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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with the history and literature relating to the Matang community. Historical background of the community consists of development of the Matang people and involvement in different historical evidences. It has also narrated the origin of the word Mang or Matang, sub castes and relations among them. The Historical evidences and incidences are collected through references of religious books, documents and recorded stories from ‘Dakkalwar’.

2.1 THE TERM MANG (MATANG) AND ITS ORIGIN

V.R. Shinde has said in his Problem of Indian Untouchability that the origin of the Matang community will be understood through the origin of the word ‘Mang’. With the help of linguistic form, ‘the origin of the word ‘Mang’ is from the meaning of this word i.e. a maker (fast grower) a big terrorist without any weapon. Means a person who has a power to attack without any weapon is called as Matang whose body is strong.’

Dr. B.K. Khadase points out that, ‘the term ‘Mang’ is rumored since 13th century in Maharashtra. Before 13th century this term was called as ‘Matang’. Mange and Matang these both terms having same meaning.

The religious books like Ramayana, Kathasaritsagar, Harivijay, Mulasthambh, Leela Charitra give us reference about rishi ‘Matang’ through which we introduce the
word ‘Matang’. In Manu-smriti and other old reference books the words ‘Chandal’ (a wicked fellow) Pulkas and Nishad have been connected with the word ‘Matang’.

V. R. Shinde state that the terms Madig or Matang are the sanskritization of original word Mang.³

Iravati Karve says, Matang means marginal living personnel which live to the last or long point from the village.⁴

The story of curse and bridegroom has been told by an old aged interviewer. He said that, ‘There was a jungle on the bank of Pampa lake near the Rishimukh mountain. That jungle was recognized as ‘Matangvan’ because of fear of Matang rishi’s curse…. Wali could not enter in that region so that his brother Sugriv was living there without fear or Wali. Whenever the pupils of rishi Matang use to go to jungle for bringing the wooden bundle, the perspiration which fell on the earth and got converted into flowers which never dried up. A famous lady Shabari who had been given tested jujubes to Lord Rama was a lady pupil of ‘Matang rishi’. With this reference he said that, our Matang caste and its name mostly connected with the name of Matang rishi.

The term ‘Mang’ or Matang also has cleared in the ‘Marathi- English Dictionary’, constructed by Molseworth. It has given a meaning that; Matang means low race or an individual. They are employed as executioners.⁵

The meaning of the word ‘Mang’ has been given in ‘Maharashtra Shabd Kosh’. The Matang means an ‘Elephant’.⁷ So that it may be said, a person has acquired power or strength like elephant always may use it to give happiness to the people who are in a critical condition.
Mr. Mansing Sadashiv Mane told a myth story who hailed from Andhali, Tal. Man, Dist. Satara about origin of Matang. He says that, “Once upon a time when Rishi Narad went to take bath in river Yamuna with the purpose of escaping from the curse of Satyabhama he inadvertently took bath in a pond which was for ladies. Suddenly the body of Narad converted into a beautiful young lady. At the same time rishi Matang was making penance nearby that place. A beautiful lady went to rishi Matang. With the noise of a jingling bell of her feet the deep meditation of rishi Matang got diverted and he saw the young lady. After meeting with that lady 60 sons were born which were called as the sons of rishi Matang i.e. Matangs which are called an ancestors of Mang.”

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There is an asylum relation in social structure and village settlement of Maharashtra. There are two separate parts of village i.e. Kali (Blackish) and Pandhari (whitish). The caste structure is mostly related to these parts. The Matang community has been involved and mingled with these two characteristics of village and the characteristics of agrarian society of village. Therefore, the historical background of the community is analysed by the steps like Ancient period, Medieval age, Pre-British period, British period, Post-independence period. Within these different ages the community’s introduction in the activities of the social structure has been changed. In the study of historical background of the community the references have been taken from religious books, mythological stories, the reports and different historical studies.

Historical written documents on Matang are not found because of massive illiteracy in the community but historical Matangs are far old in India. It is said that Madhya who was securing to God Shiva belonged to Mang and adorable rishi-maharishi
Sandipani who was the guru of Lord Krishna also belonged to Mang. We also find evidence that there was a special place for Matangini in the temple of Goddess Bhavani and she was given an equal position with goddess Yamai and Renuka. The reference of Kalu Mang from Mulshi, Veer Yalla Mang from Maval, Yadya Mugya Mang from Maharashtra, has taken been for historical involvement. In 1839 the British government displaced Pratap Singh Maharaj a king from Satara, at that time Mang Ramoshi, Bhill, Koli were irritated and joined in insurrection of Rango Bapuji Gupte. The two-armed outbreak took place in 1844-45 at Kolhapur in which some Mang were involved. In that outbreak nearly 36 revolutionaries were hanged. Similarly on 20-6-1857 there were 17 revolutionaries hanged together at Genda Mal in Satara out of them the revolutionaries from Matang community were Yeshwant Mang, Babya Mang, Nathu Mange, Gaikwad Mang and Malya Mang. Yadhya-Mugya Mang had done much valuable work in the Kranti, whose village was in district Beed namely Gundha.

The occurrence of various persons from Matang Community also has reference to post- Peshwa period i.e. in the period of revolution in 1857. Chimanji Appa, Mangal Pandey, Rani Laximibai, Tatya Tope, Vasudeo B. Phadake, Lahuji Salve, Umaji Naik were busy in breaking the British power in Maharashtra. The various personalities from Koli, Bhill, Mang and Ramoshi community who actually participated in different wars, but their activity has not been expressed and noted in writings. As a result of this the historical evidences of these communities have been buried by other communities who were having the sources of writing.
2.3 HISTORICAL EVIDENCES

Haribhaktparyan Shivaling Maharaj Pandharpurkar who belonged to Matang community states that, “our Matang community was glittering on developed peak point.” The Matang people were an intelligent and belonged to ruling class. He also mentions about an ancient Matang nation namely “Kishkhinda” on the bank of Tungabhadra in Dandakaranya.

Mulsthambh one of the religious book gives reference that ‘Markandeya rishi’ and Shailendra rishi were born to goddess ‘Matangi’.8

The references in Ramayana, Mahabharat, Kashikhand, Markandeya Puran, Harivijay and Basavpuran give the previous evidences about an existence of Matangs in Ancient period.

During the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji’s kingdom and post Maratha history different valiant men from Matang community had been sacrificed for survival of kingdom or state. Lahuji Salve coming from a Matang was a kingmaker of revolutionaries. He taught some war games to Vasudeo Balawant Phadke, Lokmanya Tilak and Agarkar also.

Matang proudly told that they were fighters, bold, powersome in the ancient time. They also told that they are the heirs of Matang rishi.

Enthoven (1922) mentions that Matang have descended from Viluchandaya the second son of Karakmuni. Lord Shiva had taken umbrage on Madar Channaya the eldest son of Karakmuni for having killed and eaten his cow and ordered him to be a Mahar, the second son was ordered to be Mang as he appeared before Shiva with the sprinkled blood of the cow on his body.9
According to reference given in ‘Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency - Satara District’. ‘The garrison was sometimes partly composed of the common infantry. Independent of them each fort had a separate and complete establishment. It consisted of Brahmans, Marathas, Ramoshis, Mahars and Mangs, they were termed as fort guards. They were maintained by permanent assignments of rent-free lands in the neighbourhood of each fort, which with the care of the fort passed from father to son. It shows that like the other communities, the Mangs were involved in Chhatrapati Shivaji’s Kingdom and worked as fort guards.

Evidence was also found in the above mentioned ‘Gazetteer’ which is noted that, ‘In the year (1810) Shahu the Raja of Satara died and was succeeded by his son Pratapsinh. Bapu Gokhale was allowed by the Peshwa to take all the benefit of these conquests and he levied heavy exactions over the whole district and seized all the Pratinidhi’s jewels and private property. In 1811 the Peshwa demanded back his territory, which, with that usurped by the Patvardhans and Rastias, was brought under his control, by British influence. The same year Trimbakji Dengle was sent into confinement at Vasantgad for instigating the murder of Gangadhar Shastri the Baroda Minister, and was then delivered to the custody of the British Government. He afterwards escaped and infested among other places like the Mahadeo hills supported by the Mangs and Ramoshis. Trimbakji Dengle on being given to the British Government was confined in Thana. He escaped and retired to the hills near Shingnapur in east Satara. Early in January 1817 he was at Phaltan, and constantly changing his residence between that place and Pandharpur, extended his range as far as the Mahimangad and Tathawade forts. On the 29th January he had 500 men near Barad in Phaltan and Natepute in Malshiras, 300 near
Shinganapur, 600 near Mahimangad and 400 near Phaltan. A total of 1800 men almost all foot and the bulk of them were Mangs and Ramoshis.11

2.3.1 Participation in Sawalaj Kranti:

Principal Dr. Shinde has given reference in his ‘Anti- Government of Satara’ about the involvement of Mangs in ‘Sawalaj Kranti’. The situation of involvement of Mangs he has stated that, there was a table land between Sangli, Miraj, Budhgaon, Aundh and Jat states. No ruler was ruling properly in this area. Therefore, this area was a centre of criminal and dacoity groups. There were more than 50 dacoits ruling their kingdom. G.D. Lad and Dnyanu Santu Jadhav (Chaukiwala) had convinced to all dacoits and diverted their mind to Satyagraha against British. But all the dacoits from Mang and Ramoshi community were under the pressure of local Inamdar and Zamindars who had been kept to Mangs and Ramoshis with them and were collecting wealth through dacoit. Whenever the dacoits were caught and imprisoned the Inamdar and Zamindars were not helping properly so majority dacoits were absconded. G.D. Lal and Chaukiwala considered properly that if all the absconded Mangs and Ramoshi collected together who are brave and stronger we can attack on Police out post which was established at Sawalaj, Tal. Atpadi, Dist. Sangli. Both tried to collect and then spread Mangs and Ramoshis. Nearly 200 persons gathered in village Vaiphale. They attacked Sawalaj Police outpost on 27th October, 1942. At that time Vithu Rawaji Mang, Chandru Rawaji Mang and Balya Khashya Mang had participated and made attack on police out-post. Even Balya Khashya Mang was killed in that attack.12
2.4 MATANG CASTE IN INDIA

L.S.S.O. Malley has pointed about the term caste that, the word ‘caste’ is of Portuguese origin being a form of caste, meaning a race or breed, a word which the early Portuguese settlers in India used to describe the different sections of the Hindu community.’ It was issued by the sacred Council of Goa in 1567 stated that in some parts of the Province of Goa the Hindus were divided into distinct castes of greater or lesser dignity, which were maintained so superstitiously that no one of higher caste could eat or drink with those of a lower.”

Mang community which is classified in Scheduled Caste category is spread in the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Orissa and Rajasthan. A section among them is described as Mini Madig because of their expertise in making mini, a leather rope used for tying in the yoke and the plough. They have been described Sanskrit word. However, the word ‘Mang’ means to beg and seeking alms was one of their vocations. According to Russell and Hiralal (1916), during an eclipse the Mangs use to beg because the demons Rahu and Ketu who are believed to swallow the sun and moon on such occasions, were both Mangs and devout Hindus give alms to their fellow caste men based on a current legend of their origin.

2.4.1 MANGS IN MAHARASHTRA:

The ‘Mang’ in Maharashtra are spread all over the state but are concentrated in Osmanabad, Solapur, Pune, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Satara and Sangli districts. They are notified as Mang, Matang, Mini Madig etc. They are non-vegetarian who take beef and pork and their staple cereals are jowar, bajra, matki, holga (coarse grain), hybrid jowar and churi (low grade rice). They have several clans such as Admane,
Kathale, Jogdand, Lokhande, Kuchekar, Bhise, Diwate, More and Jadhav. They are mainly landless and only a few have small holdings. In addition to their traditional occupation they prepare ropes from hemp (kekati) or sisal bark and brooms from date palm. They profess Hinduism. Mahadeo is their patron deity.\textsuperscript{15}

The clans namely Awale, Waghmare, Awaghade, Mane, Bansode, Khandsode, Potphode, Mohite, Thorat, Borade, Gaikwad, Rite, Sonawane, Sankpal, Buchade, Ranadive, Bhondave, Ubale, Adagale, More, Sakat, Wayadande, Patole, Babar, Chakhale etc. were seen in study area.

Mahar :- The Mahar are residents from the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Gujarat. Hassan (1920) recorded Dher, Bhumia (guide), Yesker (gatekeeper), Taral (Watchman) and Dharnicheput (sons of soil) as synonyms for Maharashtra. In Aurangabad Subah, he noticed three sub groups, namely Somas, Andhwan and Tilwans. The Somans, or Somavanshis have derived their name from Soma (moon), the Andhwans, he opined, are Hinduized Gonds, whereas the affinities of the Tilwana cannot be traced. In Adilbad, he further noted two subcastes namely Mahar, also called Bamaniya Mahars, who are weavers by profession, and Ladwan Mahars who are supposed to have been immigrants from Lat (a place close to Broach in Gujarat). Among these subgroups, he recorded fourteen, eight, fourteen, and nine clans within the Somas, Andhwans, Ladwas and Winkers, respectively.

The Mahar have a number of subgroups among them and Enthoven (1922) concluded that the term includes over fifty tribal fragments that do not ‘intermarry and in reality connotes more a status than a tribe’. He noted fifteen synonyms (Antyaja,
Atsudva, Bhumiputra or Dharnicheput, Bhuyal, Chokhamela, Dhed, Domb, Hulsava, Kathivala, Mhetre, Marasi, Parvari, Taral, Thorlegharche and Veskar). However, it was found that communities like the Hulava in Karnataka and Domb are distinct groups, despite their occupational similarity. Antyaja means last born and the term Thorlegharche is an ironical expression, meaning noble born. Bhumiputra or Dharnicheput means sons of the soil. Kathivala are men with a stick, which is a word indicative of their profession. The term Marasi means a landholder. Russell and Hiralal (1916) found a number of subdivisions among the Mahar, generally of local or territorial type.

The Mahar of Maharashtra call themselves Neo-Buddhist or Buddhist, after their conversion to Buddhism in 1956 under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. In Maharashtra, they are notified as Mahar, Mehra, Taral, Dhegu Megu and their total population, including all the subgroups, is 1,648,269 (1981 census). The Mahar are concentrated in Nagpur and Bhandara districts where their population is only next to the main agricultural community, the Kunbi or Maratha. The Indo-Aryan language, Marathi, and the Devanagari script are used for both inter-group and intra-group communication. In the past, men used to wear cotton pieces in the ears and a loin cloth (langot) to cover the lower portion of the body, carry a stick in their hands, and wear a black thread around the neck and a headgear (pagadi). A big red pigment (kunku) mark on the forehead with no ornaments on their body used to characterize the Mahar women. These days they do not conform to these specific dress patterns. Earlier they were carrion-eaters, but now they abstain from eating carrion. Their staple cereals are wheat, rice, jawar, bajra and maize. Men occasionally consume liquor purchased from the market.
They are divided into more than fifty sub-divisions and the bases of these divisions are occupation, geographical area and territorial affiliation. These subdivisions used to be endogamous, but now they do not strictly follow subgroup endogamy. The Mahar, also known as the Ati Sudra, are divided into Bawane, Barke, Papini, Ladwansa, Kosare and Somawanshi subgroups. The information presented here relates to the Bawane, Kokare.

2.5 DIFFERENT SUBCASTES IN MATANG COMMUNITY

A close study of the names of the various minor units, the so-called sub-castes, within the major groups reveals the fact that the bases of distinction leading to the exclusive marking off of these groups were: first, territorial or jurisdictional separateness; second, mixed origin; third, occupational distinction; fourth, some peculiarity in the technique of one and the same occupations; fifth, sectarian difference; sixth, dissimilarity of customs; and last, adventitious circumstances, suggesting certain nicknames. According to Ghurye, sub-castes that bear the name of some ancient city or locality are to be met with in the majority of the castes. The Ahirs of the Central provinces have among their sub-castes like, Jijhoti, the classical designation of Bundelkhand; Narwaria from Narwar, Kosaria from Kosala, and Kanauji from Kanauj.\(^\text{17}\)

G.S. Ghurye also narrates the sub-castes, especially among the castes that are either of the nature of ethnic groups or carry on secondary undefined occupations, are named from the nature of their special economic activities. The Mang-garudis a subdivision of the Mange-caste, are so called because they are snake charmers; the Tokarphodes take their name from their occupation of splitting (phod) bamboo (tokar);
the Nades who prepare a big rope called, Nada. The Mangmochis are leather-workers. Kakars make ropes of untanned hide.\textsuperscript{18}

Prabhakar Mande has given sub-differences of Mang stated by Govind Mangesh Kalekar.\textsuperscript{19}

These are:


Wilson\textsuperscript{20} has classified sub-groups of Mang community by following different classes and regions.

**Different Pradesh**: Kanadi Mang, Gujarati Mang, Telengi Mang, Maharashtrian Mang, Madhya Pradesh Mang.

**According to Vocal Region**: Varhadi Mang, Khandeshi Mang, Dakhani Mang, Ghatole Mang, and Satmale Mang.


**Superiority and Inferiority**: Assal Mang, Akkarmase Mang.

**Different Occupation**: Vajantri Mang, Pungiware Mang, Daphadewale, Tokarphode, Mochimang, Mhaisbhadr Mang, Ghodke Mang, Burud Mang, Nade Mang, Borari, Radhe Mang, Madiga, Jirait Mang, Dhor Mang, Ghadashi, Dekkar, Desur, Shelke, Jingar, Holar, Kakarya, Dhalya, Rangit, Kakkarkate.
Criminality: Uchale, Pehdhari, Manggarudi

Bhat: Dakkalwar (A beggar of Mang)

In District Gazetteer of District Buldhana (1976), it has mentioned that, ‘there are 12 ½ subcastes in Mang community these are: Dhatole Mang, Satmala Mang, Madig, Telgu Madiga, Uchale Mang, Pendhari Mang, Pungiwale, Burud, Dakhani Mange etc. 21

It should be mentioned here that actually the number of sub-castes of Mang community increased because of ignorance of caste origin among Matang people. Majority of studies stating the subcastes on account of information given by the people from the community. Most of Mang people were illiterate when these studies were conducted. The caste names were told by the individuals according to what work carried out by the concerned men and the sub-castes were considered as types of caste. But in practice subcastes are less.
B. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is not much specific literature of the Matang community people available on economic ground. Some studies and references were collected from different case studies and autobiographical literature of different individuals from different backward communities. The literature used for this study was mostly available through the studies of Scheduled Tribes which is done by study groups or commissions.

It will be worthwhile to mention the names of autobiographers and work done by them who have produced real literature of the socio-economic situations of the Matang community.

Uttam Bandu Tupe who has created a novel namely ‘Katyavarchi Pote’ (A story of dependent Matang families on Cordage plant). In this novel all the characteristics of Matang people in society has been focused by him. Tupe also noted about superstitions, honesty and approach towards education of the Matang people. Most important thing which is pointed by Tupe is when the families of Matang migrated to urban area, they faced the problems like settlement, kinship, earning etc. The problem relating to post marriage also demonstrated by him through his own example. Therefore, the literature prepared by Tupe is certainly considerable.²⁷

Annamhau Sathe who was recognized as an eminent person in Marathi literature. A novel like ‘Fakira’ which is the sample of whole Matang community people in the period of British rule. He has mentioned different types of situations concerning to Matang people the situations like, housing condition, food scarcity, settlement outside the village, no value in general society, etc. He also tried to mention that why the Matangs prefer to do theft, the cause behind it he has mentioned is scarcity of food and
injustice. Fakira’s character becomes representative and is shown by his honesty and warrior theme.\textsuperscript{28}

Prabhakar Mande\textsuperscript{29} has given much information about the outcastes in Maharashtra through the book like ‘Gaongadyabaher’ (outside of the village settlement). In his book he has given evidence of origin of Matang caste, old occupations, relations with the other castes and the socio-economic condition of Matang people. He has also focused on other outcastes like Mahar (Navaboudh), Girhanpeshi, Dakkalwar, Akkalwar and others also.

Dr. B. K. Khadase has made a study of Matang community from Vidharbh region. He has touched all the socio-economic aspects in his study. He says that the major concentration of the community is in Maharashtra, the Matang people also are found in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat states. Argument made by him in his study states that ‘majority of Matang people are related to rural area but because of industrialization, urbanization, educational improvement, unemployment and drought situation, Matang are migrating to urban area. Dr. Khadase notices that more 57% families were Nuclear in nature. When he considers about deity he looks upon that, majority of Matang families prefer to pray Hindu Gods. According to Khadase, Majority of the Matangs from rural area are found in traditional occupations, but in urban area the situation is different. The educational, economic, social, occupational conditions of the Matang from Vidharbh have been focused by Dr. Khadase.\textsuperscript{30}

Shivaji Ghatge in his article in Marathi ‘Matang Samaj – Kal Ani Aaj’ (Matang Community Yesterday and Today)\textsuperscript{31} published in a book ‘Asprushyanche Arthik Jeevan’ (Economic Life of Dalits) has narrated real economics of rope making business of
Matangs. He says that Matang people were doing work as balutedar so that their main occupation was making rope which was very handsome. But because of non-availability of any other alternative the Matang people were doing the job like rope making. He has stated the names of products which were being produced by Matang these were.

**Vesan** - Means a nose bridle for a bullock to control.

**Kandaka** – a rope with the length of 8 to 10 feet for binding to the bullocks, hebuffaloes, buffaloes and cows.

**Vasari** - A rope prepared by combination of three ropes with the length of 100 to 150 feet which used the betel – plant garden, and binding of roof prepared by grass or other types.

**Kasara** - A rope prepared with the length of 15 to 20 feet used to bind bullocks and hebuffaloes.

**Vadani** - It is bigger than ‘Kasara’ with the length of 50 to 60 feet used for building, material in bullock chart.

**Yetak** - A rope with the thickness two times than ‘Kasara’ is prepared by the length 25 to 30 feet which is used for connecting the instruments of harrowing.

**Mhorki** - A rope has slightly more thickness than Kasara and used for binding the mouth sides which is tied behind the horns of the animals.

**Dor** – A rope used for drawing the water from wells with the length of 40 to 50 feet.

**Kanda** – A rope with double thickness than Kasara used to bind in the neck of the animals i.e. bullocks, cows and buffaloes.

**Muske** – It is a muzzle prepared by the small ropes and binded around the mouths of bullocks and buffaloes at the time of the operation of trading or beating out corn.
**Jale** – A one type of net prepared for keeping the corn corps.

**Wale** – A rope which has tripple thickness than ‘Kasara’ with the length of 15 to 20 feet used to tie up the yoke and plough at the time of ploughing.

**Dave** – A rope with one and half thickness than ‘Kasara’ prepared by the length of 6 to 8 feet used to tie the goats.

**Saundar** - A rope with which was bigger than ‘Kasara’ prepared with the length of 40 to 50 feet which has twelve rope lines combined together. It was used to draw up water from wells.

**Nada** - A big noodle rope with three times than Sounder prepared with the combination of 18 ropes having length with 40 to 50 feet which was used to pick up water from well.
REFERENCES


11. Ibid., P. 300.


16. Ibid., P .2174.


18. Ibid., P.7.


