CHAPTER II

BACKWARD CASTE AND CLASS MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA

Hindu society is made up of several hundred of castes which are arranged in a hierarchy of high and low, on the basis of the ritual status of the occupation they follow. The Brahmins, in the past, who knew reading, writing and recitation of Sanskrit books as their occupation were considered as the highest and the noblest, and were thus considered to be the top of the hierarchy. Other castes who were in business, tilling of the land, crafts and so on were treated as ritually low. The lowest born like the Sudra had the duty of serving the castes above them. These occupations were assigned to different castes by tradition and so the statuses attached to these became traditional. Thus changing of ones occupations was not only possible since there were none left but was also considered as a sin and violation of the Dharma.

The low castes not only had occupations which were low in status but the income also from them was less. Over the generations and centuries these castes suffered a lot both socially and economically. In this way the low castes
were not only denied of better occupations but also better life and were suppressed and depressed for centuries. On the contrary, the Brahmins were not only on the top of the caste hierarchy but also had the advantage of having ritually cleaner occupations, which were also considered noble. This fetched them both social and economic benefits. Their ritual advantage together with their knowledge in Sanskrit, brought them not only status but also the advantage of being the only knowledgeable and literate caste in the Hindu society. This superior social status had also brought them opportunities to influence other castes, including the ruling castes.

The rigid Hindu laws and codes of conduct and ill treatment to low castes by the upper castes have been questioned all along the history of Hinduism. Buddhism, Jainism, Veerashaivism, Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj and 'Missions' of several indigenous kinds came up to bring a change or reforms in Hinduism. But later they were forced to go out as separate religious group, away from the folds of Hinduism. Over the centuries these religions fell a prey to Hinduism and began to have gods, rituals, customs and even social situations, which were similar to those in Hinduism. The most recent revolt against
Hindusm is the Backward Caste movement, which aims at liberating the low castes from the control of the Brahmins and rigid Hindu religious and moral laws and thereby get them a better social and economic status.

Backward Caste and Class Movement was in a sense a revolt against the tyranny of forward castes. So it has been also considered a fight or movement against the despotism of Brahmanism. When the Backward Caste Movement was begun during the later part of 18th century, the traditionalists, especially the Brahmins got alert and started interpreting this as an anti-Brahmin movement (Brahmaśētara chaluvali), since it was mostly the castes other than the Brahmins took part in it. In other words this also became known as Backward Caste and Class Movement.

There is a debate as to who triggered the first shot of Backward Caste and Class Movement. But the credit of starting a systematic attack on the 'Hindu religion', its ill effects on the lower segments of the society, the tyranny of priestly and upper castes, etc., in Western India goes to Shri Jotiba Phule (1827–1890), a social worker belonging to the Mali (gardner) caste of Maharashtra. During his time Phule became the champion of the down trodden and the low castes (Kavlekar, 1979–35–51) in Pune area.
Pune has a special place in the political history of India. It was a strong hold and capital of Maratha King Shivaji (1617-1680). Shivaji was a champion of Hindus and he conquered territories from Muslim rulers of North (the Moghals) and Sultanaits of Bijapur, Golconda and so on and formed his own Kingdom. He realised that the Brahmins who were with the Muslim rulers as advisors and interpreters of Dharmashastras (holy books) and Hindu laws, cannot be trusted and so he gave a low key to them in his State administration. After the death of Shivaji, the Maratha were divided and the Brahmins, especially the Chitpavan Brahmins once again took control of the situation and even came to power as Peshwa or Prime Minister of the State (Chirol, 1910:38). In this way the Brahmin and non-Brahmin feeling existed in Maharashtra area even before the advent of the British in India.

Jotiba Phule, author of many books and the writer of articles in popular dailies, is also the founder of many welfare organisations for the welfare of the downtrodden castes. Among them the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Society for Seeking Truth) has done yeomen services to the Backward castes. At that time the higher castes especially the
Brahmins, Baniya, and the landholding castes, had joined hands and controlled both men and material in the society. They treated the low castes worst than animals. To improve their conditions Phule thought that attempt of reforming the society was of no help but it needed a revolution (Ibid:42). So he called a meeting of his disciples and supporters on 24th September, 1873 at Pune to organise a forum and Satya Shodhak Samaj is the result.

The aim of Satya Shodhak Samaj was to redeem the Sudras and Anti Sudras from the influence of Brahmanical scriptures under the Brahmin priest who fleeced them, and to teach them their human rights, liberate them from the mental and religious slavery (Keer 1964:125). Phule, from his deep studies of Hinduism had come to know that the dominance of the Brahmins over others was due to their education and denial of the same to other castes. He himself educated in a Mission School was very much influenced by the Christian liberalism and equality. He wanted to give the same to the low castes and liberate them from the control of the Brahmins. So he started a number of educational institutions, including one for girls, in Pune during 1848. At that time he felt the greatest difficulty of finding teachers to teach in these
schools. Therefore he taught his wife first and appointed her as a teacher in the girls' school.

Jotiba was for compulsory and free education for all; atleast upto twelve years of age. This he also made clear to the visiting British Parliamentary Commission (Hunter Commission 1883:141). He also suggested a formal training to teachers so that they could do their duty in the right way. He was also for employing as many teachers as possible from lower and cultivator classes so that they will freely mix and mingle with low caste students and understand their wants and wishes much better than Brahmin teachers (Keer, op.cit.:168-71).

Phule's contribution in the field of socio-religious aspects of the Backward castes is also great. He attacked the blind ritual ceremonies and the priests who propagated them. He was also against idol worship and superstitions which dominated the religious life of the low castes of his time (Kavlekar, op.cit.:50).

Backward Caste Movement and Shahu Maharaj:

After the death of Jotiba Phule in 1890, another leader, a much stronger and dynamic one, took over the
leadership of the Backward Caste Movement, i.e., His Highness Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur. He was the ruler of a small princely State in Western India (now in the State of Maharashtra). The Maharaja got his inspiration from the writings and speeches of Jotiba Phule. He himself had a few bad personal experiences also at the hands of the Brahmins. It is said when he ascended the throne in 1894, his State was under the Brahmin influence. He was also personally insulted by the Brahmin priests when he visited the places of sacred and ritual bath (Ghat) on the banks of Panchaganga river, by blessing him without they themselves taking the ritual bath first on the ground that there was no need to take it to bless a Sudra (Ibid:56).

During the 1901 Navaratri festival it was claimed by the orthodox Brahmins that Ambabai, the patron deity of Kolhapur, was polluted by the touch of a particular Brahmin who had earlier attended a ritual in a Maratha caste family; to which the Maharaja also belonged. That was the time the Maharaja's policies on mass and liberal education were attacked by the Brahmins. Among them Sri Lokmanya Tilak, a nationalist and a traditionalist from Pune, had came to Kolhapur on a visit and made a few negative remarks on the activities of the Maharaja. All these made the Maharaja to plunge into a non-Brahmin movement, in 1913.
This was at a time when the Independence movement was at its heights. The colonial government was worried that the Backward Caste movement and the disloyalty of Brahmins who dominated the colonial administration, might injure their interests. So the colonial government took the native rulers into confidence and started taking their assistance in administration. In their bid to counteract the Brahmins, they proposed plans to involve non-Brahmins in the administration (Ibid:161). Shahu Maharaj ceased this opportunity to make the masses to break away from the Brahmin fold he also invited the Satya Shodhak Samaj and Arya Samaj workers to come forward and teach Vedic religion to the masses (K.R.O. 1918).

Shri Shahu Maharaj like Jotiba Phule, also advocated education to the masses. As a Maharaja he had both the means and authority to go ahead in making his cherished dream come true. He not only opened many schools, colleges and as many as eleven free hostels in Kolhapur itself, for the students coming from Backward castes.

In order to carry on his mission Shahu Maharaja also helped a few newspapers in the then Bombay Presidency,
specially the Deccan Ryot of Pune. This newspaper used to publish articles against Brahmin dominance and the ill treatment given by them to the low castes. This was not acceptable to the Brahmin traditionalists. So they even saw that the paper would not get a place to house its office and press, but the Maharaja helped the daily. He also founded and associated with a number of welfare associations of the Backward castes such as Marathas, Lingayats, Kurubas, Muslims, Untouchables and so on.

He also attended a number of conferences convened by these castes in various towns and cities and addressed the masses on the evils brought by Hindu religion, priestly castes, landlords and so on. With these activities Shri Shahu Maharaj became so much known in his days that he was invited to almost all conferences of Backward and Scheduled castes. In this capacity he even presided over the Third All India Depressed Class Conference, held at Delhi in 1922. In this last speech of his (he died the same year) Shri Shahu Maharaj called upon the low castes not to stick to their traditional and hereditary profession and asked them to educate themselves and enter different professions and try to become pleaders, barristers, doctors and merchants. He also appreciated the services of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a Scheduled Caste leader (who later
In this way during his twenty-six years of rule, the Maharaja devoted much of his time for the cause of the Backward castes. He believed that free and compulsory education for the Backward classes was his first duty. This way, he thought, he could break the upper caste monopoly and dominance in the State administration. He struggled hard to close the wide gap which was there between the two classes. His influences were such that even as for as Madras State people mourned his untimely death. The South Indian Liberal Federation, passed a resolution placing on the record its warm appreciations and gratitude for the invaluable service rendered by him and especially for the progress and welfare of the Non-Brahmin Community (K.R.O. Shahu Files, 1922).

Backward Caste Movement in Madras Presidency:

When the Backward castes of Western India were inspired and organised by Jotiba Phule and Shahu Maharaj, the Backward castes in Southern India were also organised to fight against the injustice. Here the movement was led by Dr. T.B. Nair, a prominent medical practitioner of Madras, Sri P.T. Chettiar, Raja of Penagal and Sir Ramaswamy
Later in 1925, Periar E.V.R. Naicker, the founder of Dravida Kazhgam Party, and much later Shri C.N. Annadurai, who formed D.M.K., joined the movement. The Backward Caste Movement formally took its birth in Madras in 1916 with a few prominent backward caste leaders from various walks of life like judiciary, industry and medicine, meeting to discuss the conditions and problems of the Backward castes. They discussed the possibilities to form a political association to advance, safeguard and to protect their interests. Finally they agreed to start a stock company known as South Indian People's Association and also publish an English daily by name 'Justice' and two more dailies in vernacular by name, 'The Dravidan' in Tamil and 'Andhra-Prakasika' in Telugu. During the next year, i.e., in 1917, they organised the South Indian Liberal Federation which later came to be known as the Justice Party (Spratt 1970:14).

Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur had personal and intimate contacts with the backward caste leaders in Madras Presidency also. As early as 1912 when the Maratha Education Fund was established in Madras Presidency by Rao Saheb Pingle Ramachandra Rao, it was done at the instance of the Maharaja. Shri Shahu's involvement in spreading
the Backward Caste Movement to other areas in the region became active from 1913 onwards. This was due to two factors. Firstly, when the British were busy fighting the World War I, Mrs. Annie Besant joining hands with a few Indians started the Home Rule Movement. The demands of the movement benefitted only the upper castes and the educated groups. This move was also to blackmail the British for an agreement regarding granting of freedom to India.

When the Home Rule Movement was extended to Bombay Presidency, it brought a lot of support to Congress leaders here. Among them Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Pune was one. He was opposed to the policies and activities of Shahu Maharaj towards the backward castes. Alliance of Tilak, a staunch opponent of his with Annie Besant, a leader from Madras Presidency prompted Shahu to involve in the Backward Caste movement of Madras Presidency. Secondly, the two Governors of Bombay Presidency, Lord Sydenham and Lord Willingdon, were great friends and admirers of activities of Shahu Maharaj. Later when they were transferred to Madras Presidency one after another, they continued to have cordial contact with Shahu.
This helped the Maharaja to establish contact with non-Brahmin leaders in the Madras Presidency and spread his mission there also. Using this opportunity he visited Madras and other towns in South India, including Bangalore and Mysore, to inspire people for the cause of backward castes, through his speeches and contacts. He also attended a number of conferences of backward castes in different towns of South India including Hubli City, during 1920 (Hubli is now in the heart of Karnataka State). At this conference Shri P.T. Chettiar, the leader of Backward Caste Movement in Madras, was also present.

The same year (1920), another conference - Backward Class Conference, was held at Nasik (now in Maharashtra State) which was also attended by a few leaders from Madras Presidency. Among them the Raja of Pengal attended it at the invitation of Shahu Maharaj. The speech made on the occasion by the latter was so much appreciated by the former he announced that it was an 'epoch-making one'. He also stated that it will be reprinted in their Madras daily 'Justice' and also translated and published in Tamil and Telugu languages so that the people of these two area may also be benefitted by reading it (Latthe, 1924:596).
In Andhra area the Backward Caste Movement was organised and both the Bombay and Madras leaders were in touch with the leaders here. Among them, Rao Bahadur Virasalingam Pantulu is prominent. He wrote extensively on social evils of the society like caste hierarchy, widow marriage, child marriages, dowry and such other evil Hindu customs, etc. He pleaded strongly for the education of the Backward castes women. In this way whole of South India, from Bombay Madras was organised for the welfare of Backward castes.

The first phase or the Justice Phase of Backward Caste movement in Madras Presidency changed its policies and tactics after the death of the guards Dr. Nair, Sri Chettiar, Sri Mudaliar and Raja of Penagal. The Second phase of Backward Caste Movement began with the taking over of leadership by late Pandiyar E.V.R. Naicker and his band of followers. The leaders of the Justice Party had direct and cordial contacts with the Backward Caste Movement in Bombay Presidency especially the Satya Shodhak Samaj. The Justice Party and the Satya Shodhak Samaj was not anti-Brahmin. It only strived for the upliftment of the Backward castes and for the social reconstruction.
of the Hindu society. They talked of liberation of
the Backward Caste from the tyranny of the Brahmins,
by educating them and lifting them upto better and
dignified life. But when the British colonial government
under their policy of divide and rule, attempted to break
the popularity and strength of the Indian National Congress
Party, which was led mostly by upper caste and western
educated leaders, the Brahmins were naturally affected.

Later, when backward castes organised themselves
and became a political force, the British got alarmed that
they too might support Freedom struggle. So they later
changed their attitude towards the Backward castes also.
As a result during the next elections many leaders from
the Backward castes who contested for elections got defeated.
This made the Backward castes concerned with grabbing
political power, and in the course of this they left
their traditional routes.

On the other hand with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi
into the National politics in 1918, two years after his
return from South Africa, the Congress Party changed many
of its policies and programmes. Among them making the
party a broad based one by involving the masses, was one.
When new members were enrolled many persons from Backward castes also joined the Congress Party. This served as another arena for the upliftment of the Backward castes. This brought two types of changes: First, with this decession their started a debrahmanisation of the Congress Party. Secondly, this move took away a large number of leaders of the Backward Caste Movement and thereby weakened it. With this, for some time, the Backward Caste Movement not only became leaderless but also forceless.

But by 1924 like many other Backward Caste leaders of South India Periyar Naicker also came out of the Congress Party and launched the Dravidan movement. The new movement was openly anti-Brahmin, and even encouraged non-Brahmins not to call upon Brahmin priests to perform wedding and such other religious ceremonies. Its followers were required to use their own Dravidan language, Tamil, for political and for all other purposes. The Dravida Kazhgam Party went one step ahead and regarded themselves as Dravidans and members of a sovereign, independent State (Srinivas 1972:105). He also told that even christianity and Buddhism could not afford the upliftment of Dravidians (Ādi-Drāvida), since these two religions also treated them as untouchables. This anti-Brahmin Policy of Naicker attracted a large number of Backward Caste ex-congressmen to his party.
By 1930s the Justice Party had completely lost its political control over the State since Congress Government came into power in Madras Presidency. The new Government had a plan to introduce Hindi as a compulsory language in all the primary schools in the Presidency. This brought another opportunity to the Dravida Kazhgam party to organise its following. One can even say that the Hindi issue brought a new direction to Tamil Nadu political awakening. This new situation gave an opportunity to another leader – late C.N. Annadurai, to break-off from Dravida Kazhgam and form Dravida Munnetara Kazhgam.

Anna, the elder brother, as he was respectfully called, had a different approach to the Tamilian politics. He used his sharp tongue and explained how the "Self-respect movement" started by Dravida Kazhgam has failed in delivering goods to Tamilians. He also explained the political motives of the Congress leaders of those days of the State such as late C.Rajagopalachari in introducing Hindi. He said by
imposing Hindi, the Congress leaders want to appoint nearly eight hundred teachers in schools to teach Hindi and thereby get their support to win the next election.

Anna was against burning of Hindu sacred books and also openly opposed the humiliation of Brahmin community because it served little in the cause of upliftment of the Backward castes. By this new approach, to the problem of the day he said, the new party "had to retain its Tamil cheuvanist, anti-Brahmin image but could afford estrange the Brahmin voters" (Hindu, Madras June 22, 1956). Using his literary talent and connection with stage and cinema, he educated the masses about his ideals. Finally when his party won the general election in 1967 defeating the formidable Congress Party, there began a new phase for the "Dravidian Uplift" in the State.

Thus the seeds of social justice sowed in 1890s in Bombay Presidency, bore fruits even outside the State, including the Madras Presidency. Similarly, the areas under the princely State of Mysore, Travancoor and Cochin, Coorg and so on in South India were also influenced by the Backward Caste Movement. Leaders like Shri Shahu Maharaj, Dr. T.P. Nair, Periyar and others toured the
entire area to address the conferences of Backward castes. They also influenced the masses through their writings on the matters of social justice and equality, free and compulsory education, social dignity and so on. The role played by the Justice Party was so strong it made Andre Betelille (1969:176) to write that "it would be a mistake to minimise the role of the Justice Party, which not only prepared the ground for the introduction of a new social strata into political system but also created a distinctive ideology for South Indian politics".

Backward Caste and Class Movement in Karnataka:

As has been already stated earlier the entire South India came under the influence of the Backward Caste Movement, which took its birth both in Bombay, and Madras Presidencies. The leaders from both these areas were committed persons with a missionary zeal. They themselves came from the backward castes and also personally experienced social injustice and discrimination at the hands of the forward castes, especially the Brahmins. These leaders had a burning desire to see that their fellow castemen to be liberated from humiliation and also get equal opportunities and social justice. Since caste affiliation cuts across state boundaries, whenever a
conference or meeting of a Backward Caste was held leaders from all the areas attended it. For example the Lingayats and Kurubas who are found throughout South India, whenever they called their caste level conferences, members attended these irrespective of the princely state. This helped in spreading the Backward Caste Movement without much difficulty.

Consequently as a result of the Backward Caste Movement a new awareness came among the Backward castes like the Lingayats, Vokkaliga, Kuruba, Muslims, Reddy and others. Using this unity they formed caste associations. They also started hostels for their caste students which in turn helped them to give higher education to their children. To support the Backward castes in their struggle, the Government of the Maharaja of Mysore opened many schools and colleges in several places of the State. This helped the Backward castes to gain modern education and thereby get jobs in the Government.

But the Backward Caste Movement in the princely State of Mysore is little different. Till the British took over the State of Mysore, after defeating Tippu Sultan in the Mysore War IV in the year 1799, the Muslims
and Brahmins were in the entire control of the State Administration and as the result both the castes enjoyed several privileges. Since Brahmins were the only educated class then, the British continued to take their support. But later on they began to get Brahmin employees from Madras Presidency, their Southern Headquarters, because they were so to say the only western educated South Indian group at that time. As a result the local Brahmin scholars in Sanskrit and Kannada literature, lost their opportunity to serve in the Government. Thus from about 1831 to about 1910, a period of nearly thirty years the problem was "Mysorian Verses Madrasi" Brahmins prevailed in the government circle (Kuppuswamy 1978:41). This was due to the fact that from 1831 to 1881 Mysore State was directly ruled by the British as part of Madras Presidency. Naturally Madrasis came as Government officials to Mysore State.

To crown it all the Prime Ministers (Dewans) appointed to the State of Mysore were also Madrasis. They in turn brought Madrasis to man the different administrative positions. Even teachers for high schools and secretaries to the Government were brought from Madras under the pretext that they were well qualified, compared to the local candidates. This gave room to a constant agitation
against this discrimination right up to 1910. The Mysore Brahmins who formed the Backward Class in the Mysore State then, wanted that justice should be done to them regarding jobs in the State Government (Gundappa, 1971). This might have made the British to change their policy and appoint Mysore Brahmins for higher posts in the Police Department. Further, they were the next best educated, if compared with the non-Brahmin population, in the State.

The Madras and Mysore controversy almost came to a halt in 1912 when Sir M. Visvesvaraya, a Mysore Brahmin was appointed as the Dewan of the State. As a result if the Mysore Brahmins were satisfied with this appointment the Backward castes were not, with the fear that the local Brahmins will become more powerful in State administration (Ibid:134). Therefore from 1912 onwards the agitation became Brahmins versus non-Brahmins. This may be attributed to two factors - the Backward Caste Movement which had gained strength in Bombay and Madras Presidencies had extended its influences to the neighbouring princely states also. Further, the British had a fear about the Brahmins, who were predominant both in the colonial administration as well as in the National movement of that time. To counteract them the British encouraged
the non-Brahmins to get education and participate in the State administration by getting employment in different official capacities.

This was also the time that the Mysore Representative Assembly (1881) and the Legislative Council (1907) were established in the princely State of Mysore. Its main aim was to increase the popular participation in the administration of the State. Establishment of these two legislative bodies brought a new awakening among the non-Brahmin castes. Thus they organised their caste associations to mobilise popular support to get elected to these bodies. As a result the three major and dominant castes of Mysore State: The Vokkaliga (in 1906), Lingayat (1909) and the Muslims (1909) organised their caste associations.

In the princely State administration the Maharaja was a figure head of the State and the Dewan enjoyed a much more privileged and powerful position. He played dual roles - linking the British colonial Government on one hand and the State on the other. The British under their policy of diarchy or indirect rule over the princely states, had not only kept the authority to approve the
appointment of Dewans to the states with them but also used the Dewans to implement their policies and programmes in the princely states. The British in order to get popular approval to their policies and programmes when placed before the State Legislative bodies and later on to implement them used the Dewan of the State. Naturally the Dewans especially the Brahmins among them, enjoyed a very strong and influential position in State administration. The Maharajas who were non-Brahmins, did not like this. But they kept quiet since their very existence depended on the goodwill of the British.

Later when the Brahmin administrators and politicians became a threat to colonial government the British changed their policies towards the Brahmins. The colonial Government took several measures to check the influence of Brahmins. To counteract the Brahmin influence and superiority they used the local kings and their non-Brahmin supporters. By this the British also intended to check the independence movement. In this way the Backward Caste Movement which had already gained ground in Madras and Bombay Presidencies helped the princes a lot.

By then the Backward castes had also realised that they could not compete either with Madrasi or Mysorian
Brahmins since they did not have the proper social background. So in 1914, they asked for both lowering of the qualifications for candidates coming from backward castes and also for the reservation of both higher and lower posts in the Government. As a result, in 1916 the Government directed that 25 per-cent of the posts should be given to qualified non-Brahmin candidates (Shama Rao: 1936:305). Later the quota was raised to one third of the posts filled, because according to a survey conducted out of 361 police officers posts as many as 191 were held by Brahmins.

The Backward castes were still not satisfied. They argued that a few more jobs should be reserved to match the size of their population. By now owing to the opening of a large number of schools and colleges, a large number of Backward Caste youth were qualified. But there were very few opportunities for them. In 1917 all the Backward castes of Mysore State formed the "Praja Mitra Mandali" to fight for some more privileges. During 1918 a deputation of Backward Caste leaders presented an address to the Maharaja, which maintained that the facilities available for the Backward Caste who mostly inhabit villages were inadequate. They had asked for
English schools in villages and hostels for their children in towns and cities. They pleaded for more scholarships to their children and also higher percentage of job reservations in Government.

In reply the Maharaja assured them justice. Sri Visveswaraya, Dewan of Mysore, was also for the upliftment of Backward castes so that they could improve their statuses. But he was not for lowering the qualifications of candidates for appointments, on the ground that it will affect the efficiency in State administration. He was also aware of the anti-Brahmin feeling among the legislators and public owing to the emergence of the Backward Caste Movement. All these and other factors finally made Sri Visveswaraya to resign from his Dewanship in 1918.

Later in the year 1918, a committee of six non-official members was appointed by the Maharaja, under the chairmanship of Sir Leslie Miller, the Chief Justice of the Chief Court. The purpose was to review and suggest ways and means to check the large inflow of Brahmins in the State administration and also help other Backward communities to get these posts, however, without affecting the efficiency. The committee recommended that within seven years, half of
the higher appointments, administrative and ministerial and two-thirds of the subordinate appointments be held by Backward communities (Miller Committee Report, 1919).

As regards primary education, the Committee recommended that apart from establishing in each district, an institute providing boarding and lodging facilities to the students from Backward classes, more schools may be started in the rural areas with better techniques and competent supervisory staff. It also recommended that a fair per cent of teachers belonging to Backward castes should be appointed. The Committee found that an amount of ₹15,000.00 for depressed and ₹85,000.00 for other Backward castes set aside was not sufficient and be raised to at least two lakhs of rupees per annum. As regards the accommodation in the government hostels - the admission to Backward Caste be raised and also more hostels be constructed in all taluka headquarters, so that the parents found it easy to send their children for higher education.

With regard to admission to schools and colleges, the committee recommended that no Backward Caste student should be rejected for admission on the ground that there are no seats. Further, that one half of the students in
each standard in each school, should consist of Backward Caste students. While appointing for higher posts in the Government, the Committee recommended that the University degree may not be insisted for Backward Caste candidates though necessary for forward castes. Until the education is more evenly distributed the nomination to certain appointments like Munsifs, etc., be continued instead of appointment by competitive examinations.

When the report was ready two of the members of the Committee gave minutes of dissent, another agreed with some reservations. Though the report was ready by August 1919 within one year of appointment of the Committee, the Government accepted it after a lapse of two years, i.e., in May, 1921. Here one can see the amount of opposition the report had, from the forward communities. It is also said that Sri Visvesvaraya, the Dewan of Mysore, who was not happy with the very appointment of the Miller Committee, resigned in the year 1918. Hence from then onwards all the Mysore Dewans were non-Brahmins and as a result the backward castes received a better support in the State with regards to appointments and allotment of seats in technical schools and colleges, etc.
When India became independent in 1947 it accepted the policy of equality of all citizens before law. It also believed in providing social justice to down trodden and poor. Accordingly it drafted its constitution. Before the new constitution was accepted a good deal of debate was there on the articles and clauses which provided equality and justice to all the citizens. When the constitution was finally accepted with provisions of reservation to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes, there were writ petitions against a few articles, especially the 340. The petitioners' contention was that the fundamental rights of a few sections of the citizens were curtailed by those provisions. Finally the Clause (4) was added to article 15 - stating that "Nothing in this article or in Clause (2) of the Article 29 shall prevent the states from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes".

Central Backward Class Commission:

As per the provision of the Article 340 of Indian Constitution, as pointed out earlier the Government of India appointed the Backward Class Commission in 1953 with Kaka Kalelkar as the Chairman. The Commission found that
the required information on different Backward castes or Scheduled castes were not available. So it recommended that the 1961 Census should make provision to collect such information on castes (p. 11). The Commission wanted to have the following four guidelines to determine the backwardness of a group:

1. Low social position in the traditional caste hierarchy;
2. Lack of education in the major section of the caste or community;
3. Inadequate or no representation in government service; and
4. Inadequate representation in the field of trade, commerce and industry.

The Kaka Kalelkar Commission report was submitted in 1955. The report had classed the agricultural labourers, agricultural tenants with income tenure, the small land owners, those who have uneconomic holding, the communities engaged in small scale cattle breeding, sheep breeding or fishing, the artisan and occupational classes without security of employment, the illiterate and those with
hardly any education as background (p. 46). The Commission also made provision for the reservation of jobs in Government and admission to the technical schools, etc. But the Central Government was not happy with the Commission’s findings and recommendations. With a few changes it informed the states in 1961, that they have the discretion to choose their own criteria and determine the backwardness of castes.

Meanwhile, after the reorganisation of states, the Mysore State Government had issued an order in 1958 that all communities excepting the Brahmins as Backward and 75 per cent of seats in educational institutions be reserved for these classes. However, this order was challenged in the High Court of Mysore. A modified order was issued in 1959 that excepting Brahmins, Banias, Kayasthas among the Hindus and Muslims, Christians and Jains, all others are classed as socially and educationally backward. So 65 per cent of the seats were to be reserved for them. These orders were also challenged in the High Court of Mysore. So the State Government appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. R. Nagana Gowda and its report later became to be known as the Mysore Backward Class Committee Report.
Nagana Gowda Committee Report:

The educational and reservation facilities given to the Backward castes as per the recommendations of the Miller Committee Government Order of 1921 continued in Mysore State till 1956. With the re-organisation of Indian states in 1956 on linguistic basis, fresh problems arose about the list of Backward castes. Because the Kannada speaking areas which were until now in the neighbouring states of Madras, Bombay, Hyderabad, Kerala and Coorg were transferred to the new State now to be known as Karnataka (Kannada speaking area). To set right the service and reservation problems of the Kannadigas, the State Government appointed a small committee of officials in 1953. When the Committee gave its report in 1959 its validity was questioned in the High Court of Mysore and thus the recommendation of the committee, were set aside. This necessitated the appointment of a new Backward Caste Committee in 1960 under the chairmanship of Dr. R. Nagana Gowda, an American trained Agricultural graduate and belong to Kuruba Caste. The immediate task of the committee was to suggest the criteria to be adopted in determining the backwardness of communities in the new state so that the government can adopt them in admitting students to the technical schools and colleges and make appointments to government services.
The Committee, in order to meet the urgent need of the State, submitted an interim report in February 1960. Several suggestions regarding the criteria to be adopted to consider the backwardness were taken into consideration. They are (1) the Sudras should be considered socially backward; (2) the traditional occupations of the groups; and (3) income of the groups. But none of the criteria suggested were acceptable - a few Sudra communities were well-off and most of the castes had left their traditional occupations and it was not possible to know the exact income of the groups. So the Committee finally agreed to set up three criteria of (a) caste, (b) percentage of literacy, and (c) their representation in State Service (Kuppuswamy op. cit:80-81).

In its report submitted in 1961, the Nagana Gowda Committee recommended a reservation of 36 per cent for Backward castes and 18 per cent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, making a total of 54 per cent and only the remaining 46 per cent of appointments and seats left available for open competition. The report was challenged in the High Court of Mysore on the ground that reservation over 50 per cent is not allowed by the Indian Constitution. The Government sought the modification of the report and
finally 35.34 per cent for Backward Castes and 13.71 per cent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were reserved, thus making it 49 per cent reservation. This was also not acceptable to forward castes and they once again went to High Court and later to the Supreme Court of India as well. Until then the State followed the 1961 Government order (based on the interim report of the Committee) regarding the reservation of seats and appointments in the State.

When the Central Government directed the states to reconsider the reservation question once again the State Government of Mysore (by now called Karnataka), appointed another Backward Castes Commission in August, 1972, under the chairmanship of Sri L.G. Havanur, a practicing lawyer belonging to a Backward Caste. The Committee took lot of pains and collected adequate information regarding the social, economic and educational background of each caste. Several Backward castes went on a delegation putting forth their claims. Wherever the Commission went, the Backward castes and their leaders met them and demanded a fair deal to them. Finally the Commission submitted its report to the Government in November 1975. Though this report was questionned by a few castes who were deleted
from the Backward Caste list, the Government finally accepted the report. Even to date the recommendations of the Havanur Commission are followed in allotting seats and appointments in the Government for Backward Castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In this way all along the history of Backward Caste Movement the castes who were socially, economically and educationally backward demanded and agitated for social justice. Their demand affected the privileges and benefits enjoyed by the forward castes, especially the Brahmins. In the past the Brahmins enjoyed all the privileges, including the patronage of rulers, from pre-Moghals to British period. Later when they supported the Indian National Congress which sphereheaded the freedom movement, the British adopted the policy of divide and rule to weaken the movement. For this they put up Backward Castes against Brahmins and for the first time modern education was made available to all and thereby providing opportunities for appointment to the non-Brahmins in government. To facilitate them to go to school a large number of schools and hostels were established.

On the political sphere, to remove fear in the
minds of the masses, the backward castes were encouraged to organise their own caste associations. Each caste was encouraged to hold conferences, etc. which were addressed by the Backward Caste leaders. A few joint conferences of Backward Castes as a whole were also arranged. All these activities had the encouragement from Backward Caste leaders like Jotiba Phule, Sri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, Dr. P.T. Nair, C.D. Reddy, and so on. Throughout this period the Backward Castes demanded fair deal, equal opportunities and treatment from forward castes.

Finally, when the Indian National Congress, in its bid to make the freedom struggle a mass movement, admitted members from all sections of the society, a large number of leaders from Backward Castes also joined the party. As a result the policies of the Congress Government towards the poor and backward, were influenced a great deal. When the new Indian Constitution was adopted it included a number of provisions and rights for the welfare of the backward castes, this, of course, included the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.