights. He brought to the fore the hunger and starvation of his society. He raised the question of his identity which makes him outsider. *Upara* makes the wise, sympathetic and humanistic reader to think and search the root-causes of his hellish life. Rising issues of his life and the life of his tribe started social debate due to the publication of his autobiography.
He says-

If this book proves useful in inviting social debate on the problems of Nomadic Tribes, giving a fillip to the efforts of those who have been working in that direction, I shall feel satisfied, my writing will be amply compensated. It will be worthwhile if society brings to understand the suffering of Nomadic tribes who live out their lives, generation after generation, carrying hearth and home on the backs of the donkeys, whom they resemble in many ways.

[Mane, 1997, 6]

2.2 HUNGER AND SUFFERING

2.2.1 Childhood Experience of Poverty

Laxman Mane is the name of suffering. Upara mirrors sufferings right from the beginning of the life of the author. Up to the age of thirty one, Mane witnessed worst days and saw various faces of suffering. By and large, his path of life remained a great challenge for him and he conquered it with grief and then initiated a strong fight against all the adverse calamities. Mane unfolds his childhood experiences thus-

A shirt, someone’s charity, covered my body. Mended in several places, it was full of wrinkles, shorts were a luxury. The shirt itself hangs loose serving the purpose of shorts as well. Its sleeves too were very long. They came handy in blowing my nose now and again. My head was covered with father’s cap. This too was a handout. [17]

This narrative uncovers impoverish condition of the author. There is nothing of his own. Everything is unfit and begged from the upper-class society. No dress purchased specially for him. It is his father’s inability, poverty that made him to wear those things and live. This helplessness keeps its continuation and humiliates Mane and his community. Regarding this poverty and pain, Anil Surya says-

Upara states the exploitation of Laxman Mane due to untouchability and castiesm. Kaikadi people suffered in every village wherever they had gone. Writer describes his childhood experiences. The upper caste boys do not touch him. If he is touched, they preserve untouchability. The author had to suffer due to casteism. [1996, 28]
2.2.2 The Attitude of Upper-caste Students and Teachers

A village school-teacher advised Laxman’s father to admit Laxman in school. Before Laxman, nobody was educated. It was a surprising thing. However, he got this opportunity and was taken to the school. His humiliation in the school continued. The boys wondered “A Kaikadi child… in school?” [1997. 20] Mane writes, “No student would allow me near him. The poor schoolmaster! He was a good man. He asked me to sit near the door. The pupils were afraid of any physical contact with me.” [20]

Many untold questions began to smart in the mind of the author. Who told these pupils to behave so? What made Mane untouchable? What is wrong with him? Is he responsible for his suffering or somebody else? All the questions direct the fingers towards Manusmruti, a book of codification by Manu that divided Hindu society into castes and offered humiliation in the life of Mane’s society. The illiterate community suffered and remained dumb and deaf. Enduring all those inhuman treatments by students and teachers, Mane grew up. His family had to migrate from one place to another in search of canes to make baskets and feed their empty stomachs. We may understand the small children behaving in this manner. But, even the teachers of such type caused humiliation and suffering in his life. Once, Mane’s father took him to a school in the village and the teacher reacted-

You funny guy! Do nomadic beggars go to school? If they study, who will weave out baskets? Nothing doing! You want to study, huh! [6]

This prejudiced attitude of a teacher is shame on the name of teacher community. The question remains - Who made him to speak so? Why this inequality made Mane to listen this? The answer is the traditional setup ruling Hinduism right on the directions of Manu. He allotted jobs to the community and separated people on the name of castes. All the menial jobs of the village were imposed on the untouchables due to which, the history has only pages of pain and pathos on the name of untouchables. This Manu-made system has been effectively running in India of which millions of people are made victims of subhuman existence. The untouchables’ life is as if born to suffer. No trade, no farm, no occupation, no service and no money, so, no prestige and honour in society. No shelter, no bread and no clothing, so, no stability in life. Due to continual wandering from place to place, Mane’s education suffered a lot. He learnt out of hunger for bright future. He lived uneaten. He says, “Life in school was unbearable.” [24]
2.2.3 Pathetic Cane Experience

Mane’s family had to travel from place to place in search of bread. Cane was the backbone of their traditional profession. They used to weave baskets and sell them for food. They used to feed the family and survive. Once, the parents had gone to sell the wares. There was nothing to eat for the children. It was the worst day, which utterly humiliated his parents. They were taking canes from somebody’s farm and the farmer caught them and they were beaten up in such inhuman way which shows the crooked face of this culture. Mane narrates-

What once happened was the worst … and just then I heard some pandemonium outside. Father was being pushed ahead by a small crowd. Mother was behind him. She had no blouse on. She was wearing fathers’ shirt. Her sari was torn. Father had only his dhoti on. One could see black and blue lashes over his body. He was followed by four or five rough fellows. Mother was wailing loudly and father was consoling her … I was burning with inner anger. Even at my age. I could understand the situation. Mother was falling at the feet of her captors begging them to let her go home. [62.]

Homeless and landless parents of Mane were passing days by doing hard work. Once, they were taking canes from the trees and were caught by the farmer. The farmer had beaten father and mother and had dragged them to the village abusing and beating. Inhuman punishment was given to them. The entire Kaikadi community was begging for pardon, but nobody showed mercy. Their hearts wouldn’t melt. The children were weeping and wailing. This situation shows perpetual suffering in the life of nomadic tribes. How is it possible to believe in the name of humanity? The indifferent upper caste people proved tyrants in this regard. What was the worth of those canes? Has the poor no modesty? Who gave these hard-hearted inhuman rights to these people? Have they no pity or mercy? Where has gone the brotherhood? Is there any reference of justice made on the part of these poor helpless people?

2.2.4 Childhood Experience of Humiliation in Marriage

Kaikadi community suffered due to inequality and untouchability. Serious suffering and great insult couldn’t leave Mane. His schoolfellows always insulted and humiliated him on the name of a low caste. Once, he attended marriage and sat to eat along with other upper-caste people. However, a man recognized him and inhumanly
insulted him. The upper-caste man angrily scolded him... “Son of Kaikadi low caste! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out.” [107]

The writer had to get up leaving half-eaten meal. He had to suffer by the virtue of his low caste status. He says-

\[ \text{No one intervened. I was hurt … my shirt became damp with my tears. I went quietly and slept in the house allotted to the family of the bridegroom. Nobody inquired about me. Nobody asked me anything. [107]} \]

This is how, his hunger remained burring. His insult remained uncared and unheard. Why have the people become dumb and deaf towards the tragedy of the author? Why was he neglected? Why did he leave the feast? Why should he suffer? All these questions point at discriminatory division of castes where the poison of untouchability, humiliation, inequality lies.

\[ \text{2.2.5 Various Jobs for Hunger in Schooldays} \]

Staving and suffering were inseparable parts of the author’s life. Food always remained a great problem before him. Hunger humiliated him. He had to quench his hunger with leftovers. While taking education, he remained alone in his village on the mercy of school- headmaster. He took education in such adverse conditions, which seems highly impossible. After passing his matriculation, he did the various jobs to meet his hands to his mouth. He worked as a waiter in a hotel. He sold bakery products early in the morning. He sold newspapers and attended the school. On the mercy of his friends, he continued his education up to matriculation. His search for food and education went hand in hand.

\[ \text{2.2.6 Piteous Indian Jew} \]

In the very beginning, his father admitted him to school and the same father tried his best to discontinue his son’s education due to the fear of loosing his son. He was afraid that his educated son would not do the traditional job and would not live with him as a family support. Who has made him to feel so? From where has come, this insecurity? Is it illiteracy or the tradition that has been running? Who created their traditions? In relation to these questions and their replies, Dr. Yeshwant Manohar states-
**Upara** is a story of outsider, homelessly wandering like animals. It presents befallen story of the oppressed. Upara is the piteous story of Indian Jew. This inhuman culture has never allowed them to live in village or out of the village. Then, Indian Jews are uprooted in the outskirts. Indian tribal Jews are always outside. This fascist land never allowed them to grow. Thousands of times, this culture has uprooted them. However, they have fed their roots by this wind and breathed life to their lips. Upara is such a story of neglected sorrow and it has unbelievable greatness. [1999. 267]

Upara portrays the social picture of Kaikadi community. It is representative document of all nomadic tribes wandering for bread because of poverty. Laxman Mane raises million dollar questions on the name of this poverty...“In this world, why are certain people poor? Why does god keep them that way? I never got answers to these questions.” [1997.134]

### 2.2.7 Humiliation in Muslim Marriage

After matriculation against the will of his parents, he came to Kolhapur and continued his education on the mercy of his friends. He joined Earn and Learn scheme at college. Day and night, he worked and studied. During those days, he came in contact with social movements and was awakened. He starved but continued his hard effort to educate him up to B.A. At B.A. III year, he loved and married Shashi and faced many difficulties. There comes an incident, which is tragic. After getting married, hunger started haunting. Once, he was invited to Muslim marriage. He, with his wife Shashi, remained hungry for the whole day that somebody would call them for feast. Nobody paid attention. The guests were busy in enjoying biryani. The smell made him mad. However, what could he do? He thought of his childhood experience of marriages when his community would gather the leftovers from the jackfruit plates after wedding feast. But how could he tell of this to Shashi. Secretly, he came and found that the Muslims don’t eat in jackfruit plates. He writes, “Oh hell! These Muslim guises do not eat on the plates named of jackfruit tree leaves unlike Hindus.” [189]

### 2.2.8 Hunger Chased Mane

He starved and tossed himself in utter frustration. Hunger chased Mane and humiliated him. Suffering due to starvation became his fate. Social injustice caused to
fill his ways with thorns. He bled and continued his journey and shocked the
traditions blinding him. His journey stands for patience, progress and protest against
evils of the society. He pissed on it and raised volcano on the name of caste.
However, his path is filled with tears and tensions. He continued his journey as Robert
Frost says, “Miles to go before I sleep” in his poem ‘Stopping by the Woods on A
weapon and reached the goal of his life. He exposed its biased nature. Hunger
enslaved him and caused social injustice. His life is a record of pain and pathos
cauased by the Hindu social setup. His words raised naked reality of Indian nomadics
and hanged on the entrance of India. His *Upara* is pen picture of a social crime and
injustice done to him and to his community. His getting educated in such situation is a
great hurdle before the world. Vivek rightly says- “He is recipient of Sahitya
Akadami Award for not what he has written but what he has faced / experienced.”

Sharankumar Limbale states-

In school, by calling *kaikadi*, he was troubled, in band, by calling
him dancer, he was dishonoured, during the village marriage feast,
he was threatened and taken out of feast in such a way he was
humiliated. [2005, 137]

This suffering made him to learn the ways of this society and its ugly face.

2.3 WOMEN EXPLOITATION

2.3.1 Insecure *Kaikadi* Women

Woman is always supposed to be inferior to man in Indian culture. Though she
is called by the names of goddesses, she is humiliated now and then. Social prestige is
not the part of her life in Hindu caste system. Not only this, almost all religions have
cursed women and kept them slaves to serve to the men’s lust. There is no place for
women in Manu’s *Manusmruti*. She is ‘Aatishudra’, worse than *Shudras*, Women
from Shudras lived pathetic life full of bull work, starvation and humiliation. *Upara*
throws a floodlight on the plight of women. There is no eye of honour to look at them.
The farmer humiliated Mane’s mother by tearing her sari and blouse as she was taking
canes from his farm. This woman starved, suffered and realized the sight of the upper
caste men.
2.3.2 Beauty: Curse for the Poor Women (Parumami Episode)

Beauty is curse for the poor women. It becomes difficult for them to preserve their chastity and worth noting them. Practical wisdom of Mane’s mother in this regard is more talkative. The author gives incidence of Marutimama and Parumami. Marutimama was tall and handsome and his wife Parumami was extremely beautiful. Marutimama always kept her under his vigilance. She used to pay attention towards her beauty. In this regard, Mane’s mother disliked it and showed her dislike to Parumami in these words… “We are poor people. We live anywhere. But, this flirt will invite trouble on herself and my brother’s life.” [1997. 82.] Parumami used to take bath either late in the evening or early in the morning, by the side of road. Whenever she bathed, the young men would hang around with lustful intentions as hawks and vultures. Marutimama disliked it and used to be angry upon his wife thus, “Come! Let a donkey screw your mother! Are you a Brahmin… or is your body full of shit...? Why do you have to bathe every day?” [81]

2.3.3 Practical Wisdom of Laxman’s Mother

Out of the lusty sight of villagers, the life of the poor women always remained in danger. It created problems in the lives of poor people. Why should the poor women suffer? Don’t they wish to look beautiful? Why do the only Brahmans take bath daily? Why has thin insecurity entered in the life of these women? Marutimama would say to his wife-

When we live on dunghill, we should live like dirt. We must not imitate the people who live in bungalows. We are street dwellers. We are open to the publics’ gaze all the while. What if somebody cast an evil eye on you? [82]

In rubbish language, he beats his wife and destroys her beauty. He badly hurts her face and her appearance. In frustration, he says...“A pretty wife doesn’t belong to her husband alone.” [84] Who makes her life insecure? It throws light upon patriarchal norms of the society. It blows upon the male mentality searching to fulfill their lust by love or rape. Finally, the same thing happened. Parumami was raped by four thugs of the village and Marutimama’s family got destroyed. From where have these thugs come? Mane raises questions of morality. This lust of man has always
destroyed the harmony of the life of poor women. This inhuman evil deed has always destroyed the life of women, especially; poor and lower caste women always become victims of such immoral crimes. They can neither shout nor weep for that. They bear this curse with them and finish their life as Parumami did. She became mad and died in negligence. To whom shall we call responsible for her tragic death, the four evil minded lusty men or the husband? Laxman’s wise mother says-

A beggarly woman should always behave like a lady. She must not behave like a nachi girl from the tamasha in make-up. Otherwise, she will meet the same fate as Paru. [83]

The tradition and insecurity made her to speak this. Moreover, these criminals have come from upper caste to whom Ramayana is taught as their religious scripture and Rama is called their ‘ideal’. Beauty for poor women is curse, as they can’t preserve it. Security doesn’t remain to their life. What has happened to the ethics of the Manusmrati and its scriptures? Is lust not possible to be controlled by these people? Where does go their untouchability when they rape the poor innocent women? This is hypocrite nature of Hinduism. The escapists follow the path of the beast when they see beautiful women in the huts. The author exposes the so-called ethics of this Hindu social setup.

2.3.4 Suffering of Pingle Joshi’s Wife

Pingle Joshi is also a tribal community and it is full of superstitions. They have a tradition to have wives at home before sunset, otherwise they were suspected of adulteress. During severe illness of Pingle Joshi, his wife went to bring herbal plants as a medicine for him on the advice of Mane’s father. She came late. Pingle Joshi, an ill man suspected his wife and charged her of adulteress. She was severely beaten and asked to leave his house. In anger, she spoke to Mane’s mother, “His gun has enough powder to shoot. Let him have another woman. I shall look after these four children as best as I can.” [87] A worst kind of superstition spoiled the lives of the old couple. This male-dominance is unworthy here. In relation to the insecurity in the life of women, Dr. Vasudev Mulate states-
This philosophy has feeling of insecurity as well as Hindu religious social setup. Hindu religion created *Varna* system and it is to be obeyed. We live humble and it is the curse of past life, is also a blind religious faith. [1999. 81]

2.3.5 **Women’s Dirty Life to Preserve Modesty**

Woman is already considered puppet, lower and humiliated doll in the hands of Manu-made setup of Hindu religion. In the untouchable community, she is *Aatishudra*. Even though in the *Kaikadi* community, the place of woman is after man and has a very low status. She has to work and suffer, starve and die. These *Kaikadi* women do not take bath for a week so as to avoid the amorous look of the male from upper caste. By purposely, they live dirty to preserve their chastity. They do not comb hair, never to look in mirror or decorate themselves. Wherever the husband goes, they had to follow him. If he is angry, his beating and humiliation is to be accepted. For loan, the husbands use their wives as commodity for rich people. Woman in this community has become a thing or animal to be given and taken. She has no dignity or social status.

2.3.6 **Kaikadi Panchayat Means of the Worst Women Exploitation**

‘Kaikadi Jat-panchayat’ is a kind of community court for these people. The disputes are to be resolved here. According to this panchayat Mane states -

*If a woman committed adultery, her entire family would be excommunicated. An excommunicated person would be forced to leave not only his house but also his villages.* [1997. 101]

Women may be from upper caste or lower caste, acquire a low social status in the Hindu social setup. Not only *Kaikadi* but Maratha women too suffer. Manu is fountain head of this unequal division of the society. He has dug ditches on the ways of the untouchables and the women.

The virgin widow life of Ratna, the daughter of Burge family, is ruined by father’s pride of Hinduism. Ratna’s marriage had turned into a disaster. The bridegroom wanted to have a group photo before his marriage, which was against Hindu traditions. The quarrel ensured dealing to this pretty incident and spoiled the life of Ratna. A lot of money and man power was wasted. The tradition of Hindu
religion has broken the love and marriage of innocent, cultured Ratna. She suffered, became mad and died one day. After the first broken marriage, her father tried his best to have her married, but remained helpless.

The protagonist raises the question, “Why was nobody prepared to marry her?” [148] Laxman’s mother says, “We are low caste nomads. These things are way of life for us, not for them. For them, a woman’s honour is as delicate as glassware.” [48] This Hindu made social setup destroyed the innocent dreamy life of a generous girl. Men may marry twice or thrice if they wish. However, that’s not the case of upper caste people. Woman is humble in every section of Varna system. The author boldly exposes this worst kind of hierarchy. Women of all types are portrayed to show their social status. Directly or indirectly, women have to suffer, which has become a cruel punishment on the part of womanhood. On the contrary Kaikadi and other nomadic communities have liberal and progressive approach with regard to marriage.

2.3.7 Hunger in the Belly and Hunger between the Legs

Gajra incident is pathetic. She is adulteress, mother of seven children from seven fathers. Due to her lustrous nature, she and her family were excommunicated. The writer has question haunting him. He raises his voice-

What was so bad about Gajra’s conduct? It was beyond my comprehension. But I told myself that she must be an evil woman and must be doing something awful to incur the wrath of her own children and I feel asleep. [103]

Due to mother’s adulteresses, the children of Gajra faced a lot of difficulties. Nobody would give them work. Inside their own house, they were chastised by their community and outside by the villagers. Everybody suspected them. Mr. Patil’s pump set was stolen and Gajra’s sons were suspected and humiliated. Actually, Patil’s relative had stolen the accessories and dropped them in someone else’s well unreasonably. Gajra’s sons bore terrible torture of police. Her sons left her alone and moved elsewhere. In her old age, she had to work hard for her livelihood. Finally, her sons were readmitted in the community. Gajra alone remained excommunicated. Hunger in the belly and hunger between the legs made Gajra suffer a lot. Her life became pathetic. After all, what was her crime? If thought about male in such social setup, the tradition, may it be Hindu or Kaikadi doesn’t spare woman’s adulteress
nature, which seems difficult to digest. Her morality was to feed the children for
which she accepted the immoral ways. Instead of understanding her motherhood, her
womanhood is misunderstood and targeted.

2.4 TRADITION AND RELIGIOUS EXPLOITATION:

2.4.1 Superstitions in Kaikadi Community

“Upara is a work of art that reflects ups and downs. It is the story of the
struggle of an individual and the society. It has sensitive and explosive experience.
The critical situations have sharpened it. It is the existing critical adverse condition
that has made a man to fight against man.” [Limbale, 2005. 140]

Dr. Limbale further observes, regarding Kaikadi community exploitation thus-

_Upara_ has ‘situation’ and ‘Jat-panchayat’ as villains. The
exploitation of Kaikadi community, ignorance and superstition
humiliated it. It points out the increasing dominance of Jat-
panchayat and Gods in Kaikadi community. The author has tried
his best to cross all these boundaries. [140]

Mane provides the superstitions of his community in Kalubai festival and
other Gods and Goddess for which they fear and suffer. They follow superstitions
bearing of their community. Mane sincerely reflects the fear in the mind of Kaikadi
community regarding deities.

2.4.2 Goat of Honour to Kalubai (Kaikadi Goddess)

There are many superstitions in Kaikadi community. Kaikadi people have
faith in their Gods. They go for fairs every year and sacrifice goats and cocks. They
collect money the whole year and spend it in such festivals of Gods and Goddesses.
This religious blindness has become reason of their backwardness. They sell food
grains and sometimes borrow money or take it on interest, but celebrate the feasts in
festivals. As a result of it, they become economically vulnerable. Every year, they
collect money and spend without thinking. Their supposition belief never allow
them to rescue from reality. They have strong faith in their Goddess – Kalubai at
Kurvali, district Satara. Every year Kolhati community gathers at Kurvali for the fair.
Kalubai’s fair lasts for five days. The whole families had to gather there to offer
‘goat of honour’ to Kalubai. There run all the undercurrents of superstition. The Tribes perform musical shows as a competition. People keep their wills and complaints before the priests, who in reply ask the followers to pay or worship Kalubai. The goats are sacrificed and, the smell of mutton and chicken gets spread everywhere. People keep their complaints thus... “Animals don’t survive... Someone has caste a spell... Wife doesn’t stay with me... Donkies don’t survive.” [1997. 54] In reply to their problems, the possessed man would say-

Offer a goat... offer sweets... Visit the Goddess of Mandhar... Bring water from there... Don’t miss the moonless and full moon nights... Offer service to the God. Take care of the step. [54]

2.4.3 Festivals, Fairs and Traditions: Means of Exploitation

The illiterate Kaikadi people believe in such superstitions and act accordingly. Such things would collapse the total economy of the Kaikadi families. They had to collect food and money, the whole year, and the fairs and festivals were making them through out the year. The tribes used to gather there. On one side, it happens to be an annual social gathering, but it empties the pockets of the Kaikadi community, which causes starvation and suffering later on, the whole year. The habit of drinking liquor of the whole family takes place at any celebration, may that be religions activity, Jat-panchayat or marriage ceremony. They drink wine and offer mutton and wine to their Gods. This tradition costs them heavily. Still, they maintain it and suffer every year. For five pleasurable days, they had to do hard work for the whole year. Laxman Mane has gone through such circumstances with his family and his community. Festivals, fairs and traditions in this community have become the means of exploitation. The superstitious communities follow the blind traditions and cause humiliation to them.

2.5 EXPLOITATION AT JAT-PANCHAYAT

Jat-panchayat – is the authentic means of submitting disputes of Kaikadi community. It seems court where ill health of the community is treated for well being. In modern sense, it has become the medium of exploitation. The Jat-panchayat members are elderly people and the clan respects them. They work as deities of Kaikadi community. It is very difficult to break their rules and regulations.
If crossed or objected their verdict, they apply the weapon of excommunication. Quarrels, disputes and misunderstandings come on the anvil of Jat-panchayat. This Jat-panchayat seems mighty dictatorship, of whose, word is order. This unwritten constitution strongly works in this clan.

2.5.1 Strong Hold of Jat-panchayat

Rammath Chavan comments on the strong hold of Jat-panchayat thus -

Avoiding the rules and regulations of Jat-panchayat, one can’t marry. Rituals of religion, ceremonies of death and the activities, do not take place. They excommunicate the people who disobey. Therefore, to avoid Jat-panchayat is highly impossible... Jat-panchayat never takes place in anybody’s house. It does not have a special place. It is as if moving court. They have higher and lower court. It takes place generally at the places of pilgrimages. The punishment takes place in the face of cash or excommunication. The highest court’s justice remains binding. ‘Kafinath’ the place of pilgrimage is the Supreme Court of Nomadic Tribes. The justice given here remains final. [1989. 139]

2.5.2 Trial of Mortgaged Wife of Punnappa to Dharme

An Outsider has ‘Kurvali’ the place of Kalubai Goddess. After the worship and palanquin procession, the devotees would begin to eat the rest of the meat. Until then, they had no right to touch it. Then, they gather under a banyan tree for community court for Jat-panchayat. The petitioner and defendants have to pay fees. The disputes in relation to marriage, theft, quarrel, etc. are heard at Jat-panchayat. The writer narrates a case of Punnappa who complained-

I have mortgaged my wife to Dharme, these last four years. He gave me five times fifty rupees... I had promised to return this amount to him in four years. I remit it today. But, the fellow is not willing to return my wife... [1997. 56]

The defendant Dharme argued-

…. He was in need of money, he mortgaged his wife, she was good, I accepted it. Now you know that, when you keep milk on fire, it boils and overflows, does it not? Can a young man and a woman remain together without attracting each other? I didn’t take her in just to feed her. When the shoe fitted my foot, I wore it. Is that a crime? Four years have gone by. She has a child by me. Let Punnappa return my money, I’ll return his wife. I am not refusing to do that... [56]
Punnappa submitted his say by arguing that he had kept his treasure with Dharmea with certain faith. Punnappa’s wife submitted herself and said that when she saw green grass, she ate it. She didn’t know what good were the customs and the traditions. She asked why should Dharmea feed her free of charge. Moreover, women are like dumb cows. Her husband tethered her at his door. She argued that her husband is butcher and asked for justice. Upon this, the jury thought and gave verdict – that a cow or a donkey must be properly tethered in his or her own place. The owner of the cow tethered his cow in the stable of a young man. This was an invitation to physical relationship and they have a child. Punnappa has lost his claim on his wife. Such courts and the cases of such types show the culture of Kaikadi community. Is woman a thing to be mortgaged? Is she a cow to be tethered instable? How should she eat other’s green grass or how should that attract her? Hundreds of questions may be raised of the Jat-panchayat that has been ruling Nomadic Tribes.

The Jat-panchayat members may easily be bribed with wine or mutton. These outlawed community courts should be banned as they are partial and are no more suitable to the demands of modern times. Moreover, they are always prone to bribes and wines etc. and partial to women of the community.

2.5.3 Gajra Excommunicated for Adultery with Sadya

Gajra faced the worst punishment when she was excommunicated due to Sadya who was a mischief-maker. “If a woman committed adultery, her entire family would be excommunicated.” [101] As a result of it, Gajra and her children faced the severe punishment due to her adulterous nature for hunger and lust.

2.5.4 A Pot Filled With Shit: A Wild and Barbaric Punishment

In another case, the guilty had to carry an earthen pot filled with shit. As he went around the idol of God, each of the members of the Jat-panchayat threw a stone at the earthen pot, making a hole into it. Through such holes, the shit and the piss in the pot fell on the body of the carrier, and the poor fellow was completely drenched in that.” [109] This punishment given by Jat-panchayat is inhuman. The judges have shown their wild and uncivilized culture, which seems stigma on the name of humanity. Instead of solving the problems and suggesting remedies, the Panchayat
has been acting vulgar and implementing lower ways to put people under control. It has never thought in favour of women. Their verdict changes due to the bribe and the innocent people suffer. Laxman Mane has exposed bitter reality through this Jatpanchayat. It seems his fighting with himself and with his society for the better future and affirmative social rule.

2.6 A STEP AGAINST ILLITERACY

2.6.1 Bapu Kaikadi’s Awareness of Education

A school-teacher, prepares Laxman Mane’s father, to send his son to the school. Illiterate Bapu dreams to make his son, a schoolmaster. Wherever and whenever they leave the village, Mane’s schooling leaves on the back of donkey. Bapu used to meet the teacher or headmaster in every village to allow his son to sit and learn. It awakened the life of Laxman Mane. One-day morning, Bapu thundered, “You will go to school, right from today. While we are here, I’ll bring you a slate and a pencil.” [18] Sharankumar Limbale comments-

The writer is first of his tribe to be educated. This autobiography is written under this burden. In thousand years’ history of Laxman Mane, his education is historic and even revolutionary. It is writer’s father’s as well as writer’s will to be a teacher for hunger he became teacher two times, but received tragic experience too. [2005.135]

Mane was given a timely help to complete his education by many people. At school, he got help of Rambhau, Kamble Master and Bhosle Headmaster during high school. Principal Ram Gaikwad helped him during his college life. He always suffered in English and mathematics but graduated himself and proved a great writer. Limbale points out “The irrelevant syllabus unappealing to writer’s domestic poverty, tragedy and taste remained hindrance for him.” [136]

2.6.2 Bapu’s Advice to Shirya for Education

Laxman Mane’s father narrates two experiences, which show the great need of education. He seems to say that education is the only medicine to cure their poverty. Bapu speaks and proves mouthpiece of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar. When Mane passed his matriculation, it was a happy experience to his family. During the festival, Bapu was
narrating these experiences to Shirya and persuading him to send his son to school. He exposed how the early-educated selfish Brahmins exploited the untouchables. In ‘Brahmanache Kasab’ Mahatma Phule did the same to awake the society.

2.6.3 Dagdyā Mahār’s Exploitation for Reading a Letter

The root cause of poverty and humiliation of Dalits is illiteracy. Laxman’s father narrated-

Dagdyā Mahar received a letter. Being illiterate, to know its content, he took it to the Brahmin whom everybody calls uncle. This man took the letter, read it to himself and kept it aside. Then he asked Dagdyā to chop some logs of wood. Dagdyā chopped the logs of wood all the while swearing in his mind that he would screw the Brahmin’s mother. Then the Brahmin read to him the letter, which had brought him the bad news of his aunt’s death. He came back home crying all the way. What else could he do? [1997. 97]

It clearly shows how unconcerned Brahmins who exploit lower-caste people just because of their illiteracy. Had they no feelings of pity or mercy to understand others? What is to be called to such mentality? Even cruelty may spit on the name of such people. This inhuman exploitation could continue in this relation as the education was locked in their custody. They even didn’t spare Dnyaneshwar who opened the door of knowledge for all by simplifying Dnyaneshwari in Prakrut. Through education, they exploited the other masses for thousands of years. They exploited people for their ignorance.

2.6.4 Bapū’s Own Experience to Cut the Grass for Reading a Letter

Once, Bapu himself was insulted because of his illiteracy. He narrated his experience… “Once, I received a letter from my relative, woman from Dahigaon. I took it to the landlord who asked to cut the grass from his country and make a piece of it. Only after that, he could read the letter. They are very wicked there landlords! Send Lalya to school. What the bloody hell…” [97]

2.6.5 Laxman Mane’s Awakening

It clearly indicates that Bapu is well aware of the reasons of his exploitation. He wishes that such utter darkness should not enter into the life of his people and the
people of his clan. This awareness of Bapu is proved the turning point in the life of Laxman Mane. After matriculation, he couldn’t co-operate his son, though he wishes his son to be a teacher. Bapu fears, that after being much educated, his son would not marry the daughter of his sister. His son would not continue his profession and would refuse food and support to his family. The community would excommunicate the family. Though few fears of Bapu came true, Laxman Mane strengthened his attention on the mission to expose the tragedy of his clan on the threshold of Maharashtra and made people realize the ugly face of reality. He started to take interest in college activities and social activities. Coming in contact with the people life Prof. Dhoble, Prof. Patagaonkar, Bhausaheb Khandekar, Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, Dr. Kumar Saptarshi, Dr. Baba Adhav, Yadunath Thatte and Raja Dhale, he became active social worker to reform his society. As he had realized the philosophy of education, he could make his society realize Mahatma Phule’s thought -

Intelllect was lost, due to lack of education,  
Morality was lost, due to lack of intellect,  
Dynamism was lost, due to lack of morality,  
Wealth was lost, due to lack of dynamism, 
Due to lack of wealth, the Shudras were degraded  
Lack of education has caused all these disasters.  
[Keer, 2006. 263]

2.6.6 Matkar: Mane Helped Poor Scholar Maratha Boy

Being aware of the need of education, his friends from Maratha community helped him. They shared their food and room with him and helped him to learn. In return, Laxman Mane also helped a poor and needy Maratha boy Matkar was a good at English in which Mane was poor. Mane writes-

I helped him as much as I could by paying his restaurant bills and room rent as I knew what poverty was. But I was hurt as my friends from whose plate I had shared the meals, kept me away on the caste issues. [1997. 164]

Education made Mane to look at life with new dimensions. His poverty kept his humanity alive. His own suffering made him compassionate to share others’ sorrow and suffering. His sensitivity remained alive which latter on turned into a storm for destroying the ‘closed doors’ of Hindu culture. However, his friends who shared bread, couldn’t like his inter-caste marriage. Even, it was disliked by Bapu, due to which the family was excommunicated.
2.7 REVOLT AGAINST CASTEISM THROUGH
INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

2.7.1 Phaltan Photo Humiliation in Seventh Standard

During the childhood days, Laxman Mane suffered due to untouchability. No child accepted or touched him, which remained a pathetic experience to him. Right from childhood, he saw the ugly face of untouchability, poverty and social injustice. The incident of beating his innocent father made him pathetic and communicative in future. He was in seventh standard and the examinations were taking place. After examination, the teacher decided to take a group photo, which resulted in leaving his native Somanthali in the life of Mane, shifting his family to Phaltan. It happened so-

... The students sat as instructed by the teacher. I sat where I was told to sit. Next to me sat a girl from our village. She was very pretty with a fair complexion and sharp features. We were in the same class but never dared go anywhere near her. Perhaps she felt nauseous sitting by me. Therefore, she got up to change her place but the photographer shouted at her and asked her not to move, she sat down. The photographer pressed the button of camera and all of us rose to leave. That’s all, I asked nothing, I said nothing. [111]

After a few days, unexpected incident took place. Mane was blamed of keeping his hand upon the shoulder of the girl. This caused humiliation and a great suffering in the life of Mane’s father. Mane tried to prove his innocence. The Patil community misread the reality and gave severe beating to Bapu. His mother narrated Laxman-

Her father had come. Your father was beaten up... He was beaten black and blue. Her father said... “Take her away... She is your daughter-in-law, isn’t she? [111]

Actually, the girl was asked for sex by her community boy, who being failed in attempting it, plotted against Laxman Mane. This incident made Mane’s family to leave his village Somanthali and shift to Phaltan, forever. This wound remained unhealed and he determined to marry the girl of Maratha community. Sharankumar Limbale rightly discovers it and says, “When parents of Mane proposed his marriage, he runs away. May be, he must have decided to fulfill his decision.” [2005. 138] Mane’s inter-caste marriage with Maratha caste girl Shashi may have the roots here, in his childhood humiliation.
2.7.2 Inter-caste Marriage with Maratha Caste Shashi

Completing matriculation, Laxman left Phaltan against the will of his parents and reached Kolhapur. His schoolmates helped him at Kolhapur and he fell in love with his owner’s daughter, Shashi. Even though, it was too late to return to his room, he used to meet Shashi early in the morning. When his friends realized about his love, they left him alone. It shows their social narrow mindedness, customs and traditions ruling their Hindu mind. They are the slaves of the system and do not like Mane to marry Shashi. Facing all the adverse conditions, with the help of the social reformers like Prof. Patgaonkar, Prof. Dhoble, Suresh, Bapusaheb and Prof. Deshpande, he tried his hard luck. They wholeheartedly co-operated and encouraged him- “Bravo! That’s fine! You are going for an inter-caste marriage. That is a good thing. We’ll help you as best as we can.” [1997.175]

Inspired by the encouragement, he decided to marry Shashi. Unfortunately, his marriage also took place with contributions. As it was inter-caste marriage, Bhausaheb took every care. In relation to police, his comment is much realistic, Bhausaheb Khandekar commented, “The police are not the messengers of revolution.” [175] Shashi had to run away from her house and Laxman had to face the anger and hatred of her parents and Maratha friends. Hundreds of calamities made the love marriage of Laxman and Shashi. Being frustrated due to love, marriage and the hard days on, he says-

I piss on this social system which is not prepared to consider me as a human being. When the girl was willing to marry me and when the law allows our marriage, why weren’t their people prepared to see us married each other? It’s my caste that was running things for me wherever I went life was a menagerie. I was boiling with rage... I was not able to do anything except shed tears in helplessness. [178]

2.7.3 The Revolt against Laws of Manusmruti

Laxman Mane broke the laws of Manusmruti for his marriage. He raised angst; frustration and dissonant voice against it. When law of the nation permits his marriage then why are the people opposing him? These are the laws of Manusmruti, which are the base of Hindu religion. Hindu caste culture doesn’t allow this marriage. Here is the subject of dispute and debate. How long shall the innocents suffer under the cruel heels of Hinduism? And how long the men like Mane frustrate
and boil with rage? This incident boldly comments on the inhuman traditions laid down by Hindu social ladder based upon Varna system. This inter-caste marriage is going to break the setup of Hinduism and naturally, such calamities would come. With all the preparedness, the well wishers of Mane and Shashi could manage with a meagre amount of money. The author breaths air of relief and his friends said.“Now, nobody in the world can harm you! We have won the first round of the battle!” [181]

2.7.4 Struggle to Survive after Marriage

The second round is about the challenges after the settlement. In relation to search job and room, he received such questions- “Where are you employed? What’s your family name? People tried to trace his caste and refuse the room and the job. Though he dared to marry Maratha girl, his humiliation didn’t stop. He had courageously won the battle of inter-caste marriage. This could take place because of his innocent nature, commitment to work and would be, the firm decision taken by him when he was in seventh standard. It is the victory of those social organizations which stood firmly behind him in his odd days. Specially, ‘Sadhana’, ‘Yuvak Dal’ and other revolutionary forces helped him to fulfill the dream of Mane. It’s also the victory of education, which lifted Mane’s personal life and the life of his community. He could keep his promise of making inter-caste marriage with Shashi.

2.8 SEARCH FOR EXISTENCE, IDENTITY AND SELF-RESPECT

2.8.1 Rejection to Social Injustice

The subaltern autobiographies vehemently reject social injustice in any form. The autobiographers never accept untouchability and realize that it was imposed upon them. Therefore, they write to seek answers from the social system. It requires a great courage to speak about sorrow, humiliation and insult. Apparently, it seems the story of a defeated person by the customs, traditions and policies of the society. This courage comes to them due to the social movements in which they have been brought up. It seems in which, they have built up criticism of self and society. An Outsider is search for food and profession which leads them to fight for the existence of the nomadic tribes. It is a single-handed fight against adverse norms of existing unjust
society for identity and self-respect. It is revolt against all the calamities faced by the author due to his poverty, customs and the ways of life, where he lives. Laxman Mane’s quest for identity and fight for liberation of his clan rests on the pages of An Outsider.

2.8.2 Rejected Village and Preferred City

After being well educated, Mane realized the rigidity of the customs of his community and the Hindu society. His painful suffering and raising questions to Hinduism, reflect the dumb and deaf situation of Kaikadi society. Caste-conflict tore out him and his family. Untouchability bestowed him disgusting pathos. He raises voice against cruel treatment given to his community. Dr. Surya comments-

Laxman Mane has reflected a different kind of sorrow of the untouchables. Mahar, Mang and other untouchables have the village of their right. But Kaikadi community has no village. Their life rests on the back of donkeys. Wherever they stay, becomes their village. Writer has effectively pen pictured the life of tribe. Due to love for education, he came to city. He worked in hotel and distributed newspapers. He loved city where he felt relieved. [1996.33]

The author favours the city life as it provides freedom from casteism that is not found in rural area. Therefore, this journey of life is a serious fight against casteism, untouchability and inhuman treatment, the author witness now and then. Even though, he was a child, he could realize the cruel tricks of Hinduism. He would also dislike the Jat-panchayat customs dominating Kaikadi community. His parents’ humiliation due to poverty and superstition couldn’t allow his family to come up to the honourable status.

2.8.3 Mane as a Social Activist

His penetrative feelings of suffering during school days made his mind to refuse the existing cruel inhuman situation. It sowed the seeds of reformation in the formative years. His questions of hunger, humiliation and honour forced him to search the root cause of his slavery. After being realized the cause of his suffering, he gave vent to his anger and shaped his words. His autobiography is a step towards the liberation movement of tribal communities.
2.8.4 *An Outsider* as a Social Debate

Laxman Mane writes in the retrospection of his autobiography regarding his intention thus -

*If this book proves useful in initiating a social debate on the problems of the Nomadic Tribes, giving a follow up to the efforts of those who have been working in that direction, I shall feel satisfied, my writing will be amply compensated.* [1997. 6]

2.8.5 *An Outsider* for Search of Self-respect

In relation to *An Outsider* and its creation, the author says in his book *Palawarcha Jag... “Upara is the search of my ‘self’. I have expressed suffering of a man in it.”* [2008 *Preface.*] *An Outsider* gives details of Mane’s struggle, rebel and revolt against Hindu traditions, customs and inhuman cruelty imposed upon his caste.

Dr. Vasudev Mulate states-

*By making the exposure of self, the author had to speak about the insult and humiliation of his community. Very objectively and bitterly he has done it. For that, he has given description and in detail. The pictorial description is readable as it reflects sincerity. Whatever is lived, experienced, felt and seen is expressed here. He reflects the downtrodden tribal society’s pain, which is supposed to be a crime by the Jat-panchayat. Mane was born in *Kaikadi* community. He had already made a crime by taking education.* [1999.106]

2.8.6 *An Outsider* for Social Existence

Education and experiences made Mane intellectually aware of his low status. *An Outsider* reflects social, change in Mane’s life. Being educated, he rebels against cruel social injustice. While describing it, his angst and dissonant voice reaches to the top. When he uses the words of abuse, he feels relieved of rage. It is his rebel against those dirty inhuman things exploiting him and his community. He achieved this ability due to education. Dr. Mulate supports Mane’s dissonance thus-

*Those who have suffered felt dishonored, bore loss. Their languages get the colours of angst. At such time, the difference between acceptable and unacceptable becomes narrow. Mane learnt with intention by starving, frustrated and expressed angrily. His anger has come out of disgusting suffering. When he fills the*
form for help to the inter-caste married couples from Government, he is humiliated. He said, “I am trying to hammer upon casteism and you are asking me to protect it?” He frustrates and abuses to the government policy of eradicating slavery and beggary during the Government of Indira Gandhi. He blames the useless government policies creating obstacles, using bribe. The offices are wiping the works of social movements fighting against social evils. [118]

2.8.7 An Outsider for Human Rights

Laxman Mane witnessed bitter suffering and decided to uproot it with the weapon of social organizations. During his college days, he was connected with social reformers. Regarding human rights, Sharankumar Limbale states-

Rejection’ and ‘revolt’ in Dalit literature have been born from the womb of Dalit’s pain. They are directed against inhuman system that was imposed upon them. The anguish expressed in Dalit autobiography is collective social voice. Similarly, the rejection, revolt and reformation are social and collective... I am a human, I must receive all the rights of a human being such is the consciousness that gives birth to this revolt... [2004.31]

Such a serious thinking lingers in the mind of the Laxman Mane. Prof. Dhoble was an atheist. He was lecturer of logic and rector of hostel, who dealt each question scientifically. He denied God and ghost. He explained how caste system had come into existence and who were responsible for its constitution. It made Laxman, his close friend. Laxman had to work throughout the day, though he was a part-time worker and a student. The thoughts of Prof. Dhoble made him think of his tribe and the existing cruel society. Once, Yadunath Thatte had published Raja Dhale’s revolutionary article in ‘Sadhana’. It caused sensation in upper-caste society. Laxman Mane took part in protecting Raja Dhale’s mission. He ran signature campaign in favour of Raja Dhale. All the school and college students and Dalit society people were to join it. The supporters worked for the morcha. They approached to a local leader to get guidelines that published the press note by his name and showed his narrow-mindedness. Because of morcha, Mane was suspected and lost his part time job.
2.9 COMMITMENT AND REVOLT AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICE, SUPERSTITIONS AND INEQUALITY

2.9.1 Early Impact of ‘Seva Dal’

In Kolhapur, Laxman Mane came in contact with living legends in social movements who inspired him. An incident turned Laxman Mane towards social movement. He came in contact with ‘Seva Dal’ in the company of Prof. Patgaonkar. He read all books written by Bhausaheb Khandekar and started developing a link for social work. He understood the traditional thought. Still, feelings of insecurity, inferiority and worthlessness trapped him.

2.9.2 Voice against Shankaracharya

(Impact of Dalit Youth Organization)

The incident took place at Kolhapur. Shankaracharya the authority of Hindu religion of Jagannathpur had to come to Kolhapur to lay foundation stone of a temple. Dr. Kumar Saptarshi and Dr. Baba Adhav opened a public debate on the issue. He read the newspapers and the interviews. He agreed with the interpretation of caste and religion given by them. In one of his meetings, he came to know about Bhanudas Patil who was sympathetic to the problems of downtrodden, better known as ‘Dalits’. He was moved by the speech. Shankaracharya was the supporter of Chaturvarna, the caste-system. As he was supporter of conservation and constitution of the caste system, Mane was annoyed with him. Mane wholeheartedly joined those people who opposed the procession of Shankaracharya. He writes... “A battle of unending slogans started between the supporters and opponents of the Shankaracharya... The police caught us and put us in their van.” [1997. 162]

With this awakening, Mane became member of ‘Dalit Youth Association’. He started ‘Dr. Ambedkar School of Thought’ and under it, started a primary school for children in the settlement of the Nomadic Tribes. In the company of Narendra Dabholkar, he worked for the class and caste struggles that maintained principles of equality even in his house.
2.9.3 Voice against Superstition and Inequality

Laxman Mane and his wife Shashi, being aware of social reality, strongly rejected the false, blind superstitions of Hindu religion. Mane even helped his wife in the domestic duties when she had suffered from illness. His enlightened mind and philosophy brightened his future. In one voice, both, the husband and wife, rejected superstitions, inequality and all those ugly conventions of Hindu religion.

2.9.3.1 Performing Household Chores

Once, Shashi was not feeling well and Laxman was washing clothes. The women looked it and mocked at him. They who were puppets in the hands of system imposed upon them by Manu, amazed and cried aloud at him. “Sir! What are you doing? This is a sin! Is your wife suffering from leprosy? Or does she have a bone disease? Don’t wash her clothes.” [202]

The writer continued his washing. He said, “Even when I am not sick, my wife does all the washing. So, what is the harm if I wash her clothes when she is sick?” At this, the woman retorted: “Master! Even if the caste is different, the tradition is not.” [202] These arguments clearly show Mane’s sense of equality. What to do of these stupid women, whose brains have been captured by Hindu caste system. The roots have gone too deep into their blood where uprooting the tradition may cause their uprooting from the society.

2.9.3.2 Shashi’s Rejection of Indian Hindu Ritual, Watsavitri Pornima

The writer presented an example of his social justice and equality in his domestic life. The other incident leads Shashi’s awakened mind. She doesn’t observe the ‘Vatpornima’. Though she is Maratha woman married to Kaikadi husband, she separated herself from the clutches of superstitious traditions. When the experienced old ladies asked her about it, Shashi justified her stand-

I am not observing the fast and I don’t share your views. I have no faith in such rituals. I don’t believe in the rebirth and by enacting this drama. I am not sure whether I’ll get the same husband in seven of my future rebirths! [202]
Here, Shashi rejects the Hindu philosophy of rebirth. It is a great social change in her attitude. It’s the fruit of the movements in which Laxman Mane worked and proved a great social activist.

2.9.4 Pathetic Confession of the Jat-panchayat Dominance

The end of the autobiography is a pathetic confession of the author. It reflects author’s guilty feeling on the part of his parents who adopted Shashi in Kolhati community. As Shashi was Maratha, she was not allowed to marry Laxman. Still, he had love married her and suffered from rejection of his people. He bowed before his community and allowed his uncle to do the adoption ceremony. So, Laxman’s maternal uncle adopted Shashi and the ban of his family was removed. This made Laxman serious. What was he doing and what was happening with his wife, disgusted him, but he couldn’t do anything except suffering. When he came back to Satara with Shashi, his restlessness increased. He thought-

The stain of caste, which I was trying to efface, had become darker. For Shashi, all this was new. I was desperate. But just as a man, who has a serious disease, recovers and stands up again, I too was to recover from this terrible affliction of caste and stand upright again on my feet. [212]

2.9.5 Commitment to Fight against Tribal Inhuman Traditions

The commitment to fight against tribal inhuman traditions made Mane fight for the liberty of his tribe from inhuman tradition. It resulted in adopting the Buddhist religion in 2006 by him along with thousands of people from his community. He converted his clan into Buddhism and kept his promise given in his autobiography. When he was helpless to identify his existence corrupted by the Hindu setup, he suffered and wondered in awakening the society. For want of social justice, self-respect and search for identify, he took the revolutionary decision to leave his pathetic nomadic culture and adopted Buddhism. It is a revolutionary step taken by him after B. R. Ambedkar with forty tow tribes following him. This is Laxman’s rejection to inhuman Hinduism, its slavery and untouchability. This is a great decision of him to lead his people towards Buddhism, the parameters of human identity. His struggle for
selfrespect promoted him to convert to Buddhism where honour would welcome him. In support of his adoption of Buddhism, he states-

In the ten districts of Vidarbha, we come under scheduled caste. In rest of Maharashtra, we are savarna. Has anybody made such a law? In the same state, we are touchable and untouchable. Does the religion allow this? Once, I asked Shastribhva (Brahmin) who told, we are ‘avarana’, people having no Varna system. He has no problem of words. This community creates words. I asked, “What exactly?” As are the foreigners like Muslims, Christians. In the same manner your description in Vedas comes as ‘Dharboda’. Those who have rejected our humanity, spitting on their mouth, we have started to go towards Tathagat (Gautam Buddha). [Lokrajya, 2006. 27]

2.10 CONCLUSION

Kaikadi community lived insulting life for food and shelter. Their search for livelihood made them migrate from place to place in search of permanent home. Lack of education humiliated them. To conclude the chapter, it may be stated as –

1. Laxman Mane’s autobiography An Outsider is not simply the work of art but the social document of the suffering of Kaikadi community.

2. Poverty and hunger made Kaikadi community migrate from place to place in search of bread and shelter.

3. Lack of education and traditions lowered the Kaikadi community to live inhuman life.

4. The women suffering in Kaikadi community has made the women as the incarnation of endurance. Insecurity made them obey the traditions of their community.

5. Superstitions exploited the Kaikadi community. Jat-panchayat mercilessly ruled them for maintaining the age old traditions.

6. Laxman Mane’s single handed battle against illiteracy and his community traditions is a step ahead to make progress and make his community a part of the mainstream and lead a dignified life.

7. Laxman Mane stands as the torch bearer for his community who walked on the footprints of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar and embraced Buddhism.
8. *An Outsider* raises Laxman Mane’s image as a social reformer not only for his *Kaikadi* community but also for all the subaltern communities.

9. Laxman Mane’s fight for self-respect, existence and identity make the autobiography rebellious, revolting and revolutionary. It leaves its footprints as a part of Subaltern Literature and hence the offshoot of Post Colonial Literature.