In our discussion of the Backward Caste and Class Movement in Karnataka with special reference to Kuruba, we have seen how a movement can be used to bring about not only social changes but also religio-ethical changes. The movement though political in origin and colour, later brought a number of changes which were beneficial to the backward communities. In the past each community thought in terms of its own past and glory and considered itself superior to others. The different Backward Castes though lived in close proximity were divided and had a limited interaction. They were not conscious of their common status and problems and were also not aware of their depressed and underprivileged status when compared with the forward castes. In a way they had accepted their lower status and the superior and position of the forward castes. The Kuruba were in no way different from other backward castes. They, in the beginning, were torn apart owing to several divisive factors of caste, sub-caste, regional and occupational differences and feelings etc. These in turn had brought
isolation, hatredness and rivalry among different groups of the community. As we have seen in the earlier chapters, the community as a whole never had the consciousness of oneness, common platform, aims and objectives. Each of their castes and sub-castes considered themselves superior to the other on the basis of their ethnic or historic background. They also thought that the occupation they followed was superior.

This situation continued for decades and centuries. Due to lack of an occasion and platform like the Backward Caste or Class Movement they rarely had an opportunity to know and meet each other and discuss their difficulties. They were also not conscious of the benefits the forward castes had and the problems they had from them. When the non-Brahmin and Backward Caste Movements were started by a few conscious leaders like Jotiba Phule, Dr. Nair and Shri Naikar and Shri Sahu Maharaj, to begin with and later supported by the princes, and the anti-Brahmin groups, the different non-Brahmin castes begin to organise themselves to fight for their rights and betterments. As a result many caste and inter-caste level associations were organised. They were the Satya Shodhaka Samaj in Maharashtra and Justice Party in
Madras Presidency. Later, during the early 20th century, the Lingayat Vidyavardhaka Sangha, Vokkaligara Sangha, Nayakara Sangha and so on were organised. Similarly the Kuruba community also organised its welfare association during 1921.

Like any other movement the Backward Caste Movement was also started with welfare programmes for poor and the downtrodden people. First they tried to identify themselves - their own groups and their problems. Later they debated over these issues and activities to be taken up for their welfare. In the course of this they faced a few problems in the form of opposition or non-cooperation from the so called forward communities. As a result, this generated a sort of anti-forward caste feeling among the backward castes.

Like any other reformative movement the Backward Caste Movement also had a few burning desires - economic and social betterment and political dominancy. So an attempt was made by a few Backward Caste elites and soon they realised that they have adequate followers. But most of their following were not aware of their problems
and so were also not organised. To achieve progress the backward caste leaders started organising their people first and as a first step they formed a number of caste level associations and groups. To achieve the benefits of this type of organisation they took up a few social issues or problems like alcoholism, dowry, poverty, illiteracy, child marriage, etc. During the course of this they also came to know that many of these backward castes and classes did not know their own history of origin etc. who are they? who are their prophets and priests? what are their rites and rituals? etc. Therefore attempts were made to write histories of these backward castes giving mythical origin and a divine mythic founder. They also named their welfare organisations after their caste leaders like Kalidasa Sangha, Haralayya Sangha and so on.

To enlighten their group, the backward castes also started organising conferences and meetings in the name of submitting memoranda to the rulers. These conferences gave birth to a number of welfare associations and among them association of Lingayats, Vokkaliga and later the Kurubara Sangha came into existence during 1921. The associations with their headquarters in Bangalore,
aimed at providing education, social justice and unity to their people. Thus they started a number of welfare programmes. First among them was to call annual conferences of their community members to educate them about the need for unity etc. During these meetings the community leaders appealed to their members to merge their caste, sub-caste and regional differences and work as one group.

The advantages the forward castes, especially the Brahmins enjoyed were due to their knowing the Sanskrit texts. Later, they were the first ones to get the modern education in English. This advantage had brought them job opportunities in all times and governments. The Backward Castes wanted to get the same to their communities and for this they not only opened schools and free boarding homes but also canvassed among their caste members to educate their children.

They also urged for the need to have hostels for their community students in educational centers so that the students could pursue their higher education. The backward castes also organised a few cultural associations such as Bāradeva Sangha, Kalidasa Welfare Society and so on.
to educate their people in addition to the socio-religious work. These institutions arranged cultural and welfare activities regularly. During the meetings of these groups, they discussed about evil customs like child marriage, sub-caste feeling, high and low notion among different backward castes and sub-castes, high and low occupations like sheep keeping and weaving of blankets and marketing etc. They also asked their caste members to do away with a few evils like offering of alcoholic beverages to ancestors, animal sacrifice, devadasi custom and so on and the customs they observe.

Further the caste conferences stressed the need for simplification of a few costly and elaborate rites and rituals like marriage, ancestral worship and funeral rites. Because, of rivalry and on account of false prestige, the peasant castes used to spend lavishly both their saved and borrowed money on these rites. They were also educated to divert the same for welfare activities like donating to the association funds. This was later used for educational and welfare purposes like opening of hostels, schools and instituting scholarships and prizes.

The backward caste and class movement also stressed the importance of economic development of the
masses. This can be seen in the developmental activities undertaken by the Kuruba community for the improvement of the conditions of the masses. When the Government attempted to improve the traditional arts and crafts, implemented a few programmes the Kuruba, who had blanket weaving as their traditional occupation, took advantage of it. As a result of this programme, the Kuruba accepted new breed of sheep which yielded good and more wool. This also helped in the improvement of the quality of their traditional wool products. They also produced a few non-traditional items like floor mats and rugs, headwear and so on, which had a good market even abroad.

This change among the Kuruba called for a number of changes not only in their socio-economic aspects but also in their value system as well. The traditional occupation of sheep keeping, which was followed as a moral obligation, has now become a mere means of earning a living. Secondly, instead of borrowing money from the private money-lenders to purchase raw materials now it is taken from co-operative societies. In the past the finished goods were also bought by the money-lenders to make it convenient and easy for them to recollect their loans, as the result, producers got a very low profit. But now the co-operatives buy the finished goods also.
In this way the co-operatives have also helped in the promotion of co-operative movement and thereby enhanced the national development.

Owing to the availability of modern and liberal education and hostel facilities, a large number of youth from Kuruba community got modern and better education. This brought three types of benefits. It made them modern in their outlook and which in turn helped in changing their ways of life, including the health and hygiene, food habits, etc. Secondly the modern education brought to them an opportunity to come out and meet other community members. While in hostels they met theiragemates as fellow hostel mates and also the community leaders when meeting of caste members were called in these venues. This cross-societal meeting helped them to know each others, ways and manners, differences and similarities they had. This helped in minimising or removing the misunderstanding or ill-feeling they had towards each other. This feeling also helped in bringing camaraderie in political and public life later. Finally the acquiring of modern education helped the Kuruba in seeking jobs in government and other organisations.
Seeking employment outside one's own traditional sphere has its own benefits to the backward castes. First, it brought financial gains to the communities which in turn helped in improving the living conditions of their people in terms of their dress, housing, food, etc. Secondly, it helped them to release the pressure and cut throat competitions which were there on the limited traditional means of production and consumption - their traditional occupations. In case of Kuruba it was sheep rearing, blanket making and later agriculture were their means of earning a living. These sources were very limited when compared with the huge population. When employment opportunities in the government took some of their caste members away, to certain extent, the competition was minimised. Added to this was the reservation of jobs and seats in the technical institutions by the government as per the recommendations of the Backward Caste and Class Commission; which helped them a lot to get more and more jobs without much competition from forward castes. Further, it helped them to mobilise the resources in the undivided manner and this in turn helped the Kuruba in improving their traditional occupation; to save and invest for a better gain.
Finally, the employment of persons belong to backward castes in different departments of the government made it easy for the people belong to their castes to take their help and guidance in getting benefits available from the government. Because in the Indian village or peasant context, a person is just helpless without some one in the city government offices to help him. In the past as a matter of fact even today, many facilities and privileges which are year marked for the benefit and good of the poor and needy, go without claimants owing to lack of this type of help. So the employees from the backward castes in different offices in the government apart from earning a decent living for themselves, also acted as agents, guides and helpers to their fellow caste members. In this way many opportunities were opened to the Backward Caste Communities like the Kuruba, directly and indirectly and it also solved many of their socio-economic and political problems.

In the past, when the backward castes celebrated festivals and rites, a number of religious functionaries like Gwarappa, Fasayya, Ellamma, etc., were invited as a rule in addition to the kinsmen, caste people and the
community elders. This called for spending of lot of money and time. Because on such occasions large number of animals were sacrificed and fed to the invitees. This type of mass feeding brought a few health hazards also. A poor family, coming from a backward caste or class group, knowing this well either postponed the celebrations till a convenient time or clubbed it with other ritual celebrations. This in turn brought a lot of mental stress on the religious minded people. Now owing to awakening got from the Backward Caste Movement these old customs are diluted and many rituals are performed on a small scale and many times symbolically. In most of the cases the religious functionaries are also not invited.

The custom of offering of all the favoured items of food, drinks, tobacco, etc., to ancestors at the time of ancestral worship is also liberalised now. In the past in the name of offering these to ancestors, the backward castes used to drink alcoholic beverages and smoke Ganja, etc., which were the favourite of the ancestors. As a result, young and old, men and women, used to indulge in these acts. Later many quarrels occurred out of sex and physical offences. The consequences of these had a bad repurcussion on the backward castes in
general, in terms of their status and economy. Such practices were encouraged by the older generation or caste elders and priests in the name of tradition. The upper castes encouraged these activities and also advanced loans to them; of course for their own good. Now owing to the changes brought by the Backward Caste Movement these customs have been discontinued, to a considerable degree.

Another aim of the Backward Caste Movement was to raise a team of leaders from the lower castes to lead the masses in all walks of life. This was necessary because the leaders from upper castes had their own personal interest and always misled the backward castes. To identify these leaders, meetings and conferences of backward castes were called and national or state level political, social, welfare or religious leaders were invited. Scholars were also invited to speak on the origin, status and glorious past of the communities. Souvinours and special reports were also published with photos and short biographies of their community leaders.

The Kuruba also called a number of conferences and brought awareness among its members. The drive to enroll more and more members to caste associations,
organising of hostels welfare institutions and collecting funds called for building or development of leadership. In starting or renewing a number of celebrations, fairs, festivals and anniversaries, etc. the Kuruba community got an opportunity to train its leaders. The community which was torn apart owing to caste, sub-caste, clan and regional feeling got an opportunity to come together to achieve unity. These renovation or welfare activities connected with their own caste temples, associations etc., also got them an opportunity to move around and meet their caste members, who lived in different parts of the state and also to exchange their views. All this helped them to plan, organise and execute and evaluate their activities. This in turn helped them to train themselves as local level leaders. When higher level political organisations were formed these local level community leaders joined the group in becoming state level leaders.

In the past, the Kuruba as a community were looked down upon by others since they were poor, illiterate and also had very few non-sacrosanct rites and rituals. The evil customs like dowry, bride price, devadasi custom, widow marriage, alcoholism, belief in magic and witchcraft were the main causes for this. Loss of traditional
occupation and working for others to make a living had also made the Kuruba a helpless dependents on forward castes. All this had made them to lose the 'Study State' which they had when they were one group and had their traditional occupation. This had helped them to make a decent and comfortable living. But over the years the divisive factors made them to break-up.

However, gradually Kuruba got themselves organised. In this they got inspiration from other forward communities of that time and from the religious and social movements. Among them the Bhakti Movement, Dasa Movement, Freedom Movement and later the Backward Caste and Class Movement are important. Gradually the Kuruba got themselves motivated and begin to copy the forward castes and classes. A few persons took an active part in this and begun to lead others. The socio-political situation in the state also helped them in their struggle. Over the years and by calling conferences, meetings, etc., the Kuruba got the motivation to change and develop. Day by day this got strengthened, and became a burning desire. Once they became aware of their strength and ideas the Kuruba started fighting against reactionarics
and also the outside forces. This led to a state of 'uncertainty' as mentioned by Gilber Kushner (1965). Finally the Kuruba achieved their interest and also gained what they wanted; the political power, social status and also the economic benefits.

In this way the Backward Caste Movement brought about a change and development among the backward castes and class in Karnataka. The Kuruba who are one among them also got benefitted by the same. Today if we look at their life, style and values we find that they are a much changed group. Like in any other caste we see in them a motivation to have cleaner occupations, higher standard of life and also higher morals. They are no more traditional compared to the past and instead, have accepted the values of modernity in education and occupation. This can be seen in the situations where the Kuruba have accepted modern education and jobs in Government and private establishments and settled in the cities and towns.

As we have mentioned in our introductory chapter our study of Backward Caste and Class Movement in Karnataka, with special reference to Kuruba had four hypothesis to test. First among them, the "Backward Caste and Class
Movement is a type of reformist movement with political colour*, is proved. Along the foregone pages we have seen how the Backward Caste and Class Movement brought about reforms among the so-called backward and low class and caste people, including the Kuruba, in terms of their caste and sub-caste feelings, high and low class feeling, child marriage, dowry etc. We have also shown how it brought a change in the economic life of the Kuruba and made them to abandon old and traditional methods and techniques and adopt new ones. The impact of the movement was such that the Kuruba even went to the extent of changing their occupations, from low paying and dirty ones to white collar jobs.

The Backward Caste and Class Movement has also brought reforms in the ritual and religious life of the low castes among the Hindus. The Kuruba also adopted a few and this can be seen in the new ways of celebrating rites and rituals or in the abandoning of a few age-old customs like devadasi, offering of blood and meat and alcoholic beverages to deities and ancestors and later family as a whole consuming it. All these support and prove our first hypothesis.

Our second hypothesis that "The struggle for
independence of India brought a new vigour in the Backward Caste and Class Movement" is also proved. Our data on the history of Backward Caste and Class Movement shows that the movement got benefitted by both the colonial government and also the Indian National Congress, which spearheaded the Indians freedom movement. It is evident from the history of independence movement that it has the western educated and upper caste members who organised and led the movement. We can say the struggle for independence remained a social affair with this group, in the form of discussions and debates in social clubs and societies.

With the involvement of Mahatma Gandhi into Indian politics during 1916, a mass awareness and mass involvement came. But by and large the western educated and upper caste leaders remained at the control of affairs of the movement even afterwards. When it became difficult for the colonial government to block the freedom movement, they adopted a policy of divide and rule and started isolating the so called untouchable and low castes on one hand and Muslims on the other. To put up these communities against the forward castes they indirectly supported the Backward Caste and Class Movement which was gaining strength at that time. As a first step the colonial
government made the western education available to then freely and liberally. Thus the Backward castes got job and other opportunities and started competing with the forward castes. Apart from getting jobs to a few persons belonging to the Backward castes in Government, modern liberal education brought political awareness in them. In this way to break the freedom struggle sphereheaded by the forward castes, mostly the Brahmins, the British encouraged and helped the Backward castes and this later brought a number of benefits to them.

Realising the intensions of the colonial government the Indian National Congress Party later made necessary changes for the inclusion of all castes and sections of the Indian society, especially the Backward Castes, in its organisation. It also adopted a few welfare programmes and policies for the benefit and good of Backward Castes and Classes. In its attempt to shift the blame to the colonial government it also made a few appeals to the colonial government to adopt welfare programmes to backward castes. As a result, a number of government organisations with welfare programmes came up. In line with the action taken by the British government the Congress Party also
asked its workers and especially the leaders from different Backward castes, to organise welfare agencies and take up welfare programmes. Like this the Backward castes and classes got benefitted by both the movements.

Our third hypothesis that "when compared to other Backward castes the Kuruba had a better organisational set up to receive the benefits of the Backward Caste and Class Movement", is also proved partially. A survey of welfare agencies in the state shows that next to the Lingayats and Vokkaligas, the Kuruba have the maximum number of them. A few of them were organised as early as 1912. The Kuruba Community has been organising annual conferences and meetings and has also brought out memoranda and appeals since long. Their religious institutions like the Beerappa temple, Mallaralingappa temple, etc., have done welfare work since long. Similar to the Lingayat religious institutions they too have well established institutions. The Kuruba were a ruling caste in the past and even today their ruling-clans retain that status. The clans and their leaders together with their religious institutions, were better organised compared to the other Backward castes in the states to receive the benefits brought by the Backward Caste and Class Movement. Further
owing to their ruling status of the past, a few Kuruba had huge land grants and property. This had made them to produce a few leaders and among them a few were with Congress Party also. So with all these facilities the Kuruba could make a better use of the Backward Caste and Class Movement than the other backward groups.

On the contrary a few other Backward castes started organising themselves much later, i.e., after independence of India. A few castes are yet to organise. For example the Nayaks or Talawars are another dominant and ruling caste of the past and also classed as one of the Backward castes. They had all the facilities which the Kuruba had but could not make use of its benefits. This is not without reasons. The Kuruba had lost their ruling status and privileges much earlier to the coming of Moghals and British. Whereas when the British took over India the Nayaks were still ruling some parts of Southern India. So with the coming of British rule they were politically hard hit. On the contrary by then the Kuruba had recovered from the shock of loss of their ruling status and so took advantage of the situation and made use of the Backward Caste Movement to get benefits.

Our last hypothesis that "It is the determination
of the Kuruba which brought success to them" is also proved. As we have seen from the data presented that the religious and ritual aspect of the Backward castes played a minor role compared to the socio-political and economic factors. From the history of Backward Caste and Class Movement and also that of Kuruba it is evident that the Kuruba were a determined group. From the very beginning they struggled hard against forces of exploitation and suppression. They also fought against discrimination in the field of religion and social activity. When the Brahmanic groups failed to deliver goods they came out and joined the non-Brahmanic groups, especially the devotional schools led by non-Brahmins. Among these the puritan movement and Veerashaiva Movement played an important role. The Kuruba could accept Veerashaivism, because of its treatment of equality of all and less costly and elaborate rituals and rites. Later they struggled to do away with a few evil customs and practices and also the traditional forces in the society which had supported them.

In the field of political organisation also the Kuruba fought a bitter battle against the traditional forces. The caste and clan leaders gave a tough fight to liberalists. Later, when caste associations were formed to undertake
welfare activities, the traditional leaders opposed. Changes proposed in the conduct of marriages, panchayat meetings, etc., were not welcomed. Opening of schools and hostels were also opposed by the traditionalists on the ground that the liberal education spoils their children. But, with patience and determination, the Kuruba leaders worked hard and convinced them to achieve the results.

Similarly, when change was proposed in their traditional occupations like acceptance of new breed of sheep, selling the sheep for slaughter and adopting new methods and techniques in promoting their traditional crafts and art, the traditional minded people opposed it. The very shift from the traditional occupation to more modern ones were opposed. But the enlightened community leaders used all possible opportunities they got, especially the caste gatherings, to educate their people for change. At each stage of the economic development they worked side by side with government development officials and helped in bringing a change.

Similarly, when co-operatives were introduced to financially help the poor and needy, the Kuruba did not participate in them whole-heartedly. A few who participated
did so for some personal interests and swindled the public funds. This took away what little faith and confidence the common men had developed in the co-operative movement. But the determined community fought hard and saw to it that the needy would take loans and credit facilities and help themselves in improving their financial conditions and thereby the standard of living.

In this way when compared to other Backward Caste and Communities the Kuruba were the only group who could make maximum use of the Backward Caste and Class Movement for their betterment. As an evidence of it, they have made progress in all fields. Today an army of educated Kuruba are working in different capacities as doctors, engineers, administrators and so on. Apart from owning land and also improving their traditional occupation, a few enterprising ones have opened industries and trade and commerce. In the field of politics also the Kuruba have made their mark and they form a formidable juction in state politics. In evidence of it we can see a number of Kuruba leaders becoming ministers, holding public offices like membership to legislative bodies both council and parliament, public service commission, Khadi and Gramodyoga Board,
Social Welfare Board, Co-operative Union and so on. Thus we can say that here are the achievements of a determined group. We can also add that the Backward Caste and Class Movement and also the Indian Independence Movement helped the Kuruba Community a good deal in achieving this objective much quickly and easily.