This chapter examines the effects of the Buddhist identity and educational and occupational mobility, on the social life of the Buddhists, so as to study the socio-cultural transformation of the Buddhist community.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section concentrates on the social behaviour of the Buddhists. The second examines the consistency between the Buddhist's own perception of their status in the society, and status perceived by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists. The above is considered as a psycho-sociological indicator of change. The third section deals with the spatial mobility of the Buddhists, and the fourth examines their political participation. The fifth section analyses the effect of urbanization and industrialization on the respondents under study.

As described in Chapter I, social mobility is the movement of an individual from one social position to another. It is a change in one's education, occupation, income, economic condition, prestige, status, power, wealth, social object, or value, beliefs and anything that has been
created or modified by human activity. In this chapter social mobility of the Buddhists is analysed on the basis of the extent of behavioural social distance between the Buddhists and the upper castes.

SECTION I. SOCIAL DISTANCE.

6.2 INTRODUCTION.

The reduction in social distance between the Buddhists and the caste Hindus is a significant indicator of social mobility. Santhakumari (n.d.) has analysed social distance between the scheduled castes and the upper castes on the basis of visits to the high castes homes, dining with the higher caste, inter-caste marriages, serving cooked food to high caste, and social visits. She has found that education, non-traditional and modern occupation, and community background, play an important role in increasing frequency of social visits. The lower caste people visit the house of their upper caste friends' and eat on the same table. The upper caste people also visit their lower caste friends' home and eat food cooked there. White collar jobs play a crucial role in removing caste prejudices from the minds of the upper caste when they work along the lower caste people at place of work. Regarding inter-caste marriage, hypogamous marriage is dominant. Nandu Ram (1988) measured changes with the help of two psycho-sociological indicators: (1) Scheduled castes' own perception of change
in their caste status and status perceived by others but assessed by them, and their interaction with non-scheduled castes (2) observation of purity and pollution, rules pertaining to temple entry, and inter-caste marriages. He said that most of the scheduled caste people did not bother or not care about their caste, and rank in caste hierarchy. Instead, they were happy and satisfied about their social status which they have achieved through their educational, and occupational mobility, and interaction with others. Bogardus (1967) social distance scale, consists of visits to the high castes, inter-dining, attendance in ceremonies of the high castes, entry into the kitchen and inter-caste marriages.

6.2.1 PARTICIPATION IN LIFE CYCLE CEREMONIES:

Participation in life cycle ceremonies is one of the important means of reduction in social distance. Shastree (1981) stated that the Neo-Buddhists movement is a status seeking movement. They maintain their identity to get acceptance from the other communities. They have also climbed up in the educational and occupational scale thus raising their status in the society. These effects are part of their anticipatory socialization for reduction in social distance. The following question was posed to the respondents so as to understand whether there has been any
reduction in social distance between the Buddhists and the upper caste groups:

"Do the upper castes invite you to their life cycle ceremonies?"

Most (91.5%) of the respondents responded positively to this question. Out of these nearly half (48.9%) said that they always received invitations to attend social functions of the upper caste, (42.6%) of the respondents said that they were invited only sometimes.

To another set of questions "Which of the upper caste's life cycle ceremonies have you attended" and "Which of your life cycle ceremonies did the upper castes attend"? The respondents mentioned the following life cycle ceremonies.

6.2.1.1 Attendance at Marriage Ceremonies:

Marriage is one of the important life cycle ceremonies. Most (79.6%) of the respondents said that attendance of the upper caste at their marriage ceremonies is large. Majority (80.4%) of the respondents told that they also attend the upper caste marriage ceremonies. The Buddhists attend without hesitation the upper caste marriage ceremonies just as the caste Hindus attend the Buddhist marriage ceremonies and intermingle with each
The researcher attended Mr. Gaikwad's son's marriage at Govind Mangal Karyalaya, Aundh, Pune. Mr. Gaikwad stays in the Yerawada area. He is a scientist. His son is a doctor and is working as a lecturer in the B.J. Medical College. His daughter-in-law is also a doctor. Many of the upper caste people belonging to the Brahmin community were present for this marriage. Some of these high caste people were distributing flowers and some of them were arranging chairs. Some of the Buddhists and the upper castes people were introducing each other. Mr. Gaikwad's son told me that some of the upper caste people are his colleagues and friends and some are his sister's friends. He further mentioned that these high caste friends often visit his house and he also visits their house and have food together. They also eat together in restaurants or in the office canteen. He had not experienced any caste discrimination regarding inter-dining, working together, or participation in social functions. Mr. Gaikwad said that sometimes these upper caste friends show curiosity about rites and rituals of Buddhism. They recognised them as Buddhists. (So we can say that there is a gradual decline in social distance among the highly educated Buddhists and the upper castes.)

In Dapodi-Bopodi area, I had some different
experiences. I had attended Mr. Gajbhiye’s daughter’s marriage ceremony at Dapodi. Mr. Gajbhiye is a worker in a company. His daughter is an under-graduate. Many of the other castes including Marathas residing in that area were present for the marriage. But we did not find a single person belonging to Brahmin caste. Mr. Gajbhiye told us that neither he nor his daughter had Brahmin friends. All the other caste people who were present were his neighbours. He had a good social relationship with them. The Brahmins do not stay in that area so they were not present for this marriage. He further mentioned that he is now free from the caste feelings because Buddhism has given him a sense of humanity and equality. So the presence or absence of the Brahmins in the marriage ceremony is not a great thing for him. According to him all are equal.

The researcher also attended two inter-caste marriage receptions of two respondent’s daughters residing at the Yerawada area. (a) Mr. Kamble’s daughter got married to a Karnataka Brahmin. Mr. Kamble is a retired accountant and his daughter is also an accountant. It was a love marriage (b) Mr. Bhosale’s daughter got married to a Bengali Brahmin. Mr. Bhosale is a government officer and his daughter is an Engineer. It was also a love marriage. Mr. Kamble and Mr. Bhosale told us that it was the first inter-caste marriage in their family. Though they prefer endogamy, they could
not go against the wishes of their daughters. Even though their daughters got married with Brahmins they do not have any feeling of superiority because they do not bother and believe on the caste system or caste hierarchy. They also told that such inter-caste marriages would help reduce caste discriminations. It will also promote the acceptance and co-operation between the Buddhists and the upper castes. In the marriage reception relatives and friends of both the parties were present. We did not observe any segregation among them. Effective social interaction was observed between the relatives of both the sides.

Social interaction during marriage ceremonies help to reduce the social distance between the Buddhists and the upper castes. In these ceremonies all people belonging to different castes come together and co-operate with each other.

6.2.1.2 Attendance at Birthday, naming and other life cycle ceremonies.

Some (41.1%) of the respondents said that the upper castes attend their children's birthday and naming ceremonies, and (39.3%) of the respondents said that they participate in the upper caste's birthday and naming ceremonies. Remaining (58.9%) of the respondents told me that
the upper castes do not attend their birthday and naming ceremonies. They feel that birthday and naming ceremonies are confined to their family only; and they do not celebrate on a large scale.

I attended Mr. Bhosekar's, (who is a clerk) grand daughter's naming ceremony. For this ceremony Mr. Bhosekar had called the Brahmin cook Mr. Kelkar, who is a teacher in the school. Mr. Kelkar cooked food in Bhosekar's Kitchen. He was present while performing the vandana. Some of Mr. Bhosekar’s son’s upper castes friends were also present. Mr. Bhosekar said that the upper castes develop and show the sense of mutual acceptance because now-a-days people belonging to different socio-economic category work together. They have friends belonging to different caste groups. So, social relationships are developing among them.

I also talked to Mr. Kelkar. He is a teacher in a Marathi medium high school dominated by Brahmins. He is a catering contractor. Some of his clients are Buddhists who often call him for preparation of food for their religious and social functions. Further, he mentioned that while preparing food at the Buddhists' houses he never feels that he is preparing food for the lower caste because these people are clean and educated. He also said that he has
attended and prepared food for some of Buddhists' marriage functions and the first time he did not feel that marriage is of any lower caste.

For the birthday ceremony of Mr. Kadam's daughter, mostly his daughter's classmates belonging to the high castes were present. Mr. Kadam is a Sales-Tax officer, and his daughter is studying in the 10th standard in St. Mira's English Medium School. Mr. Kadam's daughter told us that she and her friends have no caste feelings. They sit, eat and gossip together. They study together sometimes and stay together in each other's house. They have a friendly relationships.

Six respondents who are peons/sweepers said that they never celebrated birthday and naming ceremony because of their poor economic conditions. Five respondents who are clerks/workers said that they celebrate such functions within their family members only.

Some of the high castes women were present for the 'Garbha Mangal' (described in chapter III) of Mr. More's daughter. These high caste women took initiative in distributing 'sweets' and 'Paan'. Some of them were preparing dishes in the kitchen. Mr. More told us that all the high castes women were his daughter's friends. She is working in a government office as a clerk. These high caste
women visited their house occasionally.

Those who are at the lower level of education and occupation do not seem to participate in life cycle ceremonies and other social functions at the upper castes and vice versa. So the data indicate that higher educational and occupational status of the Buddhists seem to break down the social barriers of the Buddhists and the upper castes.

6.2.1.3 Attendance at the 'Puja' (prayer).

Some (31.5%) of the respondents said that they attend the religious ceremonies i.e. 'Puja' of the upper castes. Attendance in the religious ceremonies of the upper caste is less probably because 'Pujas' are confined to one's own group. Other religious or caste groups are not often invited.

I had attended 'Satyanarayan puja' along with two Buddhists and their family at Mr. Vasekar's house. Mr. Vasekar is a Maratha and a teacher in a school. Mr. Vasekar had called many people belonging to different castes including the Buddhists. The Buddhists had entry into the kitchen. They were helping Mr. Vasekar in distributing the food. Mr. Vasekar's cook was a Buddhist; Mr. Sonawane. He is one of Mr. Vasekar's student's father. Mr. Vasekar
said that all the guests were his relatives, friends, colleagues and neighbours.

Thus, we can say that social distance between the people of similar occupational status is reducing.

6.2.1.4 Attendance at Socio-cultural activities

Many respondents (69.37%) said that the upper castes participate and cooperate in their socio-cultural activities in addition to life cycle and religious ceremonies. (68.57%) of the respondents said that they also participate in the upper caste socio-cultural activities. These socio-cultural activities include sports, various competitions, guest-lectures, drama, social work (such as blood donation, distribution of food to sick-people), educational programmes, etc. Participation in each other's socio-cultural activities reduces the distance between the two communities and increases mutual acceptance.

A voluntary organization namely 'Samyak Pratisthan' organizes socio-cultural activities -Music/sports competitions, blood donation and street plays. These programmes are organised in their residential areas and also in the cosmopolitan, and the upper caste areas. The researcher had attended three socio-cultural activities arranged by the Samyak Pratisthan'.
In Phulenagar, a cosmopolitan area, Samyak Pratisthan had organised street plays. The upper castes people who stay in that area had cleaned the ground for street play. They had told all the people of the neighbourhood about the street play. Mr. Kulkarni, a Brahmin, had arranged electricity connection from his house. Everybody was enthusiastic to co-operate. The president of the 'Samyak Pratisthan' told us that there is no social distance between the Buddhists and the upper caste as far as socio-cultural activities are concerned.

6.2.2 Interpersonal Interaction:

6.2.2.1 Friendship with the upper caste:

Many Buddhist respondents (44.4%) have friends belonging to the upper caste. Most of them are educated and have white collar jobs.

One respondent who is a teacher said that his wife's friend is a Brahmin. Whenever there is a family function her Brahmin friend comes and helps her in the kitchen. When her friend is in need his wife goes to her friend's house and helps her in the kitchen. Another respondent, Mr. Shelar, who is an advocate, said that his cook is a Brahmin named, Mrs. Sathe, who lives in the neighbouring cosmopolitan locality.
One respondent Mr. Kadam, a retired Deputy Director of social welfare, said that his friend Mr. Mungudkar belongs to the upper caste. Mr. Mungudkar has a good understanding of the life and work of Dr. Ambedkar and organises seminars on the future of Buddhism. He mentioned another scholar's name, Prof. Bhalchandra Phadke, who is familiar with the Buddhist community and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's work. There are several upper caste Hindus who take keen interest in the life and work of Dr. Ambedkar. These people seem to interact closely with the Buddhist community by having friends among the community.

A group of Buddhists, who are clerks/workers said during a group interview that the upper castes are very cruel hearted. They may appear very sweet, but they play politics. Some of them gave the example of their administrative superior, who according to them is a casteist. He troubled the Buddhists indirectly. Further they said that though they talk to upper castes people, they do not make friends with them. They do not have any affectionate feeling about the upper castes and do not feel comfortable in their company. This is because for many years they have been oppressing all others on the basis of their superiority in the caste hierarchy. Buddhism has given them a separate identity, and they do not want to make
It appears that those Buddhists engaged in lower status occupation and with low levels of education do not make friends with the upper castes, because they do not feel comfortable. Clearly, inter-caste interaction is a function of higher education and high status occupation.

6.2.2.2 Inter-dining:

(58.7%) respondents said that they invite their high caste friends to dine at their homes and (52.4%) respondents said that this is reciprocated. They feel that now a days the taboo on inter-dining has reduced. The people belonging to different castes, lower as well as upper castes, sit side by side and have their food. They do not experience any discrimination on the basis of caste. Traditionally, inter-caste dining was restricted due to considerations of caste hierarchy, purity and pollution, and social stigma, of the lower caste.

Two case examples of inter-dining are presented. When I was interviewing Mr. Kharat at his Yerawada residence, his family was getting ready to go out to dinner at an upper caste friend's house. Next day Mr. Kharat's son said that when they reached his friend's house, all dishes were not...
ready. His wife helped his friend’s wife in preparing the sweet dish. Then they had food together. His friend’s wife served them. After finishing food they sat talking for sometime.

Mr. Gaikwad residing at Yerawada area, is a scientist, who had invited me for dinner on 14th April - Ambedkar Jayanti. On that day, he had also invited many of his son’s friends, belonging both to the upper and lower castes. His son is a doctor. Mr. Gaikwad told me that this is the day on which they always call their friends for dinner. They do not make any difference between the upper caste friends and lower caste friends. I observed that people belonging to different castes such as Brahmins, Marathas, Buddhists, and Gonds (tribe) were present for dinner. They discussed about how the Buddhists celebrated Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti. Mrs. Gaikwad and her daughter served food. After dinner all friends went to see the decoration done in that area on Dr. Ambedkar’s Jayanti.

6.2.3 Choice of Neighbourhood:

The Buddhists live in segregated localities in Pune city. In order to understand their attitude towards living in the upper caste localities, the following questions were asked to the respondents:

“Would you like to stay in the upper caste localities?
if yes, why?

(60.2%) said that they would like to stay in upper caste localities. The remaining (39.8%) of the respondents did not want to.

They gave different reasons to explain why they would like to stay in the upper caste localities: (1) The residential area depends upon economic status and not on caste; society is stratified according to class and not according to caste; and if their economic status rises they will buy a house/flat in the cosmopolitan locality. (2) They would like to stay among similar socio-economic, and educational, status group. (3) There is less caste feeling in such localities. They gave examples of two or three localities namely Maharashstra Housing Board, Pratik Nagar, Vishrant Society and Phulenagar where the upper castes and the Buddhists stay together. (4) Better facilities are available in that area.

The inference is that the Buddhists would like to stay in the upper castes localities as and when their socio-economic status improves whereby.

The researcher visited two localities namely Maharashstra Housing Board and Phulenagar in Yerawada area where the upper castes and the Buddhists stay together. In
these areas, both Buddha Vihar and Ganpati temple exist. During Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti, and the Ganesh festival, the Buddhists and the upper castes help each other in decorating their area, and collecting donations. They visit each others houses.

The respondents gave a negative answer for different reasons: (1) They would only like to stay in the midst of their own community. Staying in the midst of their community is necessary because the upliftment of the community is possible only when they stay in a group. (2) To reside in a group would also help in enculturation of the new generation, and to retain cultural solidarity and maintain their ethnic identity easily. (3) They also said that they can still have social interaction with the upper caste people even while residing in their own community. A few respondents, belonging to the lower class, who are poor, residing at Dapodi-Bopodi area, said that they will not feel comfortable in the upper caste locality. And so they would not like to stay with them. They also said that caste feeling is very strong among the upper caste.

The lower status the Buddhists want to stay in segregated localities for cultural solidarity and betterment of the community. They want to stay in the midst of their own community for security, and obtaining help when they are
in difficulty.

6.2.4 Inter-caste Marriage.

I have examined inter-caste marriages in the Buddhists community. Patwardhan (1973) reported twenty six inter-caste marriage among the Buddhists in Maharashtra. Out of these six were with Brahmins, twelve were with Marathas, and the rest were with other backward caste. Nineteen marriages were hypergamous i.e. (nineteen brides were Mahar and bridegrooms belonged to the upper castes), and seven marriages were hypogamous (i.e. seven bridegrooms were Mahar and brides belonged to the upper castes). Further Patwardhan says: "There are Mahars who have married into higher castes but there are hardly any Mahar-Mang marriages." Miller (1963) recorded a single case of a Mahar Buddhist marrying a Mang Buddhist.

Among the sample population there are 31 cases (11.5%) of inter-caste marriages. Out of these, 14 i.e. (45.16%) were married to Brahmins, eight i.e. (25.8%) to Marathas; a further eight (25.8%) married to other backward castes, and only one person was (3.22%) married to a scheduled caste female.

Out of these 31 cases of inter-caste marriages, 27 (87.4%) i.e are hypogamous marriages. It means 27 upper
Caste women have married Buddhists men. Four (12.6%) of the marriages are hypergamous, i.e. four Buddhists women have married upper caste men. Out of these 27 hypogamous marriages, nineteen Buddhists bridegrooms are professionals (doctors and engineers) and have high occupational status. Six are graduates, and are clerks in government offices. Two are educated till the 12th grade, and are industrial workers.

In the four cases of hypergamous marriages, all the four brides were highly educated; one is a doctor (B.A.M.S.) married to a Maharashtrian Brahmin, and the second is an engineer married to a Bengali Brahmin, the third is a graduate and an accountant, married a Karnataka Brahmin, and the fourth is a post-graduate and an officer in a Government company, married to a Maharashtrian Brahmin. High education and high occupational status appear to be important in hypergamous marriages. Santhakumari (n.d.; 162) says: “Education was found to be an important factor in inter-caste marriages in general, and hypergamous marriages in particular”

Patwardhan’s 1973 data on inter-caste marriages among the Buddhists seem to be different from the present data. While she had reported high percentage of inter-caste marriages as hypergamous. In the present study majority of
inter-caste marriages are hypogamous. In the couple of
decade between Patwardhan's study and the present one there
has been considerable changes in educational and
occupational status of the Buddhist community. More young
men are acquiring higher education and higher status jobs.
The trend seems to be reversing towards hypogamy.

The Buddhist elite are aware that hypogamy predominates
over hypergamy in their community. They feel that the
upper caste people permit their girls to marry Buddhist with
the higher educational and occupational status. The elite
also complained that the upper castes snatch away well
educated and economically well settled males from them. It
is to the detriment of their community because well educated
girls from the community may find it difficult to get grooms
from within their own community.

They also said that inter-caste marriages in their
community lead to individual mobility and not group
mobility. So, though inter-caste marriages help to break
down the caste barriers, and reduce social distance, they
do not prefer it.

It would appear as if that the Buddhists have not shed
'high caste/low caste' complex. However, the view expressed
by the elite points towards their concern for the social
advancement of the community rather than the caste
considerations.
The Buddhists own perception of their status and perception of the Upper Castes as assessed by the Buddhists.

6.3 INTRODUCTION

In the present section, I have examined the consistency between the Buddhists' perception of changes in their status in the society and status perceived by the upper caste as assessed by the Buddhists. This is psychosociological indicator of measuring change. Nandu Ram (1988: 87) says: "Based on both the subjective and objectives aspects of evaluation the term social status carries an idea of inferior and superior and is a position accorded in terms of social values current in the society. Thus, in a social system like that in India, even in the urban setting, where the primordial loyalties are still continuing in one form or the other, a person's social status is to be measured on the basis of subjective, composite and corporate criteria of status evaluation”

A couple of questions to find out the consistency between the Buddhists' own perception of their status in the society and status perceived by the upper caste as assessed by the Buddhists, were posed to the respondents.
6.3.1 The Buddhists' own perception of their status in the Society.

The following question was put to the respondents.

"What is your community's status in the society according to you?"

Table 6.1.

The Buddhists' own perception of their status in the society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No. in the Society</th>
<th>Own Perception of status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>On par with the upper castes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Improving but backward as compared to the upper castes.</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Backward</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 shows that some of the respondents feel that their community status in the society is on a par with the upper caste. These respondents are all from the upper socio-economic category. They feel that all human beings are equal. There is no one superior or inferior. They do not discriminate between persons on the basis of caste. However, the majority feel that although their community's educational and economic status have improved, as compared
to the upper castes, their status is still low. They said that there are only very few people who have reached higher occupational and economic status, and many Buddhist families are still economically backward, and stay in slum areas.

Very few respondents said that their community's social status in the society is still backward. All these respondents were from the class IV category and the lower class. They said that the upper caste people treat them as low or inferior to them.

In a group interview, Dr. Haribakth, a retired medical officer, said that his community is economically backward as compared to the upper caste, but not in intellectual capabilities. There are many Buddhist students who pass their examinations with merit. Their names appear in the merit list prepared by the school boards, colleges and universities. In the research locality at Yerawada I met seventeen persons (respondent's sons/daughters) who secured 85%-90% marks at 10th and 12th standard and are at present working as professionals (doctors and engineers). The admission to the reserved category in the medical college closed at 88% in 1993. There is hardly 4% to 5% difference in marks between the open category students and the reserved category, which substantiates the above view. Three others
supported the view of Dr. Haribakth. They are Government officers and have a rural background. They belong to the first generation of educated Buddhists who got opportunities for higher studies. Now they are economically well settled. They also said that there are no differences between the upper caste government officers and those belonging to lower caste in work efficiency. They also think that their educational, economic, and social status is similar to those of the upper caste government officers. So, they feel that their status is on a par with the upper caste. Two others said that now-a-days one's status is not dependent on his birth in a particular caste, but on the person's capacity to attain a higher socio-economic position. Their community members are showing their capacity and ability to achieve higher status in the society. So, they feel that their community's status is on a par with the upper caste.

Most of the participants in a group discussion felt that their community is developing in educational, occupational, political and cultural areas. They have rejected traditional jobs, customs and practices, and accepted the new way of life to get higher status in society. Politically, they have shown greater mobility. K'sagar (1993) stated that in Maharashtra, the Buddhists are politically strong, and are next only to the Marathas.
Four participants in the group interview, who came from rural backgrounds, said that residential structure in villages has not changed yet. The Scheduled Caste people stay outside the village. There are Brahminwadas, Maharwadas, Chambharwadas and so on. The Buddhists stay in Maharwada. Though the people call them Buddhists, in some villages their residential area is still known as Maharwada. Generally, even educated and well settled Buddhists do not build houses in Brahminwadas. So, they felt that, although their status is improving as compared to the upper caste, they are backward. At the same time they complained that the upper caste people feel that they are superior because they are born into a high caste.

In the interview, Mr. Kamble, a sweeper, said that the upper caste people will not accept others as equals. He gave an example of his daughter-in-law was a servant in an upper caste house. This high caste family did not treat her well. They kept all her utensils separate, and they used to always shout at her. Once they had abused her on caste basis, and then she left that job. He further mentioned that the upper caste people are very mean. They do not want to give equal opportunity to all, because they do not want to loose their power. So they treat all the others as backward.
Three others said that economically they are very poor. They have heard that the government has made many policies for overcoming poverty and social discrimination. But, they did not get advantage from the Government provisions because the upper caste officials did not implement them properly. These high castes, he said, want to keep the backward sections of the society backward.

Two respondents, who are daily wage workers, said that they do not have their own houses to live. They live in a slum area. They have come from Beed district to get a job in Pune. They said that in their village casteism is still prevalent. Not a single man from Maharwada is a graduate. All are economically, educationally, and socially, backward. Only the Brahmins and Patils have power in their village. Some of the families from Maharwada do not even get food for days. The upper castes treat them as backward, and they themselves feel that they are backward.

Five respondents, who are peons/sweepers, said that in their company, their community's status is low. Though the upper caste people speak to them, their relationship is of a very artificial nature. They speak very sweetly, but in their minds they have lots of bias and prejudices. They are not free from caste prejudices. They do not want to give equal treatment to others. And they are very jealous of
Today political power is in the hands of upper castes. The welfare policies are not implemented properly. They feel that their status is low in the society because the upper castes treat them as low. Nandu Ram (1988: 120) says: "The scheduled castes were socially conscious of their acquired better social status and were agitated, against non-recognition of that status by the society in general. The non-scheduled castes who did not fully recognise their newly acquired status and were 'jealous' at their achievements... They were untouchables for non-scheduled castes."

The majority of the Buddhists under the present study feel that their status in the society is on a par with the upper castes. They are improving educationally, and economically and their social status is on a par with the upper castes. Few respondents feel that their status in society is backward. Educationally, economically, and socially they are lower and inferior to upper castes.

6.3.2 Status perceived by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists:

In order to understand the upper castes perspective towards the Buddhists, I had asked a question to the respondents on their status perceived by the upper castes. For this question I got variations in the answers.
Table 6.2.

Status perceived by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Perceived status in the society</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>On par with the upper castes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Improving but backward as to the compared upper castes</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Backward</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 shows that very few respondents said that the upper castes have realized that the Buddhists are on a par with them. All these respondents are well educated and belong to the high income group. The upper castes do not consider them as inferior to them.

The majority of the respondents said that the upper caste people look towards them as an improving community but backward as compared to them. The upper caste people knew that there is no mobility within the caste system and
Some of the respondents said that the upper castes look towards the Buddhists as backward. The high castes people feel that the Buddhists are backward in all fields such as education, occupation, income and politics. Socially also they do not have equal status, they place the Buddhist on the lower level.

In a group interview, one respondent, Mr. Ashtekar, who is a retired teacher, said that his elder son is settled in the United Kingdom. His son's friends belong to the upper castes. He had been to the United Kingdom. His son's high-caste friend had accompanied him from Pune to U.K. He never experienced caste discrimination on any basis from the high caste people. I have also talked to his son's higher caste friends. They said that there is no substance in the caste system. It has vanished now and to believe in it is just foolishness. One's status in a society depends on one's educational and occupational background. They also said that they cannot say this for all the upper caste people, but there are a few upper caste people who really do not believe in the caste system and consider all human beings as equal.

One informant, who is a Government officer, said that
the upper castes consider the Buddhists on a par with them. He gave an example of his friend. I visited his friend's house who is a Buddhist, who stays in the upper caste locality, and has a Brahmin neighbour. Both the families have an intimate relationship. They do not consider each other as Brahmin and Buddhist. A two years ago, the daughter of the Brahmin neighbour got married with his friend's son. Now they are not only neighbours, but also relatives.

One respondent's wife, who is a retired headmistress of Pune Municipal Corporation school, said that her friend belongs to a high caste. Her friend's family never considers them as inferior or lower. Twice her friend had given her 'Statues of Buddha, first on her day of retirement, the other she had brought from Aurangabad during one of her trips. Her friend also helped her in arranging the marriage of her daughter. She also said that caste criteria never came between them. I have also talked to her friend when she visited the respondent's house. She said that she feels that they both are equal, and give respect to each other's religion.

One respondent's son, who is doing post graduation at the Pune University, said that once in a seminar he had discussed with the editor of a famous Marathi newspaper about the mobility of the Buddhists. The editor said, "the
Buddhists are highly educated. They have shown high mobility in educational and occupational field. They will not get such educated people among the Brahmins. These Buddhists, even though they do not get enough to eat, they receive education".

Five respondents said that most of the upper castes people feel that the Buddhists get advantage of reservations policy which means that they accept their lower caste status. They do not know that reservation is based on the concept of the oppressed class, and the Buddhists were socially, psychologically, and educationally the oppressed class, therefore they get the reservation facilities. They consider the Buddhists as improving but still backward.

Two respondents said that the upper caste people are very jealous, of their getting facilities after conversion, and so, they place the Buddhists on the lower level. They are not at all caste free. Some of the upper caste people even do not have respect for Dr. Ambedkar, because he was the saviour of the downtrodden people.

One respondent, who is working as a peon in a government office, said that his boss is a Brahmin and very shrewd. He helps the respondent in his difficulties considering him as a lower caste person. He also said that
his boss knows that some of the respondent's relatives are holding good positions, but he never accepts this fact. He always makes remarks that these people will never progress inspite of getting so many facilities.

Two respondents said that the upper caste people called them 'Sarakaracha Jawai' i.e. guest or son-in-law of the government who gets all advantages. They feel that, why should they give cooperation and support to the Buddhists, when the government is protecting them. They cannot tolerate that the Buddhist are enjoying facilities. So, some of the upper caste feel that there is no use of conversion to Buddhism. They felt that the reason behind this was the lack of awareness in the upper caste.

Two respondents, who are daily wage workers, said that the upper caste people consider them as backward. They also said that in their village casteism is strong. Even today, lower caste women cannot work in a Brahmin’s house as a house servant. All powers rests in the hands of the upper caste and they treat all others, including the Buddhists, as inferior.

It is clear from the above discussion that the Buddhists acquired a new sense of confidence while dealing with the upper caste. The Buddhist identity has helped them shedding their perceived lower status in caste hierarchy.
However, such change has not really occurred in the upper castes. Only in the case of people who acquired higher education and occupation say that the Buddhists are comparable. Majority consider Buddhists as a lower caste. They feel that the Buddhists are educationally and economically improving but backward than the upper castes.

6.3.3 Terms Used for Identification:

We have seen that the Buddhists maintain their new identity very strongly, irrespective of their education, occupation, income, and age.

In order to know the terms used for identification we had also posed the question, which term the upper caste use for identification of your community Mahar or Buddhists?

Table 6.3.

Terms used for identification after conversion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Terms used for identification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mahars</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

270 100%
Table 6.3 shows that almost all the respondents said that the upper caste and all other people recognized them as Buddhists.

Very few of the respondents said that after conversion also the upper caste uses the term 'Mahar' for identifying them. These respondents were from the lower class and mostly had a village background. The inference is that there is rural-urban difference in the Buddhists' perception.

While collecting data in Dapodi Bopodi area, I also had an interesting experience. While locating the house of the Buddhists, the other caste people were saying 'The Buddhache Ghar Aahe', meaning that is a Buddhist's house. Or the Buddhists stay in the next lane.

In Dapodi area, one of the upper caste informants said that her nephew got married to a Muslim. She also said that instead of getting married to a Muslim, her nephew should have married a Buddhist because now a days the Buddhists have improved a lot. Muslims do not belong to their religion.

While giving advertisement in matrimonial column in Marathi or English newspapers, the Buddhists write their caste as 'Buddhist'. I have talked to the editor of a Marathi newspaper. He said that now everybody recognises
the Mahars as 'Buddhist' and they use the term 'Buddhist' for their identification.

Some of the Buddhists introduce themselves as Ambedkar or 'Buddha'. Many of the upper caste people recognize them as Ambedkarite Group'. The respondents said that now they have a new identity i.e. the 'Buddhist identity' and the upper caste or all other castes recognize them as Buddhist. Their old Mahar identity has more or less vanished.

Except a very few number of the upper caste, majority of them use the term 'Buddhist' for the identification of the Mahars. A kind of identity is taking place among the upper caste. They say it's better to married Buddhist than Muslims. Now, the Mahars are recognised as 'Buddhist' in the society.
Spatial mobility is one of the important factors which contributes to social mobility. Spatial mobility is the change in place or space, i.e. change in one's permanent residence. It is directly related to change in the socio-economic status of a person. Kaistha (1989) stated that spatial mobility is the move from one territory, or place, to another, with a specific purpose, such as to improve the social, economic, or power status of a person or his family members. Spatial mobility indicates upward vertical social mobility or downward vertical social mobility.

In this section, social mobility of the Buddhists is analyzed through their spatial mobility. Here I have studied the effects of educational and occupational mobility of the Buddhists on their spatial mobility. I have also focused on the reasons for change in place.

6.4.1 Spatial mobility of the Buddhists

To find out spatial mobility among the Buddhists, the following question was posed before the respondents. "Have you purchased flat/house in other locality"?

Some (37.0%) of the respondents said 'yes'; they have
bought a flat/land in a cosmopolitan locality. And many (63.0%) of the respondents said that they have not bought a house in a different locality because of their economic condition. They cannot afford to buy a new house in other place. Some of them said that they like to stay in the midst of their own people.

Out of these, (37.0%) of the respondent, who had moved a few (9.3%) are from Dapodi Bopodi area, and (27.7%) of the respondents are from the Yerawada area. These respondents cited different reasons for changing their place of residence. (1) Very few (6.3%) said that they or their offsprings have taken house in other localities because of their service in that area. (2) (40.0%) of the respondents said that they wanted a house in different locality, and they like to stay in cosmopolitan society; and so they have bought a house/land in a different locality. (3) The respondents also said that spatial mobility, by and large, does not affect their sense of belonging and cultural symbols of Buddhism. They strictly adhere to rules of endogamy, and participate in socio-cultural activities of the Buddhist community.

In a group interview, one respondent residing at Bopodi area, said that his son purchased a flat in 'Mantri Complex' at Dapodi. He said that he is a worker in a company, but
his son is a post-graduate and lecturer in a college. So his son does not want to stay in the slum area, and he has bought the flat. His daughter has a diploma in engineering. He also said that in their new house they have kept the image of Buddha and photograph of Dr. Ambedkar. Change in place of residence does not affect their maintenance of the Buddhist identity.

One respondent said that he has two sons one, who is a superintendent of police (wireless), stays in the upper caste locality in a government Bungalow at Pashan, Pune; and the other son, a labour commissioner, stays in Bombay. His second son has bought a flat in the cosmopolitan society in the Yerawada area. His daughter is married and stays in a cosmopolitan society. He also said that when they purchased the flat, they had celebrated the Grihpravesh ceremony according to Buddhism, in the cosmopolitan area, and had invited neighbours for the function.

One respondent said that he has taken a flat in the Swargate area where the upper caste and people of all other castes stay. This respondent is a government officer. He said that he has booked the flat in his son's name. His son is doing graduation.

Four respondents said that at present they stay in a community because the government had donated land for the
backward people. They are buying a house elsewhere according to their economic condition.

Three respondents said that their sons have booked houses in cosmopolitan locality because of their service. Two respondents' sons are serving in Thane, and one respondent's son is serving in Ahmednagar. They said that their son's were unmarried but they have booked the house with help of LIC and HDFC loan. They also said that now-a-days the residential area depends on the type of job and place of job. Wherever people get a job, they purchase a house there. Now, to reside in one's own community is impossible. Luckily, they had got house in Yerawada area itself. So they are staying in the midst of their community.

Three respondents said their wives are serving in corporation school as primary teachers. Few years ago Pune corporation had announced a housing scheme for the corporation servants. They had booked in that scheme in the name of their wives. In that locality all the corporation servants belonging to different castes, and different occupational status, stay together.

Two respondents said that they have purchased land in 'Lohegaon area'; and they are going to build bungalows
Seven respondents said that they have taken the flat in the Cosmopolitan areas because now their educational and occupational status has improved. They are economically sound. So they can afford to buy a new house. Previously, they were staying in a group because in some places government has donated land. The second reason is casteism. But now the situation has changed. One’s residential area is directly related to his income and not his caste. So they have bought a house in other locality.

The Buddhists who are educationally, occupationally, and economically improved, have shown spatial mobility. Their spatial mobility shows that they follow a pattern similar to other urban population. This has not led to loss of identity. They reinforced their identity through participation in ethnic associations.
SECTION IV PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

6.5 INTRODUCTION

In this section, social mobility of Buddhists is analyzed on the basis of their political participation. Participation in politics is one of the avenues for upward social mobility.

Political participation of the Buddhists is analyzed through their participation in political meetings, participation in the election campaign, participation in agitation and voting.

6.5.1 Participation in political meetings:

To understand the level of politicisation and political interest of the respondents I asked the following questions:

"Do you participate in political meetings?" If yes, why?

Almost all (92.6%) the respondents said that they do participate in political meetings. Out of these, more than fifty percent (58.2%) said that they always participate in political meetings while (34.4%) of the respondents said that they do so sometimes. Very few (7.4%) of the respondents said that they never participated in political meetings. The respondents said that political participation is important, as well as necessary, to get knowledge of
political activities and for political awareness. It influences social life of the people. They also said that participation in politics has created confidence and boldness among them.

In a group interview at Yerawada area, sixteen Buddhists, who are social workers and members of political parties, such as Republican Party of India and Bahujan Samaj Party, said that they not only participate in political meetings, but they also arrange such meetings in their area. All of them are educated and hold white collar jobs. Usually they arrange meetings at the election time. They arrange meetings whenever their political leaders namely Namdev Dhasal, Jaydev Gaikwad, Prakash Ambedkar, Ramdas Athwale, and Kanshiram visit their area. They also organize meetings on 14th April i.e. Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti and call political leaders or members of the political parties, to give talks on the present situation in the country in order to awaken the masses. They also said that organizing socio-political meetings in a locality is important because it creates political awareness, and confidence among the masses.

I had a similar experience in Dapodi and Bopodi areas. Nine respondents, who are social workers, leaders, and members of Republican Party of India and Dalit Panther, said
that they organize political meetings of their political leaders in their areas. They also said that they have their own voluntary organization and association working for the masses. Arranging of political meetings is necessary because most of the people staying in that area are poor and less educated. They do not know much about how many political parties are working for them, or for whom they should vote, and so on. So, to generate awareness and knowledge of their rights, and the present political situation in the country, they arrange and tell others to participate in political meetings.

The Buddhists under study participate in political meetings. Their partition is confined to their own political parties. The Buddhists elite provide the leadership to awaken the masses about political activities and knowledge. They create confidence among the masses and take support from them.

6.5.2 Participation in election campaign.

To understand the respondents' contribution in the election process the following question was asked to the respondents

"Do you participate in election campaign for any leader? Why?"
To this question nearly half (47.8%) of the respondents said that they participate in the election campaign of their own community's leader. They said that they have participated in Corporation, Vidhansabha and Loksabha election campaigns. They said that they participate because they feel that it is their duty and that they are working for their community to see that their community leader gets elected. They also said that in their community, there is strong unity. During election time, different groups of their community come together and stand unitedly. They ask one candidate to contest the election. All people from their community, wherever they stay, support only their community's candidate.

At present, in the Yerawada area, there are two corporators of Republican Party of India (RPI) namely Advocate Avinash Salve and Mr. Udhavrao Vavare. In Dapodi/Bopodi are Mr. Sonkamble belonging to RPI was corporator and now his daughter Ms. Chandrakanta Sonkamble is a corporator. Some of the prominent leaders including Advocate Bajirao Gaikwad, Mr. Ramdas Athwale, Mr. Sharad Ranpise, are ex-MLAs belonging to RPI. Mr. Prakash Ambedkar, R.S. Gawai, Mr. N.M. Kamble, Mr. Khobragade are ex-mps, and Mr. Kanshiram belonging to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is at present a MP.
In a group interview ten respondents said that during the corporation election, they had distributed slips and pamphlets of their leader. They had also organized the meetings and had taken part in canvassing. They had also shouted slogans of their party. All these ten respondents are from Yerawada area, belonging to age groups 30 years to 40 years. Out of these ten, six respondents said that at present they are working for 'Bahujan Samaj Party'.

Seven respondents, from the Dapodi-Bopodi area, said that they had actively participated in the Vidhansabha election for their own community's candidate Jaydev Gaikwad. They had made house to house visits in Dapodi constituencies for canvassing. They had trained young boys for working for the party. They had contacted many elites of their community for canvassing. They had taken part in 'padayatra'. They canvassed, not only in their own locality, but also in the upper caste localities and other caste localities. They also said that they had taken leave for four-five days for canvassing for their candidate.

Six respondent, staying in the Yerawada area, said that the candidates belonging to different parties, who are contesting in the elections, visit their area to garland Dr. Ambedkar and Buddha, in order to get the Buddhists vote. The respondents said that they always support their
community's candidate only. They canvass and try to get the maximum vote to their candidate by explaining the manifesto of their party to the masses.

The above data show that some of the respondents participate in the election campaign to support their community's candidate, to have their representative in the government and they feel they are fulfilling their duty towards their community.

6.5.3 Participation in the 'Agitation':

To find out to what extent the respondents participate in political agitations, I had asked the following question to the respondents.

"Do you participate in agitations? Why?"

To this question nearly half (47.8%) responded positively and said that they participate in agitations. Out of these (31.1%) respondents said that they always participate in the agitations, while (16.7%) said that sometimes participate in agitations. Most of these respondents were members of the Republican party, and Bahujan Samaj Party. The respondents said that they participate in agitations to show their unity, strength and firmness of their demands or opinions. They show
In group interview, one respondent, who is an advocate, said that he is the President of the regional unit of the Republican Party. So, he not only takes part in agitations, but also convinces other people to join. He feels that participation in agitations is important because whatever status they have today, is just because of agitations. Participation in agitations shows the awareness of the masses. It also shows strength, consistency, and unity. It also brings changes to some extent.

Twelve respondents said that they have participated in two agitations held in Bombay for renaming the Marathwada University. They had participated in a morcha and had met the Chief Minister to complain, and to explain the necessity of renaming the Marathwada University. They also said that they participated because in our country people are not caste-free, various political parties and organization were fighting against the renaming of the Marathwada University. They participated in agitations and morchas to keep their demands before the government. Seven respondents said that that they had participated in morcha and satyagraha organized by Republican Party of India in front of the Collector’s Office in Pune demanding renaming of Marathwada University. Four respondents said that thrice they had support to their party.
participated in morchas organized by Dalit Panther for renaming the Marathwada University, demanding publication of Dr. Ambedkar's writings and speeches (Riddles of Hinduism) and an inquiry anti-reservation riots. The sons of six respondents said that they always participate in morchas, satyagraha, agitation, wherever it was held in Bombay, Nagpur or Pune. They said they are members of the Republican Party and they work for their party in their area.

It is demonstrated that the Buddhists are politically active.

6.5.4 Voting:

To understand the role of the Buddhists in voting the following question was put before the respondents.

"Do you vote? Why?"

To this question almost all (99.2%) respondents said yes, they do vote. Out of these (98.1%) said that they always vote, while very a negligible percentage (1.1%) said that they vote only sometimes. The respondents said that they vote because it is the duty of every citizen. Voting is the only channel through which they can actively participate in politics. They can change the governance or in other words they can shift power from one political party to another.
In a group interview, five respondents said that they vote because only through voting they can show their actual support and co-operation to their leader. Even if they do not participate in the election campaign and agitation, they can show their loyalty to their party through voting. It shows their party identification, whether weak or strong makes no difference. Identification is thus, very important. Voting also shows political development, political awareness and involvement.

Seven respondents said that in India caste or community plays an important role in voting. All the political leaders mostly depend on their community members. They expect co-operation from their community. To get political power, to have their own representative in the government, to get material benefits, and to show their strength, voting for their leader is necessary.

Twelve respondents who are members of political parties said that they not only vote, but also make house to house visits in their area and collect the people for voting. They also show the place, and the nature of their party’s symbol, on slip of paper. They give guidelines for voting to the illiterate people. They sit near in the election booth and work for the whole day.
Thus, it is demonstrated that most of the Buddhists under study participate in politics through participating in political meetings, election campaigns, agitations and voting. They participate in the politics to get knowledge about political activities, awareness and for awakening the masses. They show their unity, and strength, and put their demands in front of the government through participation in politics. They support their candidate and expect their candidate to get elected. In this way the community will achieve political power, get material benefits, and protection in difficulties. At present, in the research localities there are corporators of RPI and social workers of RPI, BSP and Dalit Panther working for the community.
6.6 INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and industrialization are the important sources of social mobility. Ahuja (1993) stated that urbanization and industrialization change commensal relations, social relations, as well as occupational relations. It also results in economic development and exposure to mass media. It also leads to the breakdown of traditional beliefs and brings about changes in attitudes and values.

Here the impact of urbanization and industrialization on the Buddhists residing in Pune is analyzed through their use of various means of mass media, their attitude towards the social legislation and their scientific, religious and social views.

6.6.1 Mass Media Contact:

The important means of mass media are newspapers, magazines, periodicals, radio, and television. The respondents were asked the following questions, "Do you read newspapers / magazines /periodicals"? "Do you listen to radio / watch television"? "Do you discuss with family members / friends / neighbours"?.
A majority (88.97%) of the respondents said that they read newspapers. Out of these, (77.87%) read newspapers regularly, while (11.17%) read sometimes. A few (11.17%) said that they never read newspapers because they are illiterate but they discuss various topics with their friends. Some (14.87%) of the respondents said that in addition to Marathi newspapers they also read English newspapers. Some (10.97%) of the respondents said that they also read magazines and weeklies such as 'Saptahik Sakal, Buddhayan, Economic and Political weekly etc. The respondents said that they read newspapers to get awareness. Newspapers cover information from all areas. They get knowledge of national as well as international events. They also said that a newspaper is less expensive and easily available means of getting information.

In a group interview fifteen respondents staying in Dapodi Bopodi area said that they do not buy newspapers. They go to Trilokya Bouddha Mahasangha's library where all regional as well as English language newspapers are available. Twenty three respondents said that in addition to daily newspapers, they also take employment news to get the information about the vacancies in different field for their children. Almost all (99.27%) of the respondents said that they
listen to radio / watch T.V. Out of these (84.4%) said that they do so daily. While (14.8%) of the respondents said that they do only sometimes. A very negligible (.7%) of the respondents said that they never listen to the radio or watch T.V. The respondents said that now a days there is a great impact of radio/T.V. on the masses because those who see T.V. are exposed to all types of programmes such as educational, recreational, sports, news etc. They get information at their home. Most (80.4%) of the respondents said that they give more weightage to news. Sometimes they also see/listen recreational programmes. Twelve respondents, staying in Yerawada area, said that because of the cable network they are exposed to the world. They are getting international knowledge at their home. In the Yerawada area almost all the respondents were hooked to cable T.V. They said that television has a great effect on their social and educational life.

Almost all (92.6%) of the Buddhists under study said that they discuss various topics with family members, friends, and neighbours. Out of these, (70.4%) said that most of the time they discuss national events, local events, and rise and fall in the prices. Some (22.2%) said that they discuss only topics like marriage, friendship and casteism. A few (7.4%) of the respondents said that they never discuss any topic.
The above data show that most of the Buddhists staying in the research localities used important means of mass media such as newspaper, radio, and T.V., for awareness and obtaining information at national and international level. They show their interest in current local and national events through their discussion with family members, friends and neighbours.

6.6.2 Attitude towards social legislation:

Urbanization and industrialization influences the traditional beliefs and values. Here impact of urbanization and industrialization are analysed on the basis of their attitude towards social legislation. The respondents were asked the opinion on age at marriage decided by government, widow marriage, divorce and family planning.

To a question "What is your opinion about age at marriage enacted by the government"? most (87.6%) of the respondents said it is a suitable age for marriage. While (12.6%) of the respondents said it is low. They said that, traditionally, when they were socially, educationally, economically and psychologically oppressed, child marriage was practiced in their community. But after conversion, they realised the importance of education. Dr. Ambedkar inculcated the importance of education for males and female
to them because progress of their community was dependent upon education of all. The respondents said that they are educating their daughters. Child marriage is not practised in their community. I did not come across a single case of child marriage in the research areas.

One respondent, who is a widow, said that she has fixed her daughter's marriage who is now twenty years old. She said, being a poor widow, she did not hurry for her daughter's marriage because she was following legislation which was made for the people's welfare.

Four respondents staying in Yerawada area said that, for marriage, in addition to the physical maturity, social and mental maturity is also necessary for a successful married life. So, sometimes they feel that age at marriage enacted by government is the minimum age. They also said that child marriage is not practised in their community because after conversion, scientific and rational thinking has developed among them.

To a question on widow re-marriage and opinion about the divorce, many (39.5%) of the respondents responded positively. They said that widows should remarry, while (60.5%) of the respondents said that widow remarriage should depend on circumstances. Further, if there is need she should remarry. Some (35.2%) of the respondents were in
favour of divorce. They said divorce is desirable if necessary. (64.8%) respondents said that divorce is not a good thing, it is harmful and undesirable because it reduces the status of women.

In a group interview three respondents said that previously, in the traditional society, status of women was low. They had no rights in social, economic, political and religious fields. They were treated as inferior to men. Dr. Ambedkar advocated grant of privileges and important rights, such as right to equality of opportunity, equal protection, and equality before laws, right to freedom of speech, religion, education, occupation, expression, right to property constitutional remedies and exploitation to women in the constitution of India. Further the respondents said that they are supporting social laws made for women.

Regarding divorce, two respondents, who are doctors, said that in the traditional Hindu society, marriage was considered as a religious obligation and so divorce was not permitted till 1950. But now marriage is becoming more secularized as a social phenomena. Though divorce is a tragedy, social law on divorce is necessary to give protection and support to needy people.

To a question on their opinion about family planning
all (100%) the respondents answered positively. They said that family planning is a must for easy, good and comfortable life. They said that they support and follow family planning. Even though the respondents have three, or more than three, children their sons/daughters do not have more than two children. They also said that social legislation is made for the people's welfare, and it needs support and co-operation from the people. One respondent, Mr. Dhiwal, a retired school teacher, said that his daughter has two girls and she has done family planning. Mr. Adsule, who is a retired clerk, said that one of his sons, has two daughters, and practiced family planning. Mr. Kadam, who is a retired government officer, said that his son has only one daughter. We have observed that many of the respondents support social legislation.

The above discussion shows that the respondents have a positive approach for social legislation. They support and follow social laws enacted for, the welfare of the people. The respondents feel that by supporting social laws, they are following Dr. Ambedkar and Buddha who inculcated the thinking of rationality among them.

6.6.3 Scientific views.

Urbanization and industrialization leads to breakdown of traditional beliefs and leads to changes in attitudes
The Buddhists say that they are rational, and scientific thinking has developed among them. So, in order to examine the presence of this in their practical life, their opinion on destiny, rebirth, ghost, soul, superstition, black magic/witchcraft, causes of the sickness and action during the period of sickness was asked. The majority (74.47%) of the respondents said that they do not believe in destiny, rebirth, superstitions, ghost, soul and black magic/witch craft because in Buddhism, there is no Ishwar (God), soul, rebirth and caste. Buddha is their 'Margdata' i.e. path finder. He has shown them the way of life. Buddha has given them 'Aat deep bhav' i.e. self-enlightenment. The Buddhists way of life totally depends on self. Buddha has taught them that one has a self, self is the lord of self, self is the guardian of self, one should practice self-conquest. The main teaching of Buddhism is that mind makes the man. The personality of man is dependent on his mind. So to have a good mind or to develop a good mind is the first step in following righteousness, in achieving happiness and success. The respondents also said that Buddha has taught them that whatever perceived by the eye is the only truth.

The respondents staying in Dapodi-Bopodi area said that
they attend regular classes on Buddhism organised by Trilokya Bouddha Mahasangha. The respondents said that they study Buddhism and organise lectures on Buddhism in their locality. They said that the principles of Buddhism are rational, ethical, eternal, egalitarian. So they do not believe in superstitions.

To the questions, "what are the causes of disease? and what action do you take during the sickness in the family"? almost all (98.9%) of the respondents said that the causes of disease are germs, dirt and not God's curse, black magic, or witchcraft. They said that disease spreads because of the flies and mosquitoes. They said that during sickness in the family they call a doctor, go to a dispensary or hospital. The respondents staying in the Dapodi-Bopodi area, which is a slum area, said that 'Bahujan Hitay' runs medical programme in their area. They have a clinic. Regular doses of Vitamin 'A', iron, deworming and vaccination are given to their children. For any medical help they contact Bahujan Hitay's clinic. I did not come across any blackmagic or witchcraft case in that area. The respondents staying in Yerawada area are educated and well settled; they said that for any health difficulties they contact a medical doctor only.

In addition to urbanization and industrialization, the
Buddhists identity has played an important role in
down the traditional beliefs and changing their attitudes
and values. The respondents staying in research areas are
very much influenced by Buddhism. They have an impact of
the religious institute, 'Trilokya Bouddha Mahasangha',
working for them. They show their scientific temper and
rational views towards their religious and social life.
This trend can help them in achieving upward social
mobility.

6.7 CONCLUSION

In addition to higher education and occupation, the
Buddhists identity also played a role in reducing the social
distance between the Buddhists and the upper castes to some
extent. The Buddhist identity has helped them in shedding
their perceived lower status in caste hierarchy, and
acquired a new sense of confidence while dealing with the
upper caste. They intermingle with the upper caste freely,
frequently, and without embarrassment. The upper caste has
developed a sense of mutual acceptance and co-operation.
There are some transformations taking place in the
relationship between the Buddhists and the upper caste.
They participate in each others social, cultural and
religious functions. There is a trend of having friends
belonging to the upper caste among the Buddhists and inter-
dining takes place more frequently between them. Majority of inter-caste marriages are hypogamous. There has been considerable changes in educational and occupational status of the Buddhist community. More young men are acquiring higher education and higher status jobs. The trend seems to be reversing towards hypogamy. The Buddhist elite are aware that hypogamy predominates over hypergamy in their community. So they are demanding hypergamous marriages simultaneously with hypogamous marriages. It would appear as if that the Buddhists have not shed 'high caste / low caste' complex. However, the view expressed by elite points towards their concern for the social advancements of the community rather than the caste considerations.

(The Buddhists seem to be empowered. They feel that they are on a par with the upper caste. At the same time, they assessed the upper caste perspective towards them and they feel that it is not reciprocated. Except a very few of the upper caste most do not consider the Buddhists on a par with them. They consider the Buddhists as low of them. There is an inconsistency between the perceived status of the Buddhists and perceived status by the upper castes as assessed by the Buddhists.)

Spatial mobility of the Buddhists is directly related to their high educational and occupational status is also to
income and place of job. This show that they fall in line on the rest of the urban population. This has not led to loss of identity. They reinforced their identity through participation in ethnic associations.

Most of the Buddhists participate in politics through participating in political meetings, election campaign, agitation and voting. They participate in politics to get the knowledge about political activities and for political awareness, to show their unity, firmness, strength, and to put their demand in front of the government. They are confined to their own political parties such as Republican Party of India and Bahujan Samaj Party. Only some of the respondents who are members of the above political parties, arrange political meetings in the research localities to awaken the masses about political activities. The respondents also say that they are following Dr. Ambedkar's teaching, who told them that development of their community depends upon the maximum use of political means and having political power.

The Buddhists under study are strongly influenced by urbanization and industrialization. Most of them use important means of mass media such as newspaper, radio, T.V. for awareness and information of national and international
events. They have shown positive approach, and support, for social legislation because they feel social laws are made for the betterment of the people. In addition to urbanization and industrialization, the Buddhist identity played a crucial role in breaking down the traditional belief and values. They show their scientific temper and rational views towards their social and religious life. This trend can help them in achieving upward social mobility.