INTRODUCTION

In the post-war period, when several countries attained independence, they went in for democratic form of government declaring themselves as secular states. India is one such country to opt for secular ideals and democratic form of government. However, in many societies, religion and politics go hand in hand. India is a complex society with several religious groups living together. While the bulk of the people are Hindus, who are in positions of power, the interests of the other religious groups are protected by the Constitution.

The State, as per the Constitution, has the objective of building a casteless and classless society and does not discriminate any one on the grounds of caste or religion. In reality, caste and other religious groups vie with each other to have access to power. Like any other society which is exposed to modernisation, Indian society has not shunned the traditional attitudes, values and beliefs. Instead its institutions have adapted themselves to the changing scenario.

Like most other societies, India is also a stratified society and in such a society the powerful groups which
have a high place in the hierarchy tend to acquire or hold on to power at the cost of the under-privileged and deprived groups, which are lower in status. Unlike in societies where achievement enables different groups means to acquire higher status and power, in societies, such as that of India, where ascription determines the status of the group or individual, it is highly difficult for the lower and under-privileged groups to attain not only equality with other groups but also power.

Caste system is peculiar to India and it has no parallel anywhere else in the world (Dumont, L: 1970; Leach, E.R.: 1960). Caste dominated the socio-cultural and economic life of the people and also controlled its political activities in the past. Socially caste could be identified as a cohesive as well as a divisive force. But caste in modern India has lost its cohesive status and in reality it has linked its relations very much with the political machinery. It has emerged as such a dominant force that even the progressive and secular political parties have not denied recognition to the caste groups and the dominant role that they play in the political process (Harrison, S.: 1960; Srinivas: 1962). Caste is always a crucial factor in the day to day life of a group or an individual as it carries the sentiments and interests of different caste groups to their or one's advantage or disadvantage.
As caste governs the socio-economic activities of the people, it is needless to say that it creates a political stratification analogous to caste/social hierarchy. As such it creates and provides the basis for political leadership both at the micro as well as macro levels. The strength of caste and its role in the socio-political life of the nation can be better seen and understood at the micro level.

The caste solidarity and its related weakness were exploited by the alien rulers in administering the country. The British, in particular, who understood the structural weakness of the society, systematically exploited them for consolidating their position in India. Since the British believed in the principle of 'divide and rule' to control and further consolidate their political position, provided political representation only to such caste groups, who were socially, educationally, economically and, to some extent, numerically stronger. The various governmental measures and the British India Parliamentary Acts like 1861, 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1935 amply indicate the political techniques through which the politically disorganised people were denied the chance to air their voices or grievances. But the Indian nationalist movement and the involvement of Great Britain in the two world wars and to some extent the Great Economic Depression of the 1930s converged to unite the divided Indian
society to such an extent as to make the British rulers helpless in pursuing a continued dominance of the divided Indian plural society. As a result, the politically deprived castes in India in general, and Karnataka in particular, responded appropriately and joined the main stream of nationalist movement. This in turn made the members of the lower caste groups politically more conscious and paved the way for their struggle against both the alien rulers as well as the dominant forward caste groups.

South India experienced several social and political movements in the past. The Shaivite and Vaishnavite movements in Tamil Nadu and the Veerashaiva movement in Karnataka are examples. The mid-20th century renaissance and the revolt against the dominant culture of Brahmins gave further impetus to this. Many social reformers of the time have protested against exploitative and discriminatory values in social and political sphere. A strong wave of revolt was experienced in Maharashtra under Jyotiba Phule's leadership. Jyotiba Phule created a sense of awareness among the downtrodden. The struggle for equality, fraternity and justice opened a new horizon in the life of the persecuted under-privileged groups. Ambedkar continued the mission of Jyotiba Phule and succeeded in fulfilling his dream of securing social and political rights for the downtrodden.
Politics is a means through which caste groups in modern Indian society are getting more weightage in social and economic spheres. Though caste is the outcome of Hindu religious philosophy, it has also extended its influence in more wider field. The roots of political mobilization are seen in the caste associations which are formed to exert pressure (Srinivas, 1962; Mandelbaum, 1970:500-19). These associations usually control the political behaviour of its leaders and members and regulate the political machinery at large. Those castes which were able to muster political strength have eventually emerged as the ruling class. Such castes dominated lower caste groups with their socio-political power. Thus the lower caste groups came to suffer immensely and had no say in the political sphere. But as time passed and the social and economic movements of the oppressed class/castes gained momentum, the political mobilisation with a definite goal in mind culminated into an activity with the sole objective of achieving the liberation of the oppressed from the tyranny of the dominant classes/castes.

Thus, the affected caste groups carried on a tirade against the social and economic injustices meted out to them. In the various scattered parts of Kannada speaking areas also, the so-called politically oppressed and unorganised castes seriously thought over the mechanism of dominant caste groups
as early as the beginning of the 20th century and recognised that education was the main avenue for attaining political status. In princely Mysore State, the Brahmins dominated politically, as they were the most educated lot. The 1881 census figures of princely Mysore clearly indicate that the Brahmins were actually a leading political group. As observed earlier educational progress of a group of people plays a crucial role in the social and political field. The census figures of 1881 show that Brahmins had only 9.36% and 66.92% of illiteracy among their caste males and females respectively. The Sudras (which then included Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Kurubas etc.) lagged far behind educationally. The illiteracy percentage among Sudras was 56.84% and 63.17% among males and females respectively, whereas the affected and unorganized castes such as Holeya and Madiga which were named as outcastes were mostly illiterates. And the literacy rate of the outcastes remains more or less the same even to this day.

The structural constraints of the Indian society prevented the lower castes to raise their status/position and thereby improve their economic and political status. But with the introduction of universal education and free access to it, more and more lower castes became educated resulting

1. Census of Mysore, 1881, Bangalore, 1884, p.94.
in the awareness about the importance of education. Backward castes such as Lingayat, Vokkaliga, Kuruba, Muslim, Raddi and others formed their caste associations and started educational institutions and hostels throughout the State and helped their caste students by providing free boarding and other educational facilities to them.

Consequently, there arose struggle for government jobs between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. The competition for both jobs and higher education became more stiff. Eighteen eighty one and 1907 are significant years in the political history of the princely Mysore State because the Mysore Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council were established during those years. Despite the educational advancement of non-Brahmin groups, Brahmins continued to be the most dominant section until 1920s. It is only from 1922 to 1949 that some non-Brahmins occupied key positions including that of the Dewanship of the Princely Mysore State.

There is another opinion regarding the political dominance of the upper castes, i.e. the Palegars system. P.B.R.Chandra Rao writes about Palegars system thus: "The local foundation of this political super-structure was what we may call the Palegar system. Palegars were the local power holders nominally in charge of a group of twenty villages (a political unit known as pollam)" (1950:162).
The *Palegars* who controlled the village political system mostly came from Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities. The *Palegars* by virtue of their positions establish a good rapport between the public on the one hand and the political machinery of the State on the other.

The following table shows the dominance of Lingayats and Vokkaligas, during 1931 to 1935, in different districts of the princely Mysore State.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>% of population 1931</th>
<th>% of village headman 1935</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vokkaligas</td>
<td>Lingayats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kolar</td>
<td>22.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mandya</td>
<td>49.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hassan</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tumkur</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kadur</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Chitradurg</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Shimoga</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>20.4</td>
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*Source: Census of India, 1931, XXV, pp.1-8, 45, 75 and PMLC December 1935.*
The above table indicates that Lingayats and Vokkaligas politically dominated over the other castes in 1930s.

The other prime reason that promoted the interests of the Lingayats and Vokkaligas in the political field was the exodus of Brahmins from the rural areas to the urban centres of learning during the mid-19th century. Consequently, the land that once belonged to the dominant Brahmins came to be possessed by the Lingayats and Vokkaligas who were economically better placed among the non-Brahmins. The change in the land ownership paved the way for the Lingayats and Vokkaligas to further consolidate their political position.

Thus, the Lingayats and Vokkaligas emerged as major political force in the region. They formed their caste associations during 1906 and 1907 respectively. The Sudras and other non-Brahmin groups continued to exist with a low profile. Yet they continued to mount pressure on the government for more share in government jobs besides liberal support for education of children of the oppressed. This led to the appointment of the Miller Committee to investigate and advise the rulers as to the problems of the most backward classes. In 1916 the government issued directions for reservation of 25% of the government jobs for the qualified non-Brahmins. The backward classes were still not satisfied
with such government order. At that time all the backward castes came under one banner and formed the "Prajamitra Mandali" to fight for more privileges. In the 1918 memorandum to the Maharaja of Mysore they pleaded for more scholarships for their children and for higher percentage of job reservations in government. Sir M.Visvesvarayya, the then Dewan of Mysore accepted the contention of the backward class leaders in connection with the scholarship increase but did not approve of the increase in the quota of job reservation. Visvesvarayya did not also appreciate the idea of lowering the qualification for the Backward class candidates for government appointments on the ground that it would affect efficiency. Later on, there was a rift between Visvesvarayya and non-Brahmin leaders as also the rulers of Mysore. As a result, Sir M.Visvesvarayya opted to step down from the Dewanship in 1918.

Thus caste associations and caste groups played an important role in mobilizing their caste people. Though caste has not been accepted in theory, as enshrined in the Constitution, in practice caste has come to play a new role in the political field. There is a great controversy about this and arguments and counter arguments are advanced time and again. Periodically, efforts are made to keep the caste phenomena out of the political sphere, lest the political
atmosphere is spoiled. Yet all our political practices and election process and propaganda are largely dependent upon caste only which is fully exploited by the political parties, including communists, to gain political power. Political sociologists and political scientists have always used social criteria as a political parameter. To understand the political process and structure one needs to understand the social organization and stratification and other social aspects in depth. The roots of political thinking in the Indian society, can be found in the social structure of India. It is a fact that caste plays an important role in the rule making process. Caste and political structure apparently seem to be not independent institutions. The sociological and economic factors have to be inter-linked to understand the caste and class relations in the Indian political scenario.

The dynamics of Caste, Politics, and the Political Process

The political process in post-independence period in India with reference to the functioning of democracy is full of contradictions. It is true that the political process is operating in a traditional social milieu and the state of its under-developed economy needs no explanation.
The traditional social set up was guided by the caste factor. The caste system is a highly complex phenomenon. Its role in society and its importance in the political process cannot be easily summed up. There are several works dealing with caste and its multifarious dimensions. Special mention must be made of those who have delved deep into its (castes) sociological significance or its political role admit that it is too complex a phenomenon to delimit its treatment in the analysis in a restricted and well defined framework. We have ample examples of this in the works of M.N. Srinivas, Rajani Kothari, Anil Bhatt, Michael Mahar, Andre Beteille and David Mandelbaum. In one way or the other all of them refer to the complexities of caste and admit that caste dominates the public life and political process to a considerable extent.

The word caste is of Spanish/Portuguese origin. It simply means lineage or race. It is believed to be derived from the Latin word 'Castus' which denotes purity. Though the Spaniards were the first to use it in this sense, its Indian application is drawn from the Portuguese after they arrived in India - probably around the middle of the 15th century. However, its current spelling indicates that it is of French origin. The word caste appeared around 1740 in the French "academics". Earlier to this the word was spelled - 'cast'. But in the
sense of race or creed of man it was used as early as 1555 A.D. In this sense the Spaniards used the word 'casta' to denote the mixed breed between Europeans, American Indians and Negros. But its use in the Indian context and as understood in the present sense it was unknown before the 17th century. In the Indian sense, as it was vaguely understood, it has been loosely applied to denote the hereditary classes (Ketkar 1979:12). By heredity, it meant the transmission of the potentialities from father to son. Hence the idea is supposed to have been applied to the hereditary specialisation - which in a way was responsible for the segmentation of the society. And such segmentation constituted the blocks with which the larger Indian society is built up.

The observation of Rajani Kothari that, "the alleged casteism in politics is thus no more and no less than politicisation of caste" (1970:4) is to be viewed contextually. During the elections, "politicians mobilise caste groupings and identities in order to organise their power" (Kothari 1970:4). This means the politicians exploit the caste identity and caste solidarity in order to achieve success in the political process and thus try to enhance their own political status. Further Kothari is right when he states that, "politics is a comparative enterprise; its purpose is the acquisition of power for the realisation of
certain goals, and its process is one of identifying and manipulating existing and emerging allegiances in order to mobilise and consolidate positions" (1970:4). The whole process of democratic politics viewed in the light of this observation may be summed up as a business venture, the proposition being one of investments and returns - of cost and the benefit. The purpose or the whole exercise being very obvious, it is the acquisition of power through which one can gain control of the situation as well as the organisation which in turn provides the necessary infrastructure to secure control over goods and services for enhanced social status.

Andre Beteille has aptly stated. "The most distinctive feature of caste is its exclusiveness, and sharpness of its identity in relation to other castes" (1969:229). The significance of this caste attribute is latent. How they operate and what in turn they acquire for their participation and successful manoeuvring is difficult to state. In this context Andre Beteille states thus: "Support may be given in return for material benefits. But material benefits cannot be granted directly or immediately in exchange for every kind of support. For this reason the mobilisation of support requires appeals to loyalties of various kind which do not always have tangible material basis" (1969:156).
Thus a caste alone cannot play a role for no return, and also monopolise power. But they are always inclined to **combine** and operate with a view to benefit in the ultimate. In the process segments of population with a caste label combine into large aggregates so that they could be viable at the level of operation. Thus the success or failure to capture power and harness the given situation depend upon largeness of aggregation - whether there is sociological justification for such a combine in the sense of social or ritual unity.

Dominant castes usually play a crucial role in the political process. But as rightly observed by Srinivas (1968) endemic factionalism may loosen the hold of dominant castes on political power. According to Srinivas a caste could be dominant, "when it preponderates numerically over the other castes, and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power. A large and powerful caste group can more easily be dominant if its position in the local caste hierarchy is not too low" (1955:18). The dominant castes have lost power in the constituency due to the mechanisms of non-dominant caste combines into large aggregates at the time of election. What mechanisms brought them to such successful combines makes an interesting investigation. In a way these castes, who have combined, have great
diversity in ritual matters and are highly unlikely to share the same views to provide ritual unity. In reality, ritual unity is not required for any alliance of caste groups to gain political power. In fact, Srinivas (1968:199) rightly points out that "fusion" is a modern phenomena while "fission" was a traditional method of mobility. There are many incidents in the political history of post-independence of India which prove the point. Further, what is more of interest is dethroning of the dominant community during the 70's in the state congress organisation which has been returned to power repeatedly in all the elections. The political scene in the state of Karnataka is dominated by the rivalries between the two dominant castes - Lingayats and the old Mysore area Vokkaligas. It is an accepted fact that this "rivalry is colouring every issue, whether it be appointment to government posts or reservation of seats in colleges, or election to local bodies and legislatures" (Srinivas 1962:32). These two dominant communities were wrested from the democratic power. Whether this occurrence is a reflection of what is witnessed at the micro level needs to be examined.

The contradiction that has been witnessed is in the evasive theme of 'secular social unity' as emphasised in the Constitution of India and the influence of caste in
the political process. The forces at work - especially the caste factor at the elections and all that follows in the political process has been pervading the issue of integration of divisive forces and believe the attempts at the creation of the new social order. Over the years, as the incidence of people's participation in elections increases, the consciousness of the caste solidarity too, would go up. Individuals have been resorting to attribute their success or failure to the factor of caste. And caste antagonisms are becoming very common. As a result, the village life once held as an organic unity due to the occupational inter-dependence is split up into as many units as there are castes in it. The life and work in the villages virtually become turbulent both preceding and following the elections. The values once cherished by the locals are eroded. The observation of M.N.Srinivas is very apt. He says: "Caste may enter into political process in a number of ways. Firstly, appeals may be made to caste loyalties in a general way as when Lingayats are exhorted to vote for Lingayat candidates. The force of this kind of appeal is made evident in Karnataka where rival parties often match caste with caste in the selection of the candidates for electoral offices. Secondly, network of inter-personal relations are activated both during elections and at other times for mobilising support along caste lines"
(Cf. Andre Beteille 1969:157). For whatever reasons, social or political, caste has been viewed even by outsiders as a divisive force. The records of an English report cited by Celestin Bougle reveals it: "Caste is division, hatred, jealousy and distrust between neighbours" (1971:10). To find harmony amidst this divisive trend and blend it with the political process in an exercise. And this exercise is coloured with the caste factor. The day to day affairs of administration and the interaction of people in public life are linked with caste; and caste affiliations dominate the political process in the sense that they guide the actions of individuals and are responsible for the whole process of development in public life. Thus, the political process depends on the caste factor and the caste factor dictates the 'Politics' in a given situation.

A study of this kind calls for the analysis of structure of power, political process, problems of leadership, voting behaviour, political participation and role of social structural factors like caste and class. All these concepts and the mechanisms of caste politics and the individual's participation in the political process and his voting behaviour has been studied in the present work with reference to Badami constituency from 1971.
Objectives of the Study

There have been many studies on the structure of power and the political process covering national and state level political institutions, and problems of leadership, voting behaviour and political participation. But very few of them cover the studies at the grass roots level. Some serious attempts are made by the American political scientists. Robert Dhal and Floyd Hunter. They have studied the elitist and voting pattern at micro levels to develop a theory of political process. In India Rajani Kothari (1970:3-25), Andre Bettille (1970:259-298), Anil Bhatt (1970:299-339) have initiated studies in the recent past. The foreigners who conducted notable studies on India are: Eleanor Zelliot (1970:29-69), Robert L.Hardgrave (1970:102-126), Jr.Carolyn M.Elliot (1970:129-166), Richard Sission (1970:175-222) and Donald B.Rosenthal (1970:340-370). They studied how various caste groups played an important role in Indian politics in different states. There are others who have studied Karnataka State politics. They are: James Manor (1977), Haetten Bjorn (1978), Lelah Dushkin (1974). Their studies are concerned with the British period and early years after Independence. All of them invariably established the fact that the major communities like the Lingayats, Vokkaligas, and Brahmins have dominated the political scene in princely Mysore State. But systematic studies on Karnataka politics
after independence are few. There is hardly any study relating to North Karnataka. Interesting developments in the political process have been taking place since the seventies. The present study attempts to fill the lacuna by undertaking this study at the micro level viz., Badami taluka, Bijapur district. The main objectives are to understand the political process at the micro level and to examine the relationship between caste and politics.

The problem of Bijapur district politics in general and Badami taluka in particular can be studied in the overall background of political structure of the Karnataka State. The present study restricts its scope specifically to Badami taluka and generally to Bijapur district in order to observe closely the link between caste and political process and caste structure and political structure.

Since independence and particularly after the 1952 General Elections to the State Assembly in Mysore only the economically dominant castes have established their political control over the backward classes and minorities. After the split of the Congress in 1969, the political atmosphere changed and the power axis shifted from the dominant castes to the other lower caste groups. The reflection of shift in power and its impact is noticed in Bijapur district and
Badami taluka. This has led to a new thinking that the minorities and backward classes also can come to power and dominate over the others if they were properly mobilized. A testimony to this was seen in the emergence of Devaraj Urs who hailed from a minority Arasu community which constituted only 0.07% of the total population of Karnataka. Because of his benevolent programmes and dynamic and shrewd political moves, the politically weak backward castes opened their eyes and identified him as their political messiah. In his time an elite class among the backward classes had emerged. The politically neglected classes like Kurubas, SC/ST, Valmiki and other minorities forged unity to compete with the already established castes. As a result a new pattern of leadership eventually developed in the Badami taluka. The caste associations of backward classes and minorities mushroomed in every nook and corner of Badami taluka. The poor, illiterate, unorganized and politically ignorant castes organised themselves to hold closed door meetings and conferences in which they discussed various political strategies to gain control over political power. Equally, the politically dominant castes in Badami taluka also realised their weaknesses and in order to regain control of political power pledged themselves to divide the newly organized backward classes. In this context, the present investigation, among other things, attempts to study the following:
(1) What role the caste plays in the political process in the contemporary situation;

(2) To what extent the dominant castes have succeeded in monopolizing power under the present political situation;

(3) Whether the dominant castes actually control the political machinery and thereby influence the backward classes and minorities in the political process; and

(4) Can upward mobility be achieved by the backwards and the downtrodden through the democratically earned political power.

Scope of the Study

The problem of the caste politics and political mobilization as a general study can be examined at various levels, such as national, regional, district and taluka. It can also be studied as related to problematic situation arising out of the sociological and economic factors, such as caste and class.

The present study restricts its scope to the political mobilization and caste politics in Bijapur district in general and Badami taluka in particular. Much attention has been paid to study the political positions of various
Caste leaders vis-a-vis their followers. The study adopts the political criteria for studying the emerging pattern of the different caste groups in Radami taluka. Obviously it confines its inquiry to all those caste groups and examines as to how they mobilize their people to capture the political power. This study has adopted a particular time frame, that is, from 1971 onwards, which marks the beginning of the political awareness among different lower caste groups and leaders.

The reason for taking 1971 as the base for the present study is, the dominant caste viz., Lingayats and Raddies in Bijapur district and Badami taluka in particular established their political sway over the other minorities. The Lingayats and Raddies virtually dominated over the other minorities because of two factors: (1) The Lingayats and Raddies enjoyed social and economic positions and hence it was easy for them to enjoy political status. (2) Though the minorities constituted the largest population when compared to Lingayats and Raddies, they could not organise themselves effectively and capture power. Besides, the internal rift and sub-caste consciousness among the minorities compelled them to be politically unorganized and ignorant.
Right from 1947 to 1969 it was the Congress Party, dominated by the Lingayat and Raddies that enjoyed the political power in Badami taluka. And the minorities like Muslims, Kuruba, Walmiki and SC/ST and other groups suffered under the dominant castes. The political machinery at the State level dominated by Lingayats and Vokkaligas did not care to improve the socio-economic conditions of the backward castes and minorities. This eventually led to political apathy among the leaders of the minority.

In the year 1969, the Congress which ruled the country right from independence split into two groups, that is, Congress (O) and Congress (R) headed by S.Nijalingappa and Indira Gandhi respectively. Indira Gandhi was fully aware of the political situation and happenings in Karnataka. She adopted new strategies to outwit the dominant castes that were in a way suspected to be complementary to Congress (O) and began to patronise the unorganised and numerically stronger backward caste groups. Catchy slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' etc. attracted the hitherto neglected people and in a way she became the messiah of the backward castes. This opened up a new era, and changes began to occur all over the country. And the Bijapur district and Badami taluka did not remain silent.
The political situation also changed in Bijapur district in general and Badami taluka in particular. Veerendra Patil, who was the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, directly supported the Lingayats and this led the minority leaders to mobilize their masses to meet the challenges posed by the Lingayats. It eventually created political awareness among backward castes. When Devaraj Urs came to power the backward castes and classes virtually broke the dominance of Lingayats and established their sway over the politically dominant castes.

In this thesis an attempt is made to study as to how the different caste groups mobilized their masses politically from the beginning of 1971. An attempt is also made in this study to understand the political aspirations of the different caste groups. Though the Constitution declares the country to be a secular state and the politics based on equality, fraternity, liberty and justice, caste continues to dominate the political process.

Methodology

In the present study available literature was consulted. The relevant books on the subject, articles from research journals, reports on election results, census data, backward classes commission reports, classified assembly debates, newspaper cuttings were all analysed and also utilised.
in the body of the text. From 1902 to the present day, a good rapport with the local leaders and politicians was established by the researcher in the area of field work. Being a native of the taluka, the researcher had an advantage. He knew the people and their culture intimately. The Chikodi Parliamentary constituency is a reserve one. Here the caste politics and under-currents that cut across party lines and caste associations were watched from close quarters to learn the dual role of politicians, party functionaries, caste leaders, big businessmen and the rural folk that ultimately matter in the elections. The Panebennur parliamentary constituency is a general constituency. Here, the Muslims – a majority religious group – dominates. This gave an opportunity to the researcher to have an insight into the problems of minorities and the way they forged unity to capture political power. As a keen student of political science the researcher had developed wide contacts with party workers, local leaders and the party bosses and as a result, he had free access to all sections of the society. By 1983 elections, the researcher was in service as a college teacher. This further enhanced the confidence of the local leaders in the researcher to associate him in the local election work.

To consult the literature, the Karnatak University
Library, Dharwad, and the State Legislature Library at Bangalore were consulted for literature survey. The offices of the Election Commission, the Backward Class Commission and the State Minority Commission were visited and a series of discussions with the officials were held to gather information. The Bureau of Statistics and Economics in the State capital as well as Statistics Department at the District headquarters - Bijapur - formed secondary source of information. Besides the District offices at Bijapur, the researcher constantly visited the government and party offices at Badami and made notes on every visit and reviewed them periodically.

Formal field work was undertaken at Badami town and constituency during 1982-83 and 1984-85. An interview schedule was canvassed to the taluka level politicians and leaders. Both formal as well as informal 'Interviews' were conducted at Bijapur district party office circles where it was easier to meet all the political leaders from 15 constiuencies - business-men and the influential and well-informed persons to elicit information on local problems and events. During these several trips, visits to caste association offices were fruitful. A greater insight was gained in these offices as to the attitudes of people and the role of caste in public affairs. During the election campaigns
an intimate contact was developed with the rural elites who were highly knowledgeable and informative. Through discussions the researcher was able to feel the pulse of the people (voters) and their choices - likes and dislikes. It was also possible to assess the party's efforts to win over the voters and the reactions of voters to party promises and appeals. It is during this period that contacts with real 'link men' were established and the dynamics of caste associations and the vote banks were learnt.