Chapter - 2

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY AND RELIGION

Introduction:

By the nature of its functioning, the word 'Political Mobilization' has been frequently used as synonym to the concept of political participation or politicisation. Since there is no independent dictionary meaning and theory as such in politics, it is fully restricted to the mobilizational aspect of the people in the political field. The concept of political participation is confined mainly to an act of voting in election and electoral participation in the democratic process. Sometimes it refers to a set of attitudes, such as a person's sense of political competence, or high levels of interest in and information about politics. And at other times it refers to a wide range of political activities of which voting is only one\textsuperscript{1}. By discussing the word, Norman and Verba have shown slight disagreement over the similarities by saying that protest type of mobilization like strike or demonstrations are urban phenomenon which required favourable environment to emerge. They criticise saying that these types of mobilizations as being basically exaggerated the actual numbers of participants producing false picture of mobilization\textsuperscript{2}. 


Mobilization: Meanings and stages of the process:

The dictionary meaning of the term 'mobility' is quality or state of being mobile. It shows unstatic nature of being with one's capacity or facility of movement or mobileness. The mobilization in the military or war context is called military mobilization, which stands for gathering up and covering all energies or efforts in the direction of an emergency or a calamity like a war. The aspects of political mobilization include willingness of action and demonstrative spirit in the political field in the given socio-political system.

The mobilisation refers to the process of forming crowds, associations and organizations for the pursuits of collective goals. By its definition mobilization is a process in which a social unit gains relatively rapid control over resources it previously did not control. It refers to a situation where an interest group or organisations like political parties direct its own political energies mainly to the broad campaigns of election and ideological persuasion. The concept in the form of political participation has been fully theorised by many scholars like Almond, Gabriel and Coleman James (1960), Apter David E., Pennock Ronald, Welch Claude E.M (1967), Gustield Joseph, Pye Lucion W., Nettl J.P., Oberschall Anthony and Rudolph and Rudolph. They have done comprehensive study on political participation taking place in every types
of political system. They provide insight into certain limitations in the process of political development. The participation aspect itself is dividend into many roles and one of them is mass-mobilisation for opposition or change seeking\(^\text{13}\).

The concept discussed by Nettl J.P. is a process, function and purpose itself. According to him mobilization is an essentially (i) attitudinal - a commitment to action, and (ii) a means of translating this commitment into action or observed behaviour. This is a composite process involving several stages viz.

(a) The existence of values and goals requiring mobilization.

(b) Action on the part of leaders, elites or institutions seeking to mobilize individuals and groups.

(c) The institutional and collective means of achieving this mobilization.

(d) The symbols and references by which values, goals and norms are communicated to, and understood as well as internalized by the individuals involved in mobilization.

(e) The process by which mobilization takes place in terms of individual interaction, the creation and change of collectivities and structures, the crystallization of roles, the effects on sub-system and their boundaries.
(f) Estimates of the number of people (or proportion of a population) mobilized and the degree of such mobilization for different sectors or strata of the population. The process of participation has divided due to the relationship of peoples representing different socio-economic status and different types of consciousness which have resulted in to hostility among themselves. This situation provides mobilizational units having their own strength, followers and objectives. This political behaviour is conditioned by certain important factors viz:

(i) The level of education of the population
(ii) Consensus on democratic values
(iii) Political structure and institutions
(iv) Historical development of the society
(v) Social economic condition

The result and effectiveness of mobilization is always connected with these factors at large.

**Participation and Mobilization inter-relationship:**

The concept of political participation stands for the perpetual process of political development. Its basic function is to influence the government decisions. It covers all organizational political activities like functioning of voluntary agencies, party organizations as well as the
political activity of participation on individual level irrespective of sex, age and their socio-economic status\textsuperscript{16}. Against this background the concept having mobilizational strength does not stand independently but it covers all participatory aspects in the political process. It tries to improve their participatory aspects to achieve goals for which they are confined and mobilized.

The motivational aspect or appeal of demonstration has its importance in its overall outcome or the circumstances that emerge. Theoretically speaking, the participation is not an end of the mobilisational aspect of the activity, but it is an instrument for organizing people for achieving their goals. Participation becomes effective when coupled with proper programming and leadership.

The concept 'political mobilisation' does not stand for the overwhelming process of political participation in continuation of the past but it is very much concerned with present requirement of political process and participation. The actors mobilize themselves to achieve certain goals viz; acquiring political importance in present conditions, getting representation in government, scaling upto the ruling elite circle, supporting or opposite governmnetaal policies, consolidating or dissolving of political authority, interest articulating, propagating certain political ideology, political lobbying, inthuencing electoral political activities etc.
For achieving these goals they try to make masses politically viable and available\(^{17}\). The mobilisational aspect of political participation is occasional and short lived. The prolongation of satyagraha, marches and protest rallies may lose the very spirit of mobilization. Therefore, the mobilisation in the form of violent eruption, riots and demonstration are found more dramatical and effective than petition or ballot.

The process of political mobilisation backed by certain ideological and issue wise notions, develops psychological proximity among the participants. When they participate, they feel strong ties of togetherness and oneness\(^{18}\). The mobilisation stands for achieving certain objectives which include nationalism, national feelings, patriotism, ethnic feeling and loyalties, great varieties of ideologies, religious and strong moral feelings on particular issues like social reforms, human rights, racial discriminations and socio-economic inequalities etc. The mobilisational activity like social movement is also basically a socially sharing activity based on the beliefs and demand for change in the social order through collective mobilisation\(^{19}\). The inner logic of the process of political mobilisation is to provide the ground or modus operandi to act. It appeals the masses for action in various ways, including satyagraha, formation and promotion of organised activities, expression and
propagation of beliefs and it provide moral support to ongoing political activities.

The process of democratisation in the traditional societies provide greater scope for political activities. In these systems different groups of people feel the need to participate in political process to achieve their long standing demands by exploiting their strength as the democratization provides them opportunity to exploit their politics for mobilization. It has the inner process working with new aspirations, hopes, motivational aspect and resourcefulness of the people in gaining more strength. Naturally it provides larger opportunities for mobilization, through the emergence of interest groups with intense political consciousness about their rights and justice. In other words, the process of modernisation undermines traditional society as inevitable part of change20. The process has its logic to replace the traditional societies into modern one. This process of replacement initiated by the large scale mobilisation of people generates more pressure for the political participation. The participation here refers to any voluntary action - successful or unsuccessful, organised or unorganised, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods - that tries to influence the public policies, administration of public affairs, political leaders at any level. The process demonstrates three aspects of mobilisation. (1) in all political systems
people have certain attitudes towards government and politics, but they are meaningless if there is no action to express them. Here mobilization is seen through action of the people, (2) Impact: There action can be seen in the form of voluntary activities of the people with both positive or negative impact on government and political system as such. These impact of action is a characteristic feature of mobilization. (3) There are multiple organisational agencies operating in the society like business organisations, labour unions, farmer's associations, community organisations including cultural, recreational and religious organisations, various section-wise societal organisations like Students Unions, Bar Associations Cr. Medico's Associations in pursuing their interest. The conflicting interests lead to tension and quarrel. The instrumental value of agitation or participation in political process receive more importance when the conflicting groups try to foster their interest through it.

The unequal social structure gives rise to various movements with divergent interests in a single political system. The political mobilization provides this kind of class interest and is called protest movement. It is a manifestation of opposition to or for the demands to be fulfilled; existing socio-political structure. The clash of interest appears due to the stratified nature of the society. The process of democratisation and modernisation intensifies the situation on various levels.
The collapse of traditional structure provides opportunities to form their own groups and associations based on common linkages or common professional interests. The establishment of new identity and consciousness provides them sense of collectiveness and action oriented mobilisation to assert and protect their interest. This activism produces tension and strains among the social groups. In the process, if the new groups emerge, consequently the established group or groups are threatened and shattered. The dissatisfaction over the distribution of socio-economic and political power creates hostility among themselves. The intensified conflict between social classes, religious and communal groups, virtually creates group consciousness, which in turn leads to collective action and turn to politics.21

The conflicting socio-political interests delivered distinct types of political mobilisation in the form of protest movements. Protest is an attack on prevailing system in an intellectual or organized way.22 Social conflict arises from the structured arrangement of different interests of individuals and or groups in a social system. In every social organisation, some positions are entrusted with a right to exercise control over other persons and to ensure compliance with authority through coercion... social conflict is seldom a simple reaction to grievances and frustrations experienced in the pursuit and defence of material interest. Interest and
dissatisfaction are experienced and interpreted by way of moral ideas about right and wrong, justice and injustice of conceptions of the social order as they are expressed in ideas and highly regarded principles. The stratified social systems preserved inequalities in socio-economic arrangements. The dissenter is equipped with desire for chance in his psyche which prompts him to participate in protest movements. They propose change in given system by preparing themselves for collective action. The commonness which they share in social system consist unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influence among them. This system is divided among the superior and inferior, higher and lower strata. It is identified with hierarchical inequalities among the people based on their power position, privileges and social status and wealth. As a result, the situation of upheaval and turmoil is found in this system as an inevitable thing. The ongoing process of change in such system preferred the rational utilization of resources and aimed at the establishment of a modern society. The systems undergoing such change are characterised by the application of technology, extensive social interdependence, urbanisation, literacy and social mobility either upwards or horizontal as Rudolph and Rudolph pointed out, by shifting the traditional status in political field on equal standard. The process admits
that the traditional societies are essentially change-prone and it is inevitable part of their existence. It has brought about drastic change in economic and political life of everybody. In the field of economy, it has reduced or destroyed the traditional means of production and replaced by the new mode of production and economic activities. The emerging industrial set up provides for new opportunities to the people, of social basis, by destroying traditional norms of segregation. The change brings out a new outlook and life style based upon the economic status called class identity. The class-wise unequal relationship and inequality becomes the integral part of the new urban society.

In the political field, it provides opportunities to alter the structure of stratified social system by creating new political consciousness among the people. The growing urbanisation, literacy, and mass consciousness through modern means, make people aware about their role and rights in given political system. People accept new form of political power in urban set up. The new political forces emerge with new objectives and requirements. The larger proliferation in interest groups and associations in the system start active participation to protect their interest in political field through various socio-political platforms.

The process of the attainment has been characterized by following things -
(i) The Advancement of highly differentiated political structure.

(ii) Growing extension of the scope of the central legal, administrative and political activities.

(iii) The continuous spread of potential political power to wider groups in the society. By the weakening of traditional elites and traditional legitimacy of rulers and by establishment of some sort of ideological accountability of the ruler to the ruled who are the holders of the potential political power. In the ongoing strained democratic system, various channels for the expression of discontent have to emerge, followed by legitimate political action. The process of political mobilisation started and resulted in the attainment of these goals. The process of political mobilisation became the part and parcel of this kind of goal attainment process. The various types of movements and the activities lead this participation in the ongoing political process to articulate their demands. Prof. T.K.Oommen has categorised it on the basis of goals they prefer to achieve.

(a) Primordial collectivities pursuing instrumental goals. Examples of these are mobilization by caste groups for economic benefits, mobilization by tribal groups or linguistic groups for political autonomy, separate statehood etc.
(b) Primordial collectivities pursuing symbolic goals. Examples of these are caste mobility movements, conversion movements, reform movements, linguistic groups fighting for cultural recognition etc.\textsuperscript{29}

A standard definition of social movement defines it as 'socially shared demands for change in some aspects of social order\textsuperscript{30}, which has allowed those people and their attempts of mobilization who willingly support the destruction of unfavourable rigid social structure through the available means of mobilization.

The very purpose of these movements featured on protest movement are scholarly discussed by many scholars including Rudolph and Rudolph (1971). Gusfield Joseph (1970), Norman F. Cantur (1970), M.S.Gore (1971), Satish Arora (1971), Mathew Joseph (1970), Alan Marsh (1977), and Sunanda Patwardhan (1973). The socio-political movement is called a protest or revitalising movement, and its significant contribution is itself producing weightage in the process of political movement. The political participation with certain social agenda receives greater importance in the political field. Protest becomes an effective means of mobilizing people to accelerate the long-standing requirement of change. It becomes the important instrument for unhappy, frustrated and exploited people to find the satisfaction and fulfilment\textsuperscript{31}. The social
sharing of deprivation and want of privileges can be considered as the starting point of these movements. M.S.Gore has put the characteristics of the protest movements in the following way.

(1) In the process of protest there will be existence of deprived persons willingly coming together to fight, sacrifice and mobilise for the benefits of the group.

(2) There are two types of groups found in this process indicating differences in their persuasion, one showing no homogeneity and solidarity in their presentation. One favoured change and other opposes or resists the change.

(3) The existence of the ideology, in the process seeks change and attacks and to demolishes the old values practices of existing inequality, and enunciates values in terms of changed relationship and sick to establish means to bring about the change.

(4) Have the 'Leaders' who have seen the need for change, articulate it and initiate the process of mobilisation.

(5) Have active followers who have been mobilised and who assist the organisational efforts.

(6) The rank and file who will remain virtually involved but participate in the movement so far as it is consistent with their day to day preoccupation.
Joseph Mathew discussed protest in its relation with relative deprivation. The protester sees his relative position vis-à-vis those who are of an advantageous position in the society. Thus, hierarchical discrepancies lead to protest. Poverty and unemployment often lead to protest. He quotes Arora to the effect that there is a large scale politicisation of protest which is inevitable. Protest and dissent are not the activity of merely the irrational and opportunistic sectors of society. They represent a particular mode of political participation chosen by the citizenry...33. The stratified societies obviously came under the pressure of various types of protest movements.

The age old discrepancies and frustration due to inequality have erupted in the form of socio-political activities. The satyagrah, morchas, agitation and various pressure tactics on government machinery for favourable policy adaptation have been trigged by the leaders and ideologues representing the discontent. The enrolment of membership and work under the collective spirit get momentum as an urgency. The conflictual socio-political situation became the sign of system going under change and advancement. The theories of relative deprivation, re-vitalisation have specifically produced huge literary evidences on political mobilisation, standing for socio-political change or transformation. Political mobilisation as a concept stands for broader scope.
The Role of Ideology in Political Mobilization:

The political mobilisation standing for the socio-political change has supported by its essential variables. Ideology has provided pivotal role in this process. The process of change itself manifests two sets of forces giving by different values and norms clashing each other. One is change oriented and the other is the preserver of status quo. The protest movement is value oriented which propagates such values which were lacking in previous value system. These values have become inseparable part of the movement itself. The people asserting in the movement evolves these values which are as follows:

i) High sense of political efficacy.

ii) Cynicism towards the political system.

iii) A developed sense of ideological and political conceptualisation. It also related to dissatisfaction with government performance$^{34}$.

The role of ideology has been well discussed by many scholars. The meaning of the word 'ideology' has been frequently debated in the concerning field. Dozens of definitions have been proposed for correct meaning but have been found contradicting each other. The political scientists have no consensus regarding whether ideology has a positive or negative or neutral features in modern society$^{35}$. 


Today, the ideology has occupied the important place in the field of inquiry about political activism led by the state or masses. Karl Marx put it as a fabrication used by a group of people to justify themselves. He also added that an ideology is a part of super-structure usually working for the benefit of the ruling class. In the opposite point of view Frederick Watkins in his book 'the Age of Ideology' quoted by Baradat Leon, suggests that ideology comes almost entirely from political extremes. He argued that ideologies are always opposed status quo and favoured abrupt change in the existing order. Ideologies by nature are violent, militant and revolutionary. Watkins goes on suggesting that most ideologies are stated in simplistic terms, are Utopian in their objectives. They usually display great faith in humankind as potential for finding success and happiness. Conservatism, because it defends the status quo resists change and is an anti-ideology.36

The full blown ideology consists of four parts of its usefulness and operational validity.

First, it interprets the process which leads to the present undesirable state of affairs, and blame for certain individuals, groups or institutions responsible for it. It identifies heroes and villains.

Second, the ideology provides the blueprint of a desirable state of affairs that can be obtained if only the resistance of certain groups is
overcome. The blue print describes the goals of the moments and the means to achieve them. The blueprint provides a hope to overcome frustration and dissatisfaction.

Third, the ideology usually brings about moral ideas for the healthy society, which is 'social philosophy'.

Baradat Leon has to discussed the role of ideology and its relationship with the purpose for which it has come into existence.

First, for him it is a political term, though it is applied in other context. The political nature of the term ideology stems from its historical use in political context.

Second, every ideology consists of view of the present and vision of the future. The preferred future is always presented as a materialistic improvement over the present. This desirable future condition is almost always attainable, according to the ideology within a single life time. The outstanding feature of an ideology is that it offers hope.

Third, ideology is action-oriented. It not only describes reality and other perspectives of better future but also most importantly, it maps-out directions and regarding the steps to be taken to attain this goal.

Fourth, ideology is directed towards the masses. The ideology, or the person following the ideology directes it his appeal to the masses.
They are interested in mobilising vast number of people for the achievement of their targets.

Finally, because ideologies are directed at the masses, they are usually couched in fairly simple terms that can be understood by ordinary people. For the same reasons ideologies are usually motivational in tone, tending to call on people to make great efforts to attain their ideological goals. This mass appeal itself implies confidence in people's ability to improve their lives through positive action\textsuperscript{38}.

M.S.A. Rao has described the ideology as a symbolic system which projects self image of the concerned groups. It helps to codify the beliefs and myths in order to define the aspirations and responses of the people. It fulfils the need to interpret the surroundings for the action as historical necessity\textsuperscript{39}.

Ideology is closely related to the problem of identity. The ideological backing of the political activities are fully governed by the design and the aspirations derived from that ideology. Mostly, ideologies give direction to the demand for change. They give radical movement whatever coherence and meaning it has for its followers. In an important sense they are the movements in a sense in which the social base, the organisational structure or the external stresses which give rise to it or not\textsuperscript{40}. 
Ideologies are truly responsible to their structural elements. The manifestation of their structural content—certainly produces positive results to the given system.

The role of the ideology as the historical process could be understood as follows:

1) A statement of basic values on which society should be organized.

2) A utopian of society, in which these values would be realised.

3) Description of the existing society in terms of its departure from this ideal, and an analysis of the causes and historical genesis of the current situation.

4) A view of strategy, of how active human intervention can move society from its present situation to the ideal, including a view of the forms of action necessary, the key targets of change efforts, and the key agents necessary to accomplish the change.\(^{41}\)

The ideology has capacity to bring the relevant experience, of relative deprivation, of powerlessness or hidden oppression, into the consciousness of the people it wishes to move. The patterns of everyday life can be presented in such a way that their restrictness is revealed and the common sense assumptions behind them challenged. Ideologies constitute an important element in analysis of social movements. Ideology refers to a 'system of belief' that is elaborate, integrated more
or less coherent, which justifies the exercise of power explain and judge historical events, identities political right and wrong and furnishes guide to action.

The emergence of protest movement in the socio-political field has strong ideological backing. Its very character is associated with feelings of deprivation and injustice. The ideological belongingness of protest movements emphasize and take responsibility to govern and guide the movement. It tries to identify the persons with their overall deprivation and degradation in the society. Ideology performs certain functions. It either distrust the value system which perpetuates injustice or it creates psychological proximity among the persons having similar social identity. It creates the feeling of commonness among the people, and the common goal of achievement of the objective forces them to confront the system. It prepares masses for an action and develops new hope in them. The preparation for the replacement or destruction of the old system takes place in organisational form. The formation of protest movements generate delivered consciousness among the deprived persons. It also generates sense of justification for whatever action they prefer to take. The ideology has provided firm beliefs about justice and its attainment. The collective understanding about action produces mobilizational spirit among the people. There are various political mobilizational activities
which find identical backing and consist ideological aspects within them. In such cases ideology works as an authority which provides aspirations, action plan and leadership at the same time. The relationship between mobilization and ideology is inseparable.

Ideology acts as a driving force in political mobilization. It reflects diverse themes of protest, dissent and reform etc. In the stratified social set up it plays both roles the role of an interpreter and the role of an accelerator, to gear up the movement. According to Rudolph and Rudolph, in Indian stratified society, caste provides very effective soil for caste led political mobilization. Various caste associations are engaged to further the caste interest in modern policy. There has been a long history of backward caste movement having ideological backing. The Indian social system has witnesses many attempts at changes and transformations. The liberal ideology of reform movement and its emphasis on non-Brahminism has bred many forms of movements including protest, revitalization and ultimately abandonment of Hindu faith. The ultimate aim of these movements is to achieve justice in existing social system.

**Role of Religious Conversion in Political Mobilization:**

The religious conversions apparently create an impression that it is a simple act of change in faith. But the systematic inquiry into the
subject reveals the truth that conversion is a form of negation of ones current faith. The act of mass conversion has been considered as a mobilizational activity. In India, it has a long history in religious development. Historically speaking Buddhism, Jainism, Veerashaivism and even medieval Islamic enterrenchment and later missionary efforts at converting people to Christianity were considered as a reaction against Brahminism and the superiority of the Brahman in Hindu social order. The growing dissatisfaction and insubordination creates the feeling of alienation among the people in the faith. Many a time the protest movements, reformation movements and revitalization movements try to reinterpret the scriptures and demand changes in the belief system. These movements challenge the governing religious authority and prepare for confrontation with them. The conflict between the preserveness of old order and reformers is historically important. The working style of Arya Samajists, Brahma-Samajists and Prarthana Samajists has made major contribution in this regard. The discrimination by the privileged people forced the disappointed and neglected people to find the option which would serve as solution to their problems. They have adopted new religions which would fulfill their aspirations.

The collective efforts require organizational capacity and perception to lead in proper direction. The capable leader and psychological feeling
of association prepares ground for effective mobilization. The religious conversion if it is opted by the large numbers of people, certainly requires all factors for its completion. The act of conversion does not occur abruptly but has long standing efforts involved in it. It consistently works to make people aware about their status and position in the living faith. The social system works under the influence of religious dogmas and is governed by the religious authorities. The act of conversion of people may disturb religious and social set up and is therefore, opposed by the vested interests in society. The conversion movements in India have a history of opposition. The conversion movements have created hostility between the people having a particular faith and people who forsake it. The future of converted people in new faith itself is undecided and uncertain. The conversion movements pre-suppose the preparation to check the antagonism from both sides.

The conversion act is not singled out as a fully independent act but it is an associated action, purposefully designed and ideologically governed by the particular masses.

If the conversion movements stand for the social justice, it denotes a kind of social mobilization for better living. It may be the revolt against living social arrangement. The social change movement or the protest movement may have equal aspirations in this regard. The conversion is
an act of social change and has significant space in religious development in a particular state. The conversion movement is not considered as the solution to find the human dignity. The critic stands for reformation, ready to discard the unbearable faith. The search for better religion is basically related to human desire for dignity and equal respect in human relations. The conversion act, if followed by huge number of people, requires programming, direction and ideological base. It may take the form of agitation for attainment of political aspiration.

The conceptual framework for political mobilisation and the role of ideology and religious conversion to formulate this mobilisation, applies to 'Dalit Politics' – also the subject under study. The next chapter deals with the dalit political development since the pre-Ambedkar to post-Ambedkar period. On the basis of these major concepts, an attempt has been made to describe development of dalit politics in Maharashtra and the role played by ideology and religious conversion in it, as these factors prima faci appear to have deeply influenced the attitudes of different caste groups among dalits in the state.
Notes & References


11. Anthony Oberschall: Op Cit


16. The point of political efficacy is also discussed by Fred Greenstein and Polsby: Op. Cit, p.32. See for details about who participate, p.38.


   See the concept 'Class conflict', Widely discussed by Engels Friedrich in 'Marx and Engels basic writings on politics and philosophy' edited by Feuer L.S. Anchor Book Published, New York, 1959, p.132.


34. Dennish Kavanagh : Op. Cit, P.186


36. Ibid, p.8


41. Ibid. p.22