CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

As the subject of this thesis is both women's movement and heterogeneous categories of women and specially dalit women among them, the question always remains whether a conclusion is really possible? This question inevitably comes up because a movement constantly being in a flux, makes any definitive conclusion impossible. Moreover, the most important thing about a movement is its inconclusive nature and its ability to change its trajectory using signals, which emerge from the practical, grass root experience. Hence, though no permanent conclusion is possible, still at every stage some kind of an approximation can be worked out. So, within the framework of this thesis too some such conclusion can be arrived at.

Two things clearly seem to emerge through the present work. Firstly women as a category are marginalized and voiceless within this social structure. This disadvantage is further intensified when it comes to dalit women because of the way they are positioned in this society. Gender, poverty, patriarchy and other factors are in fact responsible in pushing women into margins. In the case of dalit women caste deepens and enhances these disadvantages and makes her position much more vulnerable. This trend prevalent in larger social set up has percolated deep into women's as well as other movements too. The constitution of women's movement itself is made up of urban, educated, and upper caste women, and hence the dalit women who do not fall into any of these categories naturally feel, segregated, isolated and left out. Within the dalit movement "He includes she," It is completely male dominated. Her voice is unheard there. Her opinion is not sought after. Gender perspective is totally lacking. This has led to contemplating dalit feminism as an alternative.
Mobilizing dalit women and building a dalit women's movement exclusively is seriously thought of. This emerging trend has stemmed quite naturally from the present situation, which has been discussed in the earlier chapters of this dissertation.

But before contemplating this kind of a post modernist position it is also important to see its feasibility in practice and its implications socially, politically and economically (from the point of view of policy making). It is also important to examine its larger implications on the dalit women. In addition, it is also vital to consider if this alternative really helps to liberate dalit women and helps them to move beyond the shackles of caste.

Though contemplating dalit feminism has been the natural outcome of the utter marginalization they have suffered, in practice in all the movements; it may not be very advantageous and helpful both for dalit women and to the women's movement in general.

The very purpose of any movement is to liberate those who are involved in it and lead them to a higher level so as to identify with emancipatory movements of various hues. All the emancipatory movements basically use the category, which is exploiting them as a springboard for launching the struggle against. It is the take off point but not the end or the destination. The ultimate aim would be to transcend that exploitative category and become a part of the larger emancipatory struggles. It is within this theoretical framework that we have to view the mobilization of dalit women. If dalitness becomes the sole factor for dalit women to mobilize themselves, there is every possibility that it suffers from all the limitations of identity politics. The movement may also become dangerously agenda based. It may end up with demand for reservation for jobs, seats or for power sharing without any ultimate vision of liberation. The real and fundamental exploitative factors get totally sidelined and only symptoms get projected. Consequently, the dalit women may be left
completely unaware of the forces, which are responsible for the exploitation they are suffering. This kind of identity politics will defeat the very purpose of the dalit women's effort of addressing the problems of being a dalit on the one hand and liberating themselves from the shackles of patriarchy on the other hand. This is because identity politics has always strengthened the hold of the reactionary forces. In case of caste based identity politics also this is bound to be the case. Usually these reactionary forces, which aim at identity politics, are intensely patriarchal. Such forces will be very keen on preserving status quo in relation to caste and strengthen the control on the sexuality of women and also wish to maintain strict gender roles. These oppressive gender roles are in fact the things, which women have been struggling to break since time immemorial.

Identity politics always involves a very serious effort of caste and economic mobility. Respectability in social terms and affluence in economic terms are usually expressed through women. The findings of the fieldwork in Cikkade village in Pandavapura Taluq, which has been discussed elaborately in one of the earlier chapters shows that economic mobility and affluence strengthens the hold of the patriarchal forces and restrictions. Sumit Sarkar brings in a similar observation in his study of Namashudras of Bengal who seek social respectability. His observation is worth quoting here: "Respectability was sought to be enhanced by stopping Chandal women from going to markets; an important reminder that caste mobility efforts have been associated all too often with the tightening of patriarchal restrictions on women."

Therefore, getting into the identity politics would work contrary to the very aim and intention of the movement. Falling into the trap of the identity politics is like getting deeper into the quicksand of patriarchy, which will completely efface their identity rather than create an identity for them.
The identity politics intensifies the vulnerability of women. In any patriarchal structure women on the one hand are symbol of honour and on the other hand are the targets of attack and objects to be humiliated and also the means to puncture the male ego. This role assigned to them within the patriarchal system gets deepened in identity politics. Hence irrespective of class, caste and religion women become acutely vulnerable. This vulnerability is both qualitatively and quantitatively much more acute in case of dalit women because of the caste and social hierarchy. As a result of this women are pushed more and more into the narrow and parochial hold of patriarchy, which almost eludes even the remotest possibility of emancipation.

The effort of dalit women for exclusive mobilization turns out highly detrimental to the women's movement. Post modernism itself is not conducive to build a movement because of its excessive stress on difference. Due to its excessive insistence on difference, difference alone emerges as reality, while major commonalities are totally left out. In a way it is inverted modernism. Post modernism being divisive is not at all proactive. It creates a kind of complacent indifference towards the plight all other groups and sections and completely rules out the possibilities of establishing a sympathetic network with other sufferers and aggrieved groups. Consequently building a strong, solid, broad based women's movement becomes impossible. At the same time transcending these barriers to become a part of a common emancipatory project involving various shades of emancipatory struggles also becomes impossible.

Even politically too this kind of exclusiveness may not be rewarding. In his last political speech, Ambedkar told, "Scheduled Castes Federation had created self-respect among the depressed classes, but it had also raised a barricade between them and the other classes. Matters had come to such a pass that other people did not vote for the scheduled castes candidates; nor
did they themselves vote for the candidates of other parties. So they would have to form a party with the help of those who had sympathy for their grievances and they should try to do work with the leaders of the other communities. A time had come to review the whole situation."\textsuperscript{2} This of course is a historic realization on the part of a great leader like Ambedkar whose life itself was a struggle for the upliftment of the depressed classes. He had fiercely fought for creating an identity for dalits. Experience of and anism in which a hard truth that den their base by extremely crucial faces the plight of a because of gender.

should be left unaddressed. Speaking differently is of course very essential otherwise her voice will again go unheard. It should evolve as a strategy of sensitizing and shaking the movement out of its complacency and reminding it of the problems of different categories of women and urging it to work out such strategies which would have in view the welfare of heterogeneous categories of women. It is needed to conscientize and constantly keeps the movement on vigil so as to bear in mind that women should not be treated as a category.

\textsuperscript{1} Sarkar Sumit, Identities and Histories, in Beyond Nationalist Frames, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2004, P 47.5
\textsuperscript{2} Keer Dhananjay, Ambedkar Life and Mission, Popular Prakashan Private Ltd, Bombay, P 502.