CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

- Introduction
- Concept of Lingayats
- Historical Background of the Lingayats
- Concept of Elite
- Theories of Elite
- The Theory of Elite and the Circulation of Elite
- Factors Responsible for the Emergence of Elite
- Elite in India - Historical Perspective
- Working Definition of Lingayat Elite
- Statement of the Problem
- Review of Literature
- Objectives of the Study
- Hypothesis
- Limitations of the Study
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is highly considered as a complex division of labour deeply rooted in the specialised competition. It has been so much the century of the common man that it is perhaps not astonishing that until recently little attention has been paid to the part played by the 'Elite' in the society. Elitism seeks to channelise human energies along lines where there can be growth based on the exercise of skill, creativity, and labour. In all forms of lifestyle weather social, economic, and political, each society is divided between elite and non-elite. In the social field, for example in India, Brahmins are the elite because they enjoy the highest social status. In the economic field, the rich are the elite as compared with the poor and in the political field, the rulers are the elite, as compared with ruled. Elite rule the society, and the masses follow them. Earlier, the concept of elite was confined only to political life but now this is being seriously studied both in Sociology and in Economics as well. It is true to say that it is always flattering to human pride to know oneself to be a member of an upper set. Hence, the emergence of elite is positively facilitated, where social change is an everyday occurrence, and people are already accustomed to recognise the superiority of certain social groups, where it is possible for a person to appear from somewhere else as a man with a mission. In viewing the process of development in a society, it is necessary to view it from the perspective of all segments of society, and especially of those who are involved in bringing development about, thus making the institutional
analysis and role of elite in the context of political process more purposive and meaningful. In the given system, the political institutions are not taken as some kind of a superstructure interconnecting the economic and political relationship in the society. Instead, it is a process wherein the complete social structure of the society is involved. The elite in this context can be seen as not just a simple recipient of economic and political inputs in the society but as creative actors in the process of social reconstruction of the society, initiators of a far-reaching social change and catalysts and mobilisers of new set of norms and values in the society.

The idea of 'Elite' is of great significance in discussing the problems and over all development of any community or society. Dominant communities play significant role in the state politics, as they are socially, economically, and politically dominant. Say for example the 'Reddys' and 'Kammars' in Andhra Pradesh, the 'Nairs' in Kerala, the 'Marathas' in Maharashtra, the 'Kshatriyas' in Gujarat, the 'Sikhs' in Punjab, the 'Christians' in Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, the 'Muslims' in Jammu and Kashmir, the 'Yadavas' in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and similarly 'Lingayats' and 'Vokkaligas' in Karnataka state. They have tried to control political institutions from village level to state level and have established their control over 'Panchayat Raj' institutions directly or indirectly. They have better organisational base, numerical strength, financial resources, wide range of leadership, social status, self-confidence etc. Hence, they play a vital role in all the activities of the state. Further, the impact of revolution in the field of
information technology, urbanisation, modernisation, industrialisation, rapid growth of population, advancement in medicine, democratisation processes, and strong opposition for change of traditional way of life, stresses the significance of elite. Hence, the 'Lingayat Elite', who are capable of inspiring effective action, directing and controlling the fellow Lingayats, is of great importance in the present study. The fundamental questions arise at this stage of the development of elite are: Who are the 'Lingayat Elite'? What is their socio-economic background? How they achieve the position of elite? Therefore, the study of the social forces creating new elite as well as the activities of elite themselves in social transformation would be extremely fruitful. Under the impact of revolution in the field of information technology, urbanisation, modernisation, industrialisation, rapid growth of population, highly developed medicine, democratisation processes, and strong opposition for change of traditional way of life. The significance of 'Lingayat Elite', who are capable of inspiring effective action, directing and controlling the fellow Lingayats are of great importance.

CONCEPT OF LINGAYATS:

The 'Lingayats', who are conscious of their identity and historical legacy, and who have urge for modernisation, mobilisation and political leadership, cannot be understood without understanding their community through historical perspective. Lingayats are also called by various names like: 'Veerashaivas', 'Jangamas', 'Sharanas', 'Lingawantas', 'Lingangis', 'Shivacharyas',
‘Shivamatasthas’, and etc. almost derive their names from the word ‘Linga’. The word ‘Lingayata’ can be split into ‘Linga’ the phallic emblem, and ‘ayata’, meaning ‘repose’. Thus, ‘the person who wears and worships Linga, is called Lingayata’. Lingayata possesses a ‘Linga’, called as ‘Istalinga’. ‘An Istalinga is a black, oval shaped, flat based, thumb sized, shining object.’ Lingayats wrap it in a piece of cloth and place in a reliquary (made of small silver box containing a stone phallus, which is the symbol of his faith and loss of it is equivalent to spiritual death) and ties it either around their neck or around their left arm. It is a rule that every Lingayata must wear it always and worship it twice or thrice or at least once, especially in the morning, daily. However, the two names- ‘Veerashaiva’ and ‘Lingayata’ are commonly used and are more popular. ‘Veerashaiva’ may be translated a ‘Staunch Saivite’, ‘Veer’ (Vira) literally means, a ‘Hero’ or ‘Champion’, and is used to express the idea of warrior zeal in the cause of Lord Shiva and Shiva only.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE LINGAYATS:**

The ‘Lingayats’ are the ‘Dravidians’, who are the stock that was established in India before the advent of the Aryans. They are slightly dark in complexion, common with the races of people of Southern India, living chiefly in ‘Kanara’, the language of these people is ‘Kannada’, and it is a Dravidian family of language. Of the Brahmanic trinity Gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, Lingayats accept only the Lord Shiva, whose emblem the ‘Linga’ they bear on their persons. They worship the Vedas, but disregard the later
commentaries on which the Brahmans depend. In the beginning, they seem to have been the product of one of the several reformations that have been aimed in India against the supremacy and doctrines of the Brahmans, whose selfish exploitation of the lower castes has frequently led to the rise of new sects essentially 'Anti-Brahmanic' in origin. It is clear that, in its inception, 'Lingayatism' not only rested largely on a denial of the Brahman claim to supremacy over all other castes, but also attempted to abolish all caste distinctions. All wearers of the 'linga' are considered equal in the eyes of God. The great Lingayat guru, Basaveshwara, proclaimed all men holy in proportion as they are temples of the 'Great Spirit', and thus, in his view, all men are born equal. The denial of the supremacy of the Brahmans, coupled with the assertion of the essential equality of all men, constituted a imperative departure from the doctrines of orthodox Hinduism. Other significant innovations were the removal of all restriction on widow's re-marriage, the prohibition of child marriages, the burial instead of burning of the dead and the abolition of the chief Hindu rites for the removal of ceremonial impurity. With the rise of caste distinctions, numerous other changes occurred in the nature of the Lingayat community. The 'Ayyas' or 'Jangamas', the priestly class of the Lingayat community, devised in time a ritual and ceremonies in which the influence of the rival Brahmin aristocracy can freely be traced. The more important of these ceremonies are described in the section below dealing with beliefs and customs. Further, it is essential to a thorough understanding of the nature of Lingayatism that the most important ceremony of all acknowledged
as the 'Ashtavaarna', or the 'Eight-Fold Sacrament'. The Lingayat community is
the right to receive the full 'Ashtavaarna' and it consists of eight (8) rites known
as Guru, Linga, Vibhuti, Rudraksha, Mantra, Jangama, Tirtha and Prasada.

On the birth of a child, the Lingayat parents approach the 'Guru', or
'Spiritual Adviser', of the family who is the representative of one of the five
'Acharyas', or 'Holy men', from whom the father claims descent. The 'Guru'
binds the 'Linga' on the child, besmears it with 'Vibhuti' (White Ashes), places a
garland of 'Rudraksha' (seeds of the bastard cedar) round its neck, and teaches
it the mystic 'Mantra' or prayer known as 'Om Namah Shivaya' i.e., 'Bow to the
Lord Shiva'. The child being incapable of obtaining knowledge of the sacred
text at such an early stage, the prayer is just recite in its ear by the guru. The
child has then to be presented to the Lord Shiva in the person of a 'Jangama' or
'Lingayat Priest', who is called for this purpose. On his arrival, the parents of
the child wash priest's feet, and the washed water is described as the 'Tirtha'
or 'Charan Tirtha' of Lord Shiva. The same water is poured over the 'Linga'
attached to the child and sprinkled all over the house. Later, the 'Jangama' is
fed with food and a portion of it is placed in the child's mouth. This final
ceremony is known as 'Prasada'. Occasionally, the double character of 'Guru'
and 'Jangama' are combined in one person. When the child attains the age of
eight or ten, the ceremony is repeated with slight modifications. This eight-
fold ceremony forms a very concise experiment of a Lingayat's community
status. However, not all members of the Lingayat community undergo the full
ceremony of 'ashtavaarna'. It would perhaps be safer to apply the term Lingayat
to all wearers of the 'Linga', whether they are entitled to the full 'ashtavarna' on birth or conversion, or to a few only of the eight sacraments. In doing so, the lower orders, from a social standpoint, of the Lingayat community will not be excluded, as they would otherwise be from inclusion in the fold. Lingayats are not permitted to touch meat, drink any kind of liquor or any other type of drug addictions. The greater numbers of them are either engaged in agriculture or trade and business. They are generally reputed to be peaceful and law-abiding, but at times, they are capable of dividing into violent group with such rancour (a feeling of hate and continuing anger about something in the past) and hostility that the dispute culminates in riots and occasionally in murder. Among the educated members of the community, there is a strong spirit of rivalry with the Brahmans, whose intellect and capacity has secured them a preponderating share of Government appointments. Except for these defects, the community may be expressed as steady and active, devoted to honest toil whether in the cultivation of the soil, professional employment, or occupied in trading.

The history of the 'Lingayat' faith goes back to the 12th century great Lingayat saint, Basaveshwara (Basavanna: 1134 - 1196) who lived in Kalyana or Basava Kalyana, (now in Bidar district of Karnataka state) is believed to be an incarnation of 'Basava' or 'Nandi'. Basava is the Kanarese name for a 'Bull', an animal, which is sacred and greatest devotee of Lord Shiva and thus a connection is traced between Basaveshwara and the Lord Shiva. Dr. Fleet (1901) threw lights on the acts and doctrines of Basaveshwara and his nephew
'Channabasaveshwara', which are set forth in two 'Puranas' or 'Sacred books' named after them, the 'Basavapurana' and the 'Channabasavapurana'. According to Basavapurana, Basaveshwara was born in the year 1134 A.D., to the Brahman parents, 'Madarasa (Madiraja)' and 'Madalambika', the residents of 'Ingaleswar' presently known as Basavana Begewadi in Bijapur District of north Karnataka State, India. Basava at the age of eight refused to wear the Vedic tradition sacred holy thread ceremony of the twice-born caste. The Holy thread was to be worn by upper class like Brahmins. However, the same ceremony was not eligible to the women of upper class. Basaveshwara could not understand this. 'Yagnopavita' or 'Holy Thread' gave the wearers the right to read the Vedas, Shastras and other scriptures and the right to perform the religious rites. Basaveshwara questioned, "Why not the Holy thread for all and why should not all read the scriptures and seek God?", and this reflected him.

Basaveshwara declared himself a worshipper of Lord Shiva and stated that he had come to wipe out the distinctions of caste system that widely prevailed at that time. Basaveshwara's knowledge on the Shaiva scriptures attracted the attention of his uncle 'Baladeva Arasa', the then prime minister to the King of Kalyan, 'Bijjala'. Baladeva gave his daughter 'Gangambika (Gangadeve)' in marriage to Basaveshwara. Later, King Bijjala, made Basaveshwara as his Prime Minister, and gave him his younger sister 'Neelambika (Nilalochana)' in marriage as second wife. Further, the 'Puranas' narrate the birth of Channabasaveshwara from Basaveshwara's unmarried sister 'Nagalambika'. The myth in connection with this miraculous conception is
interesting. Basaveshwara, while engaged in prayer, saw an ant emerge from
the ground with a small seed in its mouth. He took the seed to his home,
where his sister swallowed the seed and became pregnant. The subject of this
unique conception was Channabasaveshwara.

Basaveshwara, though by birth a Brahmin, revolted against the rigid
practices of the caste system, and ultimately began expounding his own
theosophy with a casteless society at its core. Soon, his thoughts of philosophy
began attracting huge number of populace into the fold. Basaveshwara is
related to have been finally absorbed into the 'Linga, the Lord Shiva'. He shed
the mortal body at the confluence of the rivers at Kudala Sangama, presently
in Bagalkot District of Karnataka State, in 1167-68. An annual pilgrimage of
Lingayats to the shrine at Kudala Sangama takes place even to this day in
huge numbers. Basaveshwara's teachings live on. He had a large following of
passionately devoted disciples.

Religious scholars, called as 'Sharanas' like 'Allama Prabhu', 'Akka
Mahadevi', 'Channabasaveshwara', and others, played vital role in founding and
organising the sect. The Sharanas, who were more concerned with socio-
religious evils of the society, were motivated by human compassion, ethical
and moral considerations, they have liberal ideas, which fairly correspond
with the modern concept of liberal democracy. "The basis of the 'Lingayat'
state was ethical. The socio-political state was based on broad moral
principles. In fact, a moral ideal was not only the background of the
'Lingayat' but also the backbone of its socio-economic and politics".
This was a moral liberal democratic state. All the democratic spirit was found in the ‘Anubhava Mantapa’. This was the place where all the ‘Sharanas’ discussed and debated about their experience, values, ideals, etc. in the light of reason and human compassion which are found in their ‘Vachanas’. Thus, everyone participated on equal footing in the ‘Anubhava Mantapa’.

Lingayats have struggled hard to establish an ‘Ideal State’ (Kalyana Rajya) launching a movement against casteism, superstitions, inequality, untouchability and exploitation which existed in the name of religion. ‘Lingayatism’ preach fatherhood of God and goodwill of humanity, uplifting the downtrodden, upholding the principles of equal rights for women, fraternity, and social justice.

Following are its unique special features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophet Founder</th>
<th>Lord Basaveshwara (1134-1196)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the God (the Creator)</td>
<td>Lingadeva - Lord Shiva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Symbol</td>
<td>A globular shaped emblem called “Istalinga” that is worn on body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Scriptures</td>
<td>Vachana Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Kannada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Religious Place</td>
<td>Kudala Sangama, in Bagalkot district of Karnataka State, where Basavanna merged with Lord Shiva, termed as ‘Lingaiyya’ in Kannada Language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Religious Annual Congregation
Sharana Mela, the annual mammoth congregation at Kudala Sangama held every year from 11th to 15th in the month of January.

Religious Customs Sharana Vratha

Religious Centre Basava (Anubhava) Mantapa

Holy Month Shravana Maasa, usually in the months of July or August.

Flag Symbol Hexagonal star with 'Istalinga' on Saffron coloured cloth.

Religious Consecration ‘Istalinga Diksha’ through which anybody can be taken into Lingayat fold.

R.C. Carr (1906) has accurately described the rituals in trend at birth, betrothal, marriage, and death in his monograph on the Lingayat community. He explains that, 'Birth' is customary for the female relatives attending a confinement to wash both mother and child. On the second or third day a ceremony known as 'Viralu' or 'the worship of the afterbirth, is performed' where the boiled turmeric and water is applied to the mother. When the child receives the 'tirtha' or water in which the Jangam's feet have been washed, the mother, also participate in it. In the case of the death, the dead are buried in a sitting posture, facing towards the North, but an exception is made in the case of unmarried people who are buried in a reclining (lying) position. The Jangam, places his left hand on the right thigh of the body. The relatives present worship the dead body, and the usual distribution of coins and betel to Jangams follows. The body is then carried in a viman, or bamboo chair, to the burial ground. The Linga is untied and placed in the left hand, 'Bilva'
leaves (AEgle armelos) and ‘Vibhuti’ are placed at the side, the body is wrapped in an orange-coloured cloth, and the grave is filled in. A Jangam stands on the grave and, after receiving the usual douceur, shouts out the name of the deceased, and says that he has gone to ‘Kailasa’ or ‘Heaven’.

Abbe Dubois (1846) expresses that a Lingayat is no sooner buried than he is forgotten. He says, ‘the point in the creed of the Shaivaites which appears to me to be most remarkable is their entire rejection of that fundamental principle of the Hindu religion, marujanma (re-birth), or metempsychosis. From this, it would follow that they do not believe in ghosts. However, there is a generally accepted idea that evil spirits sometimes take possession of females. This may be a rude way of expressing the fact that the gentle sex is uncertain, coy, and hard to please’.

Among Lingayats, widow re-marriage is common, and divorce is permitted. The ordinary law of Hindus is followed in regard to inheritance. Non-members of other religious communities who wish to become Lingayats are supposed to undergo a three-day ceremony of purification. On the first day, they allow their face and head to be shaved, and bath in the products of the cow, which alone they may feed on and drink that day. The second day, they bath in water in which the feet of a Jangam have been washed, and which is therefore holy water. They eat sugar and drink milk. On the third day, they take a bath described as ‘Panchamruth’, i.e. they apply to the head and body a paste made up of plantains, cow’s milk, clarified butter, curds and honey, and wash it off with water; they again drink the tirtha or water in
which the feet of a jangam have been washed, and are then invested with the linga, after which they are allowed to dine with Lingayats, and are considered members of the community. Women undergo the same ceremony, except the head-shaving.

Accordingly, Lingayats aspire to build up a 'Welfare State', by means of equal treatment, which is free from religion, race, caste, creed, class, and sex, where once consecration is over. Hence, Lingayats are unique in every aspect, in beliefs, practices, rites, rituals, customs, culture etc. According to few historians, few copper inscriptions reveal that some three hundred years ago, five hundred Lingayat families went to Nepal on the invitation of a king and settled there only. They have spread in the neighbouring states, mainly in Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. According to the survey conducted by the 'Veerashaiva-Lingayat Mahasabha' in the year 2010, the head count of Lingayats, revealed that out of about six crore population of the Karnataka State, one crore thirty two lakh (i.e. about 22 percent) constituted Lingayat community and about fifty lakh in the other states of India. Whereas, the estimated population across the country is 3.5 crores of population.

CONCEPT OF ELITE

The term 'Elite' is originally derived from the Latin word, 'eligere' means 'to elect'. Historically, the word elite has been used in various connotations. In the 16th century, the word 'Elite' was used simply to mean a
choice. During the 17th century, the term 'Elite' was used to describe the excellence of a particular commodity. Later on, it was used to elucidate the superior groups. In the recent years, the study of elite has come to occupy a prominent position in the research agenda of scholars in the social and behavioural fields.

Vilfred Pareto defined elite by stating that *those who have highest indices among a particular class of people, in their branch of activity, are the people belonging to elite class.* Mosca while discussing the 'Elite' has aptly said that, *in every society two classes of people appear a class that rules and the other that is ruled.* The first class of people are less numerous performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the most numerous class of people are directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent.

Robert Michels says that, *in every society, organisation are created for meeting socio-economic needs and each such organisation needs leadership both for its survival or for making progress on advancement. Leaders in every organisation enjoy the prestige and power and they are the elite of the society or the organisation in which they function.* T.B. Bottomore has defined, the term 'Elite(s)' is now generally applied, in fact to functional, mainly *occupational groups which have the high status for whatever reason in a society.*

Geraint Parry, has defined elite as *small minorities who appear to play an exceptionally influential part in affairs of society in specific fields.* T. Bank has explained elite as *decision makers of society whose power is not subject to control by*
any other body in the society. S.F. Nadel maintains that elite are those who have an influence over the fate of the society because of their superiority.

According to 'New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary', the term 'Elite is a group of people in a society, who are powerful and have a lot of influence, because they are rich, intelligent, etc'. Generally, in Sociology, the term 'Elite' is a relatively small dominant group within a large society, having a privileged status perceived as being envied by others of a lower line of order. The 'Elite' at the top of the social strata almost invariably puts it in a position of leadership, whether it be expected or volunteered, and often subjects the holders of 'Elite' status to pressure to maintain that leadership position as part of status. However, in spite of the pressures, the existence of the 'Elite' social stratum is usually unchanged. From all these definitions, it is understood that, 'Elite are group of people who are powerful in the society and enjoy great powers, positions and influence in various walks of life.'

THEORIES OF ELITE:

The 'Theories of Elite' have been a dominant theme in the history of western thought. They have been attracted the attention of the Sociologists as well as of the Political Scientists across the globe, especially those who are interested in the studies of distribution of power, influence, and decision-making authority in society.
The Theory of Elite and the Circulation of Elite:

It is a basic saying by an Italian born Sociologist, 'Marquis Vilfredo Frederico Damaso Pareto' that, people are unequal physically, as well as intellectually and morally. Pareto is renowned as the founder of the 'Mathematical School of Sociology'. He was fascinated in bringing the scientific method to Sociology. Pareto’s magnum composition is ‘Truth Di-Sociologia Generale’; it is one of his utmost and most significant contribution is that the ‘The Theory of Elite and Circulation of Elite’. He tried to formulate a theory of social change and social mobility. He said that, in society as a whole, and in any of its particular strata and groupings, some people are more gifted than others are. Those who are most capable in any particular grouping are the elite. In Pareto’s usage, the term ‘Elite’ has no moral or honorific connotations. It simply means, ‘A class of the people who have the highest indices among a particular class of people, in their branch of activity.’ He denotes society based on psychological traits of superiority and inferiority viz.: ‘Elite- a higher stratum in the society, the elite nominally contained certain groups of people that are called as aristocracies’ and ‘Non-elite- a lower stratum in the society. His main discussion focuses that a certain organised minority who are, by nature, superior to non-elite in intelligence, character, skill, capacity, power etc., dominates societies and hence, they are the best few in the society.

Pareto concerns himself that, the term ‘Elite’ is further divided into two classes: ‘Governing Elite- comprising individuals who directly or indirectly play some considerable part in government’ and a ‘Non-governing Elite- comprising the
rest'. There is a basic ambiguity in Pareto's treatment of the notion of the 'Elite'. In some passages, as in the one quoted above, it would appear that those occupying 'Elite' positions are, by definition, the most qualified. However, there are many other passages where Pareto asserts that people are assigned 'Elite' positions by virtue of being so labeled. That is, men assigned 'Elite' positions may not have the requisite capabilities, while others not so labeled may have them. It would seem that, Pareto believed that only in perfectly open societies, those with perfect social mobility, would elite position correlate fully with superior capacity. Only under such conditions would elite position correlate fully with superior capacity. Only under such conditions would the 'Governing Elite', for example, consist of the people most capable of governing. The actual social fact is that obstacles such as inherited wealth, family connections, and the like prevent the free circulation of individuals through the ranks of society, so that those wearing an 'Elite' label and those possessing highest capacity tend to diverge to greater or lesser degrees. Given the livelihood of divergences between ascribed elite position and actual achievement and capacity, Pareto is a passionate advocate of maximum social mobility and of careers open to all. He saw the danger that, men devoid of such talent would in the course of time preempt elite positions that were once occupied by men of real talent. Thus, the 'Circulation of Elite' is almost constantly aided and accompanied by rising religious-humanitarian sentiments, in such a climate, the existing elite becomes softer, milder, more humane and less apt to define its own power. At such a time, if the innovators
already dominate in the elite, it spells habits justifying its drive to power derivations, and these are moulded by the same rising religious humanitarian sentiments. However, after victory, the elite become more rigid and more exclusive. As a result, the wheel takes a full turn. The new elite is now established and the process can start all over again.

*Gaetano Mosca,* in his book, *The Ruling Class*, used the term 'Elite' in a restricted sense and by elite, he means the ruling class. Mosca divided elite into two groups, 'Governing Elite and 'Non-governing Elite'. He states that, in every society two classes of people appear: 'a class that rules and a class that is ruled.' The first class, always the less numerous performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first, in manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent. Mosca believes that the elite has the benefit simply because, it is a miniority. Thus, both Pareto and Mosca regard the elite as a group of people who directly exercise strong influence on the Government.

Mosca's disciple and student of Max Weber, Robert Michels, in his study on: 'Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy', proposed a law governing all social organisations and he called it 'The Iron Law of Oligarchy'. Michels stresses that in every structure of any organised society gives rise to elite. He says, in all society organisation are created for meeting socio- economic needs and each such organisation needs leadership both for its survival or for making
progress on advancement. Leaders in every organisation enjoy prestige and power and they are the elite of the society or the organisation in which they function.

C. Wright Mills has also tried to give his ideas about 'Elite'. He sees power in society as attached to institution and defines 'Power Elite', 'as those who occupy the command posts', in his book entitled: 'The Power Elite'. According to him, 'The Power Elite is composed, whose position enable them transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women, they are in a position to make decisions having major consequences.' Mills, categories into three major elite in the USA, they are 'The Corporation Heads', 'The Political Leaders', and 'The Military Chiefs'. In USA, all these three are high-class people and represent 'Power Elite'. They based on the oneness have individual as well as family relationship. Mills describes the American society as a mass society in which the power elite decides all important issues and keeps the masses quiet by flattery, deception and entertainment. He points out that since power elite is not responsible to the masses for their right or wrong decisions; therefore, there is a lot of corruption. He also believes that concept of power elite is not a historical one because inspite of the fact that it takes all important decisions yet it has no significance place in the reconstruction of history.

T.B. Bottomore has expressed his views about 'Elite' in his work 'Elites and Society'. He defines, 'The term elite(s) is now generally applied, in fact to functional, mainly occupational groups which have the high status for whatever
Bottomore felt that, as long as there is class-dominated society, elite system is bound to exist. He felt that the system will come to an end only with the coming of classless society in which there will be no institution of private property. He has linked elite system with socio-economic system. Relating to under-developed countries, he found the following type of elite, namely 'The Revolutionary Intellectuals', 'The Nationalist Political Leaders', 'The Military Officer', 'The Government Officers' and 'The Businessmen'.

Thus, from these classification and theories on elite by various scholars, elite are a group of people who are powerful in the society and enjoy great powers and positions. In modern society there is no single comprehensive elite but rather complex of specialised. It means there are various types of elite confined to different type of activities. Among them the most important type of elite are ruling elite, as they are the key people and models for the modern society. The concept of elite changes from time to time and place to place. It keeps on creating a situation for sharing of power by one or the other group claiming over the other. Thus, the notion of superiority is always connected with that of elite.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ELITE:

The concept of 'Elite' has been perceived as social category having the features of superiority based on influence or excellence or both. Definitions of elite, either the ruling elite or the non-ruling ones, are numerous and various;
but they all center upon the idea of a group regarded as socially superior. The factors responsible for an individual or group to gain such superiority or elite position are many. The literature on elite originates with Pareto, an outstanding sociologist and economist. According to him, 'Ruling Elite' are composed of those few with the power of decision in various sectors of the polity or economy. These ruling elite include the economic elite (the top Entrepreneurs, Chief Executive Officers, Bureaucrats, and Civil Servants who rule the macro-environment) and the political elite that govern and operate the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Structures. 'Non-Ruling Elite' comprise the Members of Media, Academia, and Intelligentsia.

Mosca, wrote that, 'Wealth is one of the main aspect that helps an individual to emerge as elite.' In some societies, priestly class emerge as elite, while in some other societies the positions of elite are occupied by hereditary caste and class. He further writes that, in any society in which religious beliefs are strong and ministers of the trust form a special class, a priestly upper classes usually arises and gains control of a more or less important share of the wealth and the political power. Noticeable case of that situation would be during certain periods in ancient Egypt, medieval Europe, and Brahmins in India. Often times the priests not only perform religious functions; they possess legal and scientific knowledge and the class of highest intellectual culture.

One category of elite class has been responsible for innovation and creativity, which has led to societal development and progress. The entire
cultural array built on the super-structure of society is credited to a minority section of the society. Generally, such society has been viewed as a phenomenon, which comprises complex variety of ideas, standards, material artifacts, a belief system, relationships expressed and organised in a normative and institutional framework constantly undergoing a process of transformation.

*Ralph Miliband* considers educational qualifications are obliviously not enough to reach the top position of management and it may still, be unnecessary. The modern trend is tending towards the professionalisation of business, at least in that sense; formal educational qualifications are required from any of the universities or equivalent institutions, for the other type of elite positions. While writing about the ‘Elite’ in Germany, Miliband expresses that, the recruitment to elite position, is based on wealth and heredity.

In the modern societies, there is no single comprehensive elite but rather a complex system of specialised elite linked to the order and to each other in various ways. The classification needs to include many factors in its broad coverage. Thus, the review of the above studies reveals that, the family tradition i.e.: hereditary, wealth, religious supremacy, education, individual ability, innovations, and creativity are generally responsible for the emergence of elite in the society.
ELITE IN INDIA - HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Indian history reveals that, from the days of the Vedas and Dharmashastras, the original values of Hindu religion and traditions were hierarchy, holism, and continuity. They solidified the authoritative power dispensation by the Dvijas i.e. the Brahmins. Nowhere there was any support to the suppressed Shudras, Vratyas, Vaishyas and the Chandalas. It was the duty of the 'King' to be powerful military leader and protect his state and his subjects. Hence, the King and the Brahmins (Priestly Class) played the important role of elite. The Brahmins used to evolve in the source of Dharmashastras, which the king was obliged to enforce them systematically. Thus, the caste played the role of ascribed status and that benefitted the Kings and the Brahmins the root cause to avail elite status.

The advent of Britishers into India benefitted the upper classes like Brahmins, Kayasthas, Baniyas and Muslims in the field of education. Only these classes were benefitted in acquiring the western education and slowly attained the position of elite in political, military, bureaucratic and business. According to Yogendra Singh, the freedom movement intensified the land gentry and was increasingly isolated and the political elite role passed on to educated middle class and professional groups. Gradually, the count of British Elite in India got down from the bureaucratic elite. After the Post-Independence, the Constitution of India states equal opportunities to its citizens. As a result, the lower sections of people avail the recruitment opportunities in all the competitive examinations conducted in the country.
Thus, the elite studies in India has focused on the size of elite, the relation between elite, their nature of recruitment, and the degree of social mobility between elite and masses. As a result, in these works, the word elite imply no more than the man at the top position in the state.

**WORKING DEFINITION OF LINGAYAT ELITE:**

For the present study, *Research Scholar* has broadly classified 'Lingayat Elite' of Belgaum district of Karnataka state, India into three categories; they are *Administrative Elite*, *Political Elite*, and *Religious Elite*.

- **Administrative Elite** means all the Lingayats who are Class-I Officers.
- **Political Elite** includes all the Lingayats, who are elected representatives, namely: Corporators, Zilla Panchayat Members, Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA’s), Members of Parliament (MP’s), and Ministers.
- **Religious Elite** consists of Swamijis of Belgaum district, Karnataka State, who have completed higher education.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

In a traditional Indian Society, people were divided into four important categories, namely: Brahmina, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Due to the impact of revolution in the field of science and information technology, the life and statuses of these people have been undergoing lot of changes in every walk of life from time to time. Due to the policy of liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation, the role of 'Elite' in the development of the country is
significant. Similarly, the Lingayats being the dominant community of Karnataka state play vital role in the overall development of the Lingayats in particular and society in general. Thus, in the process of advanced mode of social forces and in the rapid track of social transformation, the significance of ‘Lingayat Elite, who are capable of inspiring effective action, directing and controlling the fellow Lingayats, play a vital role of importance. Hence, the topic selected for the research study is 'Lingayat Elite: A Sociological Study' of Belgaum district of Karnataka state.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Following are some of the studies carried out so far on ‘Elite’ and ‘Lingayat’ are briefly reviewed in this study:

I. P. Desai, (1965), in his work entitled ‘The New Elite’, confers about the personality of elite and opines that contact with the Britishers and the impact of new education has resulted in the emergence of new elite in India.

Andre Beteille (1969), in his book ‘Caste, Class, and Power’, has studied the distinctions and characteristics of the elite in different spheres of life. He listed the features of elite in political field, in bureaucratic organisations and among business executives. He also relates them to old status groups like castes and the new status groups, which are emerging because of westernisation and urbanisation in Indian society.

V. M. Sirsikar (1970), in his study on ‘The Rural Elite in a Developing Society: A Case Study in Political Sociology’, has studied the rural elite in which
he has selected the leaders of Zilla Parishad in three districts of Maharashtra and has tried to find out the motivations which made them to participate in politics and their value orientations and their social and economic background. He has also analysed the relationship between support bases and power linkages, which they establish with state level and national level leaders.

Sheshadri (1971), in his research paper entitled 'Mass Elite Interaction', views, the elite give lead to the society but there is a wide gap between the elite and masses observing that under normal circumstances, the gap between the elite and masses of India is so terrible that any interaction between these two is impossible.

S. K. Lal, (1974), in his study on the topic entitled 'The Urban Elite', made an empirical study on Elite and Power Structure of Jodhpur City. The study examines more particularly the adequacy of various approaches of indentifying the elite viz., the positional, reputation and issue participation approaches. He has studied the social background of the elite, media exposure and political affiliation, which plays a very formidable role in the emergence and existence of elite in the society.

Iqbal Narain, K. C. Pande and Mohan Lal (1976), in their work entitled 'Rural Elite and Elections in an Indian State (A Study of Panchayat Raj Leadership)'. This study ia report on a survey conducted in 1970 of rural elite associated with the institutions of Panchayat Raj in the five districts of Rajasthan state. The data in the study nevertheless reflect what was discovered about the
social origins of the rural elite, their political career patterns, their associations with one another as well as with those in the larger political system, and their judgments about the effectiveness of Panchayat Raj since its inception. The elite of rural Rajasthan comes preponderantly from among middle castes (peasants and artisans), a pattern most pronounced in the more highly economically developed districts. Lower castes i.e.: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were found only minimal in the elite, and then only at the lowest levels, where turnover is high and where the resources to distribute are minimal. A high proportion of the fathers of members of the elite had also been involved in public affairs in some fashion, and had sons who tended to be fairly well educated and economically well to do. The study clearly revealed that in recruitment and circulation of elite, political movements plays a vital role.

Sachidananda (1977), in his study on 'The Harijan Elite', studied the status, mobility, network, of the three categories of elite, i.e.: 'Legislators', 'Public Servants', and 'Social Workers'. The study highlights the role of Scheduled Castes in Bihar state. The economic condition of the legislators and some of the public servants is higher than that of the social workers. The high caste colleagues secretly resent the entry of Scheduled Castes in modern professions like law and medicine. The Political elite are aware and comprehend the value of their vote. They have been very active in spreading education through which Scheduled Castes can involve themselves in social transformation. Dr. Sachchidananda presents the conditions of 'Harijan Elite'
in the entire state and showed that education is the prime movers of social change, and mobility and the transformation in status of the Harijan Elite.

Shashilata Puri (1978), in her work 'Legislative Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan', has assessed the role of elite especially legislative elite, who are elected by people and few are nominated by the Government recognising their eminence in social services. Legislative elite are the policy makers. They make laws to cater to the needs of the people. Normally, the legislative elite arrive from a well socio-economic and political background that play an important role in bringing about changes in the society. Legislative elite are expected to mediate between the state and people. In case of their failure the development activities crumbles down.

Y. B. Abbasayulu (1978), in his research on 'Scheduled Caste Elite', makes in-depth study on the socio-economic background of the Scheduled Caste Elite and analyses the factors which led to the emergence of these individuals as elite and processes through which the whole phenomenon unfolds itself. The term elite was defined to mean as Members of Legislative Assembly, Members of Legislative Council, Ministers, Civil Servants, Doctors, Engineers, Advocates and University Teachers. He highlights the intra and inter-generational interaction among the Scheduled Caste Elite. Having been availed the position of vintage and decision-making, the elite classes have special responsibility to look after the progress of the Scheduled Caste people in general.
Surjan Singh Sharma (1979), in his study 'Rural Elite in India', was conducted in sixty six villages in the Community Development Block Bisrakh, Block in Buland Shahr, New Gaziabad in Uttar Pradesh Northern India. To study the rise and fall of the Elite, three Panchayat elections, held in 1955, 1965, and 1972 were examined. He revealed that in the villages for over twenty-five years, castes have maintained their supremacy and are regulating power in majority of the cases.

Ram Ahuja (1980) in his 'Political Elite Recruitment and Role in Modernisation' study, discusses about the elite. He considers elite as a dominant group, which possesses uniqueness and exclusivity. He expresses that, those who have occupied dominant position in the political structure are not at all close knit and, therefore, do not act as a coherent political force. The elite's main concern is achieving and preserving power with the result that they have lost touch with the people. He says that, elite character has always been changing from microstructures to the macro ones. He concluded that elite are by and large status quoits.

N. K. Singhi (1980) in his study on 'The Elite Phenomenon with Reference to the Bureaucratic Elite' traces the problems with reference to bureaucratic elite, which in modern India is supposed to be responsible for introducing innovations and social change. He feels that, there are inherent structural weaknesses in Indian bureaucracy, which renders it ineffective as an instrument of social change. He explains that 'Bureaucratic Elite' class is responsible for bringing about innovations and creativity. The Bureaucratic
Elite are responsible for preservation continuation and equilibrium of society. He also makes a classification of elite on attribution basis.

R. Thakur (1981) presents comprehensive information about the 'Administrative Elite' recruited through a certain well-defined mode of selection, which influences decision-making and implement decisions. Administrative Elite enjoy high status in the community by virtue of their occupation and merit. Tasks of nation building and modernisation lie upon the administrative machinery. They have more important place especially as agents of social change who can drive or hold the wheel of progress. Due to lack of communication between the policy-makers and administrative elite, the progress is curtailed. The bureaucratic arrogance keeps people away and this in turn hinders development.

Ram Sagar Singh (1985), in his work ‘Rural Elite, Entrepreneurship and Social Change’ studied Azamgarh District of Uttar Pradesh state, which comprises of a number of blocks and a number of village Panchayats. The research analysed and revealed leadership entrepreneurship formations in rural areas are mostly restricted to the dominant upper caste groups. The middle castes came up to share power, but so far they have not been able to avail the new opportunities of agricultural development. Other castes hardly made an impression in leadership and entrepreneurial functions. The entrepreneurs are mostly from the traditional upper caste groups particularly the Brahmins, Rajputs and the Bhumihars, who dominate the rural economic scene. The upper castes possessed the resource potentials and the political
power, have easy access to the entrepreneurial opportunities. More or less the traditional caste and land based power structure is still continuing in the villages. The dominant castes still continue to dominate the rural political scene. The study showed an investigation of the forces of modernisation and changes, which gave an account of social and political changes taking place in rural India. The study comprised the understanding of introduction of various programmes of development under the new set up of Panchayat Raj institutions.

**Oliver Mendelsohn** (1986), in his study entitled "A 'Harijan Elite'? The Lives of Some Untouchable Politicians" published in the Economic and Political Weekly; has investigated Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly belonging to Scheduled Castes of Bihar state. A significant finding of the study is that Scheduled Caste Legislators were at the mercy of congress party bosses (belonged to Hindu), because of which, the Scheduled Caste atrocities did not raise the issues.

**Ramesh Chand Swarankar** (1988), in his 'Political Elite: A Sociological Study of Legislators in Rajasthan' examined the working of 150 Legislators of the Rajasthan state. An interesting three classification of the Legislators into 'Top Ranking Elite', 'Ranking Elite', and 'General Elite' is advanced by Swarankar. The study highlights the socio-economic background of the Legislators and the role of caste, class, and region in the state politics, which explains the structure and functioning of the Legislative Elite. The research observes that due to the manifestation of the respondent's higher education,
sound economic status, political authority and their maintenance of traditional social dominance has led the higher caste groups in the elite class.

*Rudranand Thakur* (1988), in an edited book, *Elite Theory and Administrative System*, finds various kinds of elite in Europe and America, namely, the ‘Professional Elite’, ‘Academic Elite’, ‘Political Elite’, ‘Military Elite’, ‘Power Elite’, ‘Economic Elite’ etc. It describes how the Professional Elite, especially the Medical and Legal Elite are playing their role in the British political system, where privatisation has been the current trend in policy. In Indian context, it is been explained that, Power Elite, who are the decision makers in a democratic set up, play vital role in framing the laws. Similarly, Economic Elite, who wield enormous pressure upon the political elite and try to influence the governments to formulate convenient policies in the present globalisation set-up. They donate huge sums on various occasions to political parties to gain the political favour, exemptions through government policies.

*Suren Navalakha* (1989), in his book *Elite and Social Change: A Study of Elite formation in India* attempts to study elite formations in India. The book examines the difficulties created by the traditional social structure and colonial experience of change faced in generating modernisation and structural change in India. The study surveys 1,432 members of three educated-professional elite groups ‘Industrial Managers’, ‘Civil Servants’ and ‘University Teachers’ drawn from all over India. The study analysis the socio-economic, education, occupational background, and kinship connection of the
elite class. The findings confirm the familiar pattern of an extremely narrow upper stratum from which these functional groups recruit their members to the exclusion of the bulk of society. The book re-examines the institution of caste. He says, it works as a tight and elaborately defined bureaucratic order that encourages every group to preserve its uniqueness and graded privileges; and that, being fundamentally connected with factors relating to distribution of power, land, capital and labour, caste provides the main structure of dominance that divides society into two highly defined strata of great rigidity.

S. M. Dahitwala (1994), in his study, 'Role of Scheduled Caste Elite in Socio-economic Development of Downtrodden' classifies four types of 'Elite' namely 'Social Work', 'Service', 'Self-employment', and 'Teaching' across Nineteen (19) Scheduled Castes and Eight (8) Non-Scheduled Caste communities of Kolhapur city of Maharashtra state. The study reveals that, the elite are not much interested in the development of their own community people. The author suggests for a new Dalit movement focused at self-improvement and the conception of self-sustaining source of development.

Dasharath R. Albal (2002), in his research 'Lambani Elite: A Sociological Analysis' studies the 'Lambanis' of Bijapur district of Karnataka state. Few decades ago, they were nomadic transporters and petty traders. Today, they mostly lead a sedentary life because of the changes that have taken place in their traditional economy since their nomadic days. As a result various aspects of their life have also undergone change. The study reveals education,
reservation with Constitutional safeguards, awareness from within and without, profession and family background are the prominent factors for the emergence of 'Lambani Elite'. The study highlights 'Education' as the prime factor along with Constitutional provisions results to occupationally mobility to attain the elite position.

*S. H. Patil* (2002), in his book, *Community Dominance and Political Modernisation - The Lingayats*, presents how the Lingayat community modernised and mobilised itself by making use of the agents of modernisation under the impact of modernisation and democratic processes in the beginning of the 20th century. The study analyses the Lingayat community from the point of view of Political Sociology, in the light of modernisation and democratisation processes and Gandhian ideals. It unfolds the evolution of the Lingayat community in the religious, social, literary, economic, and political fields under such impact.

*Zia A. Pathan* (2006), in his research on *Muslim Elite: A Sociological Analysis* reveals that, Muslim community is undergoing great transition and churning. He says that, Indian Muslims have experienced certain positive trends, in which there is a realist and competent Muslim Elite, who compete with others in intellectual pursuits and develop a spirit of self-confidence. The study finds parental support, economic and educational backgrounds are the prime factors for elite emergence.

looks at the extent to which Jews, Women, African Americans, Latinos, Asians and gay men and lesbians have entered the higher circles of power that constituted what Sociologist C. Wright Mills called 'The Power Elite.' Richard and William explore why this has happened, who has and has not become part of the Power Elite, and what the implications of diversification are for understanding the workings of the American Political System. They reveal once again, that class is a more significant factor than ethnicity but that race and gender discrimination remain pervasive, even at the upper level of the class and power structures. Using a clever combination of academic research, the book examines the backgrounds and careers of various well-known members of the power elite as explain why and how the power elite has diversified and the effect this diversification has had on the way power works in the United States.

Zhiyue Bo, (2010), in his research entitled 'China's Elite Politics: Governance and Democratization', presents a new theoretical perspective on elite politics in China and uses this theoretical perspectives to analyse power transfer and the transition in structural terms, presents features of China's political elite, and highlights the balance of power among formal institutions as well as among factional groups.

John G. Bullock, (2011), in his study 'Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate', states that, one of the most common concerns about elite influence on mass opinion is that it causes people to neglect what they know about relevant policies. However, the study reports that, the effects of
position taking by party elite can be more modest than what they often imagine, and that the effects of policy considerations can be much greater. The ability of political elite to mislead citizens is correspondingly limited, at least when citizens have other information on which to base their judgments.

*David Se Budubudu* and *Patrick Molutsi* (2011), in their discussion paper 58 *'The Elite As A Critical Factor In National Development: The Case of Botswana'*, examines the role of the coalition between political leaders and elite as a critical factor in Botswana’s development. It analysis on the development of the ruling elite, their socio-cultural and educational roots, and, how this shaped coalition building and networking among individuals that were to constitute the future leaders of the country and their collective vision for national development. It also provides a historical grounded analysis of the evolution, nature, and politics of this ruling coalition, and the ways its politics and governance style have contributed to the successful developmental project in Botswana.

Thus, from the above review of literatures, good numbers of scholars have made successful study on various issues on elite and Lingayats. Most of the studies highlighted were of the backward classes of India. However, there is very rare study made on the ‘Lingayats’ who are considered one of the dominant communities of the Karnataka state. Hence, the need of the specific study on the ‘Lingayat Elite’ is felt by the researcher and it has assumed great significance along with filling the gaps of the existing studies.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the objective of the study:

★ To study the Socio-economic background of the Lingayat Elite of Belgaum District.

★ To know ‘Occupational Mobility’ including ‘Intra and Inter-Generational Mobility’.

★ To understand the role of Lingayat Elite in the progress of the society.

HYPOTHESIS:

→ H₁: A Sound Economic background is responsible to become an ‘Elite’.

→ H₂: A Sound Educational background has led to the Emergence of Lingayat Elite.

→ H₃: A Sound Educational and Occupational Family background has helped them to occupy ‘Elite’ position in the society.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

★ The study covers Lingayats of Belgaum District.

★ The study is confined to Lingayat Elite only.