The history of reservation policy reveals that it is not only a struggle for equality but also a struggle for power. The Hindu society is a complex society and is hierarchical in nature. The society is organised on the basis of caste where groups are stratified as high or low and the change of status position being impossible in theory. However, in the hierarchical system which is unique in character, the position of the top and the bottom is clear while at the middle level there is room for disputes about the relative status position. This has made possible for the mobility of groups at the middle level. It must be pointed out that the caste system is based on inequality and is philosophically justified by the concepts of dharma, varna and other worldliness.

In a society which was divided on the basis of religion, caste and language, the British, to consolidate their power and for easy governance, introduced the English language as the medium of instruction and administration. The historic decision to make English the medium of instruction and administration in 1835 in preference to Sanskrit or Persian and Arabic heralded a new era. This new language
policy also brought with it a new education policy. It promoted the study of English literature and science. In 1837, Persian was abolished as the court language and English was introduced in its place. This new policy promoted new values besides becoming a means of livelihood for the native people. Persons with knowledge of English managed to secure the East India Company jobs. This attracted the natives to prefer learning English in place of Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic. As the educational facilities were enlarged during the 1840's admissions to educational institutions were thrown open to all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. All this promoted advancement in science, development of democratic ideals of liberty and equality and national integration. The cumulative effect of all this was the replacement of 'superstitious belief' by 'reason'. The power castes who were denied educational opportunities and better conditions of living began to get educated and started tasting the comforts which were the total monopoly of the upper crust of the Hindu society 'the Brahmins' and the struggle began between these two for educational opportunities and white collar jobs that assured better living conditions. Each group manoeuvred to control or restrain the other grabbing the lucrative jobs or gaining the lead through the opportunities that were
opened up. In fact, with the introduction of English, the seeds of Backward Classes movement was sown, especially in South India.

With the founding of MLEF (Mysore Lingayat Education Fund) in 1905 and the Vokkaligara Sangha, the following year, the political consciousness was slowly built up among the non-Brahmins. Added to this was the new democratic forum - Mysore Representative Assembly - constituted on limited franchise where grievances of the people were expressed and resolutions passed especially regarding the recruitment policy to government service.

Towards the end of the 19th century, conflicts arose even among the Brahmins. The higher echelons of services in the State were monopolised by the Tamil Brahmins who came over to Mysore along with the British officers. These Tamil Brahmins preferred more of their own stock and the Telugu Brahmins and neglected the Mysore Brahmins in the process of recruitment to government service. The Mysore Brahmins were in a way considered backward by those outside Brahmins as they were exposed to English education much later than their counterparts from Madras and Telugu speaking areas where the British were the administrators. To resolve this difference among the Brahmins, a Mysore
Brahmin was appointed as Dewan in 1912. Though the import of Brahmins concluded with the raise of Sir M. Visveswarayya as Dewan of Mysore, the controversy as to who deserves the government jobs continued. The local Brahmins had to face the non-Brahmin movement led by the Lingayats and the Vokkaligas and the struggle to corner the government jobs by members of all these castes continued. British officers who did not approve of the single caste monopoly of power, advised the Mysore Rajah against such policy and encourage the appointment of non-Brahmins in the services. As a result of this, conflicts arose, and to resolve it an official committee under the Chairmanship of Miller was appointed in 1918, with terms of reference to investigate and report to the government on the question of steps to be taken to encourage non-Brahmins to seek employment under the government in large numbers. Sir M. Visveswarayya, who stood for the policy of meritocracy and was against any preference/concession being shown on the basis of caste, resigned from the Dewanship and the Miller Committee Report was accepted by the Maharaja of Mysore.

After the formation of the linguistic states in 1956 the government faced difficulties in the area of administering reservations for the Backward Classes. The caste
lists were not uniform in all the districts and the governmental efforts to set right the anomalies from the integrated areas were challenged in the courts. To remedy the situation the government appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Nagana Gowda to investigate and suggest the pattern of reservation to fill up the government posts and also to indicate the reservation quotas for admission into educational institutions. The castes were listed, and on the basis of the percentage of literacy in the community and their representation in government service, the backwardness was determined. The whole of Lingayat community was treated as forward as their educational level as well as their representation in government services were found to be above the State average. This was resented by the Lingayats. Bitterness was exhibited and massive protests were organised. The government feared survival in the wake of protests and accepted to include Lingayats also in the backwards list. This was opposed by the Vokkaligas and the others, who were politically dominant. Caste feelings became stronger and anti-government agitations were held all over the State. The Vokkaliga caste leaders who had already lost political power to the Lingayats made a big issue of the reservation policy and the advantages given by the government led by a Lingayat Chief Minister to his community. And for several
years cases were fought in the court by individuals with the patronage of caste associations. Reacting to the court judgement, public opinion, and the pressure of legislators, the government abandoned the caste criteria in determining backwardness and instead adopted economic and occupational criteria to determine the backwardness. As a result of this occupation-cum-income criteria, almost every community benefited. However, the greatest beneficiaries in this were the dominant castes, especially the Lingayats and Vokkaligas. But each caste group nursed secretly the desire to exclude the other from the list of backward classes to minimise the opportunities to their rivals in matters of admission to technical institutions and recruitment to government service and increase their own caste quota in both.

The political developments of 1969 that split the ruling Indian National Congress Party and the emergence of Devaraj Urs as a leader in Karnataka in 1972 paved the way for revoking the reservation policy. Devaraj Urs who was to continue as Chief Minister on the support of backward classes, ordered the appointment of the First Backward Classes Commission under the Chairmanship of L.G. Havanur. This move pleased some who were persistently demanding revision of the reservation policy and the existing quotas for different castes. At the same time this move also enraged the dominant castes. With this a new caste war
began in Karnataka.

The legislators of the dominant Lingayat and Vokkaliga castes belonging to the ruling party were caught in a dilemma. They had to serve the interests of their castes and at the same time go with the party programme in the name of party discipline. At a time when polarisation of forces between Mrs. Gandhi's camp and her rightist rivals were first shaping into meaningful divisions of power axis, the appointment of Backward Classes Commission spread caste feelings nursing distrust, suspicion, ill-will, between castes and posed a severe set-back to the unity and strength of the Congress (I) party in the State.

The Havanur Commission employed a rather sophisticated approach to inquire into the status of people. Its approach was both social as well as economic in nature. It took into account the race, caste, tribe, social, educational and economic background of groups for identifying the Backward Classes. For this purpose, a socio-economic survey was conducted.

The objectives of the Commission were very clear. The intention of the government was no doubt good in appointing a Commission, but deep inside those who advocated
a new approach and fresh recommendations, was the animosity towards the major communities/castes. From the very beginning when Siddaveerappa, leader of the then opposition was blocked from leading the government since he was a Lingayat, Urs's bonafides were questioned as to whether he was a secular leader. The composition of the Commission further increased this doubt. Even the bonafides of the Commission members came in for public criticism. The more intelligent critics questioned the survey methodology and the projected findings. It was also alleged that the data for the Commission were collected by biased government servants. The available government employees were used for work of the Commission at all stages. And the findings and recommendations were implemented ignoring the criticisms and protests levelled against the government policy based on the Commission's work. The affected castes bitterly attacked the government and the caste associations were strengthened to meet the challenge of the time. Thus the cold war among different communities began once again and this cold conflict began to govern and shape the political events that followed after 1977.

The affected caste leaders severely criticised the Havanur Report. In fact, one of the legislators of the ruling Congress (I) party, Bhimanna Khandre, a Lingayat by
caste, as a protest, burnt the copy of the report in the legislature. This action was resented to by the beneficiary caste MLAs. Bitter verbal exchanges echoed in the house. There were even riots here and there all over the state. In order to attract the attention of the government, no move was spared by those, branded as forward castes, who were deleted in the Commission's Report.

As a consequence of the implementation of the Havanur Commission's recommendations, Congress (I) party began to lose ground in the dominant caste circles. The State leadership belonging to this party came to be disliked and eventually rejected by the electorate. Thus, when the Congress (I) was replaced by the Janata/Kranti Ranga and eventually when Janata party secured a clear mandate of the State electorate, it was obliged to go in for populist policies and also carry the dominant castes with it.

But what went wrong with the administration of quota system as recommended by the Havanur Commission was this: The Urs's government identified a 'new group' for the
1977, the Government implemented the new policy. The special group was based exclusively on income criterion of Rs.4,800 per annum or less to cover the actual cultivators, artisans, petty businessmen, and those holding employment in government or private institutions, and self-employed persons irrespective of caste or community. Apart from this, 16 castes were brought under the category of backward community, 129 castes under the backward castes and 62 castes under backward tribes. An income limit of Rs.8,000 a year was fixed for the Backward Classes, in general, and this was subsequently raised to Rs.10,000 per annum. The reservation fixed for the four categories was backward community 20 per cent; backward castes 10 per cent; backward tribes 5 per cent and backward special group 5 per cent. On 27.6.1979 the special group quota was raised from 5 to 15 per cent just on the eve of the mid-term Lok Sabha elections.

In the intervening period a number of cases were filed in the High Court and the Supreme Court. Efforts were on to get the court's direction in the matter by those affected by the political development. In 1982, the Karnataka government (led by Gundu Rao of Congress-I) gave an undertaking to the Supreme Court that it would constitute another (second) backward classes Commission, for the
purpose of "enumeration and determination of the backward classes". To fulfil this commitment, Ramakrishna Hegde's government constituted the Second Backward Classes Commission under the Chairmanship of T.Vinkataswamy (18.4.1983). The Commission completed its work and submitted its Report to the government in March 1986. The recommendations of this Commission were based on a state-wide survey. It covered 90 per cent of the projected population of 1984; and identified 35 castes/communities for benefits. There were violent reactions to the report. People of all walks of life protested. Soon, the government realised that the corroborative evidence produced by the Commission was 'faulty'. Some press reports called the panel report as 'unrealistic, arbitrary, unscientific and anti-social' and urged the government to reject it. The most affected castes revolted. They took to the streets. The government came under severe pressure and rejected the report.

It stated: "The Venkataswamy Commission Report was analysed at various levels. Reaction of the public, press and others were taken note of and government took the decision that the Report cannot be accepted as a reliable guide to act upon in determining the backwardness for the following reasons:

(1) Inability of the Commission to proceed according
to the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court as the decision was received in May 1985 by which time the Commission had completed most of its work.

(2) Lacunae in the methodology, data collection, and indicators and conclusions arrived at by the Commission.*

A survey of this nature and magnitude handled by the Government employees at the grass roots level cannot be free from bias. The Commission had accepted whatever was reported and the data was not cross-checked for accuracy. A tally of the employment figures reported and also incorporated in the report with figures available from the Bureau of Economics and Statistics is revealing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number of Government Servants in the State**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As per the survey</td>
<td>28,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As per the Directorate of Economics and Statistics</td>
<td>8,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess/Difference</td>
<td>19,737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


** Ibid., p.8.
The above information amply reveals that the data was highly unreliable.

Under pressure from all quarters the government rejected the Commission's report and an ad hoc reservation policy - "hold-all" policy - announced. To drive the government to this decision, many politicians had to resort to hunger strike. The veteran leader of the Vokkaliga community K.V. Shankare Gowda, M.P. had to resort to fast at Mandya. Southern Karnataka agitators mainly belonging to the affected Vokkaliga community obstructed rail and road traffic and the agitation to scrap the report spread to the whole of Mandya and the adjoining districts. The Lingayats too intensified their agitation. Many morchas were held in support of their claim to backward tag and memoranda were submitted to the Government urging for inclusion of Lingayats in the list of beneficiaries. The government under pressure succumbed to the demands and finally Lingayats and Vokkaligas among other beneficiaries left out by the Commission were included in the list and the strike was called off. A three year reservation policy was announced and the government also agreed to set up a new panel for study and recommendation of the Backwards problem and reservation quotas.
What is intriguing here is the way the former as well as the present governments reacted to the reports on Backward Classes and the policy they have finally pursued. In the R.Nagana Gowda Committee Report, Lingayats were declared as forward. But due to the caste politics and the then leadership which belonged to the Lingayat caste, Lingayats were included in the list of Backwards. This led to fights and confrontation between Vokkaligas and Lingayats. Prior to Independence, it was a confrontation between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. And after the Independence and formation of the Linguistic State, Lingayats and Vokkaligas fell apart and developed serious rifts in their relations with one another mainly because of leadership question and access to the benefits that the State had extended to these communities under the Backward Classes tag.

The exploitation of the provision of Backward Classes by Lingayats came to an end during the Devaraj Urs regime. This further damaged the caste relations of Vokkaligas and Lingayats.

But after the publication of the Venkataswamy Commission Report, there has been a shift in the attitudes of Vokkaligas and Lingayats towards each other. They have
come to forge unity in order to bargain better with the authorities that be. Both being the two major dominant castes in Karnataka are sure to guide the course of events in the years to come if they come together.

Another development is an increase in the caste consciousness as a consequence of Backward Class Commissions set up in the State and the emergence of many caste associations. Even the sub-caste and the splinter groups within the sub-caste category have been coming out with their own associations to submit memoranda to the Commission pleading for recognition and support of the States' reservation benefits. Where this fragmentation of the castes would lead to is to be watched.

In Bijapur district caste associations have been active. The dominant caste association, Lingayat Association (BLDE), is well-organised and is one of the oldest to function for safeguarding the interests of its caste members. The sub-castes among Lingayats who are building up separate associations are: Ganigas and Kuruhinashettis.

The recent associations that are active to attain/grab political power are: Valmikis, Kurubas, SCs, Muslims, and Banjara/Lambanis. In fact, the SC leaders - S.S. Arakeri,
R.N.Toivi, J.L.Kabade, Ganesh Nagthan and K.K.Pol - have started a move to demand delinking of Lambanis, Bhovis and Bhajantris from SC's category. They want these castes to be deleted from the Scheduled Caste list.

All the party leaders both at the State level as well as at the national level have linkages with the caste association leaders. They are very active in cultivating the caste leaders with some long range aim and to win over these caste votes in the coming elections.

It is appropriate to record here the observation of Paramanand Singh. He points out that, "the State practice on Reservation reveals that the device of reservation has become the tool of aggrandizement in the hands of politically dominant caste who always try to strike political bargains to retain the privilege of being classified as backward even at the expense of the really needy and the deserving. Even those in power see the advantage in the system for winning their political supporter castes"
In Karnataka, like elsewhere in the country, the political leaders belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SC) face all sort of discrimination against them. In spite of 40 years of freedom and the protection guaranteed under the Constitution, they have been unable to get out of the hierarchical shell which puts them at the bottom-most level of the society. SCs are further divided among themselves in terms of castes. Their divisions are so strong that such caste considers the other as inferior. For instance, the Male caste considers the Madiga as inferior, since the latter's occupation is to deal with hides and carcasses of dead animals. In fact, the former, in a few cases, do not eat beef and hence, consider themselves superior. This kind of a situation further complicates the problems of SCs. Although, it appears that they enjoy some sort of equality in urban areas, still they have to go a long way in the matter of the upper castes accepting them as equals. Their condition in the urban areas has not changed much.

In the political arena, especially those members who have achieved positions like ministers, etc., have not only to face the envy and jealousy of the upper castes, but they have also become victims of many a baseless scandal. Many
cases can be quoted to substantiate this. For example, H.D. Kittur of Belgaum district, who was a member of the Devaraj Urs ministry became the victim of a baseless scandal that was widely publicized in the press all over the country. His name was associated with a young Gujarati girl, Miss Sumitra Desai. It has been opined by many that Kittur was totally innocent and that the whole story was fabricated by the opposition members only to embarrass Devaraj Urs and his ministry. In protest, Kittur resigned himself to face a police inquiry. This inquiry not only vindicated Desai but also revealed to the public the notorious activities of this Gujarati girl who was operating in league with the anti-social elements like smugglers, etc. Due to the compassion and grace of Urs, who protected the interests of the downtrodden, Kittur regained his political power as well as clean image. He was reinstated as minister.

Similarly, another prominent leader from Congress (I), B. Basavalingappa, also suffered and weakened politically due to the connivance of the higher caste group leaders and the press. What Basavalingappa considered the realistic assessment of the status of Kannada literature was misinterpreted and the issue was politicised. Basavalingappa, Municipal Administration minister, declared in a speech
that much of the Kannada literature was nothing but 'boosa' (cattle feed). The meaning and significance of this speech were ignored and a caste war was started all over the State. Basavalingappa, the dynamic leader who was considered 'a tiger' because of his bold approach to problems of the downtrodden and the innovative policies, was literally reduced to a party status only in order to weaken the whole of Scheduled Caste groups in the state political arena. Even the students were used in this cold 'caste' war, without considering the damage such a move would leave behind. The Kannada daily Prajavani of November 29, 1973 reported that, "About 2000 students from various colleges took out a procession along with a donkey and a dog bearing the names of the Chief Minister and Basavalingappa respectively. After burning Basavalingappa's effigy they stopped buses and autos and wrote anti-Basavalingappa slogans on them. On November 28, rival student groups clashed in the heart of the city forcing the police to resort to Lathi-charge and arrest. However, the upper caste leaders tried to brand the issue as 'disturbing peace in the society' in order to use police machinery heavily against the supporters of B.Basavalingappa. Students supporting Basavalingappa shouted pro-Basavalingappa slogans and also slogans against Prajavani (a prominent Kannada daily), the Vice-Chancellor Javare Gowda of Mysore University
and Kannada writer 'Beechi'. Student demonstrators then came before the local offices of the Deccan Herald (a widely circulated English daily) and Prajavani and shouted slogans denouncing the policies of these papers. Later, they also burnt copies of these papers."

Due to the clashes of these two groups, a number of students were injured and the educational institutions were closed all over the State. The student sufferers were from all communities. In this kind of caste war not only the students but also the local leaders from every district were involved. Students from the downtrodden sections from all over the State did their best to safeguard the interests and image of their leader, Basavalingappa by whole-heartedly agitating against the upper caste protesters.

Some well-known writers have come to appreciate the criticism raised by Basavalingappa. Of them K.V.Puttappa, a reputed Kannada scholar, is one. He observed in his inaugural speech at the Karnataka Writers and Artists Vokkuta Foundation Conference at Mysore city, held on April 20, 1974, that, "there was a big rumpus about a speech made by Basavalingappa alleging that all literature in Kannada is boosa (cattle feed). There was even a
But some of the high caste writers hated Basavalingapppa and opposed not only his speech but his continuation in the ministry. This demand for the removal of the controversial minister was not only a warning to the younger generation, but it triggered off an awakening of both the writers as well as the elites in the society at large.

The political activities of Scheduled Caste leaders after independence have suffered setbacks in Karnataka State. They could not play any considerable role in the political system as they were highly unorganised. In the contemporary Indian political situation the dominant caste
groups have continued to control the political activities. The Scheduled Castes' masses and their leaders had to compromise with the values of the higher castes for their survival and play the second fiddle.

The Republican Party of India (RPI) is the only political party in India which symbolically represents the aspirations of the ex-untouchables. It came into existence after the death of Ambedkar. Its active members and leaders in Karnataka are C.M. Armugham and S.S. Arakeri. They represented K.G.F. and Ballolli constituencies in the state legislature. In Karnataka, the RPI has no history of militancy or Buddhist conversion* to bring about a cohesion among the several sub-sects of the Dalits. Only C.M. Armugham, S.S. Arakeri and their followers embraced Buddhism. But the RPI has an uphill task. The members of this party are mainly the Scheduled Castes and converted Buddhists and it is difficult to mobilize members from innumerably number of other castes because of caste

*Ambedkar along with his followers, mostly from Mahar community, embraced Buddhism denouncing the discriminatory order. This was a protest and in order to mobilize the deprived castes and to erase the notion of inferiority from their minds.
It was pointed out very aptly by Leelah Dushkin that, "the electoral history of the Republican Party illustrates the hard facts of political life that have to be faced by any group of untouchables who seek power under their own leadership. First they must obtain a substantial number of caste Hindu votes to win. Normally they must win caste Hindu support as well as mobilizing their own members. The risk they run is that the very activities they must engage in to mobilise their own supporters will alienate the caste Hindu voters, as the Republicans did in earlier elections" (1972:201).

The community untric nature of RPI and its inability to mobilize the poor belonging to other different communities made it a failure in Karnataka, and also at the national level. The Scheduled Caste people are poor and powerless. The upper castes do not allow them to grow in the political field. If a leader of the Dalits shows his leadership qualities, and interest to protect his own people, he would lose the support of the dominant caste groups. The Scheduled Caste candidates in the Reserved Constituency fully depends upon the high caste people both for financial assistance, and for party ticket as well, to win the election. The dominant caste lobby works relentlessly against such Dalit leaders who attempt to
gain political power.

It is observed that usually the reserved constituency candidates are poor, submissive, uneducated and weak. Only such persons are chosen by the lobby of the caste leaders of the constituency who matter in the political party affairs and are always at the mercy of the dominant caste leaders. The educated, clever and dynamic/progressive Dalits are not only not encouraged, they are in a way put down and are not allowed to grow. For instance, in Hallolli Reserved Constituency, Dalit leader S.S. Arakeri suffered in his political career due to the Lingayat lobbies led by B.M. Patil and Gudadinni. They know Arakeri is a well-educated person capable of protecting his people. So the educated Dalit leader could not come into the forefront in the political field as always the dominant caste controls the political power and plays a dominant role in the reserved constituency. C.M. Armugham, a prominent Dalit leader, feels that the reserved constituency divides the Dalits and acts as a 'curse' on the Scheduled Castes. To quote him, "the Republican Party of India will have a better future in Karnataka and in India, if reserved constituencies are abolished forthwith. It is this reserved constituency that is the cause of disunity among the Dalits".

(1978:100)
A significant observation was made by S.S. Arakeri, former M.L.A. and former SC/ST Corporation Chairman, in his interview. He said, "the SC/ST candidates are being elected to the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. But again, such candidates need the support of the major community for the success in the elections. The party is insignificant but major communities are significant for all SC candidates to win from the reserved constituencies." In any general election, without the support of major community people, SC candidates cannot win. These major communities, in some case, do not care for the party principles but they care only for the candidate, who would serve their interests. This is the fate of the SC candidates in some parts of Karnataka. The SC candidate must obey their demands. Arakeri further stated, from his own experience as a legislator that, "I have been elected two times from Ballolli reserved constituency in 1967 and 1978. I feel that mental security and political awareness is more among the SC/ST people in reserved constituency. The SC/ST people have been able to become more courageous and also more literate among the people in the Reserved Constituency due to socio-economic programmes of the Government. In a word, the atrocities and communal

*Personal Interview with Prof. S.S. Arakeri, Former RPI M.L.A. of Ballolli of Bijapur District.
cruelities and harassment are lesser in reserved constituency, than in the general constituency. The non-SC/STs usually dislike SC/ST leadership and hate the SC/ST leadership heart in heart because of the communal feeling, and their caste philosophy never makes them appreciate the values: equality, and equal economic development. The very root of the caste is against the coming up of untouchables in Hindu society."

S.S. Arakeri is one of the few well-educated persons and is an eminent Advocate. His considered opinion is based on his experience as a legislator. He feels that the dominant caste continues to play a very significant role even in the affairs of the reserved constituencies. Right from the allotment of party ticket the upper or dominant castes control and influence every political operation including the elections. In fact, the popular and powerful political parties put up only a meek person as the party candidate and ensure that the elected person remains obedient and complementary to the interests of the upper dominant castes. The educated, politically aware, militant and dynamic among SC/STs who nurse political aspirations do not succeed in the elections even if they contest as non-party candidates because of the upper castes' attitudes and lobbies. One of the major techniques
employed in the elections by the dominant castes' leaders is to intimidate the voters of the lower caste groups. Intimidation may occur any time during and after the election. Burning of huts, harassment and through other atrocities, fear psychosis is built up in the minds of the voters of lower castes. This is how the 'vote banks' are exploited by the upper caste leaders to achieve their desired results. Lower caste groups who are economically weaker, are by and large dependent on the landed gentry to eke out a living, obey the dictates of their masters and vote as directed. There are a number of leaders belonging to Scheduled Castes like B.Basavalingappa, K.H.Ranganath, B.Shankaranand, Mallikarjun Kharge, C.M.Armugham and S.S. Arakeri who are suppressed by the dominant caste leaders. In this context, the observations of C.Parvathamma are very apt. She states that, "from entire Scheduled castes political leadership, apart from being manipulated by upper caste party bosses, no one is allowed or tolerated to emerge powerful. This kind of dependency restricts their role. They always are made to play second fiddle" (1981:67). The upper caste leaders in any political party try to curb the Scheduled Caste leaders, if they try to become dominant. This they resort to through different ways including spreading false rumours (political lobbies), which will tarnish their image and thereby make them lose
their public support and moral courage.

The economic backwardness and exploitation of the weaker sections by the dominant castes has been nicely stated by Srinivas in the following lines: "the dominant castes have been quick to see that they can benefit from the various development programmes in rural areas... The policy of decentralization has given more power and money to the dominant castes. It would be unduly optimistic to expect that they will use this power and money for everyone's benefit... While the leaders of the dominant castes are sensitive to economic and political opportunities, they are socially conservative. They do not, for instance, like the conditions of Harijans to improve. They have a vested interest in keeping Harijans poor and ignorant. At the present time, Harijans are their most important source of agricultural labour, and if they become educated and conscious of their rights they will be a threat to the position of the dominant castes... Attempts by Harijans to exercise the rights given to them by the Constitution have led to violent attacks on them by the dominant castes. They have been beaten up and their huts burned down, and in addition, they have been subjected to economic boycott. Harijans are among the poorest sections of our agricultural
population and many of them are agricultural servants of the land-owning castes. The conditions under which agricultural labourers work are reminiscent of serfdom...

It is true that a great deal has been done for Harijans since the achievement of Independence, but the fact that in the villages they are economically dependent on the higher castes is coming in the way of their speedy emancipation. They must be freed from the economic control of the higher castes" (1962:91-2).