Chapter – IV

Socio-political and Economic Landscape of Gujarat

This chapter intends to provide the social - political and economic background of Gujarat and particularly through its historical trajectory. It attempts to look at the contradictory nature of state’s development record, social structure of Gujarati society, communities’ especially inter-community conflicts, economy etc. in order to explain the marginalisation of adivasis and women in particular. With regard to the former point, it underlines how economic growth does not go hand in hand with the social development unlike in pre-independence period. The latter aspect is particularly of importance as suffering related to reproductive health is linked to the discrimination and disenfranchisement of adivasi women. Considering these points, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides briefly the state formation and the social context/reasons for which the state was formed as well as the demographic profile. The second section discusses about the socio-economic and political milieu of the state. Specifically, attention will be paid to the kind of policies, legal interventions and social movements taken up by the state and people for upliftment of weaker sections and social development and its challenges. The third section outlines the politico-economic condition of Dangs which unequally disadvantages adivasis.

Part: I

History of State Formation: Gujarat

Before, delving in to the socio-political and economic context of Gujarat, it is significant to provide the brief history of state formation of Gujarat and its demographic background. This will describe how the state formation itself was fraught with conflicts and created hostility between different caste groups. Different regions of the state had different social structure. Gujarat state was constituted in 1st May, 1960. Administration wise, there are thirty three districts in Gujarat at present. Gandhianagar is the capital of Gujarat. The
people of this state with hills and plains, deserts and forests belong to many communities, castes, tribes, religions and faiths. Gujarat can be divided primarily into five regions: 1) North Gujarat 2) Kutch 3) Saurashtra 4) Central Gujarat 5) South Gujarat (Thakar 1997).

4.1. Map of Gujarat: District wise

Gujarat state was formed with the above mentioned regions as a result of unification between British Gujarat (by bifurcation from Bombay Presidency), the independent princely states Saurashtra guided by the nawabs and Kutch, being a border region with Pakistan (Tambs-Lyche1997:17, Wood 1984, Shani 2007 & Hiraway 2000: 3106). Gujarat state was created when the erstwhile bilingual Bombay state was split into two separate states, namely, Gujarati speaking Gujarat State and Marathi speaking Maharashtra (Hiraway 2000: 3106 and Shani 2007). Prior to the inclusion of Junagarh
into Gujarat, in 1952 Saurashtra (the present name of the region and it is also called as Kathiawar) was incorporated as a state in the Indian Union. Till 1956 A.D. it was called United State of Kathiawar which included Kutch also, which used to consists around 200 princely states. With independence, Saurashtra became a confederation of princely states led by a Rajpramukh elected from among the rulers. Junagarh tried to secede to Pakistan in 1947, and in the following years several members of the princely families were active in an insurrection against the new political order (Tambs-Lyche 1997).

As mentioned on the other side, North Gujarat, Central Gujarat and South Gujarat were included in erstwhile Bombay state. Some of these regions were under the rule of Maratha Dynasty earlier and later British Gujarat (Shani 2007). Point to be noted here that the connection of Marathas with Gujarat commenced in 1664 with Shivaji’s (father of Maratha nation) raids on Surat, the then richest town in Western India. In the second period of Maratha’s interaction with Gujarat, the Marathas acted as mercenaries, when partly by independent action “but far more by a course of judicious interference in the local quarrels of the Mohammedan officials and by loan of troops, they acquired considerable territorial advantages.” Then came the time of domination from 1760 to 1801, during which period the Gaekwad influence was occasionally greater than that of the Peshwa. After 1802, the internal power struggle between Poona, which was in control of Peshwa and Baroda, which was in control of Gaekwad, so weakened the hold of the Marathas on Gujarat that the paramount power passed over to the British long before the downfall of Balajirao Peshwa and the final annexation of his territories in 1819 (Kalia 2004). Lastly, Kutch was placed under the administration of the Union Government without a local legislation assembly. The Central government poured money into Kutch for maintaining the army and for settling Sindhi refugees. The Kandala port came to replace the loss of Karachi (now in Pakistan) and the new town of Gandhidham was built next to as the capital of the state to rehabilitate the government and refugees (Kalia 2004).

The reason behind elaborating the integration of different regions is to underscore its different kind of social structure – hierarchical and unequal; it created for different communities which are discussed in the second section.
Tambs-Lyche (1997) writes that the peninsula-Saurashtra is geologically distinct from the mainland; it is believed at some time in pre-history to have been an island. Culturally, it is equally well defined, and people define themselves as belonging to Kathiawar, rather than to Gujarat. Kathiawadi, the local dialect – differs from standard Gujarati and seems more closely to resemble the dialects of western Rajasthan. Socially, though some groups span the border, Saurashtra has its own combination of castes. While stereotypes of Gujaratis relate to the image of a businessman, Kathiawadis are seen as the ‘hill-billies’ of the state. Material culture, too, differs from that of the mainland. Handicrafts are in some ways closer to those of Rajasthan, as is traditional dress. While women in Gujarat mostly wear saris, the skirt, blouse and shawl remain the traditional dress of Kathiawadi women. Some of these differences may not be regional in origin, but rather indicate that Saurashtra, like Rajasthan, has retained a number of cultural traits which, in mainland Gujarat, have changed or disappeared. Centuries of Muslim rule, merchant cultural influence, and the regional dominance of such castes as the Anavil Brahmins of southGujarat and the Patidars of Charottar all affected mainland Gujarat, while Rajput culture remained dominant in Saurashtra and Rajasthan (ibid: 11, 12). Another cultural difference is observed is in terms of food consumption pattern.

Coming to the point of state formation under linguistic nationalism, it is to be noted that the linguistic demand initially did not impassion the Gujaratis, however who greatly profited from their association with Bombay. Bombay had been the educational and economic hub of Gujaratis from the time of British rule. Wealthy Gujaratis moreover had set up cotton mills and business in Bombay. The Gujaratis from North Gujarat, Kutch and Saurashtra had closer ties with Bombay than the mainland Gujarat. In fact, Morarji Desai strongly opposed separate Gujarat from financial grounds. However, Bombay became a centre of blind fury and in 1956 anti-Gujarati riots broke out throughout the city, resulting in loss of life and property. The emotional divide between Gujarat and Maharashtra then onwards became complete (Kalia 2004).
Stagnant Maternal Mortality Figure and Skewed Sex Ratio

As per Census 2011, the population of Gujarat is 60,383,628 and the male population is 31,482,282 and female is 28,901,346 whereas previously it was 50,671,017 in 2001 while male was 26,385,577 and female was 24,285,440. The total population growth in the last decade was 19.17 percent and the population of the state forms 4.99 percent of the total population of India. The total area of Gujarat is 196,024 sq. km with a density of 308 per sq km.

Gujarat is one of India’s leading states in terms of economic success. Despite rapid economic progress, social and health indicators have plateaued as continuously revealed by NFHS (National Family Health Survey) and SRS (Sample Registration System). Although there was a rapid decline in maternal mortality ratio from 389 to 202 per 100,000 live births from 1989 to 1999, now it has been stagnated to 160 per 100,000 live births in 2005 (SRS 2007). The infant mortality rate (IMR) is also very high at 52 per 1000 live births (SRS 2007). More than 65 per cent of these deaths are in neonatal period (NFHS, 2005). Nearly one out of every two children (47 per cent) is malnourished (NFHS 2005). Comparison between NFHS-2 and NFHS-3 also indicates that malnutrition rates in Gujarat have been stagnated (UNICEF India 2009).

Another indicator of social development is sex ratio which too does not paint a progressive picture. The Sex Ratio of Gujarat in 2011 is 918 for each 1000 male. In the last census of 2001, the sex ratio was 921 per 1000 males in Gujarat. So, it can be inferred that it is gradually declining even if economically Gujarat is becoming more prosperous. Furthermore, it is worst when we look at the child sex ratio. The child sex ratio is 886 per 1000 males and has decreased as compared to 964 in the 2001 census. Feminists opine that high growth and prosperity especially among the upper sections of the population does not prevent them from disfavouring girl child. Instead affluent sections of people misuse the availability of new medical technology for female foeticide to avoid dowry.
4.2. Map of Sex Ratio in the Gujarat: District wise

In this connection, Biswas (2017) remarks that “In Gujarat, they have a lot of respect for girls, they say we will educate them, attitude-wise everything is fine but at the end of the day, they would like to have a boy. They do not have any reason- the attitude is very positive towards girls but still, a boy should be there (cited in Dogra 2017: 3, 4).” Dogra (2017) writes by quoting Biswas that “Orissa is supposed to be a very poor state. But ten districts in the state have high sex ratio – the number of girls is higher than boys. Whereas Gujarat, a prosperous state, is one of the four states in India with the lowest sex ratios. The town of Mehsana, in Gujarat, had the lowest sex ratio in the country – 760 girls for 1000 boys when we started the project.”
However, relatively the district which are predominantly tribal foothold, possess a positive sex ratio. For instance, in Dangs district, the sex ratio is highest in Gujarat. The sex ratio in the Dangs in 2011 is 1007 for each 1000 male, while the Tapi district comes second highest in sex ratio 1004 for each 1000 male. As stated earlier, it is related to the absence of dowry system in adivasi society. Since in mainland Gujarat, female sex ratio declines, finding a bride for groom becomes a difficult task. In this scenario, from plain area, Gujaratis flock to adivasi regions of the state to find bride. Currently, they are buying girls from the adivasi society to marry their sons. However, now some adivasi organisations are sensitising the locals against the risk of selling adivasi girls and preventing non-adivasis from buying bride in the adivasi area. Some cases are also noted in the police stations. The literacy rate in Gujarat has risen as it is 79.31 percent, with male literacy at 87.23 percent and female literacy at 70.73 percent. In figures, total number of literates in Gujarat are 41,948,677 out of which males are 23,995,500 and females are 17,953,177 [Census 2011]. Though in Gujarat literacy percentage is increasing; but it is not increasing among the SCs and ST. However, it is increasing among upper caste. And lower caste people are turning to work at early age by dropping out from education because of economic distress and we would return to this point in the third section. Ghanshyam Shah (1991) makes an interesting observation that there is hierarchy and inequity which exists among adivasis and better of adivasis like Chaudhurys and Dhodiyas, who are educationally and economically advanced compared to other adivasis like Dubla, Rathwa and Bhils. These better off adivasis have primarily used the benefits of reservation and joined into white collar jobs and want to be equal to the non-adivasi babus. On the other side, non-tribals or upper caste resent the fact the jobs which they monopolised for many years, now is shared with the tribals by virtue of the reservations. In this connection, I.P. Desai (2014) too writes about how caste violence and agitation against reservation in Medical Education took place in 1970s which primarily targeted the entry of lower castes, adivasis and Muslims in public institutions through the policy of reservation and KHAM experiment later. Coming back to the point of educational condition, adivasi women’s literacy rate is very low compare to caste women as Census of 2011 suggests.
Hirway and Shah (2011) referred UNDP study that, Gujarat ranks eighth among the major Indian states in the Human Development Index (UNDP 2011). It ranks eighth in education and ninth in health. Again, according to the latest report of the NSSO, Gujarat ranks 13th in infant mortality rate (IMR) (the lowest IMR gets the first rank), 14th in child mortality rate, and ninth in children’s malnutrition. It ranks 11th in retention of children (6-16 years) in school. The recent NFHS has also pointed out that Gujarat ranks very low in women’s health and nutrition. Even the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's report have pointed to numerous gaping holes in the implementation of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in Anganwadis. In October 2013, the CAG found that the March 2012 monthly progress report said that every third child in the state is underweight. Gujarat stood a poor 20th in the malnutrition scale in 2012 with Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh and doing better in reducing malnutrition levels from 2007 and 2011 (Desai 2014). Worse, Gujarat’s figure of "severely malnourished" children (4.56 per cent) exceeds the national average (3.33 per cent). In short, it is clear that a high growth rate is not translated into well-being effectively. This has implication as for maternal mortality which the next chapter extensively dealt with.

It is suffice to say here that though recently Gujarat is showcased as the epicentre of communal conflicts, which is even traced to pre-independence era, nevertheless, it is a multi-religious state as there is co-existence of diverse ethnic and religious groups such as Sindhis, Muslims, Parsis, Hindus, Jains and Christians.

Part: II

Socio-Economic and Political Milieu of Gujarat

Whereas the first section briefed on the state formation and demographic profile, this section discusses about the socio-economic and political milieu of the state. It underlines that despite Gujarat recently being promoted as the poster-boy of growth, there is wide social inequality and pauperization which growth account hides. Simultaneously, it seeks to chart out the various social movements propagated by various communities for social equality and secularization.
Before detailing the social and political intervention, it is useful to discuss briefly the social structure of Gujarat and later the economic development. In simple terms, Gujaratis are known for their utilitarian and parochial spirit (Gillion 2013). Situated between the Arabian Sea and the kingdoms of central and northern India, possessed of a long coastline and fertile soil, Gujarat for more than two thousand years has been a centre of trade and textile exports. Its traders and financiers, not its royal officials, nor its landholders and chieftains, nor even its Brahmins, set the tone of society in Gujarat for long before modern times and made business valued and more than normally respectable for all (Gillion 2013). The Gujaratis are perhaps the least other-worldly of all the Indian peoples (Gillion 2013). Gujarat – where per capita income is three times that of India’s poorest state, Bihar – in many ways epitomized a newly emerging India: its aspirational middle class, with strong links to the outside world and to the large, successful Gujarati diaspora, wore proudly a reputation for industry, entrepreneurshhip and civic-mindedness (Khilnani 1997).

The opening of the first Ahmedabad textile mill in 1861 and of the railway line between Ahmedabad and Bombay three years later was a harbinger of the Ahmedabad’s rapid expansion (Shani 2007). Shani explains the historical shifts in the economy – merchant capital to Industrial capital, and the way it affected the prospects of different caste groups. For more than a century the textile mill industry had been the backbone of Ahmedabad’s and Surat’s economy and the key to its expansion. With its related vocations and commerce, it had become the principal means of livelihood for most of the city dwellers, and for the many new migrants (these migrants are mainly lower castes and adivasis from southern part of Gujarat). This situation changed at the beginning of the 1980s, when a crisis in the industry resulted in the closure of mills. Between 1979 and 1984, 12 of the 65 mills in the city were shut down; 9 of the mills were closed over six months between 1983 and 1984. At the time, the textile mills were estimated to provide direct employment to about 150,000 workers and indirect employment to another 100,000 in related vocations such as sub-contractors and suppliers – a total of 37 per cent of Ahmedabad’s working population. By 1985, as many as 50,000 labourers had lost their jobs in the mills. Nonetheless, despite the downsizing, increased productivity through
newer technologies in small power-loom factories meant that there was hardly any
decrease in the output and consumption of textiles. The increasing diversification to
power-loom factories was related to broader processes of de-industrialisation as well as to
changes in the textile market that took place throughout India after independence. From
1960, in contrast to the large-scale integrated production systems of the composite mills,
which had dominated the economy of Ahmedabad for a century, there was a significant
growth in small-scale disintegrated industries (Shani 2007).

Additionally, some of the legislations such as amendment to Industrial Dispute Act in
order to embroil in neo-liberal market economy too were detrimental for the employment
prospects of marginalised sections. Jaffrelot (2008) critiques that Modi (former Chief
Minister of Gujarat till 2014) believes in a market economy and has accelerated the
retreat of the state. He has reduced the state spending which had not been part of the five-
year plans by 9 per cent and reformed the Gujarat State Electricity Board. This SEB
which was in red regained some financial health once it started to have power paid by the
consumers, including in the villages. Last but not the least; the Industrial Disputes Act
was amended in order to make the labour laws more flexible in the state's Special
Economic Zone (Jaffrelot 2008).

Sud (2012) also traces Gujarat’s trajectory of development through detailed empirical
data to argue that Gujarat’s development story, like its politics, is embedded in caste and
class – where the powerful elite cornered most of the benefits of development while the
poor have been a residual category throughout. Many important literatures (Roy 1999,
Dhar 2017 and Whitehead 1990) discuss about how instrumental nature of development
especially through construction of dam, SEZ projects, nuclear power plant (at Mithivirdi
in Bhavnagar district), etc were initiated in order to boost economy at the cost of
dispossession of people mainly adivasis and Dalits. Sardar Sarovar dam is a case in point
which resulted in massive displacement of adivasis mainly Bhils (according to Roy
(1999) 57.6 per cent tribals were uprooted in the case of the Sardar Sarovar Dam) and
captured the popular imagination. Roy (1999) critically linked the benefits of the big
project not only to powerful sections of the state but also to the multinational

83
organisations for whose corporate interests like World Bank, ruling classes set to construct this project. She predicts that it would not only result in displacement and the loss of livelihood but also devastate the ecology of the region. Not coincidentally, it was also used to justify fairly brutal processes of land alienation of tribal peoples in the cause of capitalist modernisation. These objectifying, temporal metaphors now seem to be applied to the Bhils of the Narmada region. Pauperisation and the transformation of a formerly self-sufficient adivasi community into casualised agricultural wage workers may become a permanent consequence of resettlement, at least in this site (Whitehead 1990). In an unequal society like India, dams and SEZ projects like Tata Nano in Sanad have served as yet another instrument of dominant classes for appropriating the two most important natural resources – water and land – from less powerful communities like adivasis and Dalits.

Similarly, Hirway and Shah (2011) point out that despite high growth in the state; it is not accompanied by high employment. They write, “Though changes have taken place within primary sector employment, the overall structure of employment has not changed significantly in spite of a high rate of growth of the economy. For example, in 2008-09, the primary sector contributed 14.8% to the state State Domestic Product (SDP), but housed 54.4% of the workforce. As against this, the non-primary sectors contributed 85.2% to SDP but gave employment only to 45.6% workforce. To put it differently, 1% of SDP in the primary sector supported 3.67% of the workforce, while 1% of SDP in the non-primary sectors supported only 0.53% of the workforce! This indicates the wide gap between incomes in the primary and non-primary sectors. The percentage share of SDP from the primary sector to total SDP has continuously declined between 2001-02 and 2009-10. The moving averages, which remove annual fluctuations in the percentage shares, also suggest the same thing. However, according to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) rounds, the share of employment of the primary sector in the total employment has increased from 49.9% in 2004-05 to 54.4% in 2008-09. When Arthur Lewis talked about structural transformation, he meant shifting of labour from agriculture (i.e., the primary sector) to non-primary sectors along with structural transformation in production. And this has not happened in Gujarat. The growth in the non-primary sector
has failed to create adequate employment opportunities for labour to shift to non-primary sectors in the state.”

However, if we take a pause from the recent economic policy and visit to pre-independence period, we can see that some of the policies of the Princely states were actually more inclusive and progressive in nature compared to the present day. For instance, Bowe (2006) writes that Maharaja Sayaji Rao III, Gaekwad of Baroda, was among the most progressive Indian rulers of his day. By the time of his death, he had completed many modernization projects in Baroda, such as arranged for the building of much-needed railways and roads, the establishment of local model industries, and the construction of hospitals. He had also set up a system of free and compulsory education, outlawed child marriage, and established a library system to promote continuing education. In addition, his Maharani campaigned against purdah and had chaired the first All Indian Women’s Conference. The Gaekwad also created a series of significant gardens around his royal palaces and initiated a programme for the 'greening' of his state (ibid: 192). It is a well known fact that it is Sayajirao who funded Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar’s education in Britain and America. After successfully completing his education, Ambedkar returned to India and joined Baroda assembly. Long before Gandhi was to espouse the cause of the Harijans (untouchables), Sayajirao built schools for untouchables and temples in Baroda were thrown open to them. Another important point here is that Sayajirao was aided by economists called R.C. Dutt, who transformed Baroda state in economic development. All the hopes for economic development had rested in Ahmedabad, which was then called as, the Manchester of India. The combination of improved business and Gujarati entrepreneurship resulted in the transformation of the merchant capital into the industrial capital, which made its debut while establishing of the Ahmedabad Spinning and Weaving Mill. Up to this point, the merchant class of traders and bankers composed of Jains and Vaishnava Banias had shunned industry. However, the timing proved fortuitous because the American civil war broke out in 1861, increasing demand for Indian Cotton. Even though the demand for Indian cotton declined after that, textile industry was well established as well as new Seths (financiers and
business community) adopted western life style and invested their wealth in this (Shani 2007).

Besides wide economic gap across various sections of people in contrast to pre-independence era, several scholars have discussed about how Gujarat became the experimental state for communal violence as well as how there were attempts to do secularisation in society. The state has a history of communal violence in the post-Independence period. The year 2002 became a watermark for the “ethnic cleansing” of the Muslim minority in Gujarat. In the period thereafter, urban space has become pockmarked with community-based segmentation (Naz 2012).

In this context, Khilnani (1997) writes that Gujarat – one of India’s more prosperous and urbanized states, a textbook case in political stability and commercial vigour – imploded, as Hindus slaughtered and set alight hundreds of their Muslim fellow-citizens. The conventional wisdom is that economic progress and the emergence of a middle class promote moderate and centrist politics, and as such provide the conditions for a liberal democratic politics. But in Gujarat, the murderous Hindu gangs were led by the rich and educated: doctors and advocates roved in cars, punched mobile phones and used government-supplied computer printouts of Muslim addresses to conduct their pogrom – itself retaliation for an attack by Muslims on a train ferrying Hindu activists from Ayodhya, the once-sleepy northern town that has become the epicentre of the bloody religiosiety spreading across parts of India (ibid: ix).

He continues, in Bombay, one sensed the vague, enchanting promise of technology to transform and uplift lives. In Gujarat, one felt the brute fact of technology at the service of state-sponsored massacres India seems on the face of it poised between such choices. In the one hand, there is a shrink-wrap, software-package India, where ‘brain arbitrage’ is the new spice trade and where India is a global brand-name advertising the world’s electronic ‘back office’. On the other hand, there is a self-inflated, venomous redefinition of India in terms of the ideology of Hindutva (ibid: x, xi).”
Another thing he argued is that the tragedy of Gujarat manifested the extent to which some in India remain in thrall to a defining theme of the century just past: the pursuit of a strong, militarized state driven by a narrow nationalism. This is an India that sanctifies its nuclearized sands – an India in which Hindu religious men, swathed in saffron robes, could gather vials of sand in the Rajasthan desert where India exploded five nuclear devices, and peddle them as sacred offerings. For such believers, Gujarat was not an aberration but, as Hindu extremists declared in its wake, the first step in the creation of a Hindu Rashtra, a religious state. In India as elsewhere, present politics are shaped by conceptions of the past. Broadly, there have been two differing descriptions of Indian history. One – the one playing havoc in Gujarat – sees India as a victim of recurring invasions, whether led by Muslim horsemen or European adventurers, Aryan tribes or satellite TV moguls. The other views India as an arena of civilizational encounters, often uncomfortable, between unequal protagonists, which have produced unique and splendid cultural forms (ibid: xi). Engineer (1982) also writes about the communal riots in Gujarat through historical lens and discussed the way financial clashes between the two religious communities triggered the communal riots. He writes that the nation had still not overcome the shock of the Meerut communal riots when there began the serious outbreak of communal violence in Baroda. Gujarat has by now acquired the dubious distinction of being one of the most communal riots-prone states in the country. In Gujarat, Baroda has a history of communal riots. Baroda had gone up in flames in the wake of the riots in Ahmedabad in 1969. In September 1981, communal riots erupted again, taking a toll of 9 lives according to government figures. Baroda had a population of 7.5 lakh according to the 1981 census. Muslims number about 85,000, i.e., about 12 per cent of the total population according to the 1971 census. Muslims of Baroda are divided into six sub-communities, i.e., Dawoodi Bohras (1,200), Alavi Bohras (six to seven thousand), Sulemani Bohras (2,000) and Dudhwala Jamat, Memons and other Muslims (for these three groups separate population figures are not available) (ibid: 1845). He stressed that during the September 1981 riots also the business rivalry between the Muslims and the Kahars had played the main role. It is important to note that 35 per cent of the population of Baroda consists of Marathas as it was once a Maratha state. 52 per cent of the population is that of Gujaratis. Last time as now, upper caste Hindus like Patels, Banias
and Brahmins did not take part in the clashes. Marathas who are generally economically at par with the Muslims have been traditionally the rivals of Muslims. Bhois or Kahars who are concentrated in Navapura and Pani-darwaza (the trouble-prone areas), as pointed out earlier, are engaged in rivalry with Muslims over liquor business and gambling rackets (ibid: 1845).

The interesting point here is that though the region has witnessed extremity of communalisation and state apparatus’s direct involvement in communalisation especially after 1980s, ironically, history provides a complete contrasting picture. For instance, several scholars have discussed about the secular initiatives and progressive social movements for the betterment of deprived sections. For instance, Kothari and Maru (2002) wrote, “Bhils who are semi-tribal, with Bariyas (a Koli caste) middle of the way. Socially, there is great distance among the various caste and lineage groups in the Kshatriya hierarchy, although Rajput hypergamy does permit the daughters of Bariya chiefs to be married into some Rajput families. Economically, barring the well-placed Rajput nobles, most of these castes are poor and landless, some of the Rajput families as destitute as the Bariyas, if not worse” (ibid: 237). Here adivasis also believed themselves to be Rajput but it is different from caste society and Varna system. Because, Kothari and Maru noted that attempts were also made to change traditional behaviour and introduce reforms such as elimination of marriage dowries. The eagerness was kept by organising in each village that was covered a non-official militia which emphasised the marital tradition of the Kshatriya and required to inspire a common sense of organisation and regulation in the Kshatriyas, an otherwise unformed and indifferent mass (ibid: 239, 240).

It is fascinating to appear at this shot at combination of an area whose economic and social formation differed broadly from that of Gujarat, as it brings out the variety of circumstances that support or hold up the growth of a caste association.

They argue that one of the most important purposes of the Kshatriya movement in Gujarat was to bring improvement and promote the Bariyas, Thakardars and Bhils, the lesser castes in the Kshatriya hierarchy. In the Rajputs they took the guide. Such a practice of integration led to two significant grades. Former, the lower castes felt
upgraded and eagerly received Rajput leadership of the movement. Instant, a general lack of economic and political power affected in the lead these different caste groups the need to depend upon statistical power as the only valuable weapon in serious their requirement (ibid: 241). However, Shah (2002) countered that, “such an assertion is, of course, debatable. But it is certainly true that consciousness of Hindu identity has spread in all castes including backward or low castes (including tribals). On the other hand, adivasis or tribals who had traditionally not been part of the chaturvarna system, now call themselves Hindu. They are largely considered by upper-caste Hindus as Ati-Sudras along with Dalits or Scheduled Caste (SCs).” Hardiman (1984) too noted about how adivasis were copted into Hindu-caste structure. He writes that, “Sanskritization is not confined to Hindu castes but also occurs among tribal and semi-tribal groups such as the Bhils of Western India, the Gonds and Oraons of Central India, and the Pahadis of the Himalayas. This usually results in the tribe undergoing Sanskritization claiming to be a caste, and therefore, Hindu’. In the case of the Devi movement it could be argued that in observing new rules of purity such as temperance, vegetarianism and cleanliness the adivasis of south Gujarat were advancing a claim to be accepted as clean castes within the Hindu hierarchy. It can therefore be seen as a dramatic example of the process of tribal sanskritization.” These studies underlined the cultural and religious appropriation of adivasis in Gujarat. In this realm, Thaker’s (1996) response towards Sanskritisation was more critical. She writes that when adivasis came into contact with non-tribal communities, they became sanskrtsised and viewed that “they have improved”. She lamented that instead of adivasis stating that they have changed their cultural practices due to their association with non-adivasis, adivasis view that they have excluded themselves from traditional rituals as those were part of backward tradition. This essentially implied that indictment of the cultural practices of adivasis by adivasis themselves. However, according to her, some of the traditional practices of adivasis are more egalitarian than of non-adivasis. In this connection, she critiqued this acculturation process by highlighting a critical statement made by Jawaharlal Nehru’s while introducing “Panchasheela Yojana” (five principles for the policy) who then critiqued sociologists and anthropologists who advocated and observed acculturation or sanskritisation process. Nehru says, “Schemes for welfare, education, communication,
medical relief are no doubt essential; however, one must always remember that we do not mean to interfere with their way of life, but want to help them to live it. The Government of India is determined to help the tribal people to grow according to their own genius and tradition (ibid: 16).”

Writing about the upliftment of the lower castes and adivasis, Shani (2007) writes that “The Rajputs (Kshatriyas) were descendants of ruling families who had enjoyed political power in the past. During the 1940s, the Kshatriya caste in Gujarat ‘grew’ when the Kshatriya Sabha (association) accepted the backward-caste Kolis into its fold. This decision, which was taken in the context of the expansion of their electoral base, aimed to increase the number of Kshatriyas and thereby advance the group politically. The Kolis are the largest caste group in Gujarat, constituting around 24 per cent of the population. The British categorised the Kolis as a criminal class and in some official publications of Gujarat state into the 1980s they were still described as ‘formerly engaged in roadside robberies and dacoities’. From the end of the nineteenth century, the Kolis attempted to attain Kshatriya status through the census and by imitating Rajput customs.”

Similarly, in recent Dalit uprising in the state against the flogging of Dalits in Una by cow vigilantes from July 2016, Dalit movement was renewed under the leadership of Mevani. He attempted to bring secularisation on one hand and equal access to land and Dalit self-respect on the other. Once again it resurrected Ambedkar’s fundamental question of access to the common property resources, land ownership and self-respect of Dalits.

In addition, social initiatives for the unification of lower caste groups during pre-independence era resonated presently when Madhav Sinh Solanki tried to experiment it through KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims) in 1980s and later young leader like Alpesh Thakor. Nag (2007) describes this aptly that the latter has formed an OBC, ST and SC (OSS) forum which believed to have membership of 6.5 lakhs and showcased how there are not enough jobs being created and all the development is bypassing the poor and underprivileged. Earlier, Madhav Sinh Solanki (an almost
unknown politician during that time and later became chief minister by the state) and
Jinha Bhai Darji (a tailor by caste) did an experiment called KHAM into a vote bank by
providing reservations for jobs and colleges. Nag (2017) writes that the state was under
the grip of the three upper caste communities – Brahmins, Banias and Jian- in the 1970s,
two men plotted a daring experiment. However, these initiatives faced setbacks with anti-
reservation agitations led by upper caste communities especially led by Patels. This point
was already discussed earlier that it was primarily led by Patels who previously became
prosperous as a result of capitalising land reform policy as well as green revolution (use
of modern technology in agriculture) in 1970s. Otherwise, originally, they were village
based small land holders. Once economically well off, they sought to empower their
children through education. But the reservation policies had kicked in, resulting in the
Patels- who not OBCs - were finding it hard to get admission to colleges. This resulted in
massive frustration and anger within the community (Nag 2017). History is repeated
many a times and same course of event was replayed through Patidar’s agitation recently
in 2015 demanding reservation in public sector following economic recession which hit
them badly especially the slow international demand for diamond. Point to be noted here
is that Patidars in 1980s slowly invested their success in agriculture in to other businesses
like owning educational colleges, medical institutes, pharmaceutical business, stock
exchange, and diamond and textile industry. Global economic downfall and their
aspirations once again pressed them to demand job reservation in public sector as a
security which they themselves have abandoned long back.

Prior to these agitations, there was another important protest called Nav Nirman Andolan
which tried to curb corruption in public sector and interestingly many adivasis participated
in it. Bhagat-Ganguly (2014) described the Nav Nirman Andolan (literally, the movement
for constructive reforms; henceforth, the Andolan), that it protested against rise in the
price of food items and corruption issues, and received support from different groups
from all over Gujarat. Within ten weeks, it achieved two political objectives: the
resignation of the Chief Minister Chiman Patel on 9 February 1974 and the dissolution of
the Gujarat Legislative Assembly (henceforth, the Assembly) on 15 March 1974. This
was perhaps the first successful agitation after Independence that ousted an elected
government through extra-parliamentary mobilisation. The Andolan aimed at social reconstruction, but its agenda remained unfulfilled (ibid: 95).

Bhagat-Ganguly (2014) writes that the Andolan acquired importance page in the social and political history of India, and more so of Gujarat, in terms of mass mobilisation and outcome. Gujaratis describe the Andolan as 'swayambhu' (self-initiated) 'lok andolan' (people's movement) with participation of praja (literally, citizens) and janata (the masses). It was the largest collective voice and action by the people of Gujarat to fight against a morally, financially, and politically corrupt state government that did not care for its citizens. The phrase Nav Nirman was coined incidentally in one of the first meetings held at L. D. Engineering College, Ahmedabad, the place from where the Andolan started and organising efforts were begun with the formation of Nav Nirman Samiti with the support of several associations and organisations as collaborators and participants (ibid: 95, 96).

Bhagat-Ganguly (2014) describes that the students got organised and initiated a dialogue with the Chief Minister on the issues of increase in mess bill (due to withdrawal of subsidised ration) and police brutality on students on 8 January 1974. The meeting did not achieve the result desired by the students. So, they gave call for closure of schools and colleges for three days. The 14th August Shramajivi Samiti (an action committee consisting of sixty-two unions of employees belonging to different sectors and government offices) had given a call for bandh on 10 January 1974 against price-rise and corruption. Price rise became an issue of household talk in Gujarat and many groups like the 14th August Shramajivi Samiti, Gujarat University Area Teachers' Association (GUATA), political parties like Swatantra, Congress (Organisation [O]), and Jansangh, and people from different parts of Gujarat joined the Andoian. The political parties, however, organised parallel protest programmes (ibid: 97). Bhagat-Ganguly (2014) writes that in the 73-day Andolan, 310 persons were injured. Officially, 103 deaths were reported, of which 88 were due to police firing. Of the eighty-eight victims of police firing, sixty-one were students and youth, all under 30 years of age. In all, 8,053 persons were arrested under various charges and 184 were arrested under MISA. The police
action included 1,405 rounds of bullets fired, 4,342 tear gas shells thrown, 1,654 lathi and cane charges (ibid: 95).

Bhagat-Ganguly (2014) writes that the point highlighted four important aspects as a vision of the Andolan, the ethical-political rights of the praja. First, the Constitution sanctions elections and the ruling by the majority, but there is no provision for removal of those who once elected betrayed the praja. In the developing countries, there are only two ways to deal with such rulers: military dictatorship or blood-spattering revolution. This Andolan of Gujarat has shown a third path; that is, asking the elected representatives who have lost confidence of the praja to step down. Second, through legal battle, misuse of MISA was questioned and the duty of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly was affirmed. Third, important rights like 'Right to Recall' and 'Right to Information' were articulated. Fourth, students played their role as awakened 'citizens'; they raised ethical and political consciousness among janata (people) especially youth, through protest, which is usually not the norm to express dissent in Gujarati society (ibid: 106). Bhagat-Ganguly (2014) writes that the issues of price rise, inflation, and economic corruption are primarily economic concerns. However, the Andolan made it an ethical and political issue and, as a swayam bhau lok Andolan, it ousted the Chief Minister and the elected representatives (ibid: 109). Shah (1991) lamented this movement for being urban middle class centric and even if this movement did not campaign for the cause of adiavais, college going better off adivasis like Chaudhuris organised demonstrations in tribal villages.

However, these social movements also faced backlash with other religious movements which led the lower caste people to sanskritize and stabilised the prevailing caste hierarchies. Related to this, Shah (2002) discussed about the architect of the Swadhyay sect from Maharashtra has a large following among traditionally low castes such as Machchis, Kharvas, Kolis, Vagharis, Harijans and adivasis in Gujarat. He refers to Machchis and Kharvas, traditionally fisher folk and sailors, as Sagarputra (sons of the sea), adivasis or tribals as Vanvasi (forest-dwellers), and diamond cutters as Ratnakar (jewellers). Incidentally, the BJP also refers to tribals as Vanvasi. A number of judges,
doctors, professors, journalists, engineers and other members of elite sections of society are also his followers (ibid: 300, 301). Another thing he (Shah) noticed about Hindu right wing force that, for VHP, ‘Hindu’ refers to nationality; it is not a mazhab means that the VHP does not used the word dharma, sect or judgment. ‘Those who believe themselves to be Hindus are also Hindus.’ The word Hindu unites four varnas and several castes, and a number of sects, dialects and languages. The theme of unity among the Hindus is repeatedly found in Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the organ of the VHP edited by K.K. Shastry, an ex-president of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, who received the title of VidyaVachaspati (a pre-eminent learned person). So, religion is creating confusion among poor people, adivasi and SC (Schedule Caste). He noted that Hindu radicals’ behaviour seems to be always fearful for the poor. In 1992, BJP supported the demand to give away government land to tribals in the Dangs. Even today Dangi people fight for that land with forest department. The government only spoke to give this land to adivasis but it was remained verbally. People organise movements and force the authorities to bring out acts, but these acts are never implemented. So, of what use are these acts to the people? Out of the confusion over the land holding, forest department employees had beaten up the adivasi people, because the adivasis were cultivating in the forest land. The adivasi people then lodged a written FIR (First Information Report) at the local police station. The police department is never willing to lodge the FIR. So the people themselves write and submit the FIR at police station. However, they never take any action. Forest department is under the jurisdiction of the same government which had promised to give the lands to the adivasis. Adivasi people should assert their right over these lands because land and forest are the source of their livelihood. These social initiatives entail how socio-culturally and economically adivasis were marginalized while trying to mobilize them into Hindu religion and appropriated by the state.

Another conservative religious movement which supported the upper caste ideologies was Swaminarayana movement or Vaishnva movement. It is a Hindu reformist movement which promotes vegetarianism. Tambs-Lyche (1997) writes about the proliferation of Vaishnva movement which completely changed not only food practices among the deprived sections of the people; it also catalysed the lower castes emulating
the practices of merchants rather than Kshyatriyas. “Hinduism in Saurashtra is not a unitary phenomenon. Its constituent elements may be interpreted to form a ‘unity in diversity’ – view held particularly by Brahmins in the traditional set – up, but, on the regional level, Hinduism tends to dissolve into several mutually conflicting sub-systems. The chief opposition, here, parallels the structure of power and economic relations; it divides the merchants from most other communities. Thus there is a structural contradiction between rulers and merchants, parties which are nevertheless dependent on each other in forming traditional Saurashtrian society. Behind the rulers stand the rural, agricultural population, in an alliance known here as the tertansali or ‘thirteen castes’. The opposition between merchants and rulers, then, is more than just a conflict between the elite; it integrates the rulers with ‘the people’ and isolates the merchants from them. Later, sectarian Vaishnavism–especially the Swaminarayana movement – draw the masses away from the religion of their landlords towards the vegetarian and non-violent attitudes of the merchant groups (ibid: 10). Following independence, the merchant and Swaminarayana view came to stand for modernity as against tradition, enlightenment versus obscurantism, democracy and land reform as opposed to the old powers of the land. With the end of princely rule, the values and ideas of merchants – in effect, of the bourgeoisie – came to dominate modern Saurashtra. Yet perhaps the trend has turned, as elements of the traditional pattern are now used to legitimize the regional conception of the new fundamentalism.

Likewise, Nag (2017) writes about Swaminarayana Sampradaya. The Patel community which is highly concentrated in Saurashtra has traditionally been influenced by the Swaminarayana Sampraday. Once the radical Hindu party came to power in the state (with the support of upper castes and Patels) it began promoting vegetarianism as a matter of state policy. Non-vegetarian food was banned from official functions and the Khansmas at circuit houses like the one in Junagarh which was run under the guidance of a nawab pre-1948 found themselves unwanted. In similar vein, the influence of Swaminarayana sect spread among adivasis of Gujarat and particularly Kunkanas too became vegetarians.
Another thing Tambs-Lyche (1997) wrote is an analysis of tradition in Saurashtra, that in Rajasthan, traditional political institutions were allowed to continue here even after independence. The princely states of Saurashtra are among the last extant examples, and thus most accessible to us, of traditional Hindu states (ibid: 9). He pointed out that, political domination was effected by a combined control over fortresses-the Uparkot in Juagadh was the most formidable-and over agricultural land, from which most of the revenue came. War was an integral part of the political system. In the towns, protected by fortresses, trade and manufacture formed an additional, and important, source of revenue (ibid: 13). He analysed the changing forms of society in the peninsula as a shifting balance of forces; the opposition between rulers and merchants, between town and country. These oppositions involve a cultural discourse, a conflict of values and religious forms of interest groups – ‘estates’ as I shall call them- have, to a considerable degree, been continuous throughout history. This basically Weberian approach is used to analyse the caste system of Saurashtra, which emerges not as an ordered hierarchy, but as a scene for competition and discourse. We may now return to the present. If caste is, indeed, less a ‘system’ in itself than a set of rules guiding interest groups in their cultural, economic and political competition, the idea of a ‘return’ to the ideal Hindu state should remain a dream. Politics in such a society should aim, rather, at creating as far as possible equitable rules of competition within a basically neutralor, to use the current term-secular framework (ibid: 15).

Another movement which tried to bring cultural reform among adivasis and consequently, cultutral alienation is Devi movement. Scholars like Hardiman (1984) have written about social movement like Devi movement during colonial period which affected adivasis. However, he equally, pointed out how Dangs of Gujarat was less affected by the social reform process or resisted Devi movement which was essentially trying to co-opt adivasis into Brahmincal Hinduism by banning the consumption of liquor. At another level, he also described how adivasis of Dangs used this movement to challenge the upper caste merchantile community’s dominance. Hardiman (1984) pointed out that, the Devi movement of south Gujarat had many features in common with tribal movements in other parts of India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
There are cases of such movements among the Bhils of east and north-east Gujarat, among the Bhils of north-west Maharashtra, among the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh and UP, among the Oraons, Santals and Bhumij of Bihar, and among the Khonds of Orissa. In these areas movements with similar programmes swept through the tribal villages with surprising speed and force. They were relatively peaceful and often had a lasting effect. There were in addition many more violent movements involving adivasis, such as that of Birsa Munda, which incorporated programmes of social reform (ibid: 198, 199).

Hardiman observed that this movement did not however start in the Ranimahals of south Gujarat, but in the coastal villages of Bassein, just to the north of Bombay city. He observed that early in the year 1922 the Mangela Koli fisherfolk were hit by an epidemic of smallpox. They believed this epidemic to have been caused by a goddess who had therefore to be propitiated. Ceremonies were held at which Mangela Koli women became possessed by the deity. Through these mediums, she made it known to the community that she would be satisfied only if they gave up meat, fish, liquor and toddy for a limited period. The Mangela Kolis followed this advice. The women who were possessed were known as ‘salahbai’, meaning ‘woman (bai) who gave advice (salah)’. This propitiatory movement spread fast up the coast northwards to other fishing villages in Thana district, Daman and then Surat district. From the coastal villages of Daman, Pardi and Valsad talukas it spread to the Dholiya adivasi villages of the interior. By this time the goddess herself had come to be known as ‘Salahbai’ and, as was the custom with adivasis, both men and women were becoming possessed. During this stage the cult spread comparatively slowly, as the ceremonies of possession took place in people’s houses and the attendance was small.

Hardiman pointed out that, in the Dangs the Devi movement underwent an important change. Until then it had been conducted in a low key and there had been nothing in it which could be perceived as a challenge to the local status quo. In the Dangs, groups of villages began to attend the meetings en masse, so that forest officials began to find it hard to obtain labour for the felling and transport of timber. The movement became better organized, with Dangi shamans, known as gaulas, carrying it from one group of villages
to another. Many Dangi adivasis stopped drinking liquor so that the local Parsis were soon complaining to the authorities about a serious fall in sales and profits. From the Dangs, the gaulas themselves carried the movement into Khandesh in the north-east and into Songadh taluka in the north-west. The first Devi meetings in these areas were organized by Dangigaulas. But after going a certain distance they turned back, leaving the movement to spread of its own accord. In Khandesh it did not go beyond the area covered by the gaulas, but in the Ranimahals of south Gujarat it gathered momentum enough to spread westwards right up to the Arabian Sea (ibid: 209).

Thus, his analysis of the Devi movement can thus be seen as a landmark in the struggle between the adivasis of south Gujarat and their exploiters. However, at the same time, it represented a stage in the growth of a class of richer peasants within the adivasi community. This process had already begun before the Devi movement but it was given a boost by the movement itself, for it helped the more substantial adivasis to achieve both economic independence and respectability within Gujarat society. Since then as the Parsis have declined, so have the richer adivasi peasants become one of the leading exploitative groups within the Ranimahals. There is no need therefore to romanticize this movement. One should rather recognize it for what it was — on the one hand a great liberation but on the other a movement which laid the foundations for new forms of exploitation (ibid: 230).

In the nutshell, this section underlined that despite Gujarat recently being promoted as the poster-boy of growth, there is wide social inequality and pauperization which growth account hides. Simultaneously, it sketched the various social movements propagated by various communities for social equality and secularization such as Kshatriya Sabha, KHAM in Gujarat in order to improve and promote the Bariyas, Thakardars and Bhils, the lesser castes in the Kshatriya fold. However, there were also backlashes in the form of interdiction of multifarious policies by the state during pre-Independence as well as post-Independence such as abolition of Jamindari system, introduction of Indian Forest Act 1878 (which will be discussed in the next section of the chapter) and amendment of Industrial Dispute Act which benefited the Patidars to acquire land in adivasi area and
criminalised the Bhils and decimated their claim to the Forest resources on the other as well as parallel conservative religious movements like Swaminarayana movement, anti-reservation movement which created setbacks and pre-existing social inequalities remain intact. Secondly, these policies and social movements - progressive or regressive not only pauperized adivasis but also subordinated them culturally by assimilating them forcefully through Sankstrtisation process.

Part: III

Politico-Economic Condition of Dangs

This section focuses on the politico-economy of Dangs and in this connection it outlines the social conditions of adivasis in general and particularly doubles marginalization of adivasis women. In this direction, it depicts how on one hand, adivasis are both included and excluded by dominant sections and state machineries on the other. As mentioned earlier, different regions of Gujarat had distinct history and it too shaped the specific social and political relations between various groups. For this purpose, it is worthwhile to discuss in detail about specific politico-economic history of Dangs and the way it placed adivasis at disadvantage.

The Dangs have an area of 1,764 km. As per the Planning Commission, the Dangs is the most economically distressed district out of 640 districts in India [Census 2011]. Similarly, it is the only district of the state which does not house any major industry unlike other districts. Nevertheless, in this region and mainly adivasis living here succeeded in maintaining a position of semi-independence well into the nineteenth century. Only gradually were they subjugated as share croppers and tenants by penetrating caste Hindus (Breman 1991: 399). Consequently, in this region tribal emancipation movements also arose.

The main economy of the region is drawn from agriculture and natural resources from the Forest and handicraft business. However, the prospect from agriculture dwindled when British Government introduced Forest Act i.e. Indian Forest Act 1878 to protect the forest
from environmental degradation due to involvement of *adivasis* in slashes and burn cultivation during 19th century. Through this Act, Forest was brought under the control of the state- institutionalisation of Forest Department, which was previously under the control of the local *adivasis*. Consequently, if *adivasis* are seen in the Forest they were arrested or were beaten. This Act is considered by local *adivasis* as a way not only to criminalise and deprive them from their source of livelihoods but also facilitated the non-*adivasis* to control and exploit the forest for their advantage.

Bayly (1999) elaborates in addition how Criminal Tribes Act demonised the *adivasis* and benefited Patidars in acquiring land. She writes that the superior Gujarati tillers who had come to call themselves Patidars were yet another broad regional cultivating group who made much of the kin ties and prestigious ritual solidarities of *jati*. An early stage in this process can be seen in the success of those Patidar cash-crop farmers who came to dominate much of southern Gujarat’s rich cotton-growing land during the later nineteenth century. This they achieved at the expense of dependent labouring populations; the colonial officials had furthered their interests by applying the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Acts to the region’s so-called predator groups, thus forcibly transforming them into a tied labour pool for ‘worthy’ cultivators. It was these Patidar landowners’ descendants who achieved renown as ‘peasant’ nationalists by attaching themselves to the Indian National Congress’s first great campaigns of rural non-cooperation, the Kheda agitation of 1918 and the Bardoli satyagraha (civil protests) of 1921 and 1928 (ibid: 243). The fall out of these policies can be linked to association of *adivasis* of Dangs as subjugated labourers in sugarcane fields owned by Patels in recent times under *Koyta* system.

Hardiman (1984) too writes about the economic exploitation of *adivasis* of Dangs by non-*adivasis* especially Baniyas, Parsis and Brahmans during colonial period through liquor and money lending business. He writes that, 88 (77 percent) of the families were either landless or held farms below this acreage. It is likely therefore that the large majority of the *adivasis* were living in conditions of considerable poverty. We can conclude that not only were they poor, but also that by the 1930s there was a fair degree
of differentiation in the villages. However, the differentiation was a good deal less extreme than in the non-tribal villages of south Gujarat in which there were many bonded labourers working for high caste landowners. Despite these inequalities there was little exploitation of one _adivasi_ by another. The worst exploitation was carried out by high caste moneylenders and Parsi liquor dealers. The colonial bureaucracy also took its share of the fruits of the _adivasi_’s labour, either through taxation or through forced labour and illegal levies. Policemen, revenue, excise and forest officials all took their cut. The money lenders were mostly Vaniyas, Parsis and Brahmans. Vaniyas and Brahmans lived in the taluka headquarter towns. They lent their money either from their houses in the towns or from the weekly markets (_haats_) held at convenient centres throughout the _adivasi_ tracts. Parsis, who tended to combine money lending with liquor dealing, normally lived in the larger tribal villages. In these villages they had an exclusive right to sell liquor (ibid: 201).

Hardiman (1984) observes that, they (upper caste people) advanced liquor and toddy throughout the year, being repaid at greatly inflated rates in grain at harvest time. Landless _adivasis_ paid back their debts by labouring in the fields of the Parsis. There are numerous accounts of the heavy-handed methods used by the latter to control the _adivasis_. Besides taking labour, they also took sexual advantage of _adivasi_ women. The tribal poor lived in constant fear. Any protest was met with a swift beating by the Parsi or his resident strongmen. Local officials and the police invariably took the side of the Parsis (ibid: 202). Another point, he highlights was the profits made from money lending and liquor selling was invested to a large extent in land. Before the land revenue settlements of the 1860s the _adivasis_ had used land in the customary manner of shifting the area of cultivation from year to year. They did not think of themselves as owners of individual plots of land. During the 1860s however the tribal peasantry of south Gujarat was given ownership rights on the land which it happened to be cultivating at the time and for the first time land became a marketable commodity. Because they lacked political weight and were relatively docile (for they had never before been forced to defend their land), the _adivasis_ were soon being deprived of their new proprietary rights by
moneylenders and liquor dealers, and turned into tenants who, meek as they were, could be exploited with distressing ease (ibid: 204).

In this connection, Teltumbde (2011) brought an interesting point with regard to the acquisition of lands – agricultural lands by non-**adivasis** namely Patels in Dangs through the process of abolition of Zamindari system in the climate of Independence of India. Though this policy from the outset looked like benefiting the tenants or lower castes, but in actual terms it did not benefit the most backward sections like **Dalits** and **adivasis** of Gujarat. Instead the middle level peasant castes too the advantage of this policy. He argues (2011)

“At the time of transfer of power in 1947, landownership was virtually concentrated in the hands of a few landlords, who were the erstwhile feudal lords. The ethos of the freedom struggle led the new rules to announce policies like abolition of Zamindari and redistribution of surplus land to the tillers. It had a salutary impact in calming and confusing radical peasant movements that demanded land reforms. The glorious Telangana struggle, for instance, was called off by the communists precisely because of these policy announcements, pushing them onto the parliamentary path that, they mistakenly thought, would reach their cherished goal of revolution. Land reforms did take place but in a calibrated and truncated manner. Some amount of land was taken from the upper caste feudal lords and distributed among the middle caste tenants. No one fully comprehended the farreaching consequences of this innocuous development, which would change the basic complexion of rural India. The capitalist strategy of green revolution immediately following it led to the enrichment of these middle castes, who leveraged the economic gain to establish their hegemony over most spheres of national life (ibid: 10).”

“Speaking of Gujarat, U N Dhebar, the chief minister of the then Saurashtra state, had enacted the Saurashtra Land Reforms Act, 1952, giving occupancy rights to 55,000 tenant cultivators over 12 lakh acres of land, out of 29 lakh acres held by girasdars, spread over 1,726 villages, the balance being left for their
personal cultivation. Girasdars were mainly upper caste kshatriyas, known as darbars, literally meaning rulers. Tenant cultivators were mainly Patels by caste, who became the owners of this land. The Patels enriched themselves by undertaking massive cash crop cultivation like groundnut, cotton, cumin and later graduating to setting up cotton ginning, oil mills, and other industries. This has been the evolution of the Saurashtra Patel lobby, euphemistically known as telia rajas (oil kings), who came to occupy the dominant position in the politics of Gujarat. With their social capital and state backing, they went on acquiring huge tracts of agricultural lands all over the state, most notably in the tribal belt of south Gujarat. Laws were suitably amended to facilitate this acquisition. There were two of the most notable changes in the law. One was the taking away of the eight km limit for an agriculturist to own agricultural land away from his residence, thereby allowing absentee landlordism. The second was changing the order of priorities from Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) to original land- lords and then others for the right to cultivate government surplus land (ibid: 10, 11).”

Social and political relations between various groups in Ahmedabad were informed by the distinct history of land-ownership and land reforms in the different regions of Gujarat (Shani 2007). The two regions – British Gujarat or erstwhile Bombay Presidency and formerly princely states of Saurashtra- differed significantly in their social hierarchical structure and relations. Shani (2007) traced how Patels in both the regions took advantage of land reform policies and Kolis and Bhils and dalits were the major losers in this. In British Gujarat, the Patels began gaining dominance when the Maratha rule appointed many of them as revenue collectors (Shani 2007). Later, the British gave them lands in what were then backward areas. Many Patels bought more lands from Kolis at throwaway prices under distress sales during the 1899 famine. It is worthwhile to mention that the second largest and particularly influential caste group in Gujarat is the Patidars (contemporarily known as Patels), who constitute 12 percent of the population. According to Hindu Law they are Shudras, the fourth in the caste hierarchy. Until the nineteenth century they were also considered to be a low caste, but subsequently the
Patidars gradually strengthened their social and economic position and attained higher caste status. Mainly as a result of land policies during British rule they were transformed from agricultural cultivators (Kanbis) into a powerful land-owning group and also became dominant among the professional classes. The Ahmedabad District Gazetteer described the group as an enterprising community which ‘earned their status, wealth and power by ability and tactful behaviour’. The Patels became politically dominant in Ahmedabad and well entrenched in the Congress Party under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel. The Patels are divided into two main groups, Leva Patel and Kadva Patel, the former being considered higher in the status hierarchy (Shani 2007).

Land reforms in the area after independence in the late 1940s and early 1950s, which aimed to transfer ownership rights to the tenants, were not effectively implemented. The Patels, who dominated the Congress Party at that time, utilised their links with the government in order to bypass the reform acts and to keep their lands. A large number of tenants belonging to the upper and intermediate castes were able to acquire land from absentee caste-fellow landowners who had moved to urban areas. Lower-caste tenants rarely gained land on the basis of high-caste absentee from their lands. Thus, hostile relations prevailed between the Patels and the Kolis in British Gujarat. The land reforms in the area after independence failed and reinforced social inequalities and animosities between the groups. Different social relations predominated in Saurashtra. Rajputs were the main land-owning class, oppressing the economically backward Patels and Kolis. The government rigorously implemented the land reforms in this area in order to transfer the rights over the land from the former princely states. With the formation of the Union of Saurashtra in 1950, the Indian government enacted the Girasdari Abolition Act for the uprooting of absentee landlords and granted occupancy rights to the tenants. The main beneficiaries of the reforms in Saurashtra were the Patel cultivators. Consequently, land reforms in this area yielded a change in the local power structure. The Rajput landowners lost lands to the generally poorer Patels. The latter suddenly attained ownership over land and gradually became economically and politically influential. Land reform policies in Gujarat, therefore, resulted in the empowerment of Patels in both regions of the state (Shani 2007).
With the history of oppression, Dangs too became the epicentre of revolutions and social movements. Skaria (1996) writes that in 1868, the *adivasis* of Panchmahals rebelled against the British and the small states in the region. A police outpost was sacked, several small places were looted. British troops were sent to quell the rebellion. The final showdown between the poorly-equipped rebels and well-trained colonial troops occurred at a hillside where the messianic leader of the movement was encamped along with several thousand Bhils and Naikdas. Colonial troops had already taken up positions nearby. The scene was set for the confrontation (ibid: 13, 14).

Skaria writes about the Satipati movement which is very popular amongst the *adivasis* of Maharashtra and Gujarat, including the Dangs, since the fifties. Followers of the movement, whose numbers may be as high as 100,000, refuse to recognize the Indian Government and claim that the leader of the movement, Keshrising Kuver, is the real government. In the past, they have sometimes refused to pay revenue to the government or obey Forest Department laws, questioning the legitimacy of the government to impose laws or demand taxes. They are also very hostile to non-*adivasi* outsiders, who have emerged during the last century as an exploitative oppressive dominant group. Keshrising Kuver, or Dada as he is called, is a strikingly charismatic *adivasi* in his eighties or early nineties. The arguments advanced by him and his followers constitute a remarkably elaborate and complex cosmology and ideology of subalternity. Dada is prolific in his writings, and these form a central element of the movement. From the village where he is based, some printed books by him together with others consisting of photocopies of his various handwritten reflections, may be bought. A significant number of his followers have copies of these books (ibid: 57, 58). But there are profound paradoxes involved here. First, the bulk of the followers who buy the books are non-literate. So we are confronted with the question of why they buy it, and what they do with it. Second, almost like Joria Bhagat’s document, his writings seem at first sight to be nonsensical. By this, I mean that the writing is not used to convey ideas in the way we are taught to in the process of being made literate. Having stayed with him for some time, we have learnt to
recognize some specific words or symbols, used in ways to those unfamiliar with the vocabulary of the movement (ibid: 58).

Recently the amendment in the Act i.e. New Forest Act in 2006 called Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers - Recognition of Forest Rights - Act, 2006 was enacted which sought to provide *adivasis* their right to use the Forest and prevented outsiders to exploit it. Though this was a watershed/historic moment for the *adivasis*, however, it is observed that in actuality very few *adivasis* were allowed in reality to use Forest Land for cultivation and habitat. My own experience which I mentioned in the second chapter brings out the sordid story where Forest officials subvert the Act by mobilising few *adivasis* (primarily the better of Kunkanas) through creating *Van Samiti* (Forest Association). Even if the new Act aimed to provide *adivasis* their right to use the Forest resources, this extra judicious entities like *Van Samiti* actually prevent *adivasis* (landless *adivasis* like Vasavas and Bhils) from using it through the allegation of destroying Forest. This is followed by police firing and those who protest by citing the constitutional amendment, ether they are charged under false cases or some cases offered compensation. This aspect not only demonstrates the poor implementation of the Act but also the class inequality and internal differences that exist among *adivasis*. Related to this Shah (1991) argues that political thought and performance overlook the growing economic separation within and between tribes. All the tribes are clustered into one group described as Schedule Tribes by the Indian Constitution. This actually ignores differentiations among tribes, and also legitimizes a tribe as tribe with distinct social and cultural characteristics (ibid: 289). Caste systems affect *adivasis* too and they are divided over different sect.

Besides economic disparity, majoritarian state slowly planted communal tension in the region which was otherwise saw peaceful coexistence of *adivasis* practicing diverse religions. For instance, in Dangs, *adivasis* follow Hinduism, Islam (Sufism), Christianity, etc. Prakash (2009) while discussing about communal violence perpetrated by the majoritarian government in the state argued that many churches in Dangs were attacked and innocent *adivasis* were reconverted into Hindu fold, pitted against the Christians and
Muslims. Whereas in another scenario, the same adivasis were excluded from deriving any benefits from the economic prosperity of the state. He writes, “Another thing, the killing of tribals by the police, whilst the former were demanding their rights, is an indicator of the marginalization of this important segment of society. A little over two years ago, we observed the centenary of Satyagraha, when in 1906; Mahatma Gandhi launched his campaign of non-violence with courage and determination, to hit brute force with the powerful weapon of truth. Political parties must be challenged in their attempt to divide people in the name of religion. Civil society, intellectuals, and celebrities, have too long remained on the sidelines. There must be a mass movement that comes out and “speaks truth to power” (ibid: 116).”

Prakash (2009) pointed out that, the other hand; there is a picture of an arrogant flag waving Gujarat which has given itself titles such as “Vibrant”, “Development” and “Progressive”. There are challenges, several of them. Consistent attacks and demonization of minority communities, very specially the Muslims and the Christians, have divided and polarized the state in a manner which today seems beyond repair. In some areas, adivasis and Dalits were used very effectively in the arson and looting of Muslim homes and establishments. The build-up to this victory was gradual, but efficiently, planned- that Gujarat was bound to become the laboratory for the Hindutva ideology was clear as daylight (ibid: 110-112).

He continues to argue, governance or the needs of the people were never their top priority (and never will be) so they chose a soft target-the Christians. With frightening regularity from March 1998 onwards, Christians, and their institutions, were attacked. A huge church which was under construction was pulled down in Ahmedabad city by the Sangh Parivar mob. Several other churches all over the Dangs and other parts of south Gujarat were attacked or burnt in December 1998 and January 1999. (However, in February 2006, a huge Hindu revival program called the Shabri Kumbh Mela (SKM) was organized be some fundamentalist groups in the Dangs which was aimed solely against the Christians.) It is also a clear indication that “communalism” has been mainstreamed and institutionalized in Gujarat. Attacks on Christians in Gujarat and so called
gharvapasi programs happen with frightening regularity just before Christmas by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) or Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). In March 2003, Gujarat passed its Freedom of Religion Act which more or less prohibits any person from changing his or her faith. The rules to govern the implementation of this Act were finally promulgated on April 1, 2008 (ibid: 113-115).

Echoing this, Lobo (2002) wrote, during 1997-1999 the Sangh Parivar relentlessly perpetrated atrocities on adivasi Christians of South Gujarat. A list of these atrocities, such as burning of churches, prayer halls, beating up adivasi Christians, performing forcible purification (‘shuddhikaran’) ceremony and other forms of harassments, etc, are documented. Of the 51 instances of atrocities, 41 took place in the Dangs, nine in Surat and one in Valsad districts of south Gujarat. Of 41 atrocities in Dangs, 24 were to do with burning of churches and prayer halls, eight with beatings, and four of various kinds of harassment. Of nine instances in Surat district four had to do with burning churches, two with beatings and three with other forms of harassments. When adivasi Christians were in intense anguish there came the prime minister of India to Dangs, not to console the victims of atrocities but to score a point for the Sangh Parivar saying a national debate on conversions was the need of the hour (ibid: 4845, 4846). In a relatively peaceful south Gujarat adivasi area these atrocities shook the people. They said, “Baharthi loko aveene dhamal kare chhe, ame to shantithi raheta hata” (outsiders have come and created disturbances when we were living in peace). It must be noted that these atrocities were preceded by the certain activities of Sangh Parivar in the adivasi areas (ibid: 4846).

Kanungo and Joshi (2009) too notes about the reinvention of Shabri, a marginal adivasi woman in Ramayan in Dangs by Sangh Parivara, particularly by Aseemanand in order to disseminate and promote Hinduism among adivasis and mobilise them against conversion to Christianity. One interesting point made by the authors is that consequently, a new elite has emerged among the adivasis, particularlry among the educated and economically prosperous elite prefers not to be called either adivasi or Vanavasi, preferring to be part of the mainstream Hindu identity rather than sticking to its
traditional tribal identity. This elite has been at the forefront of the Hinduization campaign.

**Exploitative Koyta System: Inducement for Underage Marriage and Heavy Work Burden for Adolescent Girls**

Besides, using *adivasis* in communal project while diverting their attention from their real issues like land and employment, other scholars like Varghese (1999) explains the politico-economic structure that traps *adivasis* into exploitation and relatively endangered *adivasi* women rather than the men. In order to understand this, we need to go deeper into the economic distress triggered due to exploitative political economic system and how it affected the social relations and subsequently the reproductive health risks.

According to the 2011 Census data on Marital Status of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes which was released on July 28, 2011 by Ahmedabad news, there were over 35,000 children who were married when they were between 10 years and 14 years of age. The instances of child marriages, as per this data, is higher among Scheduled Tribes where 25,508 persons in the 10-14 year age group are married (9,878 Males and 15,630 females). Among them 1009 are widowed, 526 are separated and 285 are divorced.

While the problem seems to be more widespread in the rural areas of Gujarat, the 2011 Census figures show that the issue is more serious in some of the local tribes like Bhils, Dhodia, Halpati, Gamit, Kunkana, Nayaka, Rathawa and Varli. For instance, among Bhils - who constitute 40 percent of the total tribal population of the state who largely reside on “east belt” stretching from Banaskantha in the North to Dangs in the South - the number of married persons in this age group is over 11,500.

Reacting to these trends, many upper caste sociologists quoted that the presence of many married persons in this age bracket is in violation of the Prohibition of the Child Marriage Act, 2006, which lays down the minimum age for marriage for all Indian citizens, as 21 years for men and 18 years for women. “It is surprising to know that there are so many married tribals in this age bracket in Gujarat. Normally, some of the tribals of the state,
especially in the southern parts, tend to get married when they are between 16-18 years,” said Satyakam Joshi, senior sociologist and director of Centre for Social Studies, a Surat-based autonomous social science research institute supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the government of Gujarat. My counter point to the above quote is that, since *adivasis* economic condition is very poor, early marriage and migrations become the coping mechanisms to increase income as women join their young spouse as pair while working outside. This aspect has been well encapsulated by Varghese’s study which is discussed in the fifth chapter. So, *adivasis* marry early in order to help their own family from economic crisis. But, sociologists over look this aspect. “The Census figures show that the state government and the society at large have not been able to root out the problem of child marriages among STs and SCs. Though the tribals - who constitute 15 percent of the state’s total population - are used extensively as labour in development activities of the state, education and modern intervention still elude them,” says Dr Gaurang Jani, sociologist and senior lecturer at Department of Sociology, Gujarat University.

However, what is disturbing about the analysis and remark is that instead of searching for external and politico-economic explanations, sociologists provide internal factors like cultural attitude and backwardness among the tribals as the cause of the underage marriage. However, field interactions with men and women in *adivasi* society provided another interesting angle. In the *adivasi* society, it is common to find children helping parents for their livelihood in the field. Perhaps, in the Dangs approximately 80-85 % of

---

7Meanwhile, the Census figures also reveal that among the Scheduled Castes in Gujarat, there are 9,930 married persons (3,945 males and 5,985 females) in the age group of 10-14 years. Of these, 469 are widowed, 197 are separated and 104 divorced. Surprisingly, there are more number of married SC teenagers (5,523) in the urban areas compared to the rural (4,407), while child marriages seem to be more prevalent among SCs like Bhangi, Valmiki and Vankar. The figures of child marriages in Gujarat are much higher if the next age bracket of 15-19 years is taken into consideration, especially for males, whose marriageable age is 21 years. There are over 37,000 married males among the ST population; while there are over 10,000 SC married males in the age group of 15-19 years. Talking about the trend where child marriages are seen among SCs living in urban areas, Jani (sociologist and senior lecturer at Department of Sociology, Gujarat University) says, “In the last couple of decades, a number of SCs groups have migrated to urban centres. However, they still remain strongly rooted to their caste equations. Most of them still strictly marry within their sub-caste and face a lot of social pressures to get married early.”
population goes for child marriage i.e. age group of 10 to 16. Among the Bhil *adivasis*,
early marriage is not part of cultural attitude rather it is strategized in order to overcome
economic insecurity where state fails to provide aid to disempowered people. Most of
Bhils work in sugar cane field and other labour work for few months. One of the pre-
requisites for work is pair system under which payment is made. So, for the pauperised
Bhils, marriage entails pairing which facilitate them to earn money and help family for
maintenances. Varghese discussed about the *Koyta* system under which *adivasis* from
Dangs are employed through a *Mukkaddam* and are trapped into exploitative chain. In
this system, not only there is low wage and higher working hours but also local *adivasis*
end up into a debt system. The details of this system are also elaborated through field
insights in the next chapter.

Exploitative economic system is not new to post-independent period or post-liberalisation
period. During colonial period too this system and simultaneously people’s resistance can
be traced. For instance, Hardiman (1987) wrote that, after the rains had failed in the
Poshina area of Gujarat one year, the Bhil peasantry gathered together with their bows
and arrows and other weapons and went in a procession to the town of Poshina. Standing
in front of the houses of the *shahukars* they shouted aggressively to them to come out.
The *shahukars*, all Jain *Vaniyas*, feared their houses might be sacked and so came out.
The Bhils ordered each *Vaniya* head of house to take an earthen pot full of water and
place it on his head. The Bhils then took the *shahukars* in a procession, dancing and
shouting as they went. At a fixed spot the *shahukars* were made to stand in a row with the
waterpots on their heads. The Bhils shot arrows at the pots, smashing them and drenching
the *shahukars* with water. The Bhils took this action because they believed that the
*shahukars* were a cunning people who through their craft were able to control the forces
of nature. The *shahukars* had stopped the rain so as to cause a dearth and consequent
inflation of prices to their advantage. By smashing the pots with their arrows and freeing
the water rain within a day or two. The *shahukars* were thus unlikely to again try to stop
the rain or attempt to profiteer from the drought-for a time at least (ibid: 2).
He pointed out some of the essential features of the relationship between the Bhils and their *shahukars*. Firstly, it reveals the power which the *shahukars* exercised over the Bhils, a power so great that they were believed to be able even to control the rain. The *shahukars* did indeed dominate the lives of the Bhils. Each year, in the long dry months before the monsoon, the Bhils depended for their survival on hand-outs of food grains from the *shahukars*. When the rains came they had to borrow seed-grain to sow their fields. After the harvest they paid their taxes from money given to them by the *shahukars*. Their marriages, funerals and festivities were financed by the *shahukars*. In return the Bhils handed over the lion’s share of the crop at harvest time (ibid: 2-3).

He wrote, for many observers such behaviour has presented a paradox. Why in the normal run of events have the Bhils allowed themselves to be so exploited by the *shahukars* when they could have been commonly advanced, which we many label respectively as ‘evolutionist’ and ‘culturalist’. In the evolutionist explanation the Bhils are seen as primitives who cannot grasp the intricacies of modern social and economic organization and thus have to rely on intermediaries who can too easily exploit them. From such a viewpoint the solution is to provide education so that the Bhils can be raised from a state of ‘barbarity’ to ‘civilization’. Once educated, it is argued, they will be able to resist the wiles of the *shahukars*. Although characteristic of bourgeois thinking, such beliefs are found amongst certain Marxists who maintain that groups such as the Bhils lack the maturity of understanding needed to struggle with success against their exploiters. Again it is believed that education— in this case by socialist cadres – will enlighten the subordinate group as to their true interests. Such thinking is tainted with an elitism which sets itself up to be a judge of what is best for the lower classes (ibid: 3-4).

He argues that the relationship between the Bhils and the *shahukars* was formed out of a particular history which brought the egalitarian society of the Bhils into a close economic relationship with the hierarchical society of the *shahukars* without changing in a fundamental manner the internal social organization of either. The Bhils rose and looted the *shahukar’s* shops, carrying away large amounts of grain. They rose; it was said, not
because they were starving, but because the *shahukars* had acted in a morally unacceptable manner.

Hardiman (1987) pointed out that the Bhils therefore had a healthy respect for the powers of the *shahukars*, which they invested, as they did all power, with magical qualities. This power was, however, by no means unchallengeable. The action taken by the Bhils of Poshina against the Vaniyas showed that they believed that it was possible to break their spells. Despite this respect which the Bhils had for the power of the *shahukars*, they did not accept their moral hegemony. Far from internalizing the values of the dominant class, the Bhils maintained their distance, believing strongly in the superiority of their culture and way of life. They did not accept the religion of the *shahukars*, having for the most part their own deities and refusing to accept the sanctity of Brahmins. They did not allow the *shahukars* any control over their internal social and political affairs. What we see here are two systems of social organization and morality interacting and coming into occasional conflict without the one exercising moral hegemony over the other. The one world, of the *shahukars*, was characterized by physical concentration in the towns of eastern Gujarat; the other, of the region. The main occupation of the Bhils is agriculture and labour. They stick to these two forms of occupation (ibid: 23, 25).

Besides this, in the realm of education too, there is not much improvement among the *adivasis* of Dangs. Skaria (1996) writes that, not too many people in nineteenth or early twentieth-century Dangs could read or write. According to oral traditions, there were formerly semi-formalized indigenous systems of education for learning the rituals required to be a bhagat—a man of medicine and supernatural skills. But literacy was not a feature of these systems; only with the opening of schools on Western lines did literacy begin to be imparted. The first of these was set up by missionaries in 1904. By 1915, schools had been opened in at least seven other villages attended by around 94 children. Things were not all that different even by 1951, when around 5 per cent of the population was literate. For ordinary Bhils or Kunkana, literacy was almost never required, nor was there much necessity for encounters with the literate world. Rights to hunting, fishing, foraging, shifting cultivation, or land revenue were organized not by written documents
but around popular oral knowledge of territorial authority (ibid: 20-21). Kanungo and Joshi (2009) too pointed out the role played by catholic missionaries in the field of education, health care and women’s empowerment. They write that at present in Dangs, they run four primary schools, one secondary school and some medical dispensaries in Dangs.

Another point he wrote, some Kunkana jagirdars were important figures or advisers in the retinue of Bhils chiefs. Most, however, were outside the circle of bhauband, and received jagirs for favours such as making a loan of grain or money to a chief when he was in particular need of it. Even kunkana advisers, usually Patils, acquired their role through their individual abilities rather than family standing. In this sense, all Kunkanas were less part of the community of chiefly obligations than the Bhil bhauband. Their relative marginality made written deeds more important. The deeds could become a resource in maintaining the fragile consensus necessary for continuing grants. In consequence, they asked for written grants affixed with a chief’s seal, and preserved these documents better than the Bhils. Within the Dangs, thus, a title deed was evidence of the marginality of the land-grant and its holder in the Bhil polity (ibid: 21, 22).

**Summary:**

The first section discussed the history of the contested nature of the state formation whereas, the second section discussed about the paradoxes of the Gujarat Model of development which brought growth and benefited the dominant sections of the society while simultaneously worsened the conditions of the historically subjugated community. This section also explained the way Hindu radicalism too contributed in worsening the lives of deprived communities even though secularization projects and upliftment of weaker sections were taken up by social movements such as Kshyatriya Sbha and KHAM recently. Another interesting dimension is the way successive state policies during pre-Independence as well as post-Independence – such as abolition of Jamindari system, introduction of Indian Forest Act 1878 and amendment of Industrial Dispute Act – benefited the Patidars to acquire land in adivasi area and criminalised the Bhils and decimated their claim to the Forest resources on the other, have actually devastated the
living conditions of *adivasis* especially Bhils, Rathvas, etc. Third section provided the social and political backdrop of Dangs and contextualizes the problem of *adivasis*. In this connection it outlined briefly the double marginalization of *adivasi* women which is interlinked with their suffering related to reproductive health condition. It focuses on how *adivasis* are included and excluded by dominant sections and state machineries in the Gujarat. In this direction, it depicts how on one hand, *adivasis* are both included (like used in communal projects, promotion of Sanskrit language in schools, etc) and excluded by dominant sections and state machineries (job creation and poor implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers - Recognition of Forest Rights - Act, 2006) on the other. Coming to double marginalisation of *adivasi* women, it is discussed through the introduction of Koyta system which creates a kind of bondage system and influence underage *adivasis* for early marriage.