

Dalits' Struggle  
for Social Justice  
in Andhra Pradesh  
(1956-2008)



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By

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Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-9466-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9466-1

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## FOREWORD

The problem of untouchability has driven many social thinkers to consolidate the unprivileged to raise their voice against suppression. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar launched a lifelong crusade to liberate the untouchables and under-privileged sections of society from their centuries-old enslavement and ostracism. In the context of their historical reluctance to acknowledge the caste question as their problem, this slight shift in the understanding becomes utterly inconsequential for the victims of the caste system.

The present book, *Dalits' Struggle for Social Justice in Andhra Pradesh*, reflects the entire socio-economic and cultural problems faced by the Dalit community in this region. Dalit movements in contemporary India follow more than one path under different banners. However each one of them projected issues affecting the whole community or its one or the other stratum, and expresses the Dalit identity. Social issues and the new Dalit identity are more important than economic issues. It is evident that Dalits were forced to struggle for their existence and identity even in modern day society. Social inclusion of Dalits into mainstream of society has become a misnomer. Particularly the problem of caste and class discrimination is prevailing in all walks of life. Eradicating caste bias and suppressing the Dalit community in the name of their social disadvantage is again a morbid culture. Dalits are easily targeted even in this independent nation where the constitution guarantees equal rights and privileges to every citizen. On this account, Dalit movement and struggle has been classified as reformative and alternative. The dominant Dalit movements in different parts of the country at local and regional levels are still within the ideological framework of the caste system. The prevailing cultural system and ethos on the one hand, and sluggish economic development on the other, work in their favor.

The post-independent Indian state has also undertaken many ameliorative programmes but still caste remains a massive deadweight on Indian society in general, Andhra Pradesh in particular. In this book, several important issues have been discussed at length. It is noticed that the first event in the beginning of the agitations in the state was an indication of the Dalit upsurge, symbolically resulting in the capture of the post of Chief Minister of State. The major counters of the protest movements, which are an extension of the anti-Brahmin struggle from the

combined Madras presidency, appear to have social equality. This has facilitated the emergence of the leadership of Damodaram Sanjivaiah, a great scholar and politician.

The achievements of the Dalit movements are impressive, and one too often overlooked. They have given birth to a tradition of struggle in many areas, not only on cultural and ritual issues, but also not breaking feudal bonds. Dalits emerged as a strong force to articulate against atrocities and to press for equality and social justice. Many books and writings on Dalits' struggle for social justice have been appearing in the print media. In this context, a book authored by Dr. Akepogu Jammanna and Dr. Pasala Sudhakar, *Dalits' Struggle for Social Justice in Andhra Pradesh* becomes noteworthy. It is rightly pointed out that any genuine change can be traced through social justice. For that, the emancipation of Dalits, by a restoration of self-respect, is very much needed. So it is the duty of all progressive forces and rights organizations to assimilate for the establishment of genuine social justice.

***Dr. A. Chakrapani***

Chairman

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council

## PREFACE

The study of the Dalit movements and social consciousness has attracted scores of social scientists over the past three decades in India and abroad. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a plethora of publications on Dalit consciousness and movements for self-respect, resulting in the growing literature on Ambedkar, Dalit politics, and the Dalit movements. Ambedkar's idea of social justice is woven into a single thread. This runs continuously through his writings on equality, liberty, fraternity, human rights, socio-economic democracy, and the state of minorities. It appears that Ambedkar's various theoretical positions, with particular reference to social justice, are so close to each other that they could lead to misinterpretation if not carefully differentiated between using the dialectical method, which is available in Ambedkar's writings.

Historically speaking, justice in the Indian context was seen as an important social value in as much as it consisted in the strict observance or enforcement of Hindu law, which was based on the four Varnas and elaborated caste system. Ambedkar maintained that the established order was based on graded inequality and was legitimized by Hindu law, which completely negated equality, fraternity, liberty, democracy, and human rights. Ambedkar was of the view that the system of graded inequality was not notional but legal, and penal. Thus, it can be argued that at the philosophical level, justice in the Indian feudal order had three characteristics: First it has always preferred hierarchy to equality. Secondly, this concept of justice underlined the importance of respecting traditional rights, and performing concepts of justice underlined the importance of respecting traditional rights and performing traditional duties. Finally, Hindu law means different things to different castes and people.

The concept of justice does not contain any notion of equal treatment by all human beings. In other words, the function of justice in this kind of situation was to preserve the existing hierarchy, rather than to provide criterion for social reform. This concept of justice has been used at the ideological level by the upper castes and classes just to deny deprived sections the essence of justice. Justice in the Indian context served to validate societal stratification and perpetuate casteism. As is clear from the political practice of the Dalit movement, Ambedkar used all just forms of



protest: from launching temple entry and boycotting of Hindu practices to the conversion of Dalits into Buddhism for establishing social justice, and preferential treatment to untouchables in the fields of bureaucracy and politics with the intention of protecting their interests. The Dalit social protest of the 1930s, under the leadership of Ambedkar, focused its attention on entering the savarna temples, and tried to improve the status of Dalits. The Dalit movement arose before and after independence, but they varied in intensity. The early Dalit movements were to seek human parity in social and religious relations, but the movements that arose after independence were more of the nature of Dalit assertion for a specific identity, for a share in political power, or for a show of solidarity in expressing anguish over atrocity, deprivations that were happening sporadically.

The complete alienation of Dalits, from resources like land, water, and agricultural implements also led for the collective demand for their just share in the productivity. Moreover, the sense of relative deprivation, which emanated as a reaction to the upper-caste restrictions against the Dalits, adopting certain high-caste social norms had led the Dalits in the later 1930s to overcome it through collective mobilization. Dalit movements had emerged in Andhra during the 1920s, with Dalits constituting an economically, socially, and radical anti-fundamentalist force, which resisted absorption into either a strong Hindu or Muslim identification. Agitation for rights to land ownership and fair wages, and demand for equal rights was in the forefront of the agenda of the Dalits.

The post-independent Indian state has undertaken various ameliorative programmes however still caste remains a massive deadweight on Indian society. In spite of the constitutional guarantee and safe-guards to the Dalit community, they never had an opportunity to enjoy privileges like social equality, access to economic standardization, and participation in the political and public life. In different parts of the district, atrocities and attacks on Dalits have become a common phenomenon. The oppressive methods imposed on Dalits, once again establish the upper caste dominance and political empowerment of caste Hindus in rural areas. This clearly speaks; mere constitutional guarantees do not serve any purpose, unless and until the state and civil society feels it is a very important aspect to uplift the Dalits. The upper caste people are insensitive towards untouchables i.e., Dalits due to the heavy influence of Hindu Dharma, which advocates a scrupulously caste ridden hierarchical form of social system.

The Dalits are mostly dependent on agriculture labor for their livelihood. Since the Dalits have been denied for their just right and

livelihood in society, the protest movement of the Dalits asserted the demand for self-respect, social dignity and equity, and gave a new direction to liberation struggles in their respective societies. These movements did not depend on any kind of patronage from the dominant groups, they sought confrontation. Basically, the protest movements and ideology of Dalit movements centered on socio-economic and cultural dimensions, rather than economic and political disabilities. Of the many forms of caste baiting, the two-glass system of having separate glasses for Dalits in teashops is common in many parts of the Kurnool district. Dalit entry into the villages is still banned. In the year 1984, in Gudipadu village in the Kurnool district, the dominant caste of people denied Dalits entry into the temples. Dalits being bonded laborers in the house of dominant caste people resulted in the Dalit masses taking a collective decision to discontinue generations-long Jajimani relations. As a result of the land ceiling act and distribution of surplus land to the landless poor, certain Dalit families were able to get some land for cultivation. Access to land and agriculture activity turned them to stand on their own for their day-to-day survival and livelihood. Today these Dalits have their own land and self-respect and dignity in society. Even in some places in Kurnool district in the year 1984-1985 there were incidents of denial of temple entry to Dalits.

Poverty and penury made the Dalit dependent and vulnerable to oppression. The problem for the Dalit is discrimination of high order next to the problem of recovering their manhood, in every nook and corner of the country. The Dalit face utmost discrimination and gross injustice as a daily routine and lack of resources made the Dalits vulnerable to economic and social boycott. As a result of that, most of the Dalits are continuing to languish under the yoke of untouchability. The state has the duty to prevent atrocities and protect them from the dominance of the caste Hindus. Dalits have, for many centuries, occupied a deeply ambiguous place within Indian society. Especially in Andhra Pradesh, it is more rampant because of the ignorance and lack of social exposure, resulting in atrocities on Dalits through the ages. The Dalit community is facing a serious threat from the caste Hindus across the state. As Dalits certainly occupy a subaltern position in Indian society, the series could have had a significant impact upon our understanding of Dalit history. Caste clashes, which normally take place between the untouchables and the village dwelling castes, have only helped the Dalits strengthen their identity and caste movements against the others. Dalit movement is particularly anti-systematic, rather than basically reformist in nature. Dalit movement has

questioned the caste dominance and meaning and identity of the nation, when hierarchical divisions exist within it.

We have made an earnest effort to portray the significance of the Dalits' struggle for social justice in Andhra Pradesh from 1956 to 2008. Dalit movements after independence were aimed against the marginalization and annihilation of rural Dalits. The complete exclusion of Dalits from resources like land, water, and agricultural implements, and exclusion from political participation led to resurgence among the Dalits to mobilize themselves, to articulate their grievances, mould public opinion and to plead for social justice. The post-independence Dalit movement gathered more momentum and gained popularity in the fight against the atrocities and deprivation, which existed in spite of the provisions of the Constitution that safeguard protective discrimination. Different Dalit movements highlight different issues related to Dalits with regard to different ideologies. All of them, however overtly or covertly, assert for the Dalit identity. Identity is concerned with the self-esteem and self-image of a community-real or imaginary-dealing with its existence and role. However, the difference in the nature of Dalit movements and the meaning of identity notwithstanding, there has been a common quest in all these movements for equality, dignity, and for the eradication of untouchability. It is a dominant factor that is still continuing in the matter of social relationships, and discrimination takes the form of barriers against bathing, eating, drinking, worshiping, and having access to common properties. It places a ban on all common modes of participation. The untouchables are among the very bottom elements of Indian society in both status and economic terms, and they have undergone a profound change in the context of socialization and social identity.

Political fragmentation and linguistic regional insulation; hierarchical social division and institutionalized inequality; cultural, ethnic diversity and social tolerance, and the primacy of the group over the individual were the basic characteristics of traditional India. These multiple dimensions have given rise to and shaped the nature and type of social movements. These movements attempt to negotiate with the state, market, and civil society, and the root cause of the denial of due spaces for marginalized peoples and regions in the development process. The outcome of a movement could be seen in terms of social, political, and economic change, sometimes structural and also non-structural. However, the state has the power to formulate new public policies or to modify the existing public policies within the constitutional framework in response to the demands of different social movements. Thus, social movements through the state and actions initiated by the state on its own, irrespective of any

social movements, can determine public policy. But, the question is why some movements continue to recur despite the response.

Protective discrimination and political safeguards for depressed classes as guaranteed in the Constitution led to the struggle for their identity and social transformation. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was indeed a symbol of social justice. He played a major role in reforming the vertical hierarchical Brahminical social order and establishing humanitarian social order based on the principles of equality, liberty, fraternity, and collective welfare. Brahmins were the earliest beneficiaries of the concept of reservation by a peculiar method. Instead of directly reserving the positions for them, by way of Varnashrama Dharma, they disqualified and eliminated all the others from contesting. The Varnashrama Dharma fortified the Brahmins alone to enjoy all the power and control all the positions and offices, which made them dominant in Indian society for many centuries. His struggle for social justice and political equality and especially for the oppressed class in Hindu society has remained the keystone of the Indian democracy. Therefore, his ideology makes the Dalits realize the importance of Ambedkar and his contribution. Caste dominance and atrocities on Dalits, which is a common phenomenon in Kurnool district is discussed with a good number of examples. Besides that, the role of Dalit organizations, democratic and rights organizations, and the influence and impact of Dalit movements in the district were also examined, to substantiate the very purpose and central point of the book. The struggle and movements led by the Dalit groups significantly changed the very mindset and attitude of the upper caste people to restrain themselves and not to resort to any discrimination or humiliation of Dalits. Of course, it is only for a short period, time and again the practice of suppression and humiliation continues to be in force.

Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS) and its struggle for social justice, movement to categorization, and counter movement by Malamahanadu is another significant development that attracted the attention of national political parties and leaders of opposition parties. Categorization and its impact in Andhra Pradesh, judicial interference, maintenance of status quota in SC reservations, the role of the government, people's response, and the response of the political parties were discussed. The changing scenario and the recent developments after keeping the G.O M.S.No:68 in abeyance for want of clarity in statistical data and rationalization of reservations within scheduled castes brought lot of changes in Andhra Pradesh politics. Madigas got categorization of scheduled caste reservations after a persistent struggle and movement for social justice. In the light of recent developments, it is very much essential

to assess the characteristics of the movement for social justice and counter movement to snub the genuine demand made by Madigas.

*Akepogu Jammanna*  
*Pasala Sudhakar*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's crusade against caste discrimination and struggle for social justice inspired us to take up this account. We deeply acknowledge the contribution of academicians, scholars, social scientists, intellectuals, activists and social workers across the country that helped us to take a number of insights from their activities and writings.

*Akepogu Jammanna  
Pasala Sudhakar*

## CHAPTER I

### DALITS' STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Indian history starts along with the history of the caste system, and is also based on differences according to religious beliefs. The Vedas and the Manusmriti (10:58) tell us about the (mythic) origin of the caste system and the duties of the various castes, however they do not reveal much about how and why untouchability came into existence. The Manusmriti explains that untouchables are those born of a defiled womb, which means that untouchable castes originated from the intermixture of the different pure Varna colours. From a traditional Hindu point of view this might be a sufficient explanation, but for social scientists, something is lacking in the equation. It is true that exploitation is the defining factor, but that still leaves the question of why these people were singled out for the most oppressive and degrading positions in a system of structural inequality. There is no consensus response to this question. The various answers proposed go hand in hand with different religious beliefs and interpretations of historical information.

Every society has several contradictions, but just because they exist, they cannot be and need not be resolved without consideration of their stages of development. Dialectics teach us that contradiction can only be successfully resolved when they reach their irreconcilable peak. At any stage of development, thus, there will be a single principal contradiction that craves for resolution through a revolution. Castes in this understanding are just one of the contradictions in society, not a primary or principal one, which may either get resolved in the course of the class struggle, or may be dealt with in the post-revolution society. In the context of their historical reluctance to acknowledge the caste question as the problem, this slight shift in the understanding of the left over eight decades becomes utterly inconsequential for the victims of the caste system. The caste system is a comprehensive organization of the Indian society, encompassing its structural and super-structural aspects; it has been an indisputable part of the production organization. Castes ordained the entire process of social production and reproduction (Anand, 2005).

The Dalit movements in contemporary India follow more than one path under different banners. Each one of them raises issues affecting the whole community or it is one or the other stratum, and expresses the Dalit identity. For some, social issues and the new Dalit identity are more important than economic issues. The new identity that they want to evolve is distinctively different than those of the caste of Hindus; others do not adhere to the dichotomy. Their new identity of being Dalit i.e., oppressed and exploited, is in the making, for that, they do not wish to erase the traditional identity, but have both co-exist. The Buddha and Ambedkar are their prophets and heroes. Their struggle for equality and eradication of untouchability is irrespective of their religion persuasion. There was no scope for the Dalits to organize and start movements to voice their grievances until 1920. Prior to 1920 the problems and plight of the Dalits were pathetic and unenviable and it can be neither measured nor compared to others in any part of the world. The Indian social system with its oppressive caste system is a feature that knows no parallels in history. Manudharma is the root of the evil caste system in India. Before we analyze the Dalit movements at different periods, let us take a look at the origin of the word Dalit, and its definition.

The word 'Dalit' was first used in the 1930s. The Hindi and Marathi translation of the word Dalit is depressed class or caste. 'Depressed' means low-lying and broken. This word was first used by Mahatma Jyothi Rao Phuley, and later also by Dr. Ambedkar. An English translation of Dalit is untouchable. Dalit Panthers revived the term Dalit in 1973 as it refers to include the schedule tribe, Neo Buddhists, the working people, the landless, and poor peasants, women, and all those who are being exploited politically, economically, socially, educationally, etc., in the name of religion. There are different views about Dalits. To put it briefly, Dalits are the people within Hindu Society who belong to the untouchable communities of India. Untouchability is for the Hindu religious consideration, based on the hereditary occupations. Their occupations are field laborers, leather workers, scavengers, watchmen, and village manias. History of Dalit movements enables us to understand about the Dalits and their profession. Of course, it is subject to re-examination. J.H. Hutton, commissioner of the 1891 census, made Dalit castes to be included as per their occupational categories. All the castes are included in the 1935 Federal Act of India. Since then, they have been called scheduled castes. It is very familiar after 1950s. Anyhow Dalits are schedule caste and schedule tribe of India, as per the Constitution. The people of the present study are limited to schedule caste only. Let us analyze their movements.



The very word 'movement' means people are mobilized to the existing arrangements, and seeking new social and political order. Deprivation, discrimination, inequality, and social unrest are the major factors of social movement. If, we go back to the history of India until 1920, the conditions of Panchamas, untouchable i.e., present schedule castes/Dalits were in the worst condition at all points of their life. They were excluded from mainstream Indian society. Their dress is restricted, their food is different, and they were not allowed onto the streets, they have their separate wells and tanks, their houses are different. They were not allowed to build the houses with bricks. However they have to serve the basic needs of the entire society with their sweat and blood. In short, they were the personification of the dehumanized sector, devoid of everything, including social status. From 1920 onwards, remarkable changes took place not only in the history of India, and also in the position of the Dalits with the latter becoming increasingly assertive and independent.

The word 'Dalit' is employed to identify the people who belong to those of an outcaste background in the Indian context. Dalit refers to the caste oriented idea, and not simply the suffering people of any community. They were addressed by several other names, and the Dalit community heard it with resentment. Nevertheless, this word is well approved by the entire community, because it does not undermine their dignity, and group them under one fold. 'Dalit' is a modern term for the untouchables of India, who have been exploited and subjected to atrocities due to the social stratification of Indian society. In many cases, Dalits are easily targeted, even in this independent nation where the Constitution guarantees equal rights and privileges to every citizen. Throughout the centuries they have been victimized religiously, socially, culturally, and, most of all, economically. The immediate cause of such discrimination according to the Tamil Roman Catholic priest L. Stanislaus is the caste system, promulgated by Aryan Dharma (Stanislaus, 1999). The questions are: Should this social group, the Dalits, be oppressed and tyrannized in this land? Are they not part of this vast Indian nation? How is it that this vast community has become so dejected and rejected? The importance of the study is obvious.

Dalits were addressed by many names, and James Massey (1995) points out that these have been changed occasionally, in most cases to despise them or to show contempt. They were considered outside Chaturvarna, the four caste system, they were labeled out castes and untouchables, and were alienated from the mainstream of the society. Manudharma Scriptures called them slaves. Nisada, Malicha, Chandala, and Achuta imply the sense of physical impurity. Narasihma Mehta

introduced Harijan, a popular title propagated by M.K. Gandhi (Michael, 1979, 1996, 1999) however, says that the Dalits refused it because they believed that it would demean them as illegitimate children of Devadasis. In 1985, the Government of India prohibited the terminology.

In order to define Dalits, anthropologists and sociologists have adopted two dominant perspectives. The Marxist, subaltern view emphasizes the class analysts of the Marxist ideology, including all the exploited and working class proletarians (Webster, 1979, 1996, 1999). This focuses on the wide range of the working class. The Dalit Panthers also support this stand to a certain extent. Professor G. Pantawane explained Dalit as follows: Dalit is not a caste. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution. Dalit believes in humanism. He rejects the existence of God, rebirth, and the soul, sacred books that teach discrimination, fate, and heaven, because these have made him a slave. He represents the exploited man in the country. Also, there is the traditional communal view. This view explains the Dalits as being people groups included within Hindu society who belong to those castes that Hindu religion considers to be polluted by the virtue of hereditary occupation. To identify a Dalit, two factors must be considered. The historical documents and testimonies related to the classification of the society must be examined. Interestingly, all these records are supporting the traditional view. From 1881 to 1931, six consecutive Census Records, except 1891, were all based on castes (Webster, 1979, 1996).

Three factors make the discussion of the origin of Dalits difficult. Firstly, the disagreement among scholars (Stanislaus, 1999); they differ about the origin of Dalits, and Dalits fear it as a global conspiracy of the non-Dalit historians. Secondly, the inadequacy of Dalit literature due to their illiteracy and social backwardness they could not edit their history. However, Massey (1995) observes that the absence of right material to write a Dalit history is the most difficult task, yet there are some archaeological and literary sources that can enable us to formulate some possible historical conclusions on Dalits. Finally the manipulation of history. In the land of the five rivers, mentioned that history is the key to the solution of many world problems of the present day. It is not true with the history of Dalits in India because in history, Dalits are not properly represented. They are always focused objectively. Some historians do not even regard Dalits are part of the so called Indian civilization. Romila Thapar, in her work, *Interpreting Early India*, argues that the Vedic Aryan culture became the foundation of Indian culture. Thus, the aborigines were denied a place in the civilization of their land. Moreover, myths and stories have been fabricated to maintain Aryan dominion in the society. Hindu

scriptures like Ramayana and Mahabharatha, more specifically, Srimad Bhagavat Geetha presented Dalits as object. Manusmriti has the worst reference about Dalits: The dwelling Chandalas and Suapakas as (should be) out of the villages; they should be deprived of dishes (apapatra), their property (consists of) dogs and asses, their clothes (should be) garments of the dead, and their ornaments (should be) in broken dishes and they must constantly wander about.

The impure intermixture of the four varnas, Michael (1999) after surveying the Sutras, confirmed this theory. The second theory is related to the unclean and menial occupation. Some believe that they were despised because of their mean job allotment. Thirdly, the pure-impure principle. Von Fuerer-Haimendorf, an eminent anthropologist believes that untouchability is because of urban development, and is the result of an unclean and ritually impure occupation. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar surprised scholars with his new theory. He opined that the distinction between the Hindus and untouchables in its original form, before the advent of untouchability, was the distinction between tribe men and the broken men from alien tribes. Broken men who subsequently came to be treated as untouchables, he identifies the two roots from which untouchability has sprung: One, contempt and hatred for the broken men, and the continuation of beef-eating by the broken men after it had been given up by others (Michael, 1979, 1996). However, Stanislaus (1999) discovers the origin had an economic base i.e., division of labor, and a definite function in society; later social and religious legitimizations were given to them.

However Dalits were neglected until 1930 when Dr. B.R. Ambedkar came in to the picture as a national leader and Dalit saviour, because of the Dalit movement. For example, Dalit movements, led by Dr. Ambedkar at Nagpur (Bombay), Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and Mysore are glaring examples. Nagpur had become the launching pad for the rise and development of the Dalit movement and political awakening. In spite of the liberalization tendencies, legal abolition of untouchability, reservation, and preferential policies to benefit to the untouchables living at the bottom of the economic ladder, what the Dalit leaders had done or are doing for the development of Dalits in India is the main concern of the present study. The Dalit movements are not on the line of Dr. Ambedkar's ideology for their political leadership is to safeguard the interests of Dalits in India. As a result, the Indian political system got distorted. The state of affairs prevailing in large states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are proof of this trend. How Dr. Ambedkar's ideology and social philosophy is suitable to the present day conditions of liberalization, globalization, and

privatization of world politics is that it shows all the issues to be discussed in a clear cut manner.

Dalitism essentially implies conditions of subjugation such as economic, political, social, and cultural. Dalitism also embodies different degrees of marginalization. It includes not only a marginalized status in the economic sphere but also in cultural, political, religious, and social domains. That means Dalitism symbolizes marginalization. It is a well known fact that marginalization denies basic human rights and social justice (Punalekar, 1995). Different Dalit movements highlight different issues related to Dalits around different ideologies. All of them, however, overtly or covertly assert for Dalit identity, though its meaning is not identical and precise for everyone. Identity is concerned with the self-esteem and self-image of a community, real or imaginary dealing with the existence and role. However, notwithstanding differences in the nature of Dalit movements and meaning of identity, there has been a common quest in all these movements: the quest for equality, dignity, and for the eradication of untouchability.

The Dalit movements can be classified as (i) reformative, and (ii) alternative. Reformative movements focus mainly on the changes in the caste system and the institution of untouchability. Issues relating to conversion to other religions like, Buddhism, Islam, or Christianity, through education, economic status, and political power. Also it was highlighted that M.K. Gandhi as an ardent champion for removing untouchability within the Hindu Chaturvarna framework. Ilaiah's experience of everyday life gives a platform to take revolutionary steps to criticize the Hindutva ideology. The idea that Hinduism is a religion of humanity is totally rejected by the followers of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and later by the Dalit Panthers.

Movements in the 1970s, Dalits are stigmatized from birth as spirituality defiling, and therefore potential polluters of clean, high caste people. India's untouchables have lived for centuries in segregated haunts and villages. High castes have denied them the use of public wells, as well as entry to schools, shops, and high caste shrines, and have forced them to perform the most despised and defiling jobs of society, special occupations according to the Registrar General of India, scavenging, cleaning latrines, carrying off dead animals, and exhausting unskilled physical labor. The dominant Dalit movements in different parts of the country at local and regional levels, both in the past and present, are still within the ideological framework of the caste system. They have appealed and mobilized a large mass of Dalits for collective action. The prevailing cultural system and

ethos on the one hand, and sluggish economic development on the other, work in their favor.

Untouchables also share principles of purity and pollution, although different than those of the Hindu caste. They have their own deities, but also worship deities of the Hindu religion. Michael Moffat argues that the Untouchables do not necessarily possess a separate sub-culture. They are not detached or alienated from the rationalization of the system. Untouchables possess and act upon a thickly textured culture, whose fundamental definitions and values are identical to those of more global Indian village culture. The view from the bottom is based on the same principles and evaluations as the view from the middle or the view from the top. The cultural system of Indian untouchables does not distinctively question or re-evaluate the dominant social order. Rather, it continuously recreates among untouchables a microcosm of the larger system (Michael, 1979). The problem of Dalits is not new, it is an age-old problem, as long as the caste system prevails even in its rudimentary form in India, the problems of Dalits will persist and the goal of establishment of democratic and egalitarian society remains unachieved. Dalits using political means in an attempt to better their condition and empower themselves in the process in an open democratic polity is a fascinating subject of study both from the point of academic exercise and socio-economic and political relevance to understand contemporary Indian society.

In this book attempts have been made to describe and analyze the process by which the struggle of Dalits for social justice in Andhra Pradesh, and above all aims to identify and describe the manner in which the Dalit communities participate in the political process for improvement of their social conditions. To understand the nature and pattern of how political leadership evolves, we will assess political skills and capabilities acquired and finally underscore, if any, the type of hurdles faced in their assimilation in the broader political culture of the nation and suggest ways and means for the political advancement of the Dalits in the country. Dalits account for about a quarter of the population of India. They are at the bottom rungs of society. They are the most depressed, degraded, segregated, and exploited people in society. Their plight is not comparable to any deprived social group anywhere in the world, and their living conditions are worse than the American Negro of the pre-emancipated era. Hence, there is an imperative need and urgency for the study of Dalits by the academicians and social scientists from a holistic socio-economic perspective, against the backdrop of the contemporary political setting in the country. For proper analysis and understanding of Dalit movements and their struggle for social justice in different dimensions, Dalit

movements can be divided into two phases, the pre-Ambedkar period, and the post-Ambedkar period.

The Dalits are yet to challenge legally or politically the existential arrangements of land reforms, the on-going programmes of privatization, the principles of reservation in joint sector or private sector companies, and the larger issues of Dalit human rights, the casteism in India, and a host of other issues crucial to the survival and growth of the Dalits. But not much is being done by them in these fields, as infighting takes a lot of their resources and energy, e.g., the feud between Malas and Madigas in improvements in their lives. A common political and social platform exclusively to cater for their needs will catalyze Dalit unity, in turn bringing about greater political victory through more positive self-image and greater individual achievements.

Continuous variations take place in cultural and linguistic characteristics, which means there are in effect no boundaries between the different Dalit groups, but there may be differences of languages, religion, or family patterns, or temporary occupational divergences. It is, therefore, desirable to emphasize ethnicity and ignore the divergences, give importance to similarities and overlook differences, and highlight positive images and minimize negative ones. Dalit social identity should not be negative. Production and distribution of economic principles lies with the productive castes of Dalits. Caste was based on the principle of occupation, which is productive in nature. The untouchables are the real tools of production, but have no right to consume. Hence the theory of David Ricardo and Malthus is necessary in this study. Their philosophy of Hindu religion is very important to analyze the problems of untouchables. Hindu religious studies are necessary to understand the problems of Dalits in India. Therefore there is a need for socio-economic and religious interdisciplinary study.

However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a tremendous move among the Dalits. The Bhatki movement helped Dalits, particularly in spiritual matters. Though many movements could not bring any significant social change, they reformed and revitalized the Dalit community. Few eminent leaders, like Mahatma Jotirao Phule and B.R. Ambedkar, voiced for the total uplift of Dalits (Webster, 1976, 1999). In the independent India, national rulers continue the Aryan negative attitude towards the Dalit community, though the Constitution proclaims special privileges. Now there is an awaiting menace against it, because the ruling coalition at the centre, the Brahman dominated government, is sponsoring the Constitution review panel, for bringing changes in the fundamental rights and privileges, especially of Dalits, thereby revoking the old Aryan

suppression in secular India. The natives possessed an advanced civilization. Although, they are reduced to an insignificant people, they inherit a glorious past. They were hard working, self-reliant, civilized, and sincere. They were caring for the rest of the society while the priestly class concentrated on feeding their deities, the Dalits had to work in the field to feed the rulers and their military. They inherited cultural programmes like folk dance and traditional entertainment.

Rev. Theophilus Appau of the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, has analyzed Dalit sociology with his own code: Economic, Political, Social, Ideological, Psychological, Ecological, Gender, Spiritual (EPSIPEGS). Appau clarifies that the early ancestors of Dalits were rich and never depended on anything for their meals. They had financial stability in society. Nevertheless, Stanislaus (1999) has rightly pointed out that the caste system has brought the Dalits to the unfortunate economic conditions. Hindu religious laws did not permit them the right to make property, education, and complaints, but only to serve the upper castes. Dr. Ambedkar argued that the caste system has its economic manifestation: First of all, it divides laborers, secondly it disassociates work from interest, thirdly it disconnects intelligence from manual laborers, fourthly, it prevents mobilization, and above all, it deprives Dalits of all economic avenues of employment and puts him nearly in the position of a slave. Some economic changes have taken place during the British rule. Since 1947, Dalits are provided with some constitutional privileges under Article 46. The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker section of people, and in particular SC/ST, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. However the reports prove that the provisions are only in the paper.

Dalits maintained equal social status in their community. In the early Dalit society, the family ties were very warm and delicate, and the women were given due respect. In a small Dalit family, intimacy is comparatively higher. Unfortunately, now Dalit women are not liberated duly, their psychological expressions and emotions are instant and sometimes out bursting. Usually they are not hard hearted, and never hatch any rivalry. They are loyal and least corrupted in the society. Besides that, they have a deep sense of environment. Though they are the sons of the soil, their place of living is very small, and most of them possess only a piece of land because of oppression. Yet their animals, children, and relatives live closely and utilize the rest of the land for vegetation. Formerly they worshipped the nature and offered sacrifices to her. They preserve the dignity of gender relationships. In Dalit society, there is an equal respect for both sexes. The mother is respected highly and symbolizes a goddess.

Dalits value spirituality. Every action is the outcome of one's faith. In Dalit festivities, they enjoy complete transcendence by the way of singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments throughout the night. They were relieved from their burdens of hard work by participating in their religious gatherings. They adored anything for their utmost satisfaction, and hated hypocrisy.

In the area of the judiciary, the report reveals that their share is negligible. In March 1982, the scheduled caste judges were a little more than one percent. Now, within two decades, the figure has not changed much. With the help of reservation, a few got into the government services, and there are stories of negligence and misrepresentation of them. Often, special recruitment and concessions is only a public gimmick. Recently, the Supreme Court of India was very concerned about the creamy layer of the down castes. The intention behind such a move is alleged as a Brahman conspiracy to divide the marginalized economically into small fragments, and abrogate their nominal benefits. The Communist regimes have succeeded in achieving many benefits to the depressed. After sixty years of independence, the country is not serious about the groans and needs of these people. Aleyamma Zachariah (2003), comments that the Dalit problem is a combination of economic, social, and religious issues. Unless there is a movement that tackles all three areas of suppression fully, Dalit liberation may not be possible. The marginalized must strive together to cast down the thresholds of castiesm. Now the Brahmins are keen to re-convert many of them who uphold other faiths. Dalits should reject Aryan Dharma, which made them condemned and come out of their villages where they are despised and limited and settle down in the urban culture in order to share the advantages of technological progress, and create the economic stability needed for a better and more prosperous future for themselves.

For the overwhelming majority of Dalits lived in hopeless and helpless conditions of their virtues and their jati membership were placed socially, economically, culturally, and politically at the very bottom of a hierarchical society. That was their permanent place. Every effort was made to keep them there, through enforced poverty and social degradation, and they know it. They were not Dalits out of choice. They were Dalits because it suited the higher castes of society to keep them at the bottom. Dalits lacked the power, and the government lacked the necessary will to change that. The evidence available indicates that the Dalit accepted the hierarchal ordering of society. And those who did not accept their assigned place in the social hierarchy directed their efforts towards improving their place within it. However things began to change when the simmering



dissent made Dalits rise and organize their masses to lead the revolt against society to change their unequal status. These mass movements are what are generally known as Dalit movements. So far so much work has been done by distinguished scholars on the Dalits struggle for social justice and emancipation. A good number of these are produced on Dalit issues. Dr. Ambedkar's speeches and writings are referred to in libraries. Nationwide and statewide problems of Dalits and their issues were discussed. They are available in the form of books and dissertations. Besides that, fact-finding reports and interviews with human rights activists also helped a lot to collect first hand information on Dalit problems. The contribution of Dalit intellectuals across the country has been made use of in studies like Galanter (1984), Nandu Ram (1988), Oommen (1990), Gupta (1991), Jogdand (1991), Michael (1999), Chalam (2007), Thorat (2008), and Hardtmann (2009) which tried to throw light on the Dalits in modern India. Few studies tried to establish a link between the emergence of Dalit movement and relative deprivation, social mobility, and reference group theory, though it is inadequate in understanding the Dalit movements in its totalitarian perspectives.

Galanter (1984) in *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India* explores whether a democratic society can pursue a policy of compensatory discrimination without forsaking equality or sliding into a system of group quotas. For over thirty years, India has been engaged in a massive effort to integrate untouchables and other oppressed peoples into the mainstream of Indian life. This book is the first comprehensive study of the Indian experience with policies of systematic preferential treatment. Galanter includes a discussion of the relation of the Courts to public policy in his analysis of the choices and tensions in the Indian policies of compensatory preference.

Rajshekar Shetty (1987) in *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India* shows how every hour two Dalits are assaulted, every day three Dalit women are raped, two Dalits are murdered, and two Dalit houses are burnt. Dalit is not only forbidden to enter the home of a Brahmin, but he must also not draw water from the same well, nor eat from the same pot or plate. He must not glance at or allow his shadow to fall on the Brahmin. All these acts will pollute the pure Brahmin. Also Dalit is not only Untouchable, but also unseeable, unapproachable, unshadowable, and even unthinkable. *Dalit: The black untouchables of India* is the first book to provide a Dalit view of the roots and continuing factors of the gross oppression of the world's largest minority. Over 150 million people through a 3,000 year history of conquest are in slavery, apartheid, and worse conditions. Rajshekar (1987) offers a penetrating, often startling

overview of the role of Brahminism and the Indian caste system in embedding the notion of untouchability in Hindu culture, tracing the origins of the caste system to an elaborate system of political control in the guise of religion imposed by Aryan invaders on a conquered aboriginal/Dravidian civilization. He exposes the almost unimaginable social indignities that continue to be imposed upon untouchables to this very day, despite the outlawing of untouchability with the complicity of the political, criminal justice, media, and educational systems.

Oommen (1990) in *Protest and Change: Studies in Social Movements* analysed protest movements as sources of social change. He argues that until now the basic sources of change have been taken to be the economy or those watersheds in human history labelled as agrarian, industrial, or information revolutions. By contrast, political revolutions have been accorded too little attention. In the first part of this book, the author explores the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues in the study of social movements. He then goes on to examine specific methodological problems faced by analysts of on-going movements, and explores the relationship between movements and institutions. In part two, he examines social movements in the macro context of the nation-state, while the final part considers the micro dimensions of social movements, focusing on protest by specific social categories.

Upadhyay (1991) in *Reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes* shows that the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes of India remained socially, economically, educationally, and politically backward since the beginning of caste stratification of Indian society. There is a close relationship between caste and occupation. The caste system has not allowed weaker sections to shift more productive occupations. After independence, there has been a growing tempo of developmental activities for them to facilitate their mobility. The impact of change appears more striking against a backdrop of relative immobility for centuries. These factors created a definite awareness about social climbing in the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In this book, an attempt has been made to improve the condition of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes through reservation facilities. Apart from various constitutional safeguards, a number of voluntary organizations started providing various facilities to the weaker sections of society for their proper upliftment. The Constitution of India based upon the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, and being essentially egalitarian with certain fundamental rights to the citizens for free self-expression and development of personality. The author gives valuable suggestions to improve the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This outstanding book will be of

immense use to researchers, students of various disciplines and policy-makers of the country.

Kshirasagara (1994) in *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders (1857-1956)* objectively analyzed, properly interpreted, and systematically arranged in a consolidated form of Dalit movements. It would be useful as a ready reference to the scholars, interested in undertaking intensive research on individual leaders, and their role in the movement. It would be beneficial to those activists who prefer to take lessons from their past.

Gail (1994) in *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India* traces the history of the Dalit movement from its origins to the death of its most famous leader, B.R. Ambedkar in 1956. Focusing on three states: Andhra, Maharashtra, and Karnataka- the author skillfully analyzes the ideology and organization of the movement and its interaction both with the freedom struggle and the class struggles of the workers and peasants.

Gupta (1997) in *Social Stratification* discusses social stratification in India with an interdisciplinary approach. It contains both classical and new writing on caste. It profiles the variations and the social importance of this system. The work also examines class and its dynamics, highlighting the urgency of the topic, considering all the complexities of current social and political life in India.

Oliver Mendelsohn, Marika Vicziany (1998) in *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty, and The state in Modern India* gives an account of the lives of those at the very bottom of Indian society, authors explore the construction of the untouchables as a social and political category, the historical background that led to such a definition, and their position in India today. The authors argue that, despite efforts to ameliorate their condition on the part of the state, a considerable edifice of discrimination persists on the basis of a tradition of ritual subordination. Even now, therefore, it still makes sense to categorize these people as untouchables. The book promises to make a major contribution to the social and economic debates on poverty, while its wide-ranging perspectives will ensure an interdisciplinary readership from historians of South Asia, to students of politics, economics, religion, and sociology.

Michael (1999) in *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values* discusses the aspirations and struggles of the marginalized Dalit masses, and looks forward to a new humanity based on equality, social justice, and human dignity. Within the context of Dalit emancipation, it explores the social, economic, and cultural content of Dalit transformation in modern India. These Articles, by some of the foremost researchers in the field, are presented in four parts: Part I deal with the historical material on the origin

and development of untouchability in Indian civilization. Part II contests mainstream explanations and shows that the Dalit vision of Indian society is different from that of the upper castes. Part III offers a critique of the Sanskritic perspective of traditional Indian society, and fieldworks-based portraits of the Hinduisation of Adivasis in Gujarat, Dalit patriarchy in Maharashtra and Dalit power politics in Uttar Pradesh. Part IV concentrates on the economic condition in the Dalits.

Smita Narula (1999) in *Broken People: Caste Violence against India's Untouchables* discusses about the caste, class, gender, poverty, labor, and land. For those at the bottom of its hierarchy, caste is a determining factor for the attainment of social, political, civil, and economic rights. Most of the conflicts documented in this report take place within very narrow segments of the caste hierarchy, between the poor and the not so poor, the landless laborer, and the small landowner. The differences lie in the considerable amount of leverage that the higher caste Hindus or non-Dalits are able to wield over local police, District administrations, and even the state government.

Robert Deliége, Nora Scott (1999) *Untouchables of India: The subjugation of millions of people in a caste system that is a radical form of apartheid* has long had its critics, both from within India and from outside it. Although the government has introduced equal opportunity legislation in an effort to right some of history's wrongs, untouchability is an accident of birth that continues to stigmatize and ostracize more than one hundred and forty million people. Untouchables remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale and are found, more often than not, in unskilled, low-status occupations. They are forbidden to enter temples, often beg for their food, must leave their chests uncovered and silently endure public humiliations and insults. They remain on the fringes of society, and it is even said by some that their shadows pollute passersby. This excellent book addresses the problem of untouchability by providing an overview of the subject, as well as penetrating insights into its social and religious origins. The author persuasively demonstrates that untouchability is a deeply ambiguous condition: neither inside nor outside society, are revealed yet indispensable, have untouchables constituted an original category of social exclusion. This is reflected in the various social movements they have led over the last century and more. The situation of untouchables is crucial to the understanding of caste dynamics, especially in contemporary circumstances, but emphasis, particularly within anthropology, has been placed on the dominant aspects of the caste system, rather than on those marginalized and excluded from it. This important book redresses this problem and represents a vital contribution

to studies of India, Hinduism, human rights, history, sociology, and anthropology.

Michael (1999) in *Untouchable, Dalits in Modern India* explores the enduring legacy of untouchability in India. This book challenges the ways in which the Indian experience has been represented in western scholarship. The authors introduce the long tradition of Dalit emancipation struggle and present a sustained critique of academic discourse on the dynamics of caste in Indian society. Case studies complement these arguments, underscoring the perils and problems that Dalits face in a contemporary context of communalized politics and market reforms.

Vasant Moon, Gail and Zelliott (2000) *Growing up Untouchable in India: A Dalit Autobiography*: In this English translation, Moon's story is usefully framed by apparatus necessary to bring its message to even those taking their first look at South Asian culture. The result is an easy to digest short-course on what it means to be a Dalit, in the words of one notable Dalit Journal of Asian Studies.

Sudha Pai (2003) in *Dalit Assertion and The Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh* examines the emergence, ideology and programmes, mobilization strategies, electoral progress, and political significance of the Bahujan Samaj Party against the backdrop of a strong wave of Dalit assertion in Uttar Pradesh. Based upon extensive fieldwork in western Uttar Pradesh, government reports and interviews with Dalit leaders, while highlighting the BSP considerable achievements, explores the reasons for the party's failure to harness the forces of Dalit assertion in Uttar Pradesh.

Webster (2002) *Religion and Dalit Liberation: An Examination of Perspectives*: This work is a revised version of three lectures on the views of Dr. Ambedkar on Dalits.

Ghanshyam (2001) in *Dalit Identity and Politic* examines the many facets of on-going Dalit struggles to improve their position. Focusing on identity assertion and collective action, the contributors discuss the nature of Dalit politics, and the challenges and dilemmas that they face in contemporary India.

Chinna Rao (2003) in *Dalits Struggle for Identity* deals with the familiar story of Dalits from a new perspective. Often, social scientists in general and historians in particular interpret Dalit consciousness as false consciousness, undermining their radical political self-assertion. This work mainly deals with the Dalits political self-assertion and political consciousness, their struggle for identity, and the manner in which they rose from a stage when they could develop their own self-definition and roles within the dialectics of the nationalist anti-colonial struggle. The

strength of this work lies in drawing upon vernacular sources and in presenting an insider's perspective.

Ramesh Chandra and Sangh Mitra (2003) *Dalits Identity in the New Millennium* (set of 10 volumes): This 10 volume set covers a wide variety of themes, ranging from the caste system in India, to the spread of Buddhism, to the biographical speeches of some of the eminent Dalit leaders, and would go a long way in establishing the identity of the Dalits on a firm footing, and in eradicating the notion that the Dalits occupy an inferior position in society. Vol.1: Caste system in India; Vol.2: Buddha: A Revolutionary and Reformer; Vol.3: Phases of Dalit Revolt; Vol.4: The Ambedkar Era; Vol.5: Jagjivan Ram and his times; Vol.6: Dalits and the Ideology of Revolt; Vol.7: K.R. Narayanan: Crusader of Social Justice; Vol.8: Dalit Leaders; Vol.9: Dalits and their Future; Vol.10: Untouchability and the Law.

Naik (2003) *Thoughts and Philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar*: All observations of change in masses, and outlook and impact on social relationships can be reduced to a point, whether it's the steeply rooted fort of inequality being demolished brick by brick to adopt the fraternal relationship in its social system one by one or not. The problem thus reduced has further practical issues of the inexorable rule of inequality inbuilt in genetic, traditional, and charismatic individualism. However this problem is not insolvable. It can be resolved by assuming reality and value as inseparable as an interrelationship of equality and inequality, the former dictating what principle should be held in treating all individuals of society, and the latter telling what the state of affairs actually exists. Then, by upholding fraternal equality as the reigning principle in behaviour and being aware of existing odds against it, the problem may be resolved and the one man one value oriented dream of Dr. Ambedkar can be brought about in our national life. The present book, thoughts and philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar stressed the philosophy of equality, liberty, and fraternity, as expounded by Dr. Ambedkar himself under the caption of my personal philosophy, originally in Marathi, translated into English by this author. It deals with the Buddhist development in the east and west since 1950; Ambedkarism in the world; Punjabi speech on Ambedkar by Ballely translated into English; Marathi Articles of Babasaheb translated into English; and the author's own contributions such as Education and Ambedkar, Ambedkar as a Great Relevance to a New Millennium, and so on.

Raj Kumar (2003) in *Essays on Dalits* discusses on the Dalit controversy, weaker sections during the Mauryan period, sudras in ancient Hindu law, Ambedkar's perception of justice, the Dalit psyche and the