Ethnic identity and social mobility are interrelated. Bhat (1984:199) in his study of ethnicity and mobility among Waddars of Karnataka, empirically demonstrated the above relationship. He says: "Ethnicity has emerged as a powerful instrument for achievement and mobility in contemporary societies" Mitchell (1956), Epstein (1958), Gluckman (1961) and Nair (1978) stated that the culture is the basis of ethnicity on which ethnic groups are formed by simulating their culture of origin within a new social context. Francis (1947) and Gordon (1964) stated that ethnicity provides a sense of peoplehood or 'we' feeling shared by members of a group. Nair (1983) stated that the four major premises on which ethnicity operates in India are caste, language, region of origin, and religion. Desai (1981: 309) says: "Ethnicity appears to have tremendous scope for preserverance for group mobilization without necessarily passing through historical phases".

Ethnicity is the sense of Ethnic Identity. It is an
accurate appreciation of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is the root from where ethnicity arises, which manifest in both intra and inter ethnic interactions.

Ethnic identity plays a crucial role in bringing about social mobility of a community. It provides common norms on which interaction takes place. It provides a sense of solidarity. These, in turn, lead to upward mobility in a stratified society.

Social mobility is the movement of an individual, or groups, from one social position to another. It is a change in social object or value, beliefs, anything that has been created or modified by human activity. It is a change in one's education, occupation, income, economic conditions, prestige, status, power, and wealth. It changes a person's overall social position. Rao (1984 viii) in his Foreward on Bhat's study says: "Ethnic identity is a significant unit of operation in educational, economic, and political field, which leads to social mobility of the community".

The Backward Classes in India and the Blacks from all over the world have established their new ethnic identities on the basis of protest ideology. Rao (1979) says: "Both among the Backward Classes and the Blacks, the social movements which were based on an ideology of protest, built
up self respect, honour, and prestige by enabling them to assert their independence and equality”. Further he mentioned that they rejected the religion and culture of the oppressors and embraced another religion and established new identities. These new ethnic identities provided self respect, dignity, esteem and honour to them.

Ethnic Identity has socio-cultural and political dimensions. Ethnic communities, who are locally segregated, develop their own ethnic associations and ethnic organizations, which provide for upward mobility. Ethnic associations play a pivotal role in preservation of ethnic identity by simulating their culture, and accelerating social mobility by promoting educational and co-operative activities. They also provide educational, and occupational facilities and financial help to members of the community. They look after the overall development and progress of the community. Singh (1973: 171) says: "Earlier aspiration for vertical mobility or sanskritization among lower castes, has now been replaced by new feeling of self identity within one’s own caste or increased horizontal solidarity. Caste association are an indirect reflection of this new trend". This emergence of caste based ethnic associations make significant contributions in achieving upward social mobility. Kumaran (1984) observed that ethnic associations have given a new life to the depressed classes by
strengthening their group solidarity and identity. They strive for social upliftment and development of their community through educational progress, eradication of superstitions and blind faith, and inculcating and developing spiritualism among the community members.

These ethnic associations fight for the democratic rights and demands, through collective action and political mobilization of the community members. Schermerhorn (1978) pointed out that scheduled castes develop their own political organizations for group political activism, group commitment, group identification, group authority, power and control, in order to acquire group mobility.

Ethnic identity plays an important role in acquiring political power for upward mobility. In the present study, I have examined the relationship between ethnic identity of the Buddhists in Pune and the consequent social mobility of the community. The study provides empirical evidence of the relationship between ethnic identity and social mobility and the role played by ethnic associations of the Buddhists in bringing about social mobility.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BUDDHISTS' COMMUNITY:

In order to contextualize the relationship between ethnic identity and social mobility, the historical background of the Buddhist community has been elaborated in
this section. The historical conditions of their settlement pattern, occupational and educational levels, the nature of political participation, and their conversion, have been described. Literature and previous studies are the main sources.

The Buddhists in Maharashtra were drawn mainly from one caste, namely Mahar. The Mahars - the whole caste group embraced Buddhism, under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Patwardhan (1973: 140) says: "Such a scale of mass, voluntary, conversion was unknown in history. We do not find another example in modern history, of a large group as a whole accepting a religion which is considered good and moral, and yet practical, and advantageous, to itself".

The Mahars were one of the most important untouchable caste in Maharashtra. They formed numerically the largest caste and are scattered throughout Maharashtra state. The Mahars are generally tall and robust in their physical appearance. Sir Herbert Risely (1922) pointed out that the Mahars' Cephalix Index is close to the Brahmins, and it is even above the Deshastha Brahmins. According to many ethnographers and anthropologists, Mahars claim to be the original inhabitants of Maharashtra. Russel (1916), Ethoven (1922), Robertson (1938), Karve (1951, 1961), and Wilson (1973) considered that the Mahars are as an aboriginal
tribe. They have a non-Aryan or pre-Aryan origin. Bombay Gazetteer (1959) states that the Mahars are fallen Rajputs. Some claim that Maharashtra means the land of the Mahars because the word Maharashtra is derived from the word Mahar. Some consider that the Mahars are descendants of Mahamuni. Goddess Parvati picked up the infant Mahamuni from the banks of the river Ganges. The word 'Dharniche' (meaning son of the soil) was used for Mahars which signifies that they may have possessed land. Ambedkar (1969) claimed that the Mahars were defeated by Aryans, who incorporated them into the permanently lowest rung of the social and religious hierarchy, and in slavery. He called them as "a defeated tribe" and the "Broken Men".

1.2.1 THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF MAHARS:

Mahars are found in each and every village all over Maharashtra. Their residential area is known as Maharwada, which is situated outside the village. Their houses are built of mud and stone. A popular Marathi proverb, 'jeth gaon tethe Maharwada', means wherever there is a village, there is a Maharwada. This signifies the widespread occurrence of Mahars and their importance in the villages of Maharashtra. An anthropologist, Iravati Karve (1951) in Anthropological Survey of Maharashtra found that the Mahars are the most widespread caste of Maharashtra. She says: "jithaparyayant Mahar pochle tithaparyayant Maharashtra"
meaning where ever the Mahars have reached or found, there is Maharashtra.

1.2.2 OCCUPATION AND EDUCATION:

In traditional Maharashtrian society, Mahar was a balutedar and watandar. Balute means gift in kind and balutedar means village servant, who provides his services to the villagers, and the villagers in turn give him balute in the form of grain, skin of dead cattle and land which is known as watan. Watandar means landowner.

The Mahars were inferior, hereditary and general village servants. Their traditional or balutedar duties involved watchmanship and guardianship of the village, maintenance of streets, walls and cremation grounds, as messengers of good or bad news, hauling away dead cattle, guarding the village government treasury, collection of the land-revenue from the landowners and similar menial and other tasks considered 'polluting' by other castes. In addition to this some administrative and religious duties were also assigned to the Mahars. Ambedkar (1948) asserts that the Mahars had fifty-two social and ritual rights which were sanctioned and confirmed, by the Muslim kings of Berar (15th century A.D.), and followed by all rulers of Maharashtra. Altekar (1927) pointed out that the Mahar was a member of the village governing body known as Panchayat,
which consisted of the patil, who was the head-man of the village usually belonging to the Maratha caste and a Kulkarni, who was the accountant of village belonging to the Brahmin caste. The Mahar used to assist the Patil in all administrative work and carried out all duties assigned to him by the Patil. The Mahars paid land revenue as they owned land. Agarwal (1934) wrote that in cases of land disputes, the Mahar's decisions were considered to be important and were accepted. So the Mahars used to play the role of the witness as well as the judge. Zelliot (1992) pointed out that during the Balutedari system, the Mahars had a good and widespread reputation for their ability, skill, and cleverness. Inspite of his untouchable caste, the Mahars had a close association with the upper caste Hindus. In addition to the administrative duties, the Mahars were also assigned religious duties. For example, the right to, first kindle the fire during or at the beginning of Holi festival from which other fires were lit. He also guarded the sacred place of the Goddess Mariai, mostly in Maharwada. In addition to the religious and administrative duties, the Mahars had some entertainment duties. The Mahars used to do the 'Tamasha' and 'Jalesa' i.e. singing of folk songs and folk dance. Mate (1933) said that inspite of having the lowly structural placement and serving as the hereditary servant of the village, Mahars
were considered to be important persons in many matters of the village. Goodne (1852) reported that the Mahar was the 'village eye'. He was the chief actor and decision maker in the affairs of the village. His position made him familiar and knowledgeable with everybody's affair and his presence became necessary in every dispute.

The above signifies the importance of Mahars in traditional Maharashtrian society. The Mahar was balutedar, watandar, land revenue payer, an important person in administrative, religious and entertainment fields but, still alas! He remained an untouchable!

The Mahars suffered from illiteracy, inequality and injustice. Education was denied to them. Educational facilities and privileges were enjoyed by high castes and the Mahars were deprived access to learning.

1.2.3 RELIGION:

Mahars were Hindus but had no access to Hindu scriptures, Hindu temples and other sacred places. They were forbidden to enter temples. They had their own Gods and Goddesses. The popular deities of the Mahars were Nhskoba, Kandoba, Vithoba, Chokhoba, Mariai, Mesai, Satvai, Jarvai and Bhadavi. Ethoven (1922) observed that the popular deities of the Mahars were Bhawani, Nhskoba, Mahadeva, Kandoba, Chokhoba and Vithoba. The family
deities of the Mahars were Khandoba, Mhskaba, Giroba, Jokhai, Samna, Kalkai. The Sacred place of all the above Gods and Goddesses were found in the Maharwada. The Mahars, besides their own deities, worshipped Hindu Gods and Goddesses, Muslim Saints and images of their own ancestors. They were followers of Kabir, Giri, Nath and Chokamela. They had their own priest of their own caste known as Gosavis, Gurus, Vachaks, Sadhus, and Pandits. Ghurey (1962) pointed out that Mariai was the patron deity of the Mahars. They were the guardians of Mariai. Images of this Goddess were found all over Maharashtra. Untouchables as well as the upper caste Hindus worshipped the Mariai. In each and every Maharwada there was a shrine of Mariai. Ethoven (1922) observed that Mahars believed in superstitions, witchcraft, omens, sorcery, soothsaying and ghosts. Bombay Gazetteer (1885) reports that Mahars had faith in evil spirits. According to them all diseases were due to evil spirits.

The Mahars had their own poet saint, Chokhamela. He was the only important Saint of the Fourteenth Century from the untouchable caste in Maharashtra. He spread the Bhakti cult among the untouchables. He had accepted the varna system. His philosophy was to remain loyal to Hinduism which was reflected through his songs. He had created his own Varkari cult. Chokhamela's shrine is at Pandharpur.
His songs are still sung by pilgrims of the varkari cult. Zelliot (1992) pointed out that Chokhamela never protested against the Mahars traditional work. But he protested against the concept of untouchability. Behere (1946) said that the Brahmin priests never allowed Chokhamela to worship in their temples. Chokhamela claimed that Brahmin priests resisted the spread of religious knowledge all over Maharashtra.

1.2.4 SOURCES OF CHANGE:

The Establishment of the British rule, militarisation, migration, industrialization and urbanization, role of pre-Ambedkar reformers and role of Dr. Ambedkar are important sources of changes among the Mahars of Maharashtra.

1.2.4.1 THE BRITISH RULE:

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the establishment of British rule in Bombay provided the Mahars opportunities for service in the army, employment in cotton mills, ammunition factories, railroads, dockyards, construction work, etc. Many Mahars changed their traditional occupation. Robertson (1938) and Ethoven (1922), reported that the Mahars were the first, and the only, untouchable caste to be affected by exogenous influences.
like westernization, migration, militarisation, urbanisation, and industrialization. They were the first people who served as bearers, butlers, butchers and ayahs for the British officers and their wives.

In addition to employment, the British rule also provided them secular education and established new system of bureaucracy. The British rule realized the necessity of improvement of the Depressed Class. So they gave some reservation to Depressed Classes in employment. Dushkin (1972) and Ghurey (1969) stated that the British Government developed 'protective discrimination' policy for the depressed classes and also enacted the 'Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850'. Parvathamma (1984) reported that the British rule had also sanctioned separate electorates in Provincial Legislative Assemblies for Depressed Classes which were withdrawn because of the opposition from the national leaders.

In addition to the legal provisions, the British rule also helped and supported social reformers. Kamble (1979) stated that British rule provided financial help to Mahatma Jotiba Phule, a social reformer, to run a school for the oppressed classes.

Thus British Rule provided maximum opportunities for the development of depressed classes. Mahars were the first
untouchable caste to be benefited by available provisions.

### 1.2.4.2 MILITARISATION:

The Mahars used the army services as an important source of occupational mobility. They joined the British (Indian) Army in large numbers. The pride of their ancestors, who played a critical role in the battle of Koregaon in 1818 under Peshwa's army, prompted them to enlist. Major-General S.P. Thorat stated in the Ratnagiri Gazette (1880) that the Mahars had joined the army in large numbers; the numbers of Ratnagiri Mahars on the army rolls were 2,180. They had always proved to be obedient, brave and hardy soldiers. Cohen (1969) stated that the most heavily recruited low caste was the Mahars of Western India. Throat (1954) noted that during World War I, the Mahars were given their own unit of 11th Mahars. It was disbanded after the war. During World War II, in the presence of Dr. Ambedkar, the Mahar Regiment was created. This is now known as 'Mahar Machine Gun Regiment'. Keer (1954; 8) says: that the Mahars claim to be the most "robust, adaptable, intelligent, brave, virile, and leading untouchable community in India". Army service played a crucial role in the development of Mahars. Dr. Ambedkar (1946) stated that Army education provided new vision and new values to the Mahars. It created a consciousness about the low esteem
and stigma which was attached to them. They felt humiliated and wanted to be freed from it.

Thus the militarisation had become an important source of change for the Mahars.

1.2.4.3 MIGRATION:

Migration was another source of mobility for the Mahars. Ethoven (1922) stated that the Mahars were the first community who migrated to get jobs in factories. The number of the Mahars in villages had decreased because of their migration to the cities. Kamble (1983) noted that the Mahars migrated to urban areas to reject the traditional occupations and economic dependency on the upper castes. The Mahar migration to urban areas led to change in their value system and gave them economic and psychological freedom. Jogdand (1991), Patwardhan (1973) pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar’s leadership encouraged the Mahars to give up traditional occupations to get freedom from economic and social exploitation. This resulted in migration from villages and urbanization of the Mahars, and their socio-economic development.

1.2.4.4 INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANISATION:

Industrialization and urbanization have brought about new changes among the Mahars. Employment in the textile
(mill) industry and railway construction work gave them wider occupational choice and opportunities for spatial mobility. Mahars proved their excellence in unskilled labour. Buchanan stated in Khandesh Gazetteer (1880) that the Mahars were excellent railway gang labourers and they had achieved the monopoly in the unskilled labour market. Bombay Gazetteer (1886) noted that the Mahars worked in building and road construction work in Kolhapur. Zelliot (1992) stated employment in the textile mill industry was another important source for Mahars. Morris (1965) noted that the Mahars started working in industries in Nagpur, Akola, and Sholapur and mills in Bombay, by the nineteenth century. In 1872, the percentage of untouchables was only 1% in Bombay mills, and it was below 5% in the city, but it increased to 12% both in mills and the city by 1921. Kharat (1965) and Miller and Kale (1972) pointed out that the new occupational role crated caste and class consciousness among the Mahars.

1.2.4.5 ROLE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES:

Christian missionaries played a crucial role in establishing schools for untouchables and spreading education among them.

In 1882, the British Government established separate schools for untouchables. But the spread of education was
limited among the Mahars till early 20th century. The Christian missionaries helped in creating self awareness among the untouchables. Ranade (1971) pointed out that the work Christian missionaries in the Deccan played an important role in educating the Mahar and developing social consciousness among them. Rao (1978) noted that Christian missionaries created the circumstances for self awareness among the Depressed Classes. Hardgrave (1968) wrote that Christian missionaries provided English education to the Untouchables, which led to an increase in their awareness and spread of modern western ideas. Mathew (1986) pointed out that Christian missionaries introduced education to the Mahars resulting in creation and regeneration of new ideas like equality and freedom among the Mahars. They prepared and organised themselves to fight against the social injustice and inequalities.

In 1852, Mahatma Jotiba Phule, the great non-Brahmin social reformer, established the first school for the untouchables. The British rule provided the necessary financial assistance.

Besides the Christian Missionaries and social reformers, two rulers of the Indian state: Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur, and Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, provided help to social reformers, established
educational institutions for the untouchables and also provided financial assistance to brilliant students from the untouchable community. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad provided financial assistance and support to Dr. Ambedkar's education at Columbia University.

1.2.4.6 ROLE OF PRE-AMBEDKAR REFORMERS:

Before the emergence of Dr. Ambedkar as an emancipator and saviour of the untouchables, Mahar leaders had emerged during 19th century with a new spirit of militancy because of the influence of education. They made efforts to claim higher status.

Gopal Baba Walangkar emerged as the first Mahar leader. He was a military man from Konkan region who raised his voice against untouchability and casteism, and joined the struggle for the depressed class. Zelliot (1970) noted that Walangkar awakened the downtrodden people through his writings on casteism and untouchability in Marathi newspapers 'Dinbandhu' and 'Sudharak'. He established an association named 'Anarya Doshpariharak Mandali' meaning Non Aryan group for righting of the wrong. In 1918, he published a booklet 'Vital Vidhavansak'. Pantawane (1982) wrote that in Maharashtra State, Walangkar was the pioneer of the untouchable movement. He was the first journalist, first social revolutionary, and first social thinker, from
Shivaram Janba Kamble, from Pune, was another Mahar leader who formed the "Oppressed India Association" in Nagpur, and started a Marathi Newspaper 'Somwanshi Mitra' in Pune. Pantawane (1978) stated that Kamble propagated education by running a night school. He struggled against the traditional customs like 'Devadasi' and 'Potraj'. Jogdand (1991) noted that Kamble followed techniques like establishment of organisation, arranging conferences, petitions, and opening schools and libraries for untouchables.

Kisan Kayoji Bansode emerged as the Mahar leader from Nagpur. He published 'Mazdur Patrika' (Labour Pamphlet). He played an important role in educating and mobilizing the mill labourers. He went all over Maharashtra to preach the tenets of self-respect, and freedom for the Mahars. On 1st October 1901, he formed 'The Sanmarg Bodhak Nirashrit Samaj' (Hostile attitude of rejected and devoit of shelter community). In 1910, he formed 'Mahar Sudharak Mandal' (Mahar Development Association) and in 1919, 'Antaj Samaj' (Rejected or homeless community).

All these leaders worked for the awakening of the Untouchables, created awareness, provided insights and struggled for development of the downtrodden people.
Gokhale (1993) called this work as a self-reform era or self-reform movement of Mahars. Self-reformation was the need of the Mahars. It was considered as the solution to Untouchability.

1.2.4.7 ROLE OF DR. AMBEDKAR:

Dr. Ambedkar was born in a Mahar family, with army background, from Ratnagiri. He emerged as a great leader of the Mahars and has been acknowledged as a saviour of the untouchables. He did not claim high caste status for untouchables, for it would mean acceptance of upper caste superiority. He argued that the position of untouchables in Indian society is of social, not racial origin and therefore, subject to change. He wanted to integrate the untouchables into Indian society in the modern and not in the traditional ways. His ideal was to raise the educational standard of the untouchables so that they become aware of their own condition and aspire to rise to the level of the highest Hindu. He wanted the untouchables to use political power as a means to that end. For him equality meant not equal status of varnas, but equal social, political, and economic opportunity for all.

Dr. Ambedkar was the chief spokesman for the untouchables. He was a social reformer; his concern was the abolition of untouchability. He was the founder of the
Republcan Party and became its political leader. He helped to shape the programmes of legal rights and safeguards for untouchables. He was also a religious reformer. He directly influenced untouchables through his conversion movement.

Mathew (1986) noted that Dr. Ambedkar's leadership falls in three phases. The first phase includes the period from 1918 to 1930. During this period he was a social reformer; he struggled and raised his voice against the caste system and the practice of untouchability. He found that the performance of vedic style weddings, the donning of the sacred thread, etc. had little effect on the attitude of others. The second phase began from 1930. During this period he acted as a political leader; he created political consciousness among untouchables for gaining political power for their betterment. He formed a separate party and demanded separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. He established educational institutions for untouchables during the last period of the second phase. In the third and last phase of his life, he converted to Buddhism along with his followers. This phase saw the emergence of Dr. Ambedkar as a religious reformer of the untouchables. The tasks performed by Dr. Ambedkar can be understood in these areas:
a) **SATYAGRAHA:**

To achieve religious and social rights for the untouchables, Ambedkar followed the method of **satyagraha**, a mass non-violent protest. In March 1927 the first major satyagraha was held under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, to draw water from 'Chawdar tank' at Mahad in Kolaba district of Bombay. This satyagraha is known as the Mahad satyagraha. It was the beginning and the first collective protest of untouchables for their social and cultural rights. In the Satyagraha conference at Mahad, Dr. Ambedkar said: "This conference is held to unfurl the banner of Equality ... Our conference aims at the same achievement in social, religious, civic and economic matters. We are avowedly out to smash the steel frame of the caste system". (Kunte 1982). On the last day of the conference the Satyagrahis went to Chawdar tank. Keer (1954) noted that first Ambedkar kneeled and drank some water from the tank and then his followers did the same. This action demonstrated the right of all to use the facilities like drinking water without caste restriction. It was a successful satyagraha. The Depressed Class achieved confidence and motivation to struggle against the social injustice. Dr. Ambedkar called a second conference at Mahad in the same year, December 1927. The objective of the conference was declaration of the untouchables' rights of equality. The Conference concluded with the burning of the
Manu Smriti' publicly. On 2nd March, 1930, the second major satyagraha was held at Nasik under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. This satyagraha was organised for entry into the 'Kala Ram Temple'. Thousands of untouchables gathered at Nasik to enter the temple. Jogdand (1991) noted that around 15,000 Mahars and chambhars had collected at Nasik. This temple had remained closed for about a month to stop the entry of these people. The other temple entry satyagrahas were organised at Amaravati and at Pune.

In the history of Mahar movement, Mahad Satyagraha has great importance because this was the first time that the Depressed Classes protested collectively on a large scale and gained self-confidence. Dr. Ambedkar gave them the message of self-help, self-reform, self-development and self-reliance. He prepared them to fight against the social and religious injustice and to struggle for their civic rights.

b) LEVEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:

In the second phase of Dr. Ambedkar's leadership, he created political interest and educational consciousness among untouchables. He wanted to obtain political power for the untouchables. He strived to correct social and economic injustice. He demanded the untouchable's
political rights - liberty, equality and fraternity. He established many political organizations and educational institutions for the upliftment of the untouchables. Zelliot (1992) pointed out that among all the untouchables, the Mahars were the only community who unitedly and successfully used political means for enhancing their social status. The charismatic leadership of Dr. Ambedkar made the Mahars a politically dynamic community.

Dr. Ambedkar set up the first organisation "The Bahiskrit Hitakarani Sabha" on 20th July 1924. The objectives of this association were the educational, economic and cultural upliftment of the untouchables. Its motto was "Educate, Agitate and Organise". Dr. Ambedkar made representation to the Simon Commission for political safeguards of the untouchables through this Bahiskrit Hitakarani Sabha.

Dr. Ambedkar participated in three Round Table Conferences, convened by the British Government at London, as the representative of the untouchables. The objective of these conferences was to discuss the problems in the new Government system and constitution. In 1930, at the first Round Table Conference, Ambedkar emphasized on the political safeguards for the untouchables. This conference was important because special provisions for the untouchables were included in the Constitution of India. In 1931, at the
Second Round Table Conference, Dr. Ambedkar demanded separate electorate for untouchables and reserved seats in the legislature.

Dr. Ambedkar insist on the needs and importance of political safeguards and reservations for the untouchables. As a result of this, the British Government sanctioned some percentage of reservation for untouchables in employment and political field.

Dr. Ambedkar planned his programmes to bring the untouchables from a state of dehumanized, discriminatory, debasement, and slavery into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and exercise of legal and political rights. So he started a number of papers and fortnightly such as the 'Bahiskrit Bharat', 'Mook Nayak', 'Janata' and 'Prabhada Bharat' to awaken the untouchables from their debased conditions. Ahir (1972) noted that Dr. Ambedkar, who was the saviour of the untouchables, first created consciousness about their humiliating conditions among the Untouchables and then united and prepared them to fight for their improvement through his enlightened speeches and writings.

In 1936, Dr. Ambedkar founded the first political party, the 'Independent Labour Party'. The objectives of this party were to solve the problems of labourers and bring
about social equality. In 1937, this party contested election in Bombay Presidency.

In 1942, Dr. Ambedkar established a new political party, 'The All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF)', with new political ideas and plans. Kuber (1973) stated that the principles of this AISCF - liberty, equality and fraternity should be maintained; the state should make every Indian free from want and fear; everybody should have economic and political freedom and right to equality of opportunity. There should not be oppression and exploitation of man by man, class by class and of nation by nation; and there should have parliamentary system of government.

To unite the untouchables on a large scale and to get political power for development of oppressed classes, Dr. Ambedkar established 'Republican Party of India' (RPI) in 1956. Oommen (1977) noted that the objectives of this party were to organise the oppressed and others, such as other Backward Classes, farmer, landless labourers, industrial workers, and other worker depending on wages, to work for ensuring justice for the minorities, and to fight against atrocities and disabilities. Mathew (1986) pointed out that the net result of the formation of the RPI was political mobilization of Mahars, first initiated by Dr. Ambedkar. RPI developed political ideologies and created a
self identity, self-awareness, forward looking thrust, among Mahars.

In the later period of the second phase of Dr. Ambedkar's movement, he established the educational institution, People's Education Society in 1945 and formed many schools, colleges and hostels for the untouchables.

Thus the Mahar movement under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar was based on the ideologies of liberty and equality.

c) CONVERSION MOVEMENT:

In the last phase of Dr. Ambedkar's leadership, he embraced Buddhism along with his followers, on 14th October 1956, the 'Dassara day' at Nagpur, and thereafter the pattern of their development became more pronounced. Dr. Ambedkar provided a new identity to the Mahars through his conversion movement and gave them religious liberation.

On 13th October 1935, in the Bombay Presidency Depressed classes conference at Yeola, Dr. Ambedkar made the first announcement of conversion. He said that it is their misfortune that, in spite of getting degenerative treatment, they call themselves Hindus. If they are the members of another religion, nobody would dare to treat them like this. They should choose the religion which would
provide them equality of status and treatment. He said "Though I have been born a Hindu, I shall not die a Hindu".

Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in 1956 twenty years after his initial announcement at Yeola. In these twenty years, he studied almost all the religions and understood the basic philosophy of all. He prepared the minds of the Mahars for conversion. Finally he chose Buddhism because he found Buddha a purely religious leader, and Buddhism based on equality. On 5th May 1950, in a Press Conference in Bombay he said, "I am definitely in favour of Buddhism. The Principle of Buddhism is eternal, universal, equalitarian, rational, ethical and logical". (Dr. Ambedkar's speech quoted by Patwardhan 1973). Patwardhan (1973) stated that Buddhism is a equalitarian, ethical, and humanitarian religion so it was in Ambedkar's heart and mind.

Dr. Ambedkar was aware of the fact that if conversion was organised on mass scale its effectiveness would be greater. On the evening of the conversion he said to people, "If you decide to change your religion, then do it in an organised way. No one amongst you can choose the religion you like. If you are going to do it in such a haphazard way, I will have nothing to do with you" (Dr. Ambedkar's speech quoted by Patwardhan 1973).
The Mahars changed their religion under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar to gain self respect, esteem and equality, to get freedom from the cumulative domination of the inhuman practice of untouchability, political disfranchisement, economic exploitation, cultural alienation, religious exclusion, and psychological depression. They did so as a group. Rao (1978) noted that the conversion to another religion was a religious protest. On the one hand it was a strategy to gain self respect and on the other hand it was a protest against the upper caste religion. Jogdand (1991) said that conversion to Buddhism should not be considered as just a change of faith from one religion to other. It is a movement for achieving social equality, status and justice to depressed classes. Gokhale (1993) stated that conversion movement of Mahars, under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, established a new and separate identity apart from Hindu society and its ideology. The most immediate and visible impact of this conversion to Buddhism, was in the realm of ideology.

Thus conversion to Buddhism provided a new ethnic identity to the Mahars.

1.3 THE PROBLEM:

The present study concentrates on the Mahars' experience of their new ethnic identity. The investigation
was focused on the basic questions, such as, Did conversion
to another religion and assertion of a new identity
contribute to lessening of the social disabilities, dis-
privileges and oppression experienced by the Mahars in the
Indian social system? Did the Mahars' conversion to
Buddhism contribute towards upward mobility? Did the
conversion help Mahars to achieve their desired goals? Did
the conversion to Buddhism provide any avenues for the
development of the Mahar community? The basic question of
the assertion of the new identity by conversion, and its
relation to social mobility, was posed because, for
'Pulayas', a low caste from Kerala, Alexander (1972: 159)
writes: "conversion to Christianity facilitated the
improvement of a few Pulayas but it did not bring about a
radical change in the socio-economic status of most members
of this caste...". Within Christianity they were looked
down upon. There was discrimination in religious customs
and practices. The study would also inquire into the
consequences of social mobility i.e. impact of educational
and occupational mobility on the Buddhist's relations and
interactions with the upper castes. The study aims to
document the consistency between the Buddhists own
perception of their status in the society and status
perceived by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists.
The question on the perception was posed because...
(1981) stated that the Buddhists experience a large gap between their conception of themselves and others' conception about them. This is revealed in the differences in their expectations and reality about terms of identification.

The following research questions were explored using the concepts "Ethnic Identity" and "Social Mobility".

1. How do the Buddhists in Pune maintain their new ethnic identity i.e. the Buddhists identity? What are the indicators that contribute to the self identification of Buddhists?

2. What are the advantages of maintaining the new identity?

3. What is the role of the Buddhist Institutions in maintaining ethnic identity?

4. In what way does the community contribute to the upward mobility of its members?

5. What is the nature of economic hierarchy within the Buddhist community?

6. What is the nature of educational and occupational mobility among the Buddhists?

7. What is the Buddhists' attitude towards the Reservation Policy in bringing about their mobility?

8. What is the extent of the behavioural social distance between the Buddhists and Upper castes?
9 Is there any consistency between the Buddhists' own perception of their status in the society and status perceived by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists?

10 What is the nature of spatial mobility among the Buddhists?

11 What is the level of political participation among the Buddhists?

12 What is the impact of urbanization and industrialization on the Buddhists?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEMS:

The present investigation is justifiable from theoretical as well as practical points of view. The study would test the possible relationship between the concepts of 'Ethnic Identity' and 'Social Mobility' in the Indian society. In India, where social stratification is relatively rigid, mobility in one sphere need not show mobility in other spheres. Srinivas (1966) pointed out that often occupational mobility leads to a positional change, and not to the structural change of the system. In understanding the socio-cultural change among the Mahars, it is necessary to study the newly established ethnic identity and the consequent social mobility and whether the new ethnicity arising out of their conversions to Buddhism
become a strong basis for social mobility. Patwardhan (1973: 18) says: "Conversion to Buddhism has been a significant point of departure for the Mahars. They have stepped out of the Hindu Social system, with this single act, more decisively, than through other modes like access to modern education and new occupational roles in urban centres... The Mahars have rejected mobility within the framework of Hindu values and ethos. Such a change is more radical, and thus, the changes that have occurred can be said to be structural". Zelliot (1992) stated that the Mahars changed their religion for self respect and psychological freedom from the concept of pollution, low caste characteristics, and formed the new ethnic identity.

The present study would focus on the different ways of maintaining the new ethnic Identity and benefits of this new identity. The investigation would be focused on how the new established ethnic identity of the Mahars gained self respect, honour, status leading to upward social mobility. The study would also examine the cumulative impact of a number of dependent and independent variables such as new ethnic identity, education, occupation, income, behavioural social distance, level of political participation, urbanization, and industrialization, in order to understand the social mobility among the Buddhists in Pune. Therefore, at the theoretical level, the investigation would help us in conceptual clarification of the role of 'Ethnic Identity'
in promoting 'Social Mobility' of the Budhist in Indian Society.

At the practical level, the study would help us in understanding the 'institutionalization of the new faith and the impact of this institutionalization on the Mahars. The investigation would also help us in understanding the Buddhists' expectations, aspirations and ambitions and the nature of anticipatory socialization. It would further help in identifying both emic and etic perspectives and the socio-cultural and behavioural changes and continuity within the community. It will, also, help in understanding how the ideology of the Mahar movement and the rejection of caste ideologies help them to reach their desired goal. An empirical research in such an area would be a useful contribution to social scientists as well as the community.

1.5 THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The present study revolves around two major concepts: 'Ethnic Identity' and 'social mobility'. The following dimensions of these two concepts have been explored in the context of the new identity acquired by the Mahars through conversion into Buddhism in this thesis.
CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

Provide  
|Ethnic Group|  
Provide  
|Ethnic Identity|  
gives  

|Self respect & Self esteem|  
|Dignity & Pride|  
|Confidence|  
|New values & New approaches|  
|Psychological freedom|  

Creates  

|New awakening|  
|Independent thinking|  
|Political consciousness|  

Develops  

|Organizations|  
|Institutions|  
|Political Participation|  

Increases the level of  

|Education|  
|Occupation|  
|Income|  
|Reduces the social distance|  

|Upward vertical Social mobility|  

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i. Ethnic group, Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity are interrelated to the extent that one cannot be explained without reference to the other. Ethnic group provides Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity may emerge from Ethnic Identity or vice-versa. Ethnicity is a sense of Ethnic Identity.

An Ethnic group consists of a group of people having a common descent, name, language, norms, values, beliefs, practice, manners, customs, rules and regulation, unity and integrity, homogeneity and endogamy. Ethnic groups may live in a specific geographical area. The distinguishing physio-cultural features of the ethnic group make them unique, distinguishing them from other groups. According to Urmila Phadnis (1990: 14) "An ethnic group can be defined as a historically formed aggregate of people having a real or imaginary association with a specified territory, a shared cluster of beliefs and values connoting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups and recognised as such by others. This definition thus has five components: (a) subjective belief in real or assumed historical antecedents; (b) a symbolic or real geographical centre; (c) shared cultural emblems such as race, language, religion, dress and diet, or a combination of some of them which though variegated and flexible, provide the overt basis of ethnic
identity; (d) self ascribed awareness of distinctiveness and belonging to the group; and (e) recognition by others of the group differentiation. It is thus self-defined and "other recognised status". An ethnic group is a self-defined and self-conscious group and it uses its cultural symbols for inclusion and exclusion of members of the group, and it shares common socio-psychological characteristics. Barth (1969) says that an ethnic group can be defined in terms of their objective attributes like language, religion, territory, colour, diet and dress; in relation to its behaviour with other groups, an ethnic group has specific ways of behaviour or interaction with other group, in terms of its subjective feeling of a self-conscious group. Cultural differences gives them self consciousness.

Thus an 'ethnic group' has a sense of relatedness and feeling of alliance. This feeling of relatedness, alliance, kindred and the similar cultural symbols provide an 'Ethnic Group Identity'. Glazer and Moynihan (1963: 13-14) say: "ethnic identity manifest itself through cultural markers, they stress on the self as well as group related feeling of identity, distinctiveness and its recognition by others". The causative factors for emergence of ethnic identity are feelings of having a common descent, race, caste, culture, language, region, religion, kin, blood, geographical area and 'we' feeling. Deutsch (1961,1966), Gellner (1964), and
Smith (1971, 1976) say that the highly important factors for the emergence of ethnic identity are a primordial sentiment and a psychology of sense of belongingness or identity based on kin blood, speech and customs, existence of a hierarchical cultural division of labour, colonialism, awareness of backwardness, economic interest, refusal of opportunities in civil service appointments and language.

Ethnic identity is a psychology of sense of belonging. It creates a separate and unique place in the society. Bhat (1984: 23) says: "The ethnic phenomenon whether defined in terms of common ancestry, culture, experience or even region, gives rise to 'esprit de corps' among the members of a group which lends it a distinct identity. These identities are expressed and maintained by a name, shared beliefs and symbols and projection of a distinctive style of life. Ethnic identity, besides providing an individual or group a requisite base for interaction through identification, differentiates individuals or groups outside its purview... The identity of an ethnic group or its members is not just a case of self identity but an identity which "others" concede vis-a-vis their own". Ethnic identity gives a sense of community and solidarity. Shibutani and Kwan (1965) and Schermerhorn (1970) pointed out that ethnic identity shows both likeness and uniqueness among the members of a group. It differentiates what
members of a group share in common from the 'Others'. It not only separates a group from others but also provides sameness and oneness (socio-psychological) to members of a group for identification.

Ethnicity is a primordial feeling of ethnic identity, which has been defined by Vos de (1975). He stated that a group of people use the subjective, symbolic or emblematic aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from the other groups.

Ethnicity stands for ethnic character, ethnic attributes and traits because the concept ethnicity is derived from the Greek Word 'ethno' meaning nation, race, caste, tribe, people and its derivatives 'Ethnic' and 'Ethnicity' means more about it. Burgess (1978: 278) has given working definition of ethnicity. He says: "Ethnicity is the character, quality of conditions of ethnic group membership, based on an identity with and/or a consciousness of group belonging that is differentiated from others by symbolic makers (including cultural, biological or territorial) and is rooted in bonds of a shared part and perceived ethnic interest". Ethnicity is identification to a specific class, caste, nation and race. So it plays important role in the mechanism of boundary maintenance. It classifies the social system in 'we' and 'they'. Danda
(1991) stated that ethnicity by and large is associated with a primordial system of categorization, like 'we' and 'they' of society. This categorization is different from society to society and culture to culture in respect to size and composition. All these categories have a sense of homogeneity.

As ethnicity maintains the rule of endogamy and exogamy by establishing the criteria for inclusion into, and exclusion from, the group, and by classifying the society into marriageables and non-marriageable groups, and showing the superior and inferior status of the group. Brass (1991: 19) says: "Ethnicity or Ethnic identity also involves, in addition to subjective self-consciousness, a claim to subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition, either as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups. Ethnicity is to ethnic category what class consciousness is to class".

As ethnicity is a group phenomenon, community uses ethnicity to make demands in their educational, employment, economic, political, and religious area in order to develop their community. Glazer and Moynihan (1975) pointed out that ethnic groups use ethnicity in the form of interest group politics to make demands in their economic well-being, in the political field for their status alternation, in their civic right and educational opportunities, to improve
the well being of the group members. Similarly Burgess (1978) stated that the notion of ethnicity is the compression and persistence of the ethnic group and is closely related to the structural dimensions of identity formation. Ethnicity provides quality and character to the group and is the summation of impulses and motivation for power and recognition. It is determined by a complex interaction of social forces. Ethnicity is used for group mobilization through selecting the ethnic symbols for socio-cultural and politico-economic purposes.

In this way Ethnic group, Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity are conceptually linked to each other.

Ethnic identity is affected by conversion, migration, modernization, westernization, partition and politics of the dominant group. Harowitz (1985) said that 'Ethnic Identity' is formed by the process of fission as well as fusion. In the former process, the boundary of the group contracts through division and creates a new group. In the latter process, the boundary of the group expands by incorporation and amalgamation of some other group through assimilation. Urmila Phadnis (1989: 15) says: "The emergence of new religious groups like Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs typify the process of fission or separation".
The Mahars separated themselves from Hindu social system by conversion to Buddhism and formed a new Buddhist community. For Ambedkar, religious conversion was a change of old nomenclature, and provided a new nomenclature to the Mahars which would be advantageous to them. The Mahars got a new Ethnic identity by embracing Buddhism.

ii. Ethnic Identity provides self respect and esteem, dignity and pride. The Buddhist identity develops confidence and gives a set of new values. It also creates the feeling of psychological freedom.

Conversion to Buddhism was a religious protest in order to gain self respect and dignity and get away from humiliation, degradation and debased condition of Hinduism. Patwardhan (1973: 141) says: "The conversion of the Mahars to Buddhism is significant because they changed their religion for freedom and self respect, and did it as group". For Ambedkar, self-respect and dignity were the birth rights of untouchables. So they need not beg for alms; they should be self-enlightened; they should help themselves; and should not depend on others. In 1935, in the Bombay Presidency Depressed Classes Conference at Yeola, he addressed to about 10,000 untouchables saying that the Hindu religion would never create a sense of self respect
and confidence in them. Hinduism is nothing but Brahmanism. (Dr. Ambedkar's Speech quoted by Keer 1954) In 1936, in the Mahar Conference in Bombay, he said that if the untouchables want to gain self respect, power, equality, independence and happiness in life, they should change their religion. (Dr. Ambedkar's Speech quoted by Zellote 1992). Zelliot (1992) in her recent study observed, that the conversion to Buddhism has instilled among the Mahars a sense of pride and dignity. Gokhale (1993) confirms the above. A new ethnic identity created a new set of socio-cultural symbols and values, produced new consciousness and approaches within the Mahars community. According to these authors the Buddhists have acquired tremendous confidence in humanity and a sense of self-worth. They feel released from the oppression and cruelty of the caste Hindus, and experienced a sense of psychological freedom from the earlier feelings of being a polluted and inferior person.

iii. The new socio-cultural symbols, and values, a sense of psychological freedom, the feeling of self-respect and esteem, dignity, pride and confidence created new awakening, developed independent thinking, and political consciousness among the Buddhists.

The sense of self respect and dignity created Political awareness among the Buddhists. They rejected all traditional values and became conscious about their civic
rights. Dr. Ambedkar had prepared to them fight for their democratic and civic rights and struggle for justice and social equality. Jogdand’s (1991) study on ‘Dalit Movement in Maharashtra’, Kamble’s (1983) study on ‘Deprived caste and their struggle for Equality’ and Mathew’s (1986) study on ‘Ideology, Protest and social mobility of Mahars’ pointed out that self respect and new set of values have created political awareness and consciousness among the Buddhists. It has made them forward looking and developed the faculty of independent thinking among them. They wrote on the humiliated and debased conditions of dalit life. Dalit literature emerged from such writing which again helped to sharpen their consciousness. The conversion movement accelerated the politicization of the Buddhists. The new awakening and political consciousness helped the Buddhists to utilize the privileges provided to them in employment and education.

iv. The Buddhists developed their own religious institutions, educational institutions and political organizations, which further increased the level of their political participation.

The Buddhists became aware of their debased conditions and had an aspiration to improve their conditions through education. They established educational institutions. In
order to institutionalize the new religious way of life, religious institution were built and socio-cultural ethnic associations were formed. In addition to this, political organizations and parties were also formed. Dr. Ambedkar established the first educational institution, 'People's Education Society' for providing and spreading education among backward classes. Today, this institution runs twelve Arts, Science, and Commerce Colleges, eleven English and Marathi medium schools, and eight hostels.

Prior to conversion, Dr. Ambedkar had formed caste associations such as Mahar Sabha, and Mahar Panchayat. In 1938, Dr. Ambedkar's elder brother formed the caste association 'Mahar Samaj Seva Sangha'. This was taken over by Ambedkar in 1941 and renamed 'Mahar Jati Panchayat Samiti' (MJPS). After conversion to Buddhism its name was changed to 'Buddha Jana Panchayat Samiti' (BJPS). The aim of this samiti was to spread education, to give economic and other help, and to propagate new socio-cultural and religious practices among the Buddhists community. Rudolph and Rudolph (1960) and Kananaikil (1983) pointed out that caste associations were formed to gain political power, economic advantages and pursue social mobility. In 1957, Bharatiya Bouddha Mahasabha was founded. The aim of this sabha was to spread the teachings of Buddha, to give diksha of Buddhism and other necessary guidance, and establish
Buddhist Religious associations. In 1979, Trilokya Buddha Mahasangha Sahayak Gana (TBMSG) was founded. At present TBMSG has centres in twelve different towns in India. This institution propagates the principles of Buddhism among the masses and helps to maintain and strengthen the new Buddhist identity. It also extends educational, medical and economic help to the poor Buddhists.

The Republican party of India was formed in 1956 to capture political power. This political organisation provided a platform for the political participation of the Buddhists. At present, a number of social and political organisations such as Dalit Panther, Dalit Liberation Army, Dalit Manch, Dalit Sangharsha samiti, are working for the betterment of the community. Dalit Literature and Dalit Theatre have emerged as a distinct form of literature. The scope of political participation of the Buddhists has widened with the establishment of the Bahujan Samaj Party in 1983. The establishment of political parties and other organizations have resulted in the awakening, and mobilization of the Dalits all over Maharashtra. They have started agitating and demanding their civil and democratic rights (Jogdand 1991).
With regards to education, occupation, status, income and
of a person or group from one social position to another
As mentioned earlier, the social mobility is a movement
to upward social mobility.
and reduction in social distance are directly related.

1. Increase in the level of education, occupation, income
higher positions in educational and occupational fields.
only community among the backward classes to have acquired
motivations are higher in the case of males and this is the
the Mahars, Paramwar (1973) observed that aspirations and
brought about educational and occupational advancement among
his conversion movement, and organizational activities have
Matthew (1986) pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar’s leadership,
increasing interaction among different ethnic groups.
plays an important role in decreasing caste prejudice and
education opens the doors for higher occupations. It also
the community in educational and occupational mobility.
Institutions and various religious based organizations help
establishment and development of educational
Buddhists and other caste Hindus
helped in reducing the social distance between the
the level of education, occupation and income. It also
Institutions/organizations, provided avenues for increase in
v. Participation in socio-religious and political
a) VERTICAL MOBILITY:

This indicates the changes in individuals' or groups' social position on account of changes in their occupational, economic and political status. When an offspring acquires a position higher than that of the father, it is operationally defined as upward social mobility and when an offspring acquires a position lower than that of the father, it is called the downward social mobility.

Social mobility occurs through various factors like education, occupation, social stratification, political participation, anticipatory socialization, migration, urbanization, industrialization, democratic liberalism and rationalism.

Education is the most important avenue to increase the level to the highest layer of a stratified society. It offers opportunities for a higher place in the social hierarchy and facilitates social mobility. Patwardhan (1973: 13, 80) says: "Education is a status symbol and higher education is not only a status symbol but also an effective means to upward mobility... The importance of education as a means of achieving upper social mobility is grasped by Harijans". Education offers good opportunities
to enter into prestigious occupational fields and raise the social status. Higher the education greater the chances of acquiring a higher social status. Gore (1975) observed that occupational mobility and improvement in economic status is directly related to Education. Schermerhorn (1978) states that since special educational facilities are provided to the scheduled castes, education has played an important role in their social mobility.

Occupation is another important avenue for social mobility. Society gets stratified on the basis of occupation. One's level of occupation and level of status in a society is correlated. According to Lipest and Zetterberg (1966) social mobility of an individual or group is determined by the shift and ranking of occupation, consumption, social power and social class. Occupation is the most important indicator of stratification. People's beliefs, values, norms, customs, and occasionally some of their emotional expressions, are different according to their occupational class, or occupational class is one of the major factors which differentiate cultural values of the people. The rate of mobility may vary in different dimensions. There is a possibility of having a higher rate of mobility in one dimension and lower in another. Therefore, to get more qualified and accurate conclusions about social mobility they have suggested a conventional
operational method of ascertaining mobility by comparing father's and offspring's occupational position.

Social stratification is one of the important factors through which social mobility occurs in different groups and persons in a society. We can stratify the society on the basis of the level of caste, class, family, education, occupation, economy, polity and psychological sphere. Social mobility is a movement on a stratified path from any one point to another. Ruciman (1968) analysed social stratification in three dimension - class, status and power. Several studies, [Beteille (1965), Bailey (1957), Lynch (1969), Saberwal (1976), Rao (1970) and Berna (1960)] have observed social mobility among caste and class groups in rural and urban settings. They have pointed out that caste and class are the base for stratification. “Caste is a traditional phenomenon socially bounded from all sides, class is a modern entity composed of endogamous groups”.

Political participation is an important and modern avenue for social mobility. Dalits have proved that political participation is an alternative to the process of sanskritization for social mobility. The collective political actions led by Dr. Ambedkar succeeded in achieving political power. Lynch (1974), Hardgrave (1969), Rudolph and Rudolph (1967), Seth (1987) and Zelliot (1970) have pointed out that in post-Independence India, political
participation has become the most dominant technique, and constitutes a functional alternative to sanskritization for achieving social mobility.

Anticipatory socialization is another most common avenue for social mobility. Individuals or groups try to raise their social status, for getting acceptance from other communities by their anticipatory socialization. Shastree (1981) observed that Buddhists have realized the fact that in addition to conversion, education, occupation, and standard of life, are status imparting factors. So, they are trying to raise their status through these factors. This is their anticipatory socialization. Damle (1968) stated that anticipatory socialization reduces the distance and repulsion between castes.

Migration is another important avenue for social mobility among Buddhists. Kaistha (1989) stated that migration is a movement of persons from one place to another resulting in a change of permanent residence. This spatial mobility includes all types of movements of persons for improving their social and economic status or their family members. The Buddhists rejected all the traditional and hereditary work and occupation and migrated from rural to urban areas. In urban areas they engaged themselves in different kinds of occupations. Kamble (1983) stated that
migration to urban areas on a large scale led to an improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the Mahars. They discarded all the low and hereditary occupations and adopted norms of modernization through education. Due to the migration, they became confident, economically independent; and they got economic freedom.

Urbanisation and industrialization which have broken the relationship between caste and occupation are the modern avenues for social mobility. It has given different kinds of occupational opportunities. It has helped to raise the standard of living of people by increasing their income. It has also influenced the attitude, value and belief of the people. Kuppuswamy (1972) observed that all the depressed classes have been trying to improve their social status through the medium of urbanisation and industrialization. Urbanisation has influenced the people's attitude towards women, their education and employment and their role in disciplining their children. Urbanisation and industrialization have also increased income enabling them to purchase such consumer items such as a radio, car and accessories for a comfortable living and to improve the quality of life. It has also influenced the attitude towards investing and saving in the banks and use of the savings for charitable purpose like establishing educational institutions, orphanages etc.
Democratic liberalism and rationalism are the other recent avenues for social mobility. Dr. Ambedkar has inculcated the values of liberty, rationality and civic rights among the Depressed Classes and awakened them to the knowledge of their own conditions. Kuppuswamy (1972) stated that in India, democratic liberalism and rationalism has transformed the cultural pattern and led to emancipation of the individual in India. It has given the concepts of rights, personal liberty, social liberty, and economic and political liberty. It has established the principle of autonomy of the individual in society.

In the present investigation social mobility is analyzed on the basis of the avenues discussed above such as education, occupation, the extent of behavioral social distance between Buddhists and the upper castes, the Buddhists' own perception of their status in the society and status perceived by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists, political participation, spatial mobility, urbanisation and industrialization.

1.6 CHAPTER SCHEME:

Chapter I presents the theoretical introduction of the thesis, historical background of the Buddhist Community, the statement of the problem of the research and formulates its conceptual model regarding the interrelation between Ethnic
Identity and social mobility and various dimensions of these concepts which have been explored in this thesis.

Chapter II concerns with the research methods applied in the present investigation, ethnography of the Pune city, sample profile, methodology of selection, collection and interpretation of data. It also provides the socio-economic background of the respondents.

Chapter III deals with the ethnic identity of the Buddhists regarding the ways of maintaining ethnic identity through various indicators. The analysis of cross-tabulations are presented.

Chapter IV examines relative advantages of maintaining the Buddhists identity. It explains the role of the Buddhist institutions in maintaining ethnic identity. It also focuses on the Buddhist community's contribution to the upliftment of their members and the nature of socio-economic hierarchy within the Buddhist community.

Chapter V reports the nature of social mobility through educational and occupational mobility with reference to three generations of the Buddhists. It also deals with the impact of education on the Buddhists and the Buddhists attitude towards the Reservation Policy.
Chapter VI analyses the nature of social mobility through the extent of behavioural social distance of the Buddhists. It also examines the consistency between self-identification and the upper castes views about the group as assessed by the Buddhists. It is the psycho-sociological indicator of measuring the change. It deals with the spatial mobility and political participation of the Buddhists. It also analyses the effect of urbanization, industrialization on the respondents.

Chapter VII highlights some of the major findings of the investigation and conclusions.