

Dalit Movement in India: A Case Study of Uttar Pradesh

(Late 19th to Mid-20th Century)

*A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Award of the Degree of*

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IN

HISTORY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Sangeeta Kumari, hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled “**Dalit Movement in India: A Case Study of Uttar Pradesh (Late 19th to Mid-20th Century)**” is submitted by me under the supervision of Dr. Y. Swarupa Rani Shankar, is a bonafide research work for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in History from the University of Hyderabad. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/ INFLIBNET.

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CERTIFICATE

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Part of this thesis has been

A. Published in the following Publications:

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Abbreviations

BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
NWP	North Western Provinces
RPI	Republican Party of India
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SCF	Scheduled Caste Federation
UP	United Provinces
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPSA	Uttar Pradesh State Archive
UPSCF	Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation

GLOSSARY

<i>Acchut:</i>	Literally “Untouched”; an alternative and less negative term for “untouchable”.
<i>Achhutudhar:</i>	A program for the social and moral uplift of “untouchables” devised by caste by caste Hindu organization.
<i>Asprishya:</i>	Term used for Ex-untouchables as impure.
<i>Bedakhali:</i>	Eviction from land.
<i>Begari:</i>	Forced unpaid labour.
<i>Bhajan:</i>	The singing of devotional songs and hymns.
<i>Bhuenya Devi:</i>	Local Goddess of Dalit community.
<i>Chamariya Devi:</i>	The Caste Goddess of Chamar Community.
<i>Chuna:</i>	Lime.
<i>Crore:</i>	Ten million.
<i>Dai:</i>	An untouchable woman who cuts the umbilical cord of a new born baby and nurses the baby and mother for the first three to six days.
<i>Dasa:</i>	Slave, Dasa is a Sanskrit word found in ancient Indian texts such as the Rigveda and Arthasastra.
<i>Devlok:</i>	The abode of gods, heaven.
<i>Devta:</i>	A Hindu god.
<i>Dwija:</i>	A pure or caste Hindu.
<i>Harijan:</i>	Term Used for Dalit by Mahatma Gandhi.
<i>Harwar/Halwaha:</i>	An untouchable who was being used as ploughman to land lords.
<i>Hin Jati:</i>	Lower Caste.
<i>Hindutva:</i>	Politics of Hindu identity term popularized since the 1920’s by some Hindu campaigners.
<i>Mahasabha:</i>	An association or organization, usually formed on caste or community.

<i>Melas:</i>	Local fairs.
<i>Mochi:</i>	A Shoemaker.
<i>Nirguan:</i>	Without form, the nirgun deity has no form of attribute.
<i>Panchayat:</i>	A Caste council.
<i>Sabha:</i>	A society or Association.
<i>Sagun:</i>	This form of bhakti insists worshipping of god and their incarnation.
<i>Sangthan:</i>	An organization, more generally a politics to unite all Hindus.
<i>Satyagrah:</i>	A policy of passive political resistance, especially that advocated by Mahatma Gandhi against British rule in India.
<i>Shoshit:</i>	Exploited communities.
<i>Suddhi:</i>	A ritual performed to purify untouchable and other by Hindu ceremony.
<i>Suryavanshi:</i>	Royal.
<i>Swaraj:</i>	Independence.
<i>Tahsil:</i>	An Administrative division in the District.
<i>Yagyopavit:</i>	A sacred thread (Janeu).

Chapter-I

Introduction

“Shudron Gulam Rahte, Sadiyan Guzar Gayeen Hain

Julam-Sitam Ko Sahte, Sadiyan Guzar Gayeen Hain

Ab To Zaro Bicharo, Sadiyan Guzar Gayeen Hain

Apni Dasa Sudharo, Sadiyan Guzar Gayeen Hain.”

(Swami Acchutanand Harihar)

In Indian society, caste is the reality that shapes existential experiences and everyday relationships. Caste is the social status through which power relations operate, i.e., high caste or low caste with birth conveying unlimited, unequal rights and duties.¹ The caste system legitimises inequality and power, forcing Indian society to segregate itself into a division of labour based on traditionally socially constructed functions and hierarchy (relatively superior or inferior to one another). Non-compliance with social rules may result in humiliation through a social boycott. Throughout history, unprecedented levels of caste violence and oppression have been consistently resisted and challenged.²

The anti-caste movement has been widely carried out, with tenacious opposition forming against age-old caste Hindu oppression and practices of untouchability. The anti-caste fight has spread to a wide spectrum of Dalit mobility and reformatory movements across India as a consequence of constant efforts and demonstrations.³ Dalit mobility can be roughly characterised and evaluated in three stages. The Bhakti movement, which aspired to bring about social reform

¹ J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India, its Nature, Function and Origins*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p.2.

² N. B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2002, p.35.

³ Gail Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in Colonial Society: The Non- Brahmin Movement in Western India 1873 to 1930*, Manohar Publisher and Distributor, New Delhi, 2011, p.44.

in Indian society, might be considered the first step in Dalit awakening. The Bhakti movement was a succession of spiritual awakenings that addressed anti-caste problems. The Bhakti Movement was led by Guru Ravidas, Chokamela, Kabir, Guru Nanak, and Eknath. A wide range of actions for spiritual freedom are carried out, including the promotion of cultural awakening through songs and poetry. The purpose of modern Dalit activism was to strive for the same theoretical and institutional access as well as social acknowledgment in the modern period. Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Chatrapati Sahu Maharaj, Narayana Guru, Periyar Ramaswamy, and others have made important efforts to provide Dalits and women with educational opportunities. By adopting cultural statements, Uttar Pradesh also witnessed the Dalit awakening process. The Dalit awakening process was called "Adi-Hindu" to refer to the primordial sons of the soil. Swami Acchutanand had formed a number of cultural offshoot wings to educate Dalits and other like-minded individuals in the process of awakening. This could be called the second stage of the Dalit migration and awakening process. The era of Dr. Ambedkar is usually referred to as the third phase of the Dalit awakening process. This strategy aimed at a broader view of constitutional safeguards in terms of vast social, economic, and political endeavours in relation to modernity.⁴

The proposed study focuses on the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh, specifically the movement aimed at bringing about socioeconomic, cultural, and political transformations that resulted in a new identity and consciousness that arose for Dalits during the colonial period. The study aims to trace the rise and spread of the Dalit movement, which is primarily based on self-respect, dignity, equality, and social justice. It has been attempted to explain the socio-cultural transition of untouchables into Adi-Hindus, Harijans, and, finally, Dalits in their identity and pursuit of humanity. The basic premise of Dalit liberation is the criticism of Brahminical Hinduism, anti-caste ideology. With the passage of time, Dalit literary, socio-political, and cultural expressions have found vibrant expression as forms of protest. It is widely accepted that the advent of colonial masters modernized the lives of Dalits by providing them institutional access and exposure. Thereafter, the plight of Dalits has evolved into an organized competitive

⁴B. Krishnaiah,(edited), *Dalit Movements and Literature Emerging Issues and Challenges*, Prestige Books International, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 1-5

community with agencies fighting for recognition, redistribution, and equal status in an unequal society.

Dalit leaders such as Swami Acchutananda, considered pioneers of Dalit movements in Uttar Pradesh, were initially motivated by the reformist activities of Hindu frontal organisations such as the Aryasamaj. He strove to ameliorate the plight of Dalits by surviving within Hindu society from 1905 until 1912. He battled against the horrible practises of untouchability, imputed discrimination, and other social practises prevalent among Hindu castes. Dalit leaders worked tremendously hard to implement reforms that would benefit their community members. But very soon he got disillusioned as he saw injustice being done to the untouchables. These leaders have participated in social activities aimed at raising awareness of societal prejudices and problems created by caste Hindus and their oppressive institutions. Dalit leaders also founded several socio-cultural associations for the benefit of the community, while at the same time they were questioning the state to get their rights. These organisations acted as reformists and put political and other pressure on particular castes. In addition, these associations confirmed their cultural and social ideals by opposing child marriage, terminating midwifery, aiming to limit the consumption of alcohol and meat in social gatherings, and encouraging education as a tool of progress. Efforts have been made to remedy the social evil of caste. The process of identity formation and empowerment of Dalits in society was one of the most important tasks carried out by these groups. As a result, the proposed study would highlight the engagement of Dalit movement leaders and their intellectual efforts to continue the movement at the grassroots level. The present study investigates the contours of Dalit expression in Uttar Pradesh from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century. It also aims to comprehend the creation of Dalit identity and consciousness through various kinds of voluntary organisations, which might have assisted people in grasping the unfair social practises of the caste system. Swami Achhutanand Harihar, Ram Narayan Yadvendu, and Ram Charan Kureel, among others, led Dalit assertions during the colonial period. During the same time period, numerous socio-religious organisations in the northern region, such as the Arya Samaj and the Brahma Samaj, sought to bring untouchables into the Hindu fold. The Harijan Sevak Sangh movement also aimed to lure untouchables into Indian National Congress politics. Untouchables were also attracted to religious conversion to

Islam. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar began a national effort against the brutal structure of the caste system, which is still present throughout India.

Statement of the Problem

The Dalit movement in India emerged as an alternative democratic struggle against caste discrimination and Brahmanical authority. Regional variations can be seen in the prevalence and manifestation of untouchable struggles. Sant Ravidas Panth, Gorkh Panth, and Kabir Panth have made a big difference in people's lives in northern India. The Adi-Hindu movement was founded by Swami Achutananda and aimed at establishing their identity and undermining Hindu caste rule. A growing sense of self-awareness among the untouchables forced them to look for new identities and assert their claims to political and social rights. These communities' deplorable living conditions fortified various identities, providing them with positive hope and relief from oppressive and stigmatised identities. Untouchables in India have fought for respectable, dignified identities throughout history while also contending with assigned, harmful, and oppressive identities. This fight was primarily aimed at changing caste and social relations. Changes in caste and social connections were the main goals of this conflict. However, Dr. Ambedkar's entrance onto the Indian political scene significantly changed the objectives and conflicts of the downtrodden classes. Dr. Ambedkar launched an all-India movement in order to start uniting the untouchables. Gandhi and Ambedkar disagreed on many issues, including Indian history, the caste system, and the emancipation of the untouchables, which led to their struggle and disagreement. In this case, Gandhi represented the Hindu Varnashrama Dharma reformist heritage, whereas Ambedkar represented the anti-caste legacy. Swami Achutanand and Dr. Ambedkar questioned Gandhi, Congress hegemony, Brahma, and the Arya Samajist proclivity to homogenise untouchables within the Hindu fold without addressing caste hierarchy and untouchability throughout the colonial period, particularly during the independence struggle. He questioned the communist-orthodox vision of the Indian state and society, as well as caste and Brahmanical authority. As a result, Dr. Ambedkar sought out independent movements and political organisations led by oppressed people, particularly Dalits. He connected and organised Dalit statements in order to grow this movement.

The Adi-Hindu movement had a significant impact on Dr. Ambedkar. Following Swamiji's death, Ambedkar assisted in the organisation of various Dalit leaders under the Scheduled Castes Association, which had a significant impact on the region. Dr. Ambedkar attempted to unite the dispersed Dalit community. As a result, it has become an important aspect of understanding the contemporary Dalit movements. The scholarly research work on the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh shows the formation of Dalit identity and consciousness between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries; thus, it is also an important aspect in understanding why Dalit organisations, literature, leadership, and politics were vocal during this period. And why, at the grassroots level, were a majority of Dalits drawn to this movement? Are some of the issues worth examining in light of the systemic challenge to Dalit identity and consciousness? A few of these concerns are being looked into in the present study.

Objectives

The title of the current study is "Dalit Movements in India: A Case Study of Uttar Pradesh, Late 19th to Mid-20th Century." It analyses the Dalit movement's various stages critically. It examines Dalit identity and consciousness in caste-class social relations from before to after independence. The study is primarily focused on the following goals:

- To examine the Dalit people's socioeconomic, religious, and cultural circumstances throughout the colonial era.
- To trace out the strategies of Dalit politics in shaping the identities and consciousness among Dalits.
- To examine the role of Dalit intellectuals and their literary work in bringing about social transformation for the advancement of Dalits.
- To find out the significance of caste association to improve the status of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh.
- To bring out the role of local leaders who were involved in the Dalit movement.

Hypothesis

The study formulates the following working hypotheses.

- The Dalit movement differed from other social reform movements established in India from time to time because it had rationalistic and ideological elements. This movement in Uttar Pradesh has traditionally tried to bring about a fundamental social change in the current social framework.
- The identity formation process among Dalits was crafted by politically and socially conscious intelligentsia in United Provinces.
- Colonial rule has created a dynamic context for the emergence of identities and consciousness among the marginalized sections of India in general and Dalits in particular.
- Dalit and Non- Dalit associations enabled Dalits to articulate their identity and consciousness based upon dignity and self-respect
- Dalit consciousness and identity building process is basically an emancipatory project to provide not only respectable identity but also to lay down a path for progress of Dalit society.

Methodology

The framework of social science research is followed. The historical, descriptive, analytical, and critical methodologies are implemented to describe the problems put forth in the body of research. This study collects and employs both primary and secondary sources. In terms of secondary sources, sources such as published books, papers, journals, organisations, websites, and so on have been employed. In the case of primary sources, sources from Uttar Pradesh's State Archives, the Regional Archive of Allahabad, the Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial in Delhi, and the National Archive of India are being accessed. Sources such as Provincial Gazetteers, District Gazetteers, Census Reports, Harijan Welfare Department Proceedings, Police Abstract Reports, General Administrative Department, and Ethnographical work were used. I also conducted interviews with local Dalit leaders. Apart from that, original writings by Dalit intellectuals, periodicals, and literature available in Hindi have been used to capture Dalit narratives about their social environment. The aforementioned sources can be found in the

following locations: Central Library of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Academy, Samyak Prakashan, and Gautam Book Depot, New Delhi; Gautam Buddha Central Library of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Tagore Library, University of Lucknow; Amirudaulla Library; Acharya Narendra Dev Library; Bauddha Shanti Upavan Library Lucknow; the Bahujan Samaj Prakashan Lucknow; the V. V. Giri Institute for Development Study Lucknow; Pasi Shodh Sansthan Lucknow; and the Dalit Resource Centre at the G. B. Pant Institute of Social Sciences Allahabad.

Review of literature

Several studies encompassing diverse elements and time periods have been undertaken by researchers. In addition to primary sources, we have a number of secondary sources dealing with the Dalit Movement in India: A Case Study of Uttar Pradesh (late 19th century to mid-20th century) for those who want to learn more about the Dalit Movement in general, there is a variety of material available. This literature acts as a lens into the realities of various societies. Here is a quick summary of the literature that sheds light on a particular facet of India's Dalits and the Dalit Movement.

In modern India, a monolithic and disciplined untouchable identity was established through the use of the colonial ethnographic and administrative framework. Nationalist political and social ideology actively contributed to the spread of this image. The experiences of the colonial masters who colonised the Indian subcontinent have been documented through ethnography. These ethnographic texts have generated a huge amount of academic discussion in India. Studies by ethnographers and anthropologists that looked at the lived past and present of the Indian masses spanned a very large region. Analyzing Indian society is crucial for modern studies and research, and historical anthropology is gaining popularity. Anthropologists contributed to the census reports released, as well as unique volumes of their ethnographic studies of various geographical regions of India. They also kept research journals and recorded oral conversation reports. The ethnography of the Dalit group must be recorded. In India, there are a lot of historical ethnographic accounts. “*A Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs of the People of India and of Their Institutions, Religious and Civil*”, by Abbe J.A. Dubois, (1806), is a highly renowned work on the anthropological account of India. Dubois, a French native who moved to India following the French Revolution, wrote it. The South Indian

Brahmin clans were noted by him. The Rev. G.U. Pope translated it from French into English. It was the first instance of Indian people-related writing. Because it refers to all communities as tribes, it includes details on the various tribe groups. It examines the Indian social caste groups and is extremely diversified in nature. “*Oriental Memoires*” in (Four Volumes) was published by James Forbes in 1813. Caste, tribe, nation, and race are all terms he mentions in his literature. He divided the Hindu species into 84 castes, with each caste having its own strict endogamy code. “*A Perspective of Hindu History, Literature, and Religion*” by William Ward, published in four volumes between 1817 and 1820, also covered caste and racial issues. The caste system's victims were inferior, he determined. The Khattris are the descendants of a race that fought with the Kashmiris, the prettiest race in Hindustan, with pure Aryan blood, and were second to the Brahmins in terms of religion, according to Mr. Kashi Nath's 1873 article in “*Indian Antiquary*”. The Rajputs, Khattris, and Jats were all described as one race by J. White, the assistant collector of Fatehpur in the North Western Province, who claimed that they all had common ancestors. In his article, “On the Characteristics of the Population of Central and Southern India”, written by Walter Elliot and published in the “*Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* in 1868–1869”, Elliot argues that the majority of people in South India are members of a race who were subjected to caste oppression by the pre-Aryan and non-Brahmin inhabitants of the region. Since there were no current government records on the social groupings prior to William Crooke's publication of “*The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*” in four volumes in 1896, this work set a milestone for the documentation and explanation of the majority of Dalit communities. Many glossaries, as well as caste and tribal ethnographies, were published by the provincial governments through Risely. The Aryan (upper caste), Dravidian (low caste), and Mongoloid (tribes) races were used by Risely in 1903 to classify the Indian population. The seven volumes of “*Caste and Tribes of Southern India*” by Edgar Thurston (1909), authored with T. Rangachari, are the most notable. Three authors R.V. Russell, Rai Bahadur, and H.A. Rose wrote “*A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of Punjab*”. The important ethnographic works, “*Tribes and Castes of Bombay*”, published in three volumes by Reginald Edward Ethoven in 1920-1922, and “*Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*”, published in four volumes by Hira Lal in 1916, Denzil Ibbetson in 1916, and Reginald Edward Ethoven in three volumes in 1920-1922, are all examples.

R.K. Kshirsagar's⁵ book covers the history of the “*Dalit movement and its Leaders in India from 1857 to 1956*”. The history of untouchability, a crude dehumanization technique, is examined in this book. It also gives us important knowledge about the elements that contributed to the development of the Dalit movement in India. The author cites land settlement, new industries, communication tools, new educational initiatives, the press and publications, a new legal framework, and a democratic process as contributing factors to the growth of the Dalit Movement. The chronology of events and the successes of various Dalit organizations, in addition to the founding of Dalit organizations, were covered in this book. The author concludes by critically analyzing the Dalit movement in several Indian states and outlining its dynamics.

An important book that explores the beginnings and history of the Dalit Movement is “*Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*” by Gail Omvedt.⁶ In this book, the author provides historical information in addition to descriptions of the Dalit Movement in Nagpur, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, and the Bombay Presidency. Additionally, the author has looked at the beginnings and development of caste in India. She also talks about the connection between caste, religion, and colonialism in the context of the Dalit uprising and movement in India. The key moments and turning points in the Dalit Movement's history from 1933 to 1936 are covered in great detail in this book. She also discusses the intriguing and peculiar connection between Dr. Ambedkar, Gandhi, and the Marxists.

In her book, “*The Dalit Movement in India: Local Practices, Global Connections*”, author Eva Maria Hardtmann⁷ investigates the nature and discourses, organizational structure, and local practices of activists in India. The book's main themes are movement diversity, internal conflicts, and global connections. Conflicts within the movement, according to the author, aid in its development and provide it with a stronger cultural identity. Dalit Buddhism, Dalit Christian Theology, and Dalit Political Perspective are three distinct but important Dalit discourses

⁵ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit movement in India and its Leadership*, M. D. Publication, New Delhi, 1994.

⁶ Gail Omvedt, *Dalit and Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1994.

⁷ Eva Maria Hardtmann, *The Dalit Movement in India: Local Practices, Global Connections*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

articulated by her. She also discusses Dalit feminism and the interactions between men and women in the movement.

“*The Chamars*” by G. W. Briggs⁸ was based on the Chamars of Uttar Pradesh, historically referred as the United Provinces, but also includes Chamars and leather workers from other regions of India. Sources for the investigation have included information from official census records, books on anthropology and ethnology, and other ethnographic reports. It illustrates the general traits of the Chamars. It is necessary to look deeper into the specifics of each sub-social group’s situation and thought patterns. Due to this, the author had the opportunity to meet and speak with men from all significant sub-castes, including farmers, tanners, shoemakers, magicians, gurus, and servants.

Nandu Ram’s⁹ “*Beyond Ambedkar: Essay on Dalit in India*” describes Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s contribution to the Dalit Movement and expresses gratitude for it. The author critically assesses and portrays the leader of the current Dalit movement. He describes Dalits’ status and predicament as a social reality in contemporary society. Later, he looks into the social mobility and educational attainment of contemporary Dalits. According to the author, Dalits’ current predicament is brought on by their lack of knowledge. He believes that providing these castes or communities with access to education will improve their socioeconomic standing and speed up the process of change.

Christopher Jaffrelot’s¹⁰ “*India’s Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low Castes in North Indian Politics*” is about Dalits’ political articulation in state assemblies and the parliamentary election process. The book’s narratives open with discussions on the Congress politics as well as efforts to win elections and create strategies in India. He discusses the rise of the Janata Dal, the Kisan Movement, and the Bahujan Samaj Party. He places focus on the steps that led to the ascent of lower caste groups in the political realm in UP and throughout India among different political parties.

⁸ G. W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, London, 1920.

⁹ Nandu Ram, *Beyond Ambedkar, Essay on Dalit in India*, Har Anand Publication, New Delhi, 1995.

¹⁰ Jaffrelot Christophe’s, *India’s Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low Castes in North Indian Politics*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2003.

Dr. Sanjay Paswan and R. Pramanshi Jaideva's¹¹ work, “*The Encyclopedia of Dalits in India*”, delves deeply into the background and manner of life of Dalits in India. This priceless and entertaining book has been released in 11 volumes. These 11 different books include a third volume that is devoted to the Dalit Movement in India. The third volume of the "Encyclopedia of Dalits in India" includes information on the Bhakti, Mahar, and non-Brahmin movements in addition to a brief history and background of Dalits. The Dravidian movement and socio-religious reform initiatives have been started in India specifically to free Dalits. The role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is discussed later, along with Gandhi's interactions with Dalits. The Dalit Panther Movement, Kanshiram's Movement, and post-Ambedkar progress are covered in this book.

“*Politics of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*” by Ghanshyam Shah¹² focuses on the political consciousness, awareness, and behaviour of SCs and STs. It investigates the political involvement of various communities in Gujarat. It goes into detail about the initiatives and roles of political leaders and parties in relation to these groups. This study examines colonial and post-colonial social, religious, and political movements, including the contributions of M. K. Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar.

“*History Produces Politics: The Nara-Maveshi Movement in Uttar Pradesh*”¹³ by Badri Narayan is a well-researched article on the social reform movement within the Chamar community to eradicate the foul practises of eating dead animals' flesh, cutting off the umbilical cord, and performing impure works in upper caste families. This inspires the Chamar community to pursue new development objectives.

M. N. Srinivas's¹⁴ “*Social Change in Modern India*” is a classic and diverse documentation of the Sanskritization process. How Dalits alter their social lives to accommodate Sanskritization.

¹¹ Dr. Sanjay Paswan and R. Pramanshi Jaideva (edited), *Encyclopedia of Dalits in India*, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi, 2000.

¹² Ghanshyam Shah, *Politics of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*, Vora and Company Publisher, Bombay, 1975.

¹³ Badri Narayan, History Produces Politics: The Nara-Maveshi Movement in Uttar Pradesh, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Volume No- XLV, No.40, October 02, 2010

¹⁴ M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, University of California Press, California, 1996.

This completely or partially satisfies the aspirations of India's marginal communities for higher status. Sanskritization brought with it new social status-related tendencies.

"Making the Dalit Public in North India: Uttar Pradesh, 1950–Present", Badri Narayan,¹⁵ This is a critical piece of work on Dalit political consciousness and identity politics. It is a very descriptive ethnographic account of women asserting their rights and making the Dalit public. It is concerned with the political activities and orientation of the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. It shows how the Brahmanical resistance culture became the primary source of their mobilization. Dalits used their Untouchable status to assert their identity in politics.

Patwardhan Sunanda's¹⁶ *"Change Among India's Harijans: Maharashtra, A case study"* examines the Scheduled Castes in the city of Pune. They include the Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars, Dhors, and Holars. This study explores the impact of both individual and group migration on caste connections, lifestyle, political engagement, occupation, education, and Sanskritization. The trend of industrialization, concerns with migration, and the rejection of conventional jobs due to increased education, which promotes greater social mobility, are all documented.

In Ramnarayan S. Rawat's¹⁷ study *"Occupation, Dignity, and Space: The Rise of Dalit Studies"*, previous occupations of Dalits and changes within a larger occupational framework, as well as the problem of their dignity, are all covered. In terms of employment and respect, it is incredibly helpful in the study of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh.

Lynch Owen M's¹⁸ book, *"The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in an Indian City"*, is about the Jatav of Agra. It investigates occupational mobility during the colonial era, with a focus on economic mobility. It discusses how economic mobility has helped strengthen community bonds. According to the author, the contained caste is an adaptive

¹⁵ Badri Narayan, *Making of the Dalit Public in North India: Uttar Pradesh, 1950–Present*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011.

¹⁶ Sunanda Patwardhan, *Change Among India's Harijans: Maharashtra*, Oriental Longman, New Delhi, 1973.

¹⁷ R.S. Rawat, *Occupation, Dignity and Space: The Rise of Dalit Studies*, *History Compass*, Vol.11, Issue 12, 2016.

¹⁸ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a city of India*, National Publishing House, Delhi, 1974.

organization that evolves both within itself and with other similar groups when the social environment provides suitable opportunities.

M. N. Srinivas's¹⁹ book "*Caste in Modern India*" attempted to highlight the role of caste in modern India's democratic processes, administration, and education. The author must admit that his perception of rising caste involvement in certain areas of public life concerned him. In this regard, he encountered several opposing viewpoints among the elite. On the one hand, there appeared to be a genuine belief in the ability of legislation to eliminate long-standing and pervasive social "evils." The elite, on the other hand, not only made a concerted effort to combat these ills but also tolerated their behaviour.

In Sumit and Tanika Sarkar's²⁰ book "*Caste in Modern India*", caste is the most significant category in current Indian social thought. When discussed and examined by historians, sociologists, and political scientists, it has sparked scholarly investigations. The historical literature on caste spans colonial times to the present. This anthology concentrated on particular facets of contemporary caste, including how caste was perceived during colonial times, how it was recreated in the present, and how various castes came to develop novel relationships with one another and with themselves.

Raj Kumar's²¹ "*The Chamar Dynasty, Vol. 2*", is a very thematically extensive treatise on the Chamar caste, their origins, and their historical position. It traces Chamar's development from antiquity to the pre-medieval era. It talks about the Chamar people, their dynastic history, and their subsequent growth.

Ramnaryan S. Rawat's²² "*Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamar's and Dalit History of North India*" investigate the life history and ambitions of the Chamars in Uttar Pradesh for three reasons. Firstly, it reveals previously unknown facts: population data reveals that more than 80% of them are agriculturist peasants and farmworkers. Second, the book provides some new

¹⁹ M. N. Srinivas, *Caste in Modern India and Other Essay*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962.

²⁰ Sumit and Tanika Sarkar, *Caste in Modern India*, Permanent Black, Vol.1 and 2, 2014.

²¹ Raj Kumar, *The History of Chamar Dynasty From 6th century AD to 12th century AD*, Vol.2, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi, 2008.

²² R. S., Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamar and Dalit History of North India*, Permanent Black Publisher, Utrakhand, 2012.

methodological perspectives on the trustworthiness of information found in the government archive, which has relied on oral interviews and memories while being subject to colonialism and nationalist historiography. Rawat discovered that knowledge hubs such as London and Delhi are the foundation of accurate and good narration. This work covers a wide range of Dalit and Chamar issues.

Kanpur served as the hub of the social, religious, economic, and political genealogies of the Dalit Movement, according to Bellwinkle Maren's²³ *“From Bhakti to Buddhism: Ravidas and Ambedkar”*. This research centered on the social and religious components of Dalits in North India. The foundation for Dalit advancement and inclusion is being laid by these movements. The Chamar and Kuril migrated from all over Uttar Pradesh to Kanpur and the surrounding regions, respectively. Bundelkhand's Ahirwar, Dushiya, and Jaiswara are a few examples. At the time, they belonged to different religions, and there was no reciprocity between them. After being dubbed "Chamar" by the British—a name that had never been used in the village before—they adopted their new profession as tanners.

The nineteenth century saw the start of a violent and contentious movement of protest among western India's low and untouchable castes, which was intended to combat the consequences of their lowly position within the Hindu caste hierarchy. This is the time period covered in Rosalind O'Hanlon's²⁴ book *“Caste, Conflict, and Ideology: Mahatama Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in 19th Century Western India”*. The movement's leaders believed that religious hierarchies had contributed to inequality and injustice in a multitude of spheres, including politics, education, and religion, in addition to the consequences of British colonial authority.

Gail Omvedt's²⁵ *“Dalit Vision: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity”* investigates and criticizes the mindset that considers Hinduism and Brahmanism to be associated with Indian tradition; that considers the Vedas to be a key text of Indian culture; and

²³ Maren Bellwinkle Schempp, *From Bhakti to Buddhism: Ravidas and Ambedkar*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.42, Issue No. 23, 2007.

²⁴ Rosalind O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatama Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in 19th Century Western India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.

²⁵ Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Vision: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity*, Orient Blackswan, 1995.

that associates the roots of Indian civilization with Aryan heritage. It demonstrates how easily Hindi values are absorbed into even secular speech. According to the author, Hindu nationalism is a type of nationalism that arouses religious interest. The course examines countercultures, the natural world, and Dalit movements that have challenged conventional views of Indian society and history. By investigating the Dalit people's history, voices, and ideas from a Dalit perspective, this alternative tradition and identity has been challenging Brahmanism culture.

Nandini Gupta's²⁶ “*The Politics of Urban Poor in Early 20th Century India*” sheds light on the connections between social class, occupation, and poverty, as well as the integration of migrants as wage labourers in urban areas. Both of these, she believes, have a connection to the Bhakti movement, also known as Adi Hinduism. She described it as a Dalit religious practise of the twentieth century. Many Dalits in Kanpur practised Bhakti, followed Kabir and Raidas' teachings, and participated in and supported the Kabir and Raidas Jayanti celebrations.

According to Nicholas B. Dirks²⁷ book “*Caste of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*”, caste is neither an immutable relic of ancient India nor a single system representing some fundamental aspect of culture. It is not a representation of Indian tradition but rather a relatively new phenomenon resulting from India's interaction with British colonial control. He investigates the evolution of caste politics in modern India, particularly caste-based movements and their impact on Indian nationalism. He also investigates the history of caste.

Lloyd, I, Rudolph and Rudolph Susanne Hoeber's, “*The Political Role of India's Caste Association*”²⁸ describes caste associations as forces that determined the hold of traditional culture and society as it was organised in relatively autonomous local units. It created the conditions for local subcastes to be linked in geographical and regional concerns, as well as to expand the associations. Caste associations, particularly those of the lower castes, are frequently thought to elevate caste's position in the social hierarchy.

²⁶ N. Gooptu, *The Politics of Urban Poor in Early 20th Century in India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

²⁷ N. B. Dirks, *Caste of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Paperback Publication, Princeton University Press, 2001

²⁸ Lloyd, I, Rudolph and Susanne, Hoeber, Rudolph, *The Political role of Indian Caste Associations*, *Pacific Affairs*, University of British Columbia, Vol.33, Issue No. 1, March 1960.

Sudha Pai's²⁹ *"Dalit Assertion"* investigates the phenomenon of Dalit assertion over the last three decades. It is part of a larger process of democratisation since independence as well as a grassroots upsurge that has given birth to a new Dalit identity and alternative Ambedkarite ideology and called into question the hierarchical caste structure that has historically oppressed the former untouchables. It investigates three types of Dalit assertion: grassroots, political parties, and middle-class activism. The assertion has increased political awareness and participation but not unity and has frequently resulted in violent caste atrocities against Dalits in many regions, particularly by backward castes.

The development and ultimate effectiveness of such a campaign are described in depth for the first time in Ian Duncan's³⁰ *"Dalit and the Raj: The Persistence of the Jatavs in the United Provinces."* It is suggested that the framework offered by the idea of Sanskritization is insufficient to completely understand the Jatav attempts to forge a distinctive official identity. According to the argument, the Jatav initiatives must be analysed as a manifestation of a purposeful Dalit participation in the period's developing political structure. Particularly during the constitutional reform debates, it became possible to contest the colonial regime's prior usage of caste names and numbers in its methods of government. In order to reveal the fallibility and falsity of many of the colonial rulers' assumptions, Dalit groups frequently engaged in formal examinations of reforms, frequently working with Dr. Ambedkar.

"Women Heroes and Dalit Assertion in North India" by Badri Narayan³¹ examines the ambiguous sociopolitical and cultural aspects of Dalits. From the political standpoint caste and gender, the book focuses on how Dalit women, such as Jalkari Bai, Udha Davi, and Mahaviri Bai, became icons of the Dalit assertion in Uttar Pradesh as "Viranganas" in 1857. How can posters, calendars, idols, and memorials in Uttar Pradesh use Dalit myths and memories to provide political mobilization and create identity in the Indian liberation struggle? There is a lot of information in this book, but it is all focused on various facets of Dalits as a whole.

²⁹ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, Oxford University Press, 2013.

³⁰ Ian Duncan, Dalits and the Raj: The Persistence of the Jatvas in United Provincess, *The Economy and Social History Review Publish*, Vol.56, Issue. 2, May 22, 2019.

³¹ Badri Narayan, *Women Heroes and Dalit Assertion in North India*, G.B. Pant Institute of Social Science, Allahabad, 2007.

Susan Bayly's³² book "*Caste, Society, and Politics in India: From the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*" examines Indian society as well as the history of caste, orientalist, and colonial caste perspectives. This book covers a variety of topics. The author has significantly influenced how numerous caste-related problems are theorized and conceptualized. How did routine local events create a solid foundation for caste cohesion and social interactions? This advances our knowledge of Dalit history and Dalit women in Uttar Pradesh.

Research by A. B. Mukherji³³ in "*The Chamars of Uttar Pradesh: A Study in Social Geography*" is an in-depth investigation of the Chamars. On the basis of this information, the distribution of Chamars in Uttar Pradesh can be understood geographically and historically. The relationships between the Chamars and the Jajmani system as well as other patron-client ties are also discussed.

In "*Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The BSP in Uttar Pradesh*," Sudha Pai³⁴ explores the rise of the BSP in the state while refuting a number of historical misconceptions. Assertion against upper-caste supremacy, against the state for failing to improve Dalits' economic factors, and for the abolition of the untouchability practise are all examples of what the author refers to as "Dalit assertion" in the context of Uttar Pradesh.

In Zelliott's³⁵ "*From Untouchables to Dalits: Essay on the Ambedkar Movement*", the political and religious movements of the Dalits in Maharashtra is briefly discussed. These movements range from the Bhakti tradition of Chokhamela and Ekanath to the Mahar movement led by B.R. Ambedkar, from the effects of the Buddhist revival to the literary movement of the 1970s. He has written extensively on B.R. Ambedkar's life, thoughts, and works and explores the historical connection between religious movements and untouchable protests as forms of resistance and change, starting with the Bhakti movement in the fourteenth century and ending with the modern Buddhist revival.

³² Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India: From The 18th Century to Modern Age*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

³³ A. B., Mukherji, *The Chamar of Uttar Pradesh: A Study in Social Geography*, Inter India Publication, Delhi, 1980

³⁴ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution in UP*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2002.

³⁵ Eleanor Zelliott, *From Untouchables to Dalits: Essay on the Ambedkar Movement*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996.

“The Mobile Scheduled Castes: Rise of a New Middle Class” by Nandu Ram³⁶ focuses on government employees of SCs in Kanpur City. It gathered samples from seven SC castes, including Chamar, Balmiki, Dhobi, Khatik, Kori, Pasi, and others. He investigates how affirmative action policy has paved the way for the emergence of a new middle class among Dalits.

James Massey's³⁷ book *“The Downtrodden: The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity, and Liberation”* makes an effort to address the vocabulary used to refer to Dalits and the causes of untouchability in India. He talks about some of the religious movements that supported Dalit development in India. He also discusses the globalization of Dalit issues and makes an effort to portray Dalit circumstances in the post-liberalization period.

In his ground-breaking book *“Caste in Indian Politics”*, renowned political scientist Rajani Kothari³⁸ explains the significance of caste in Indian politics. The author argues that political mobilization by various Indian social factions has led to caste becoming more prominent in Indian politics. He also mentions that various political parties have mobilized various caste groups to broaden their support base.

“Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values” edited by S.M. Michael³⁹ sheds light on practically every element of Dalit life. The articles highlight the main issues facing Dalits. There are four parts to the book. In the first portion, which is historical in nature, untouchability's beginnings and development in Indian civilization are traced. The Dalit perspective on Indian society is different from that of Hindus from the upper castes. Articles in the second section analyze the contributions of Jyotiba Phule and B.R. Ambedkar, who established the Dalit movements and are credited with starting India's social revolution. The methodological and practical characteristics of Dalits in Indian society are covered in the third section. The papers in this section criticize

³⁶ Nandu Ram, *The Mobile Scheduled Castes: Rise of a New Middle Class*, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 1988.

³⁷ James Massey, *The Downtrodden - The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity, and Liberation*, World Council of Churches (WCC Publications), 1998.

³⁸ Rajani Kothari, *Caste in Indian Politics*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1954.

³⁹ S. M. Michael, (edited), *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2007.

conventional Indian sociology, which predominantly adopts a Sanskritic viewpoint while examining Indian society. The author makes an effort to suggest a technique for understanding the complexity of Hinduism and Indian civilization throughout this analysis. The Dalits' economic status and employment issues are the main topics of the fourth and final segment.

In Ghanshyam Shah's⁴⁰ *"The Social Movement in India"*, the untouchability issue and its terrible impact on Dalit lives were the primary issues that drove a considerable portion of the Dalit struggle in the past and present. He emphasizes the importance of united Dalit action to meet their aspirations. There have also been ongoing campaigns to uphold the Indian Constitution's affirmative action provisions for employment and education. He also suggests that the Dalit reform movement addressed caste-based injustices that had an impact on Dalits' daily lives. The attempt to establish a distinct socio-cultural framework through the acquisition of favourable economic, educational, and political circumstances; the movement for a new way of life linked with conversion to a different faith. Without a doubt, their movements were successful in establishing their presence in and forming connections with political circles.

The Dalit movement, according to Gopal Guru's⁴¹ *"Experience, Caste, and the Everyday Social"*, was a necessary outcome of an absolutist Hindu tradition with deep prejudice against Dalits. As a result, he proposes that the Dalit movement attempted to bring about conceptual changes in Dalit minds and attitudes in order for them to be more assertive in public life.

Rajendra Singh⁴² gives a framework for social movements and collective acts, as well as existing notions of Indian society in his book *"Social Movements, Old and New: A Post-Modernist Critique"*. He considers these movements to be the most accurate summaries of contemporary Indian society. Additionally, he provides a conceptual critique of numerous social movement studies, including the Marxist paradigm, historical approaches, and the neoclassical model. In his writings on the Dalit, caste, and conversion movements, he asserts that the Dalit movement represents a fresh push for social justice and identity.

⁴⁰ Ghanshyam Shah, Social Movements in India, *Economic Political Weekly*, Vol. 46, Issue No. 2, 2011.

⁴¹ Gopal Guru, and Sundar Sarukkai, *Experience, Caste, and the Everyday Social*, Oxford University Press, 2019.

⁴² Rajendra Singh, *Social Movements Old and New: A Post-Modernist Critique*, SAGE Publication, New Delhi, 2001.

One of the works on the Dalit feminist viewpoint is Sharmila Rege's⁴³ *"Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of Difference and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position"*. She highlights the Brahmanism of the feminist movement and the patriarchal practises of Dalit politics while posing the very basic question of how the 1990s assertion of independent Dalit women's organizations threw up several significant theoretical and political challenges. Caste-related concerns fell under the purview of Dalit women's organizations within the context of difference. By focusing on independent Dalit women's organizations, she advocates reimagining modern feminist politics from Dalit women's perspective.

"Caste, Protest, and Identity in Colonial India" by Sekhar Bandyopadhyay⁴⁴ provides a brief socioeconomic profile of the Namasudras and attempts to trace how, in the late nineteenth century, a disorganised group of people in Bengal began to call themselves Namasudras through a protest movement. He asserts that the Namasudras movement witnessed the first organised social protest by namasudras against their degraded social status, demonstrating the importance of endogenous factors other than colonial enticements in stoking lower caste protest in India.

Anupama Rao's⁴⁵ work, *"Caste Question"*, addressed cultural exclusions and social inclusion in modern India. This book investigates the pivotal role of Dalit subalterns in redefining colonial liberalism's organising terms, such as community, religion, equality, and rights, as well as the diverse and frequently contradictory outcomes of Dalit emancipation.

Angle Lal and Rahul Raj's⁴⁶ book, *"Uttar Pradesh Main Dalit Aandolan"*, contains brief descriptions of well-known conflicts and movements from the modern era in Uttar Pradesh. It has been attempted to achieve the district of each administrative board's struggle at the same time.

⁴³ Sharmila Rege, *Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of 'Difference' and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position*, *Economic Political Weekly*, Vol.33, Issue No. 44, 1998.

⁴⁴ Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste Protest and Identity in Colonial India: The Namasudras of Bengal, 1872–1947*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

⁴⁵ Anupama Rao (edited) *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*, University of California Press, 2009.

⁴⁶ Angle Lal and Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh Main Dalit Aandolan*, Gautam Book Center, Delhi, 2011.

Mata Prasad's⁴⁷ book, *"Bharat Main Dalit Jagaran Aur Uske Agradoot"*, traces the history of Dalit movements and their leaders throughout India. The history of the Dalit movement is discussed, as well as the situation of Dalits in various states and their organisation. Several campaigns by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Swami Achhutanand, and others for Dalit rights and interests. This book is rich with accurate information.

Devendra Kumar Besentari's⁴⁸ *"Bharat Ke Samajik Krantikari"* is primarily about social reformers, and it documents the work, compositions, movements, and philosophical ideas of thinkers from antiquity to the contemporary generation. It contains information about Buddha, B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Kabir, Periyar, Jotiba Phule, and Narayan Guru, among other people.

"Dalit Virangnaye Evam Mukti ki Chah" by Badri Narayan⁴⁹ delves into the process of identifying Dalits in Uttar Pradesh and achieving political success through them. In Uttar Pradesh, important Dalit cultural symbols include Buddha, Ambedkar, Phule, Periyar, Ravidas, Kabir, and Eklavya. The memories of Dalits have been crucial in establishing their identity. Dalit Veeranganao, which includes Jhalkari Bai, Avanti Bai, Mahaviri Bhangi, and others, has been instrumental in shaping this identity.

"Purani Samasyaye Nyi Aakanchhayee" by Vivek Kumar⁵⁰ is an admirable attempt to dispel myths about Dalit society. It has provided an objective assessment of Dalit society, its movement, social reforms, and events. This book evaluates the new Dalit culture as it emerges, taking into account social change among the Dalits. This book offers a fresh look at the issues confronting Dalit society.

D. C. Dinkar's⁵¹ *"Swatantrata Sangram main Acchuton ka Yogdan"* examines the role of Dalit fighters in various Indian states, as well as the aboriginal movement and its heroes and heroines. The book's main point of contention is that Dalits were active participants in the 1857 rebellion

⁴⁷ Mata Prasad, *Bharat me Dalit Jagaran Aur Uske Agradoot*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2010.

⁴⁸ Devendra Kumar Besentari, *Bharat ke Samajik Krantikari*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2012.

⁴⁹ Badri Narayan, *Dalit Virangnaye Avam Mukti ki Chah*, Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi, 2019.

⁵⁰ Vivek Kumar, *Purani Samasyaye Nyi Aakanchhayee*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2013.

⁵¹ D. C. Dinkar, *Swatantrata Sangram main Acchuton ka Yogdan*, Boudhisatva Prakashan, Lucknow, 1990.

and other anti-colonial movements. There are also profiles of current Dalit leaders in the book. He declared Aryans to be foreign invaders and enemies of this land, whereas Dalit society was declared to be a native Adi Hindu population.

Satnam Singh's⁵² “*Chamar Jati ka Swatantrata Sangram main Yogadan*” depicts the Chamar caste's role in the freedom struggle between 1857 and 1947. It emphasizes the importance of Dalit society in the glorious history of the Chamar caste. The author makes an ironic attack on Manuwadi's role while presenting the role of Dalit society.

Satnam Singh's⁵³ “*Chamar Jati ka Gauravshali Itihas*” examines the Chamar caste's significance and identity in Indian society from historical, cultural, geographical, and political perspectives, as well as their participation in the Dalit movement.

Ramvilash Bharti⁵⁴ in “*Bishawi Sadi Mai Dalit Samaj*” traces the condition of Dalits from the twentieth century until 1925 in this book, along with an analysis of reform for Dalits' condition.

Chapterization

Introduction

The first chapter delves into the meaning, history, and definition of caste and untouchability in great depth. With thematic content, movement, theories of movement, and the term Dalit have been explained. This chapter also dwells on the review of literature, the context of the topic, the topic's objectives, its methodology, hypothesis, and a brief chapterization.

The Brief Dalit History of Uttar Pradesh

This chapter discusses caste relations in society, the history of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, their social, economic, cultural, and occupational standing in society, as well as the untouchable past and venerable present of Dalits. The chapter also demonstrates through a brief note the historical and geographical conditions of the United Provinces and the lineage of the term "Dalit".

⁵² Satnam Singh, *Chamar Jati ka Swatantrata Sangram main Yogadan*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2013.

⁵³ Satnam Singh, *Chamar Jati ka Swatantrata Sangram main Yogdan*, Samyak Prakashan , New Delhi, 2013.

⁵⁴ Ramvilash Bharti, *Bishawi Sadi Mai Dalit Samaj*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2014.

Political Consciousness and Identity Construction among Dalit

This chapter examines Dalit political consciousness and identity construction in Uttar Pradesh. It identifies the shifting forms of Dalit political inclusion, democratic social order, identity construction, and political consciousness. This chapter delves into the Dalit movement and political assertion, with a focus on Dalits.

Dalit Intellectual in Uttar Pradesh

This chapter discusses Dalit literature and how it has influenced Dalit consciousness in its opposition to Brahmanic ideology. The brahmanical cultural worldview was questioned and opposed by the new consciousness. In order to create the Dalit public sphere, the chapter outlines how thinkers, writers, and artists expressed their ideas through a variety of genres, including poetry, drama, autobiographies, novels, and more. It explains how the Dalit movement and Dalit literary works are related. The development of Dalit identity and consciousness was greatly aided by Dalit literature. This chapter demonstrates how the lowest of the low Dalits began to create literature and poses numerous historical queries.

Caste Association in Uttar Pradesh

This chapter establishes the contention that Dalit associational politics have a lengthy and significant history in North India. In addition to referring to the oneness of caste and class, associational politics also describes the process of mobilizing lower castes for the fulfillment of their demands. This process resulted in the rise of lower-caste political activism and assertion.

An Overview of Local Leadership in Uttar Pradesh

The Dalit Movement was definitely led by a number of people from both Dalit and non-Dalit communities. The current study, however, is limited to the roles played by some of the local Dalit leaders who were able to strive for a significant portion of their lives. The socio-political profiles of all those leaders, regardless of caste, creed, gender, region, or ideology, are elaborated on briefly.

Conclusion

The study's conclusion has been presented in a comprehensive perspective with the goal of providing some important ideas and possible observations.

Chapter-Two

The Brief Dalit History of Uttar Pradesh

This chapter elaborates on the history of United Provinces, which includes its ideology, practice, and strategy. The United Provinces is a fascinating illustration of how the Dalit movement articulated its demand for the empowerment of Dalits because it is one of the regions with a significant Dalit population. The main goal of this chapter is to emphasise that the Dalit struggle in the United Provinces did have an interesting ethnographic component that throws light on the Dalit history of Uttar Pradesh.

The United Provinces' history and geography are briefly discussed in the first section of this chapter, followed by a look at the history of the term "Dalit," the Dalit population of Uttar Pradesh, and the socioeconomic, religious, and cultural circumstances of Dalits in the United Provinces. The last section of this chapter looks at the overall situation of Dalits in the United Provinces.

With 75 districts spread across 240928 square kilometers, Uttar Pradesh is a state. There are 1,065,000 villages there and 312 tahsils. With regards to population, it is the biggest state in India. There are 94985062 women and 104596415 men living there, according to the 2011 Census, which counted 199581477 people overall. The overall inter annual expansion, 33383556, is calculated as 20.09 percent from the 2001 Census to the 2011 Census. With a 908 male-to-female ratio, it has an 828 person per square km population density.

The literacy rate in UP is 69.72 percent, with 79.24 percent among men and 59.26 percent among women. From 1901 to 1950, the population increased by 46647804 to 60273742, a total increase of 13625939 people in these fifty years. From 1951 to 2001, the population increased by 105924178 as a whole. The literacy rate in Uttar Pradesh was 12.02 percent in 1951 and is now 69.72 percent, according to the 2011 census. In Uttar Pradesh, there are 66 Dalit caste groups. In Uttar Pradesh, Chamar has the highest number of SCs (19,803,106), accounting for 56.3 percent of the total SC population. The Pasi is the second largest in the SC count, with a population of 5,597,002, accounting for 15.9% of the SC population. Dhobi, Kori, and Balmiki are three more SCs in descending order. Together with Chamar and Pasi, these five SCs account

for 87.5 percent of the total SC population. Dhanuk, Gond, and Khatik have populations ranging from 443,457 to 764,765, accounting for another 5% of the total. Namely, Rawat, Baheliya, and Kol, with populations ranging from 109,557 to 331,374, constitute 4.5 percent of the State's SC population; the remaining forty-nine (49) SCs, along with the generic castes, constitute the remaining 3 percent. There are as many as seventeen (17) SCs with populations of fewer than 5000 people. Two of them, Lalbegi and Bajgi, have populations of less than 1000 people.¹

The Historical context of a New Province to State

Britishers conquered and consolidated several territories in northern India, which is where the history of colonial expansion began. However, throughout the period of 1775 to 1857 A.D., the British took control of this territory. When Nawab Vazir of Oudh gave the Bengal Presidency the Benaras division, excluding the southern portion of Mirzapur, in accordance with the Treaty of Faizabad in 1775, the process of creating Uttar Pradesh officially began. The Fatehgarh stronghold was acquired by the Company in 1797 and 1798. The Treaty signed in November also saw the Nawab cede control over Allahabad, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Etawah, Mainpuri, Etah, Farukhabad, Bareilly, Moradabad, Badaun, Pillibhit, and Shahjahanpore. The Company was granted the Conquered Territories following the Second Anglo-Maratha War in 1803, including the districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, and significant portions of Agra and Mathura. The Company was also granted the territories of Delhi, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Sirsa, and Karnal in accordance with the Treaty of Sarji Arjungaon and Deogaon. The northern hill districts of Garhwal, Kumaon, Dehradun, Mussorie, Almora, Shimla, and Nainital were added following the successful Gorkha War of 1816 (according to the treaty of Sagauli). The provinces of Saugar and Narmada fell under British control when the Third Anglo-Maratha War ended in 1817. The British took control of Bharatpur's remaining territory in 1826.² All of these regions grew unwieldy and presented numerous administrative challenges as a result of being incorporated into the Bengal Presidency. Communication broke down, which negatively impacted law and order. As a result, the Charter Act of 1833 proposed separating the Presidency of Bengal into two: (1) the Presidency of the Lower Provinces of Bengal and (2) the Presidency

¹ Source: *Census 2001*, Office of the Registrar General, India, *Census 2011*, Office of the Registrar General, India, *Different Plan Document and Statistical Diaries of Uttar Pradesh*.

² Thomas R. Metcalf, *Land, Lord and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkely, University of California Press, 1979.

of Agra, which in fact was created on November 11, 1834, with Allahabad serving as the capital and Metcalf as its Governor. However, after Metcalf left, the Presidency was absorbed into the Bengal Presidency, and by 1836, it had become the North Western Provinces, with Agra as its capital. Under the Doctrine of Lapse, the North Western Provinces continued to grow after acquiring Jalaun in 1840, Lalitpur in 1844, Jaitpur in 1849, and Jhansi in 1853.³ However, Oudh continued to be retained under a separate chief commissionership even after it was annexed in 1856 under the excuse of "misgovernment." It was combined with the North-Western Provinces in 1877 because of the similarity in population, languages, and cultures, as well as administrative and financial factors.⁴ In 1902, the province's name was changed to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and its lieutenant governor was in charge of administration. The United Provinces of British India was the name of the province after the lieutenant governorship was elevated to the office of governor in 1921. 1935 saw the introduction of the shortened form, United Provinces. The princely lands of Rampur, Banaras, and Tehri-Garhwal were merged to establish the United Provinces in the years after India's separation from British colonial rule in 1947. Uttar Pradesh replaced the United Provinces as its official name in 1950.⁵ Uttaranchal, currently referred to as Uttarakhand, was created in 2000–2001 by dividing Uttar Pradesh into two distinct Himalayan states.⁶

Geographical Condition

Due to its geographic location, it is fertile and gifted with a hospitable climate for agricultural prosperity. The United Provinces were bounded on the north and east by Tibet and Nepal; on the east and southeast by the Bengal districts of Champaran, Saran, Sahabad, and Palamau; on the south by two of the Chota Nagpur states in the Central Provinces; the Rewah and Saugor districts in the Central Provinces; and on the west by the states of Gwalior, Dholpur, and Bharatpur; the Punjab states of Sirmur and Jubhal, namely; the Jamna river serves as the western boundary's port, while the artificial boundaries of Ganga make up some of the other boundaries in the east.

³ B. S. Cohn, *Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987.

⁴ V. T. Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.

⁵ *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1, Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series*, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, 1908, p. 1.

⁶ Subodh Nath Jha, *Uttar Pradesh: The Land and People*, National Book Trust India, New Delhi, 2007.

According to the Indian survey, the area of the two provinces is in square miles: Agra being 83,198; Oudh being 23,966; total being 107,494. Including the Sone and Beel rivers, which are not part of district boundaries and are not included in district details, the total area is 107,494 square miles. The province's two indigenous states (Rampur and Tehri) cover an area of 5079 square miles.⁷

The Lineage of the term Dalit

The term "Dalits" is not new. It appears to have been used in the 1930s to translate "Depressed classes," the phrase the British used to refer to what is now known as the Scheduled Castes, into Hindi and Marathi. A newspaper for lower castes named Dalit Bandu was published in Pune in 1930. B.R. Ambedkar also used it in addresses he gave in Marathi. Ambedkar selected the phrase "broken men", or the English version of "Dalit," for publication in 1948.⁸ The word "Dalit," as it is used now, first appeared in the nineteenth century, when Mahatma Jotiba Phule, a Marathi social reformer and revolutionary, coined it to describe untouchables and outcasts as the mistreated and broken victims of India's caste-based system. In addition to its general usage, the term "Dalit" is now specifically used to refer to those who have historically been regarded as "outcastes" based on caste differentiation. They were "outcastes" because, in the view of the system's creators, they were unfit to be a part of India's four-graded caste system. They were forced to endure severe forms of oppression based on their rank for millennia, which nearly caused them to cease being human.⁹ The Dalit Panthers Movement of Maharashtra in the early 1970s and following movements in the state developed the current use of the term "Dalit" in a true sense that takes into account both its use and the wider meaning behind it. Even more so, Dalit Panther made an effort to broaden the group's target audience by including: "Members of Scheduled Caste and Tribes, Neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women, and all those who were being exploited politically, economically, and in the name of religion." However, a Marathi professor by the name of Gangadhar Pantawane offers one of the most concise explanations of the term, claiming that Dalits are not a caste but rather a symbol of change and revolution. The Dalit believes in the truth of humanism. He disbelieves in God, soul

⁷ *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1, p.2.*

⁸ Ashok S. Chousalkar, *Social and Political Implication of Dalit Movement. In: Maharashtra in Social Reform Movements in India.* V.D. Divekar, ed. Bombay: 1991.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 902.

rebirth, and sacred writings that teach discrimination, fate, and paradise because they made him a slave. He advocates for the country's exploited men.¹⁰ People who have been labelled as "outcastes" based on caste distinction are specifically referred to as "Dalits."

Dalit population in Uttar Pradesh¹¹

Sr. No.	Census Year	Total Population	Population of the Untouchables	Percentage
1	1901	280,875,176	53,196,632	18.93
2	1911	298,299,527	51,738,673	17.34
3	1921	301,772,466	*	*
4	1931	332,507,743	50,250,347	15.11
5	1941	314,766,865	43,843,000	13.92
6	1951	356,691,760	51,786,688	14.51
7	1961	439,235,082	64,511,313	14.68

Sources: Compiled Census Reports (From 1901 to 1961)

Undoubtedly, Uttar Pradesh is India's most populous and significant political state. British India underwent a census in 1881, including the North Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh, which contained 22.2 percent (44, 107, 869) of the total population of 198,545,380 and composed 12.2 percent (106, 111 square miles) of British India's total area (868,314 square miles). According to the 1881 census, the North Western Province and Oudh had a population of 44,107,869 and 741,750 people, respectively. Prior to this, the province had a population of 4,204,587 in British possessions and 6,38,720 in feudatory states, as determined by the 1872 and 1869 primary censuses. There were 47,691,782 people living in the area as a whole in 1901. In the 1911 Census Report, Agra and Oudh were referred to as the "United Province of Agra and Oudh" in the 1911 Census Report, which found 47,182,844 people living there. The population of the

¹⁰ Xavier Irudayaraj, (edited) *Emerging Dalit Theology*, Madurai, 1990.

¹¹ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders (1857-1956)*, Print Publication, New Delhi, 1994, p. 28.

United Province expanded to 46,510,668 in British territory and 1,481,379 in feudatory states, according to the 1921 Census Report. There were 24,752,431 males and 23,139,616 females in these two British territories, respectively. The United Provinces had a population of 49,614,833 in 1931.

There is a substantial Dalit population in the United Provinces, and they work in a variety of jobs to earn a livelihood. The Dalit castes of the United Provinces are thoroughly described by British ethnographer William Crook. The list of depressed classes in each United Province as announced under the United Provinces Franchises Committee Report of 1932¹² and the Constitution of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950¹³, is provided below. The following castes have been formally notified:

Agariya	Bangal	Kapariya
Aheriya	Banmonus	Karwal
Badi	Chamar	Khatik
Badhik	Chero	Khairaha
Baheliya	Dabgar	Kharot
Baiga	Dhanga	Kharwar
Baiswar	Dhanuk	Kol
Bajaniya	Dharkar	Korwa
Bajgi	Dhobi	Lalbegi
Balahar	Dhusia	Majhwar
Balmiki	Dom (Benbansi)	Nat
Bansphor	Domar	Pankha
Barwar	Dusadh	Parahiya
Basor	Gharami	Pasi
Bawariya	Ghasiya	Patari
Beldar	Gual	Rawa
Beriya	Habura	Sahary

¹² File No. 83/1935, *Dalits Profile in Uttar Pradesh*, Harijan Sahayak Department, U.P.S.A. Lucknow.

¹³ File No. 83/1935, *Scheduled Caste, Race and Tribe*, Reform Department, U.P.S.A. Lucknow.

Bhantu	Hari	Sonaurhiya
Bhoksa	Hela	Sansiya
Bhuiya	Jatava	Shilpkar
Bhuyiar	Kalabaz	Turaiha
Boria	Kanjar	Tharu

File No. 83/1935, Dalits Profile in Uttar Pradesh, Harijan Sahayak Department, U.P.S.A. Lucknow.

Since 1941, there seems to have been a decline in the number of scheduled castes. In 1941, they had a total population of 11,931,320 (men 6,127,853, women 5,803,467), compared to 11,479,102 in 1951. A modification in the list of scheduled castes is mostly to blame for the drop. The list no longer includes the Khatiks, Aherias, Koris (with the exception of the Koris of the Meerut, Rohilkhand, and Agra divisions), or Tharus, who were considered Scheduled Castes in 1941. Their population was 10 lakhs in 1931, and based on the typical rate of growth, it must have increased to over 1,300 thousand between 1931 and 1951. Several castes, including Baiga, Baiswar, Bhoksa, Dhusia, and Dusadh, were not previously included in the 1951 list. The combined number of these groups was approximately 80,000 in 1941 and must have been approximately 90,000 in 1951. Therefore, these changes account for a decline in the Scheduled Caste population of nearly 1,200,000 in 1951 and almost entirely explains the difference in population between 1941 and 1951. The Scheduled Castes can be blamed for the remaining discrepancy if they returned using names that were not on the list. It's interesting to note how many Chamars and Shilpkars, sometimes known as Hill Doms, have reverted to Aryanism.¹⁴

How was a caste classified as untouchable? What standard was used? The inquiry is essential. To assess whether a caste is touchable or untouchable, official discourse from the colonial era lists the three following characteristics. The following are those elements: Keeping pigs or eating filthy food such as pork or beef; engaging in an unclean occupation such as

¹⁴ Mohinder Singh, *The Depressed Classes: Their Economic and Social Condition*, Hind Kitab LTD., Bombay, pp. 82-84.

scavenging; wandering without a fixed home to which the tribe or caste returns on occasion.¹⁵ Regarding a proposal that the Depressed Classes should be represented by nomination, the Government of the United Provinces noted in their first report that the governor should be guided by a schedule of the depressed classes that should be created for his use and that this schedule should at least include the following classes: However, the governor should not necessarily be bound by this schedule. The list, which is based on the details provided in Mr. Blunt's note, aims to highlight the classes for which, without a doubt, special care is necessary.¹⁶

Occupational Division among Dalit Communities of the United Provinces

Chamar in Rural area	4,187,770
Pasi	1,446,155
Bhangi	349,053
Dhanuk	127,581
Hill Dom	326,012
Dom	109,906
Total	6,546,477

File No. 83/1935, Dalit Profile in U.P., Harijan Sahayak Department, U.P.S.A. Lucknow.

The Dalit groups listed in the table above engage in a number of fixed professions that Hindu society has historically regarded as polluting and filthy. The community's impureness has become a crucial factor in deciding whether to consider them untouchables. Dalits in India are fundamentally socially excluded by this procedure and mindset. According to the Census Commissioner, a third figure is 12.6 million. The classifications on this list, which is based on directives from the Census Commissioner, are as follows:

Depressed and Untouchable

¹⁵ File No. 83/ 1934, Revision of list Scheduled Caste, Reform Department, U.P.S.A. Lucknow.

¹⁶ E.A.H. Blunt, *Census of India, 1911, Vol-XV, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part-1 Report*, F. Luker Superintendent Government Press, Allahabad, 1912.

1	Tribes and castes are considered untouchable and depressed because of their impure habits, particularly regarding eating.	2,840,159
2	Those who practise dirty professions	8,263,823
3	Nomadic Tribes	110,447
Total		11,214,429

Depressed but Touchable

1	Tribal members who have been degraded by their practises	118,433
2	Depressed because of their traditional job	1,269,224
Total		1,387,657

The list above demonstrates the British classification systems used to label some communities as "untouchable communities." The colonial ethnographic observations and orientalist discourse that uphold literary references as the final authority on custom rather than practice can be seen as influences on this design. As a result, the standards for designating some castes as untouchable were developed, and their identity was fixed by government approval. The idea that certain castes are untouchable is used to justify the notion of dirty environments, traditions, and jobs.¹⁷ This narrow view of the colonial state helped Dalit castes to further strengthen their previously established stigmatised identity. Here, we agree with Nicholas Dirk's¹⁸ assertion that colonial rule significantly enhanced the social hierarchies that previously existed. Similar to this, colonial power also produced a rigid and hegemonic model of untouchability, which over time came to be followed. At the same time, Hindu reformist groups like Arya Samaj continued the myth that untouchables engaged in illegal work like mending animal skins. Ramnarayan Rawat¹⁹ claims that this dual process is what gave rise to the untouchable reputation and ultimately led to their social marginalization. But this study goes one step further by arguing that, in addition to the

¹⁷ File No. 83/1935, *Dalit Profile in U.P.*, Harijan Sahayak Department, U.P.S.A. Lucknow.

¹⁸ N. Driks, *Caste of Mind: Colonialism and Making of Modern India*, Princeton University Press, 2001.

¹⁹ R. S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2012.

occupational reputation, Dalits' physical circumstances were also used as a basis of the construction of the untouchable stereotype, which was then used to prevent them from accessing valuable resources. Thus, the ideology of the colonial state and the Hindu nationalist movement significantly prepared the untouchables based on birth and ethnicity. Diverse populations who perform various occupations that are viewed as unclean by traditional Hindu society are elevated to the status of a normative and recognised category. Thus, untouchability underwent an unparalleled transformation during colonial authority, moving from the person to the community.

Socio- Economic, Religious and Cultural Status under Colonial Ethnography

The socio-economic, cultural, and religious circumstances of Dalit people in India were described in these studies. These ethnographers also recorded the social and caste realities of the Dalit castes. These ethnographic writings are still crucial for understanding Dalit communities in Independent India using postcolonial research and structures. The following section discusses some of the Dalit castes of Uttar Pradesh that William Crooke (1896) and other ethnographers, historians, and anthropologists have described.

Agariya: In the district of Mirzapur, there is a lower caste known as Agariya. Mining and iron smelting are the major businesses of the Mirzapur Agariyas. In Crooke's opinion, the culture of the Mirzapur Agariyas suggests that they are almost certainly not of Aryan ancestry. However, despite identifying as Hindus, they do not worship any of the traditional Hindu gods. All of their religious ceremonies are performed by them without the participation of Brahmans, with the exception of the Baiga, who are entrusted with performing the worship of the local deities.²⁰

Aheriya: The Central Duab is inhabited by the hunter-thief caste known as the Aheriya. They appear to use the names Aheriya, Bhil, or Karol with no particular regard to Aligarh. They believe themselves to be the descendants of Raja Priyavart, who is probably identical to Priyavrata, one of the two sons of Brahma and Satarupa. The Aheriyas believe that the solar hero's son, whose name they are unable to recall, liked to hunt and made his home atop the legendary peak of Chitrakut in the Banda District. Legend has it that Valmiki was a master hunter and thief. One day, in the bush, he came across the saint Narada Muni after having killed a great number of people. As he took an aim at Narada, he questioned the Rishi whether he knew

²⁰ *File No. 83/1934, Revision of list of SC, Reform Department, U.P.S.A., Lucknow.*

what a sin he was committing. Ultimately, Narada was able to persuade him of his wrongdoing and attempted to teach him how to chant Rama-Rama. However, he couldn't get much closer to it for a very long time than Mara Mara (Kill Kill). He eventually became a decent person as a result of his commitment, and he acquired the necessary knowledge to write the Ramayana. He is so regarded as the Aheryas' patron saint.²¹

Baheliya: Baheliya is a group of hunters and bird catchers. They typically refer to themselves as the Pasi subcaste. There is a tradition among some Baheliya in the western provinces that they are descended from the Bhil. The Bahelias of the eastern districts refer to seven, or more precisely eight, endogamous sub-castes, including the Bhelias, Chiryamar, or "bird killers," and Karaul, whose specialty is reportedly tracking prey while using a tame cow as a deception. They work as bird hunters and trappers. Bird-catchers are frequently referred to as "miskar," which is thought to be a corruption of the words "head huntsman" (mir shikar) or "meat eater" (maskar). They have a very creative way of catching birds, using a series of slender bamboo that look like fishing rods and are covered in bird lime.²²

Bajgi: A caste of musicians known as the Bajgi can be seen in the lower hills. They view themselves as native to the area of Dehradun. They used to commemorate Makar-Sankranti, when the sun entered the Capricorn sign. They consume meat and alcohol these days. Similar to the Doms of Dehradun, they preserve some crude wooden representations of the five Pandavas Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahdeva in their homes as a sort of household protector. This demonstrates their participation in Sanskritization.²³

Balahar: In some areas of the Duab and Bundelkhand, there is a caste known as Balahar. It appears that the name means "bearer" or "summoned." They are also referred to as Domar or Bakor in Kanpur, which associates them with Doms, Bansphors, and Toraiha because a portion of their work involves blowing the long trumpet or "cholera hom" (turi, turai, turhi) at weddings. They allude to Supa Bhagat, who is more renowned in Bengal as the Guru than the ancestor of the Doms, but their legends demonstrate that they are a branch of the great Dom tribe. They do

²¹ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1896, pp. 39-47.

²² R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, Anmol Publication, New Delhi, p. 23.

²³ R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, p. 25.

not belong to any sect but are frequently referred to as Sakats. On a Monday, pigs are presented to Jakhaiya, the tribe's deity. Goats are sacrificed to Devi every Monday and Friday. In U.P., the Balai once more form a tiny caste group.²⁴

Banmonus: At Sultanpur, Banmonus was a subcaste of Mushars, but at Sultanpur, they had their own caste. Making leaf plates and gathering wild honey are their main means of livelihoods. Jungle dwellers are reputed to be incredibly reserved and untamed. Those who have relocated to the village resemble other low-caste inhabitants.²⁵

Bansphor: A subcaste of the Dom that could be treated separately because they were counted separately in the Census (1881). The sub-internal caste's structure is somewhat ambiguous because it is solely an occupational branch of the original Dom tribe. On the ninth day of Chait, they worship the Bindhchal, who is their main deity in Mirzapur, with hogs, goats, cakes, and pottage (lapsi). A hog or goat is sacrificed in honour of the local deities, and ghee grain and treacle are burned as a fire offering. Some make fans, baskets, and boxes out of bamboo while working as regular day labourers. Some people sweep up night soil in their line of work. No one from another caste can drink or eat from their hands.²⁶

Basor: The Basor caste, which is only present in Bundelkhand, is typically thought of as a subcaste of the Doms. Some of them travel to Mirzapur and other places sometimes, where the men work as musicians and basket weavers and the women as midwives. When a Basor gives up his usual job of working with bamboo and accepts employment with a landowner as a messenger or drum-beater, he is known in Jhansi by the name of Barar, who has transitioned to the trade of bow-making. The tribal deities are Mother Ganges and Kali-Bhawani. Pig sacrifices are made to Vindhyabasini Devi at Bindhachal, which is to the east of the province. In Jhansi, people present betel leaves, cocoanuts, sweets, alcoholic beverages, spirits, and occasionally a goat to Kali or Jagadamba Devi on Mondays or Fridays during the Chait Navratri. They also venerate a number of deified figures known as Baba in Jhansi. So, in the Jhansi District, close to Moth Tahsil, there is Gusain Baba, who has a platform beneath a pope tree. He is rumoured to wander the neighbourhood while dressed as a hermit and occasionally engage in conversation. Baba does not

²⁴ Ibid, p.26.

²⁵ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, p. 232-236.

²⁶ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, pp. 259- 270.

have a dedicated shrine, but his platform may be seen in many villages, with a little space for a candle that is occasionally lit in his honour.²⁷

Bawariya: Almost exclusively found in Muzaffarnagar and Mirzapur, the Bawariya are a hunting and criminal tribe. They are a descendant of the Western Bengali Bauris, of whom Risley writes that "they are a cultivating, earth-working, and palanquin-bearing people, whose looks and complexion designate them as of non-Aryan descent." The following fascinating narrative of themselves was provided by the Bawariyas of the North-Western provinces. They assert that their caste originated as Rajputs and mention Marwar as their native land. They have seven clans (gotra): Punwar, Soharki, Dabas (also known as Dabi), Chauha, Tunwar, Dhandra (also known as Dhandal or Koli), and Gordhi, making a total of eight.²⁸

Beldar: This is a collective term for various Hindu communities that depend on earthwork for their livelihood. In addition to these, hereditary groups bearing this name were also prevalent in Bareilly, Gorakhpur, Basti, and Pilibhit. In Bihar and Western Bengal, a nomadic Dravidian caste of labourers and navvies is referred to by Mr. Risley under the same word. A large portion of this caste works in the Raniganj and Barakar coal mines. Both men and women are employed in the task, with the males digging the dirt while the ladies carry it away in baskets on their heads. The Beldars will never carry soil in baskets hung from their shoulders since they view this method of carrying it as unique to themselves. In addition to their occupation as earthmovers, they also depend on fishing for their livelihood. After the harvest is complete, they dig up field rats from the rice fields and cook them with the grain they have stored in their farmlands.²⁹

Bhangi: The Bhangi caste is quite well-known in North India. The word "Bhangi" relates to the tribe's predisposition for drinking and is derived from the Sanskrit word "bhang," which means "hemp." Although they are part of the Hindu community, the Benares sweepers claim that the word is a distortion of sarbhanga (sura-bhanga), indicating their segregation from it. To identify the tribe, many different names are used. Chuhra, Chura, or Chuhara are the names by which they are known in the Panjab and the Western regions of the United Province. Some claim that

²⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, pp. 222-228.

²⁸ R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, pp. 32-34.

²⁹ R.V. Russell, *The Tribe and Caste of the Central Provinces of India*, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1916, p.233.

this name stems from the person's habit of gathering or sweeping away trash. They are also referred to as "prince" or "Mehtar".³⁰ In relation to this, it is significant to note that the Bengali Bediyas honour their leaders by referring to them as "bhangi," which is Bengali for "hemp-drinkers." They are mostly ancestral serf ploughmen (harwaha). This caste is commonly known as the Indian sweeper community. Bhangi has a variety of professions. Their inherited occupation is scavenging, which includes sweeping the streets and houses, working up, bringing manure to the fields and dispersing it, and in cities and villages, where the ladies must maintain strict seclusion, removing night soil. They retain certain unclean pigs and chickens, and only they and the leather workers consume the flesh of animals that have either passed away naturally or due to disease. As a result, the Bhangis were given a lower social position because of their occupation and were assigned the job of sweeping. The majority of Bhangis went to the cities and found work as sweepers there.³¹ However, occupational pollution constantly pursues them and keeps them out of social interactions.

Bhuiya: They are a Dravidian tribe found in the Mirzapur hills to the south. In response to Mr. Risley's observation that the name Bhuiya has spread widely, he believes that we should "hesitate and demand some independent evidence of affinity before we pronounce it to be an original tribal designation"³² and accept the conclusion that all tribes that use the name today are descended from common stock. The author continues, "The advanced guard of the Aryan immigrants, pressing forward in search of land and seeking a name for the alien races whom they found in possession of scant clearings in the forest-clad tract of Central India, where they had themselves been driven, would naturally disregard the tribal names of the groups with which they came into contact and would call the strangers Bhuiyas, or children of the soil."³³ In common with all linked tribes, the ladies tattoo themselves. Contact with any Dom, Dharkar, Dhobi, or Chamar will be avoided. They do not eat the flesh of the jackal, cow, buffalo, monkey, crocodile, snake, or other reptiles. They eat pork, fish, chicken, and rats. By inheritance, the majority of them are serf ploughmen (harwaha). The average income is three sets of coarse grain every day and ten annas in cash per month. In addition to receiving food from their owners, they

³⁰ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, pp. 260- 291.

³¹ M. Singh, *The Depressed Classes their Socio and Economic Condition*, Hind Kitab LTD., Bombay, 1947, pp. 95-98.

³² R.V. Russell, *The Tribe and Caste of the Central Provinces of India*, p.236.

³³ Ibid, p.241.

also get a blanket for the winter and a khumari (a palm leaf umbrella cover) for the rainy season. Those who have risen in society occasionally cultivate their own property and rear cattle and sheep.³⁴

Chamar: The biggest community in U.P. is called Chamar. This caste is found in Northern India among agricultural labourers, tanners, curriers, and leather workers. Their name is a translation of Charma-kara, which means "worker in leather" in Sanskrit.³⁵ Regarding the origin of the Chamar, Mr. Sherrings makes the following observation: "If the leather workers of today are descended from the leather workers of Maun's time, the Chamars may fairly consider themselves associated with this and may up their heads badly in the presence of the higher castes." According to traditional theories of origin, a Raja is said to have had two daughters, Chamu and Bamu. Both of them got married and had a son who was a musclem (Pahlawan). In the Raja's palace, an elephant had passed away, and the Raja did not want it to be dismembered, so he looked for a strong man who could carry it out intact and bury it. It was carried out by Chamu's son. At this point, Bamu declares him an outcast, leading to the emergence of the Banyas from Bamu and the Chamars from Chamu.³⁶ Five Brahman brothers supposedly were passing through a road together, according to a different story. They noticed a cow carcass lying on the road. The fifth one removed the dead body while the other four moved away. His brothers condemned him, and ever since, his descendants have made it their livelihood to remove cattle carcasses. Another legend links them to the lineage of Nona or Lona Chamarin, a venerated witch who was feared throughout the eastern United Provinces. According to the mythology, Takshaks, the snake king, bit Dhanwantari, the gods' healer, who later died as a result. In order for his children to inherit his medical expertise, he gave his son the command to cook and consume his body after passing. They prepared his carcass in a pot and were about to consume it when Takshaka, who had taken the shape of a Brahman, appeared to them and forbade them from engaging in cannibalism. They then allowed the maelstrom to sail beneath the Ganges. Lona, a Chamarin washing on the riverbank at the time, took the vessel out and ate the horrifying food, unaware that it contained human flesh. As a result, she gained the ability to heal illnesses, particularly snakebites, almost instantly. According to legend, all of the women were cultivating rice one day. Lona was

³⁴ H. H. Risley, *The Tribe and Caste of Bengal*, Printed by Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1892.

³⁵ G. W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1920, p.15.

³⁶ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 2, pp. 169-170.

discovered to be capable of performing the same amount of labour as all of her friends put together. They kept an eye on her, and when she believed she was alone, she took off all of her clothes, murmured some charms, and then cast the plants into the air, where they all fell into position. They discovered that she tried to get away, and as she did, all of the water from the rice fields followed her as she went over the open ground. The Unnao District's Loni River channel was created as a result of this. Chamar in the area generally holds this belief to be true.³⁷ There are sixteen main sub-castes that make up the Chamar population of the province. Aharwar, which is primarily found in the Allahabad Division; Chamar, which is primarily found in Meerut; Chamkatiyas, which is primarily found in Bareilly; Dhusiyas, which is primarily found in Meerut and Benares; Dohars, which is primarily found in Agra, Rohilkhand, Allahabad, and Lucknow; Gole, which is primarily found in Etawah; and Jaiswaras (in Agra and Allahabad). Koris (primarily found in Faizabad and Gorakhpur); Kor Chamars (in Lucknow); Kurils (in Lucknow and Allahabad); Nigoti, a small subcaste primarily in Mainpuri; Patthargotis (in Agra); Jatwas (in Meerut, Agra, and Rohilkhand); Purabiyas (in Lucknow and Faizabad); Raedasis (reasonably evenly distributed throughout the province); and Sakarwars (in Agra and Allahabad).³⁸

The Chamars practise and adhere to Hinduism. They identify as members of the Gorakhi sect and worship Kuanwala and Chamariya Devi. They frequently worship a god known as Parameswar, or "the Supreme Being," in the Ballia area. The district of Mirzapur has a special deity called Terha Deva, also referred to as "the crooked one." Also revered are Vindhyabasini Devi, Bindhachal, Banru Bir, Aairi Devi, Birtiya, a demon whose name they only know, and Banru Bir (Purkhe Log). In order to get pregnant, childless residents of the area conduct fasts and worship Suruj Narayan, the Sun God. On occasion, people also worship the moon and fire.³⁹ The Chamars are employed in a variety of professions. He worked primarily as a shoemaker and carcass skinner. However, a different subcaste known as Mochi performed leather work. Whips, thongs, well buckets, and other leather goods required in husbandry are all available in a hamlet. He typically receives dead livestock from a group of neighbors. He used to provide them with a set number of shoes in exchange for the carcasses they gave him. Similar to him, his wife serves as a midwife for a number of households, performing different menial tasks at weddings and

³⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, pp. 182-183.

³⁸ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, pp. 170-172.

³⁹ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, pp. 180-182.

festivals. The Chamar himself is the village's general drudge (beggar), who delivers mail and performs odd chores like thatching when he goes by the name Gharami.⁴⁰ Sometimes he is paid in cash or in kind, but more frequently he is provided an allowance of grain per plough that belongs to the family he works for or a small plot of land that is not subject to rent. Another responsibility of his is to play the drums and blow the trumpet during weddings or when the hamlet is being cleansed of cholera or another epidemic sickness. Many Chamars work as field labourers, ploughmen, carters, or tromps, or they migrate to towns and engage in a variety of unskilled jobs.⁴¹ Palanquin carrying is a Kahar family profession that is assigned in the Pratapgarh district. The expansion of the leather industry in Kanpur has transformed it into a significant Chamar hub. Many of them have accumulated riches and strive to uphold social-respect standards well above those of their peers in rural communities. Some of them have started keeping their wives to themselves, as anyone does when he starts to climb the social ladder.⁴² The common Chamar from the village pursued his occupation of tanning. The tanning method used in it is the most basic. After ten days, the skins are removed from the pit where they had been put and covered with water that contains lime (chuna) and impure carbonated soda. With the use of an iron scraper, the hide's hair was removed, then it was sewed into a bag-like structure and once more filled with the bark solution before being hung from a tree or other structure. When the tanning is deemed finished, this procedure takes five days. With the increased mobility brought by leather labour, this group in UP has become more assertive due to recent sociopolitical upheavals.⁴³

Dabgar: A caste called Dabgar produces jars out of raw hide that can store butter, oil, and other liquids. Gotras have been formed from them. The Sribastab are the most prevalent ethnic group in the province's easternmost region. They got their name from the ancient town of Sravasti in the Gonda District. The Dabgar typically made two types of vessels: the Kuppa, a huge oil and butter jar, and the phuleli, a tiny phial used to hold fragrant oils. Their traditions around marriage are not unusual, and their exogamy law is typical. They worship a deity known as the Panchonpir in the east of the United Provinces. As an offering, they pour a mixture of sugar and pepper

⁴⁰ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, p.190.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.191.

⁴² Nand, K. Tiwari, *Chand ka Acchut Ank*, Radhakrishnan Prakashan, New Delhi, 1997, p. 143.

⁴³ M. Sharma, *Workers and leather industry in Kanpur (1861-1947): Transition from Craft to Factory Production*, 2014, p. 107

known as mirchwan on the shrine and then drink the rest themselves. They occasionally serve cakes (puri), sweets, and other things in a similar manner. They traditionally sacrifice a goat when trouble, such as illness, is severe.⁴⁴

Dhangar: The local population is called Dhangar. William Crooks claims that it is a Dravidian tribe that may be found in certain of the United Province's eastern regions. They were primarily concentrated in Gorakhpur,. Their herds and flocks follow them as they travel. They closely resemble the Kunbi in terms of their religion, behaviour, and language, but their temples are nothing more than a collection of massive, uneven stones. They further assert that this race produced the ancestor of the Malwa-based Holkar dynasty.⁴⁵ Despite not really worshipping any of the traditional Hindu gods, the Dhangars of Mirzapur are officially Hindus. Their deities are Varnua, the water spirit, and Goraiya Deva, as well as a female deity known as Barma Bhawani, who may be the same as Barhona, a deity of the Kurs. A yearly worship service is held for Barma Bhawani. Bucks, goats, and a pig sacrifice were made four times a year in honour of other gods. On the fifteenth Kartik of each year, the cattle god Goraiya is honoured. He treated the cattle for illness using a pig and a white-black cock, sacrificed to him. On the floor, alcohol has been spilled. Through the Baiga, they practise the customary village gods' worship.⁴⁶

Dhanuk: A caste called Dhanuk employs people as watchmen, wedding musicians, and midwives. They are most prevalent in the Agra division but are present across the province, with the exception of the divisions of Benares, Gorakhpur, and Faizabad, including the hills. Their lineage is extremely hazy. According to Buchanan, they are a "pure agricultural group, whose name implies archers."⁴⁷ The following significant subcastes of the Dhanuks were documented: Rawat, Dhakara, Dusadh, Kaithiya, Kathariya, and all the others. Laungbarsa, Hazari, Kathariha, Lakariha, Bhuseli, Garuhaiya, Hathichighar, Garpetha, Atariha, Pichhauriha, Jashar, Jalaliya, Kachhwaha, Jugeli, Ruriha, Kharahia, Tachele, Dunhan, and Bagheli are among the twenty subdivisions mentioned in the whole list from Etawah. It demonstrates the community's complexity.⁴⁸ The history of the name's derivation is unknown to the Dhanuks. However, they

⁴⁴ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.2, p.235.

⁴⁵ R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, p.50.

⁴⁶ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.2, p. 179.

⁴⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.2, p. 255.

⁴⁸ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.2, p.263.

assert their kshatriya rank by producing a type of mat known as Kathri, which is still one of the distinctive crafts made by this sub-division today. The Kachhwaha and Baghele mist are names of closely related Rajput tribes; the Hathichighar are elephant keepers; the Jaiswar and Magahi are unmistakably regional identities, originating from the towns of Jais and Magadha, respectively.⁴⁹

Dharkar: One of the Eastern Doms' sub-castes is called Dharkar. They are also known as Bentbansi because they work in cane (bent), which some corrupt into Benbansi or into the race of Raja Vena. They were mostly concentrated in Mirzapur. The Mirzapur Dharkars claim that when Parameswar created their ancestor, he placed him under bamboo and gave him a curved knife (banka) so that he might make a living by weaving baskets and other things.⁵⁰ There are no idols, temples, or clergy in their place of worship. They always live in fear of evil spirits, or the souls of the dead, who are thought to enter the bodies of the living as retribution for previous wrongdoings or the disregard of burial customs, and who are responsible for the majority of the ailments. Other than ageing, they have no belief in other causes of natural death. All deaths are attributed to the presence of bad spirits, with the exception of those brought on by violence or natural decay.⁵¹

Dusadh: A low caste that can be found in the provinces' east is called Dusadh. The word has been derived from the Sanskrit dush, which means to corrupt, or from the word dauh-sadhiks, which means porter.⁵² They are incapable of becoming occupancy tenants due to their drunken, sluggish tendencies, and the majority of them work as ploughmen for other tenants or the landlord, or as village watchmen. Some of them make their living by cutting wood or gathering produce from the jungle, but they do not practise handicrafts.⁵³

Kapariya: A population of beggars and peddlers known as Kapariya can be found throughout the provinces but was not specifically counted in the latest census. They go by the name Kapariya, which is Sanskrit for "sellers of old clothes," which they gather through charity. Another legend claims that they formed the last caste to be formed from the sweat that poured

⁴⁹ R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, p.63.

⁵⁰ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.2, p. 172.

⁵¹ *Chand ka Acchut Ank*, p. 160.

⁵² W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.2, p. 234.

⁵³ *Chand ka Acchut Ank*, p.161.

from Siva and Parvati's foreheads as they grew weary of the creation process.⁵⁴ The term "khapsariya" is used by those who adopt the myth of the skull and draw their name from it. Khappar is a noun that either refers to a skull or the earthen bowl that beggars carry. Hindus, or Kapariyas, revere Kali, Durga, Parameswar, and Mahadev. The only sacrifice they provide to Mahadeva and Parameswar is a drink as a form of devotion. If they travelled to Gaya on pilgrimage, they would revere the banyan, pipal, and tulsi plants.⁵⁵

Kharwar: In the South Mirzapur district, there is a caste known as Kharwar that consists of small farmers and labourers. An examination of the tribe is necessary due to the disparities in social standing among its many branches. While some are well-positioned landowners who have higher status, others work as servants for the more powerful tribes as woodcutters and water drawers. The majority of them are producers, and just a small percentage own farmland. In terms of occupation and social standing, their social status ranges from that of Rajputs, to that of Cheros and Majhwars, who are more ancient than the Rajputs themselves?⁵⁶

Kori: Hindu weavers belong to the caste Kori. Their name comes from the caste of Kol, of whom they consider themselves to be a branch. Kaulika also means "a weaver" in Sanskrit, where it refers to anything "ancestral." According to their own account, a Brahman girl saluted Saint Kabir as he passed her on his way to take a dip in the Ganges. "God grant you a son," he replied in response. He responded that his pledge could not be broken, despite her objections that she was a virgin and unmarried. A boy was born as a result of the blisters she had on her hand right away. She abandoned the infant on the banks of the river because she felt ashamed. He was later adopted by a weaver who taught him his profession and gave him milk from a cow that had never given birth. His mother was a virgin, unmarried, and gave birth to him, thus giving him his title (kori).⁵⁷ Numerous significant subcastes of the Koris have been identified. Aharwar, named after the ancient town of Ahar in the Bulandshahr District; Bais, the name of a well-known Rajput lineage; Jaiswar, named after the town of Jais in the Rae Bareli District; Jatua, who claim to have some connection to the Jats or to have descended directly from the matted hair (jata) of Siva; Kabirbansi, named after Kabir, the caste's founder; katua, who emerge from katua;

⁵⁴ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 3, p. 160.

⁵⁵ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.3, p. 162.

⁵⁶ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.3, p. 237.

⁵⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.3, p. 257.

kaithiya, who emerge from kayasths; kanaujiya, from kanauj; and kor Chamara, who emerge from Chamars. The province is inhabited by numerous additional subcastes. There are jaiswar, kanaujiya, sachhwar, Manwar, and Gangapari in Shahjahanpur. Kutar, Kamaritha, Jaiswar, Jaiswar, Sakhwar, Dhiman, and Sunwani are all found in Hamirapur. People who work as jonkiyaras those who administer suckers to patients are known as Bijnor. They go by the names Mahur, Sakhwar, Bhandauliya, and Chandaulya in Etawah. In Mirzapur, they identify as Chamar-kori, adhering to the shared traits of Chamars and kori, who are associated with kahars. They identify as Udaypu emigrants in this place. The Juriya or Joriya of the Jaunpur District, immigrants from a region called Katwin, proclaim to be Brahmans. They acknowledge that Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Ahirs, Kurmis, and Muraos are castes that are identical to their own.⁵⁸ They sacrificed sheep and goats as offerings to Mahabir and Bhagawati, whom they revered. Previously, they would only weave in silk; today, they produce cotton fabrics. Every single Kori is a Hindu. They formerly belonged to the Raedasi or Sivanarayani sect in the Faizabad district, which has been linked in some accounts to the Chamars. They are known as Kabirpanthis in Bijnor.⁵⁹

Khatik: The word Khatik is derived from the Sanskrit word Khat. In English Khatik is the word for "butcher". Sheep and goat slaughtering and preparation were the major occupations of the Khatik Caste in antiquity. Later, they turned to tanning sheep's skin and goat's flesh, as well as selling sheep's hair to the market and exporting it to western nations for use as pigskin. In the modern era, members of the Khatik caste trade in junk and sell vegetables. Street vendors make up the majority of those who scavenge scrap metal, paper, and plastic from nearby locations.⁶⁰

Nat: Nat is a nomadic caste of performers who are spread around the province and are sometimes referred to as "gypsy dancers" and "acrobats." According to Crook, the term "Nat" refers to a group of numerous lineages that have been combined just because they all engage in similar activities like dancing, prostitution, and the production of various archaic industries.⁶¹ The Oudh Nats were divided by Mr. Carnegie into eight sub-castes. There are three divisions of

⁵⁸ *Chand ka Acchut Ank*, pp. 139-140.

⁵⁹ R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, pp. 84-86.

⁶⁰ H. G. Walton, *A Monograph on Tanning and Working in Leather in United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Govt. Press, United Provinces, Allahabad, 1903, p. 85.

⁶¹ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol.3, p. 172.

the Gwaliyari Nats, also known as the Gwalior Nats: Kapuri, Bhantu, and Sarwani. The Sanwat are classified as Hindus by the Brijbasi. During the shows, the males walk on stilts while the females dance and sing beneath them to display their enthusiasm. There are seven subgroups within the Bajaniya Nats of the Mirzapur district, including the Makriyana (from the Sanskrit word makri, meaning "a spider"); The word "gauharna" comes from the Gangetic alligator or lizard known as the "goh". Members of this division are typically the tribe's headmen, or deodinaik, or "leader given by God," Sanpaneriya, none of whom will kill the snake; Bahumaina, or "the fly," whose name derives from the fact that it has many eyes; Gagoliya, of which they are unable to explain; and Suganaik, none of whom will harm the parrot. They have a Panth, or internal council, which is led by a head man (mutana). A messenger whose job is to gather the elderly for meetings assists the mutana. According to tribal custom, men pay 25 rupees in cash, 4 rupees worth of sugar, 1 rupee each for pulses, and 1 rupee each for ghee, 2 rupees each for wheat, some turmeric, and cakes when buying a bride. The bride's price is sent before the wedding after the date is set.⁶²

Parhaiya: A lower caste known as Parhaiya is scattered in Pargana Dudhi in the Mirzapur district. It is known as "The Burners of the Jungle" in Gondi. "The name Pareiya or Pariah is equivalent to that of the Pahariyas, a race of mountaineers," wrote Bishop Coldwell. They named themselves Malers, and they lived in Bengal's Rajmahal Hills. According to some, the Pareiyas and Pahariyas are both groups of non-Aryan, non-Dravidian aborigines. The word "Pariah," or "Pariya," actually meant "a drummer," as it was frequently derived from the phrase "a drum," particularly the large drum played at funerals.⁶³ The term "Pareiya" actually refers to a hereditary profession; the Pareiyas are the people who are typically employed as drummers at ritualistic occasions, particularly at burials. They identify as Hindus yet practise non-Aryan forms of devotion. With sacrifices of chickens and goats, they honour the Dih, or common rural gods, and the female goddess Sairi Devi. Yearly, this worship is scheduled to take place on a Monday during the months of Sawan or Baisakh. They sacrifice animals under a sal tree since they lack a temple. They simultaneously honour their departed ancestors and Mother Earth by sprinkling some milk or alcohol on the earth. There is a tiny mud mound signifying the sainted deceased

⁶² J. C. Nesfield, *Brief View of the Caste System of the North West Provinces and Oudh*, North West Provinces and Oudh Press, Allahabad, 1885.

⁶³ R. A. Singh, *Indian Dalit Ethnography*, pp.118-120.

inside each dwelling. At the common community temple in the jungle, Sairi Devi and the village gods are venerated.⁶⁴

Pasi: A caste called Pasi is primarily present in the United Province's central areas. Their primary source of income seems to have been from tapping several varieties of date trees for date liquid, which is Tari (Toddy) fermented.⁶⁵ They were counted in six subcastes during the census: Arakh, Baurasi, Kaithwans, Mothi, Rajbanshi, and Rajpasi. The Pasis are divided up into five hereditary subcastes, including the Bhar, a clan that may or may not be connected to the Pasis, and the Kaithwas, who, as was previously said, claim to be of Kayasth ancestry. The Pasis group of beggars is known as Pasmangta (pasi mangna). At weddings, they are given gifts by other Pasis. One of the five ancient Pasis clans founded by Parasurama or Parameswar is named Baurasi. The entire Census results display the well-known 305 Pasi sub-divisions. The most significant ones in their respective regions are the Baheliya and Bhil of Badaun; the Aheriya and Bhil of Moradabad; the Parasarami of Allahabad and Fatehpur; the Boriya of Fatehpur; the Rewas of Banda; the Baheliya and Bhar of Mirzapur; the Bhadauriya of the Tarai; the Banya of Lucknow; the Boriya, Mahtiya, and parasarami of Unnao; the Boriya of Rae Bareilly; the Chunarha, Dhanuk, and Khatik of Bahraich; the Chaurasi of Basti, Sultanpur, and Barabanki.⁶⁶

Sahariya: In Lalitpur and some of the surrounding areas of Bundelkhand, people belong to a caste known as Sahariya. These Sahariyas of Bundelkhand are also known by the term Rawat, which derives from the Sanskrit Raja-duta, "king's messenger," or Raja-Putra, "king's son." While they also venerate Rama and Krishna, they mostly worship Bhawani. They neither practise any ancestral devotion in particular nor involve Brahmans in any of their personal rituals. The sister's son or another senior tribal member leads the worship. They worship a number of regional goddesses, the majority of whom seem to be worthy members of the tribe, including Gonr, Narasinha, Sanwar, Goraiya, Katiya, Tholiya, Somiya, and Ahay Pal. They believed in the standard demonological notions of illness, witchcraft, and evil spirits they use

⁶⁴ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 4, p.129.

⁶⁵ *Chand ka Acchut Ank*, p.165.

⁶⁶ M. Singh, *The Depressed Classes their Socio and Economic Condition*, p.99.

profanity while standing in water or hold a hot iron in their right hand in order to pacify the demons that, they believe, have caused illness.⁶⁷

Sansiya: Sansiya are a nomadic tribe of thieves. They are mostly found in the province's western districts. Their name is thought to have originated from the Sanskrit word for breathing (Svasa). People who participate in illegal activities are tossed aside as members of an outcaste tribe and are required to live outside towns and eat off of broken dishes. It is true that the Dom serves these purposes. The Sansiya way of life has been greatly damaged.⁶⁸ The Sansiyas practise a very archaic religious system. They have a hazy conception of a powerful deity whom they refer to as Bhagwan or Narayan. There is not a convincing explanation for the traits and roles of this God. Some of them vaguely idolise Kali or Devi, when they are ill or in a problem. They have a constant fear of the malevolent souls of the dead, who, if properly appeased, transform into Bhuts, or bad spirits, and harm the surviving, much like all the other allied races. Additionally, they retain ambiguous beliefs in a deity called Miyan, who may be Ghazi Miyan or the saint of Amroha and Jalesar. They honour him for being immune to snake bites and refer to him as the king of the serpents.⁶⁹ They were detained, the majority of the youth were sent to reform schools, and the elderly were dispersed across the province in the year 1890 in the hopes that they would choose a moral path for their lives. The Upper Duab had no other means of support beyond *dakaiti*, road robberies, vehicle thefts, threshing floors, and people camped out in the fields, according to a thorough investigation. They typically bury the looted items instead of bringing them to their camp for a long period of time. They are free to use the railroad to search for opportunities of theft and flee the crime scene. They don't stop at Sardis or other well-known rest stops on their journey; instead, they set up a tent outside a village or town, dressing nicely and posing as Banjarsa or businesspeople.⁷⁰

Tharu: A tribe known as the Tharu has colonies in Northern Oudh and the Gorakhpur Division, in addition to its headquarters in the Himalayan Tarai. Mr. Nesfield has provided a thorough overview of the Tharus' community interaction. Hunting, fishing, harvesting wild fruits and vegetables, grazing cows and buffaloes, producing ghee, raising pigs, poultry, and goats, and

⁶⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 4, p. 272.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 277.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.181.

⁷⁰ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 4, p. 183.

engaging in a primitive kind of farming are all ways through which they earn a living. They hate and avoid pests like jackals, snakes, and lizards since they are predators. They primarily chase wild animals like deer, antelope, and other large game that are still abundant in the local jungles.⁷¹

These stories about Dalit groups depict certain historical facets of Dalit existence. The section briefly discusses the Dalit castes' socio-economic and cultural situations, as well as their occupational structures, in the United Provinces. It is obvious that all castes primarily rely on their resources to survive. A foundational epistemology that served as the cognitive, societal, and economic imagination of historical contexts and movements was developed by the colonial imaginations of caste in general and Dalit history in particular.

This chapter emphasised how conventional and customary sociocultural religious and political practises prevented Dalit society in the United Provinces from accessing economic resources. Numerous groups that were once seen as being untouchable absolutely depend on their community. However, they were forced to engage in occupations that the conventional Hindu social order viewed as impure. Dalit communities were able to develop a collective voice and take action at the same time in the form of the Dalit movement, through which they expressed their desire for a better lifestyle.

⁷¹ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 4, p. 253.

Chapter-Three

Political Consciousness and Identity Construction among Dalits

The socio-political system of the then-United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), as in colonial India as a whole, began to produce in the late nineteenth century, and each caste within the social structure began to compete for socio-political status and benefits. Similar traces of caste consciousness and identity suddenly began to increase in the lower and untouchable castes; now, the purpose of these castes was to mobilise the people of their respective castes so that a respectable place could be found in the new western paradigm based on modernization that the colonial government was establishing.¹ The aspect of the shape and existence of consciousness, identity, and movement among Dalit castes has been a particularly complex and mutually contradictory issue among social scientists. Dalit movements have been kicking off on the basis of different ideologies expressing various Dalit-related issues. But all these attempts have one thing in common: despite the philosophies and challenges being distinct, all the movements undoubtedly claim a Dalit identity. However, the form of this identity varies from person to person. The identity of each community or movement derives from its importance and its image in its own eyes. Not only this, as a community grapples with the issues of defining its existence and role, it asks itself, "Who are we?" And "what is our status in society as opposed to other communities"? Or "How do we interact with one another?" Then the process of identification begins with that, in which consciousness links itself with itself.²

Broadly speaking, these elements can be discovered in different patterns within a culture. Gail Omvedt says that there have been two paradigms of the Dalit movement. The first paradigm is the "Hindu United" paradigm, which largely asks for cultural reform in the Hindu system itself and appeals to religious devotion, cooperation with nationalists for themselves, cooperation with *Hindutva* and social reformers, and while its basic form has been inspired by caste mobility

¹ Bharat Patankar and Gail Omvedt, *The Dalit Liberation Movement in Colonial Period*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2004, p. 3.

² Abhay Kumar Dubey, (edited), *Adhunikta ke Aaine main Dalit*, Vani Prakashan, Delhi, 2005, p. 195.

through traditionalist Sanskritization of Dalit castes,³ there has been an "Autonomous Radical Assertion Paradigm as opposed to *Hindutvaism*," which is antithetical to both mainline Hinduism and social reformists. Anti-Hinduism, anti-caste system, search for autonomous dignified identity against Dalits' *Hindutva* identity and its socio-cultural acceptance, completely Dalit-oriented policies and programs, strong Dalit leadership and organisational attitude equipped with it, and finally, an egalitarian society equipped with liberty, equality, and fraternity have been inspired by Buddhism (the Ambedkarite model) and also by Periyar's atheism (the Periyar model).⁴ Gail Omvedt further states, "radical autonomy does not mean advocating isolation from the rest of society; it means re-establishing different social groups on socio-cultural and historical grounds."⁵ As a result, Dalit castes could be founded on psychological superiority rather than psychological inferiority in a modern liberal egalitarian society.

What exactly were Dalit consciousness, identity, and activism like in the United Provinces, and how did they exist there? Was the application distinct from the aforementioned paradigms, or was it functional with some revisionism? If so, what role did the socio-political environment play in the formulation of socio-political policies, and how was this movement similar to other recent Dalit movements in India? Does it support the Dalit political system that existed in the United Provinces during and after colonialism? The issues covered in this chapter are those mentioned above.

Sudha Pai asserts in this context, "Because there was no anti-caste movement in the United Provinces during colonial rule, Dalits in the provinces developed political consciousness much later."⁶ The "Young Jatav League" was formed in the 1940s by West-educated Jatav leaders from Agra and Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, and the "Agra Scheduled Castes Association" was established from 1944 to 1945, which was related to Ambedkar's All India Scheduled Castes

³ Gail Omvedt, *Dalit and the Democratic Revolution Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1994, p.112.

⁴ Gail Omvedt, *Dalit and Democratic Revolution*, p.113.

⁵ Ibid, p.135.

⁶ Sudha Pai and Niraja Gopak Jayal (edited), *Democratic Governance in India: Challenges of Poverty, Development, and Identity*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2001, p.204.

Association and lasted until the creation of the Republican Party of India in 1958.⁷ Pai further claims,

There have been several factors contributing to the delayed growth of Dalit consciousness and the absence of a strong Dalit movement in the United Provinces. The unchanging and rigid caste-structure characteristic of the region created a non-partisan environment for the rise of the Dalit movement, and the nature of the mobility displayed by the leaders of the Indian National Congress during the national movement in the region also did not help create a strong Dalit movement, which did not encourage an anti-caste or social reform movement here as compared to the South and West.⁸

However, this hypothesis is not without controversy, as there is a section of social scientists who claim, contrary to this hypothesis, that there was a Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh during the Vedic period. Due to this, a new debate has also started. Therefore, it becomes imperative that all those factors be re-examined on a comparative basis so that new discourses emerging from this debate can be brought closer to the truth by including them in the history of the Dalit movement. The most important factor in this chain is the caste structure. M. N. Srinivas, Christopher Jaffrelot, Sudha Pai, and others have demonstrated that the caste structures of Hindi-speaking states in the north differ from those in the south, west, and east. The North Indian state is traditional and complete with the pattern of the varna system (here Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, and untouchables) representing all *varna* in their form of origin. While in the south there are only Kshatriya and Vaishya characters, in the east there are Brahmins, Kayasthas, Vaishyas, Shudras, and Atishudras. According to the 1931 census, Andhra Pradesh had 3% Brahmins and 1.2% Kshatriyas; Maharashtra had 3.9% Brahmins, 1% Kshatriyas, and 1.69% Vaishyas;⁹ Gujarat had 4.06% Brahmins and 4.85% Rajput Kshatriyas; and the United Provinces had 9.2% Brahmins, 7.2 percent Thakurs, 2.5 percent Bania, and 1%

⁷ Sudha Pai and Niraja Gopak Jayal (edited), *Democratic Governance in India: Challenges of Poverty, Development, and Identity*, p.207.

⁸ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, Sage Publication New Delhi, 2007, p.27.

⁹ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Caste in North India*, Hurst and Company, London, 2003, p.7.

Kayastha.¹⁰ Pai claims that in Uttar Pradesh, unlike the West and South, there is no such caste, whose touch, shadow, and travel on the streets is considered untouchable, and that they are forbidden from visiting upper caste houses in the village. And here it was not that the untouchables had to be removed from the road due to the public arrival of Brahmins and *Dwijis* (twice born), but there were some castes like Bhangi, Dom, Dhanuk, and Chamar, which were less than six lakhs in number in the colonial period itself, with whom untouchability was practiced, and the upper and middle castes avoided contact with them because these castes were involved in dirty business like lifting dead animals, pig rearing, leather tanning, etc. However, if these people gave up their jobs and became cobblers, their touch would not be regarded as a symbol of untouchability.¹¹ Pai goes on to say that another significant difference in caste composition between Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai was that in Mumbai, the highly educated and dynamic lower castes, which were just below the Brahmin and at the top in the Shudra segment, gave way to the uneducated lower castes and helped raise anti-Brahmin awareness, due to which non-Brahmin and Mahar movements came into existence in Mumbai. On the contrary, in North India, the peasant castes, which were different from the Brahmins (like Rajputs and Jats), directly exploited Dalits at the village level.¹²

In fact, the way Pai has drawn the blueprint of the United Provinces shows only one aspect of it. According to her argument, as there were no pathetic conditions for untouchable castes of Dalits in the South and West in the United Provinces, the United Provinces can be considered a flexible society, and more than that, it should be considered an advanced society as compared to the South and West, but it is not so. As in other parts of the country, the Dalit touchable and untouchable castes did not have public relationships with each other and other *Dwij* castes. Second Pai's claim is more flawed when he claims that the number of untouchable castes (Bhangi, Dom Dhanuk, and Chamar) in the United Provinces was less than 600,000 in the colonial period, while according to the census of 1931, Chamars in the United Provinces constituted 12.7 percent, Pasis were 2.9%, Dhobi were 1.6%, Bhangis were 1.0%, and others

¹⁰ K. L. Sharma, *Caste and Class in India*, Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 2011, p.228.

¹¹ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.28.

¹² Ibid, p.29.

were 2.8%.¹³ According to the 1931 population report, Chamars were 12.7 percent, which ranked first in number and percentage in the caste category of the state. There were also a lot of sub-castes in the Chamar caste; in the 1891 census, these sub-castes were listed as 1156. The effect of this was that Chamar also had a sense of inferiority toward each other; as Briggs says, Jatav and Jaiswar were considered to be the highest sub-castes among these 1156 sub-castes. This Jatav sub-caste was mostly in Meerut, Agra, Mathura, Rohilkhand, Moradabad, Saharanpur, and Badaun districts in the north and west of the United Provinces, and the Jaiswars mostly lived in Allahabad, Banaras, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, and Mirzapur. About 40% of the total population of Chamars belonged to these two sub-castes. While both of these sub-castes claim their superiority, the claim of supremacy of "Jatav" among all the sub-castes of the Chamar caste can be justified. Many of these castes have been in fairly good condition, and like other Chamars, Jatavs, and Jaiswars, they do not even have dirty or untouchable occupations.¹⁴

The geographical ethnic composition of the United Provinces has been quite varied and multi-ethnic. More than 50% of the total population lives in the mountainous sections of the United Provinces (this area is now in the distinct Uttarakhand state); also, there was no district where only one caste was in majority. According to the 1931 census, there were only 5 districts where the presence of a particular caste was about 20%: in Mainpuri, the presence of Ahirs was 22%; in Azamgarh, the presence of Chamars was 20%; in Ghazipur, the presence of Ahirs was 19%; in Mathura, the presence of Jats was 19%; and in Saharanpur, Chamars had a presence of 21%. In addition, Brahmins, Rajputs, Ahirs, and Kurmis often lived throughout the state.¹⁵ The Aryan people and culture had a strong influence on the caste structure in the North Indian United Provinces, which was lacking in the south and west. Secondly, there was no social, economic, or cultural monopoly and dictatorship of the Brahmins like in the South and West. But in Dalit castes, under conditions like slavery, forced labor, unemployment, poverty, and lack of education, and in backward areas, there were no pleasant economic and social relations between Dalits and *Dwij* and middle castes.¹⁶ Pai cited Kshir Sagar's dissertation, *Dalit Movement in*

¹³ Sambaiah Gundimeda, *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2016, pp.75-78.

¹⁴ G. W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, Association Press, Calcutta, 1920, p. 16.

¹⁵ K. L. Sharma, *Caste and Class in India*, pp. 175-76.

¹⁶ Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of the Tradition, Political Development in India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1967, pp.78-79.

India and Its Leaders to further strengthen this claim, which begins roughly in 1857 and ends with Phule's death in 1890. The second phase begins in 1891 and ends in 1918; the third phase begins with the Southborough Committee inquiries in 1919 and ends with the Buddhist conversion in 1956.¹⁷ But the interesting thing is that Kshir Sagar himself has said in the same dissertation that the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh was very strong and effective. These Dalit leaders include Babu Laxman Das (Unnao), Kanoji Lal Jatav (Fatehgarh), Dharam Prakash (Bareilly), Mahadevi Prasad (Gorakhpur), Mata Prasad Sagar (Lucknow), Premchand Arya (Lucknow), and Swaminath Prasad (Deoria).¹⁸

Pai, on the other hand, argues that the first phase of the Dalit movement in the United Provinces was absent due to a lack of reformist tendencies, while the second and especially the third phase saw some awakening, which established the Dalit movement.¹⁹ So does this statement mean that there was no Dalit movement in the United Provinces during this period? It is not so, but the Bhakti movement has been very effective for many centuries, especially in mediaeval North India, which included the United Provinces. The Bhakti movement has been tremendously influential in mediaeval North India. However, from the second half of the 15th century onwards, the Bhakti movement separated principally into two groups, the *Saguna* and the *Nirguna* traditions. The followers of *Saguna Bhakti* were supporters of idol worship, Shiva and Vishnu worship, and Brahmanism, and the sect of those who worshipped Shiva was called Shaiva, and the sect of those who worshipped Vishnu was called Vaishnava. The greatest proponents of this tradition were Tulsidas and Surdas, who, through their literary works, considerably strengthened the Bhakti movement even among the Dalit untouchable castes. The *Saguna Bhakti* movement highlighted the integration of all high and low castes in a socially integrated system through devotional worship, but it never did the work of disseminating consciousness against Varnashrama Dharma and the caste system. On the contrary, the *Nirguna Bhakti* movement highlighted anti-idol worship, anti-Brahminism, anti-Varnashram religion, anti-caste system, non-untouchability, and the building of an equal society, although it spawned a

¹⁷ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, M D Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, p.16.

¹⁸ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.375.

¹⁹ Sudha Pai, , *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.31.

new tradition of *Santguru*.²⁰ Its initial master was Ramanuj of South India, whose student Ramanand introduced this movement to North India.²¹ Kabir, the greatest follower of Ramanand, was a rationalist and critic of Brahmanism and religious literature who challenged religious practices and was anti-untouchability. He gained a lot of popularity among the ignorant and lower classes due to his local language.²² Briggs states, "Kabir originated with 12 notable students, practically all of whom were of low rank, and created a separate sect in each." Satnami, Dadupanthi, Shivnarayan, Raidas, Malukdasi, and Gorakhpanthi trace the origin of their respective sects to Kabir or due to the influence of his education.²³ The influence of his teachings and cults was not only among the untouchable Dalit castes of the United Provinces, but the Bhakti movement had an impact outside the United Provinces as well, such as when Jagjivandas started the Satnami movement from the United Provinces, but his disciple Ghasidas expanded this movement to Chhattisgarh.²⁴

Raidas, who was one of Ramananda's most important followers, was born in Banaras in the latter half of the 15th century and later came under the sway of the great Ramananda. Beyond the teachings of his master, Ravidas was recognised as a bigger adherent of monotheism and Kabir when he subsequently rose to become the leader of a larger religious movement. Due to the wide impact of his teachings, he has been considered a great teacher in the *Bhaktamal* (biographies of Vaishnava saints). Raidas' religious movement gave rise to the monistic Shivnarayan sect. The ideology of this sect is almost the same as that of Raidas. Rajput Shivnarayan was the founder of this crucial movement.²⁵ It is not that the expansion of the Panths was only among the rural, uneducated untouchables, but the influence of Kabir Panth, Ravidas Panth, and Narayan Panth is there among the untouchables who migrated to the cities of the United Provinces between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

²⁰ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 6-7.

²¹ G.W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, p.172.

²² Ramesh Kumar, *Dalit Chaitna ka Vaicharik Aadhar: Brahmanwad Virodh*, G. B. Pant Institute of Social Science, Allahabad, 1989, p.110.

²³ G.W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, p.172.

²⁴ J. Michael Mahar, *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, University of Arizona Press, U. S., 1972, pp.142-151.

²⁵ G.W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, p.176.

As circumstances changed, many untouchables became devotees; this refers to those who made religious devotion a practical practise and who did not live the life of a monk with religious sects but instead earned a living like a regular person. He commonly accompanied his name with the names Kabir Panth, Shivnarayan Panth, Raidas, or Ravidas Guru, which were indicative of the Bhakti movement. Apart from this, these people did not even wear a sacred thread.²⁶ When the untouchables migrated here from the cities, they established their own separate caste *panchayats*, which used to deal with their internal affairs as well as the work of the socio-religious system; these *panchayats* also used to do the work, and moreover, these *panchayats* bear the name of the sect teacher along with their names: *Ravidas Chamar Panchayat*, *Shiv Narayani Chamar Panchayat*, and so on. In the name of these saints, temples were built by collecting donations through these *panchayats*. But these temples were also established with idols of these saints, *bhajan kirtan*, *satsang*, etc., where marriage ceremonies and *panchayats* of the people of these sects were held. But his irony was that due to financial paucity, temple construction was often slow.²⁷ However, these people were able to manage it in some ways, such as when the Chamars of the *Shivnarayan Sant* sect built a temple in Allahabad, a Shiv Narayan temple was built in Banaras where "*Gyan Deepak*" was recited, and a Shiv Narayan temple was built in Karnalganj of Kanpur. Another Shiv Narayan temple was built nearby; two Kabirpanthi temples, Benazgair Idgah in Kanpur and *Ravidas Mandir* in Collectorganj, Lucknow, were built in 1920–30, and the anniversaries of these gurus were also celebrated, and congregations were called continuously for *bhajan kirtan*. *Satsang* was organised in successive sessions in which devotional thoughts, moral ethics, social messages, etc. were expressed.²⁸

According to Nandini Guptu, the Bhakti movement spread widely among urban untouchables. In fact, it was critical of the scriptural caste hierarchy for the urban poor and untouchables and advocated for caste equality. This movement gave a message to the untouchables against the multifaceted discrimination, disabilities, and deprivation that they had been facing for hundreds of years. Other untouchable castes sought to assert their dignity as an upwardly mobile caste, claiming sanskritization within the caste structure while making no

²⁶ G.W. Briggs, *The Chamar*, p.177.

²⁷ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.66.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.68.

external efforts for an egalitarian society and non-discriminatory dignity.²⁹ Although these poor untouchables did not have all the economic and political resources with which they could bargain like other Sanskritized classes, their condition of rural serfdom did the rest, where he used to work as a slave on the landlord's farms. For this reason, they were marginalised even in the cities, yet with the help of the Bhakti movement, this untouchable class, contrary to the caste structure, insisted on building its own separate community consciousness and identity. Actually, this sense of community, identity, and psychological edge was more for the untouchables, who were becoming stronger as a result of their socialisation and who also served as a tonic for the next generation. It was such communal consciousness that was traditionally created by Mahavir, Buddha, Kabir, Ravidas, Dadu, Dharmadas, Lal Das, Sundar Das, Dariya Sahib, Bhikha Sahib, Jagjivan Das Daya Bai, Tulsi Sahib, etc.³⁰ Not only this, but the effect of this tradition was not only in the United Provinces; it also had an impact on the personality of Dr. Ambedkar, the father of the Mahar and Dalit movements in Maharashtra, which influenced the way he started the Dalit movement.³¹

Arya Samaj and Dalits

The Arya Samaj was established to awaken and unite the entire lower castes. Dayanand Saraswati spread the propaganda of the Arya Samaj by roaming around in Hindi-speaking states, especially in the United Provinces. To mobilise Dalit untouchable castes in Arya Samaj, he openly opposed idol worship and the practical functionality of the caste system during the Kumbh Mela in 1867.³² Saraswati's open call positively impacted Dalits, and as a result, Dalits became Arya Samajis. In the 1881 census, Saraswati gave a new identity to the Arya Samaj and insisted on registering them under the Vedic religion and the Arya caste. In the Awadh United Provinces, the Arya Samaj established "*Shrimati Arya Pratinidhi Sabha*" in Meerut in 1877, in Farrukhabad in 1879, in Kanpur in 1879, in Banaras and Lucknow in 1880, and in Agra in 1886 for propaganda, and opened 43 schools based on the Vedic Anglo Education system, in which

²⁹ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.69.

³⁰ Shahdev Singh, *Jati, Uday, Vikas, Istharta, Virodh, Pravartan aur Aab*, Aditya Publication, Itawa, 1999, p.142.

³¹ Dhananjay Keer, *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jivan Charit*, Popular Prakashan, New Delhi, 1996, p.12.

³² Sudarshan Bhatiya, *Dayanand Sarswati*, Gurukul Vidhyapith, Delhi, 2007, p. 165.

untouchables were provided education like Dwijis.³³ Dayanand Saraswati believed that "the sectarian and selfish Brahmins" (who frequently discourage people from learning and ensnare them from the lower castes into their evil ways, with the result that they lose health, peace of mind, and wealth) are to be strongly condemned in his "Sathyartha Prakash." Arya Samaj's anti-Brahmin stance was the foundation of its penetration into the Dalit caste.³⁴ "While Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, Antyaj, and women also have full rights to education just like Brahmins, many young Dalits were attracted to the Samaj by its theological stance of "Brahmin by merit, not by birth" or "varna on the basis of individuals' traits, behaviours, and temperaments"³⁵ Gandhi ji tried his best to adopt exactly the same philosophy and practise in his public life. Overall, the major purpose of Arya Samaj's doctrine switched from Arya caste supremacy to sanskritization, as a result of which the lower castes of North India gained self-respect and social identity through this process. The Arya Samaj had a huge impact on the lower castes in western Uttar Pradesh.³⁶

However, the expansion of Mission Schools and the Arya Samaj in the Western United Provinces (Agra) resulted in a significant change for the upliftment of the untouchable castes. The members of the Arya Samaj, mostly from Brahmins and upper castes, not only taught the backward classes to read and write but also inculcated an interest in studies. They were also inspired to adopt cultural symbols, practises, and religious beliefs. This practise had already taken effect before 1900, when Jatav Seth Sitaram, a wealthy leather industry owner in Agra, came under the influence of Swami Atmaram. Actually, Swami Atmaram came from Nepal, and Lomesh's "*Ramayana Purana*" was more popular there. Based on this, he wrote the book "*Gyan Samudra*" in 1887, in which he claimed that the gods Indra, Shiva, Varuna, Surya, etc. belonged to the Kshatriya *varna*.³⁷ If, according to Lomesh and other Ramayanas, it is agreed that the origin of the Jatav dynasty is connected with the Shiva *gotra*, then how can doubts be expressed about considering the Jatav dynasty as Kshatriyas? Swami Atmaram also helped a lot in

³³ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Caste in North India*, p.190.

³⁴ Swami Dayanand Sarwati, *Satyarth Prakash*, p.50

³⁵ Ibid, p.51.

³⁶ D.C. Dinakar, *Swatantra Sangram mein Achhuton ka Yogdan*. Lucknow, 1986, p. 89,

³⁷ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1969, p.67.

Sanskritizing the Jatavs. He began to claim from this time on that their caste brothers were related for sociocultural purposes.³⁸ Jatav caste *panchayats* were organised by collecting Jatavs in Agra and other cities. They passed resolutions like not eating dead animals' meat, not doing dirty work, and not following dirty ways.³⁹ This whole process had the support of the Arya Samaj at a wider social level. By the way, the policy of colonial rule should be held accountable for such untouchable caste activities, as caste-wise counting of the entire Indian population began in 1901. In this, the name, label, and status of any caste were also changed. In carrying out this responsibility, census officers used not only their understanding of religious scriptures but also local knowledge and practices. But whenever the name, label, or status assigned to a caste was disputed, the census officers decided on the basis of their anthropological understanding in the light of the reports given by the leaders of the caste concerned. This shows that in spite of various debates, the theological principle of caste hierarchy built on the basis of rituals, i.e., the criterion of social superiority of one caste over another, was finally clearly recognised by the British.⁴⁰ With this policy of the British government, a wave of sanskritization and imitation of the upper castes was running among the touchable castes, as well as accelerating this process in the untouchable castes as well. But it emerged as a more controversial, complex, and sometimes anti-caste paradigm among the untouchable castes than among other castes.⁴¹ Not only had this occurred, but sanskritization and anti-caste movements continued simultaneously in the untouchable castes.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the sons of wealthy contractors established the "Jatav Veer Mahasabha" in Agra after getting modern education in mission schools, Arya Samaj, and government schools. The objective of this party was to seek education and dignified identity in the society.⁴² Lynch says that in order to solve the problem of Jatav identity in India, two types of problems had to be tackled. The first problem was the evidence of the legitimacy of the Jatavs, i.e., their new Kshatriya identity. To solve this, on the one hand, he took the support of "*Lomesh Ramayana*," and on the other hand, while connecting himself with the Yadav

³⁸ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, p.68.

³⁹ Ibid, p.69.

⁴⁰ A.K. Dubey, (edited), *Lokthantra ke Sath Aadhyaya*, Vani Prakashan, New Delhi, 2005, p.94.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.95.

⁴² R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.92.

genealogy, he related himself to the traditional style of bow and arrow and made his evidence available to the concerned authorities. The second problem for the Jats was how they had reached their present deplorable condition. To solve this, he associated himself with Parshuram's fiction.⁴³

The path of Sanskritization was also adopted by the sweepers, etc. However, in eastern Uttar Pradesh, the influence of the Bhakti movement was felt on these castes, and in western Uttar Pradesh, the influence of the Arya Samaj and other organisations could be felt. But the unanimity among the castes of both places was that the representatives of both castes and other sub-castes belonging to them advocated addressing themselves as "Valmiki caste." In order to organise this caste socio-politically, Mahatma Fakirchand and Shri Gendu Ram established the Balmiki Sabha in Jalandhar in 1910, and it also spread its propaganda in the United Provinces. Later, this organisation joined Shri Santram, Chunnilal, Balmukund, and others.⁴⁴

Thus, a new identity emerged among these lower castes. This identity was also creating a collective consciousness among the lower castes of being oppressed by the traditional hierarchy, going beyond local boundaries. The discussion of rights for the ritualistic hierarchy that dominated society before the birth of this consciousness came for the first time in this process. The second change that came from this was that many castes located in more or less the same range and different local ranges started organising themselves more widely. Regional and national-level associations emerged from this process. It was becoming increasingly necessary for these castes to do so, as they began to see political space to negotiate with the state to settle their interests, while determining their political status on the basis of their wider social identity and numerical strength. Meanwhile, the third and most important change was visible in the movement of the lower castes to attain higher social status. This was not a new thing in the history of the caste system, but in new contexts, it had started acquiring a new qualitative dimension.⁴⁵ This movement started by attacking the ideological basis of the ritualistic hierarchy of caste. That is, the intellectual class and organisations that came out of the Arya Samaj and Bhakti movements did not limit themselves to devotion and Sanskritization but, sensing the

⁴³ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, p. 72-74.

⁴⁴ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.107.

⁴⁵ A.K. Dubey, (edited), *Lokthantra ke Sath Aadhyaya*, p.96.

contemporary conditions, started strengthening the foundation of Dalit politics and exploring political possibilities.

Although Arya Samaj's educational beginnings and adherence to its code of conduct were beyond the capabilities of the average man, certain elements were still present in it according to the need for some improvement in every class. The most important feature of this movement was that it took the first step in transferring the traditional Hindu religious model (*varna* or caste) to the modern socio-political system, which had its roots in the Indian Vedic social tradition and advocated an egalitarian society.⁴⁶ For the first time, some idealistic situations emerged for Dalit society because this model's attitude and experience were derived from the socio-cultural fundamental traditions of both *Dwij* and non-*Dwij*, to which Dalits also eagerly flocked. For Dalit upliftment, Arya Samaj had already made a promise to the untouchable castes. For this, the Samaj made arrangements for schools, hostels, scholarships, etc., for Dalits and also completed the process of "purification" to make them Hindu again.⁴⁷ While this exposed Arya Samaj's ideological ambiguity, which aided its expansion, it also significantly contributed to the empowerment of the Dalit educated-intellectual class.⁴⁸ However, by the 1920s, the Arya Samaj's strategy was not only proving insufficient for Dalit upliftment, but a section of Dalit intellectuals began to see the Sanskritization of lower castes as a negative and narrow consciousness. Arya Samaj was unable to complete the vision that this advanced and revolutionary class expected. Or it should be said that the traditionalist model, which was being advocated by the ideas of Arya Samaj, did not remain stable, narrow, and Dalit-friendly with the passage of time. In this way, Arya Samaj went into the background from the Dalit point of view. The new philosophy of Adi-Hinduism was developed by Dalits at this pivotal time to reject Vedic Hinduism and the caste system and to create a new Dalit identity and consciousness.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ A.K. Dubey, (edited), *Lokthantra ke Sath Aadhyaya*, p.101.

⁴⁷ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.12.

⁴⁸ Sumit Sarkar, *Aadhunik Bharat ka Itihas*, Raj Kamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 2007, p.92.

⁴⁹ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.14.

Adi-Hindu ideology and the creation of a new identity and consciousness among Dalits

According to Bharat Patankar and Gail Omvedt, "It was only in the 1920s that Dalits started organising themselves independently and strongly in many areas across India."⁵⁰ During this time, the Montagu-Chelmsford 1919 constitutional reform was implemented by the British government, providing numerical representation to various religious groups based on the "communal representation principle." In this act, Dalits also got a ray of hope for getting political representation in proportion to their numbers.⁵¹

Swami Acchutanand (1879-1933)⁵², and other Arya Samaj Dalits, most notably Babu Ram Charan (1888-1938)⁵³, Babu Nand Lal Chaudhary (1862-1941), Shyam Lal Yadav (1894-

⁵⁰ Bharat Patankar and Gail Omvedt, *The Dalit Liberation Movement in Colonial Period*, p.13. (According to the authors, the most important early Dalit movements were those led by Ambedkar in Maharashtra beginning in 1924, in which the Mahar caste played a dominant role; the Namasudra movement in Bengal; the Adi Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu; the Adi-Andhra movement in Andhra Pradesh, whose first conference was held in 1917; the Adi-Karnataka movement in Karnataka; the Narayana Guru movement in Kerala; and the Adi Hindu movement in the United Provinces, particularly in Kanpur).

⁵¹ Christophe Jaffrelot, *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, p.53.

⁵² Swami Achutaanand was born into a Chamar family in Manipur District, Uttar Pradesh. He was raised in a reasonably affluent environment because his father worked in a military facility. He had his early education at the Christian missionaries' run cantonment school, where he picked up the languages of Urdu, English, Hindi, and Gurumukhi. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four, Achutaanand roamed with mendicant saints across north India. He learned Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, and Sanskrit from Swami Sacchidananda, whom he befriended. According to the biography written by Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu, Achutaanand was exceptionally knowledgeable in religious philosophy. He studied the Guru Granth Saheb, the Bijak of Kabir, as well as works by other bhakti saint poets like Dadu Dayal, Ravidas, and Namdev. Achutaanand also read the Bengali translation of the Rig Vedas by R. C. Dutt and had in-depth conversations with Theosophical Society missionaries as well as Jain and Buddhist sadhus. Achutaanand founded the All India Achhut Caste Reform Sabha in 1919 after splitting from the Arya Samaj. Mata Prasad, *Uttar Bharat main Dalit Chetna ke Pratham Agardoot Swami Acchutanand Harihar*, Samyank Prakashan, New Delhi, 2015, pp.5-8.

⁵³ Ram Charan was born in a slum in the Kanpur district of Gwaltoli. Ram Charan's parents sent him to a neighbourhood municipal school despite making a meagre living as day laborers. He relocated to Lucknow as an adult, working at the Railway Audit Office to support himself while continuing his education at a night school. After

1959), etc. emerged as prominent leaders among the educated second generation of untouchables living in cities who expressed concern in the context of Dalit caste rise; they initially expressed their consent in the Arya Samaj, but soon a newness in their thoughts led to the formation of the Adi-Hindu movement.⁵⁴ It was based on the idea that the "Arya Samaj is just an army of the upper castes," which would never allow the lower castes to become the uppermost leadership class and would always subdue them and spend their energies on increasing the *Hindutva* numbers against the Muslim class. Therefore, in 1920, Swami Acchutanand and Ramcharan, being disappointed with the Arya Samaj, expressed concern that with the cooperation of the Arya Samaj, only structural changes could more or less take place in the caste society. It is better to search for the existence of our identity by being separate and independent from them. He sought his identity in the Bhakti movement and created the Adi-Hindu ideology based on it.⁵⁵ But Swami Achutananda claimed that the roots of Adi Hinduism lie in the Indus Valley Civilization.⁵⁶ In addition, he reinterpreted Indian religious and social history from his own Dalit perspective, expressing the historical root of untouchability in contrast to Aryan ideology. In this way, the Adi-Hindu movement started propagating its ideas of Adi-Hindu origin and Bhakti as its separate religion, which was also a pre-Aryan religion. To give more strength to this concept, Swami Bodhanand wrote a book called "Original Indian and Arya." Its culmination was seen in the Kumbh Mela of 1928–1929, when Adi Hinduism was proclaimed with great fanfare.⁵⁷ By 1924, local Hindu gatherings had been established in Kanpur, Lucknow, Banaras, Allahabad, etc. Every sabha had its own set of upadeshiks (preachers) and pracharaks (advocates), who frequently visited Dalit communities to spread Adi Hindu ideas. During these gatherings, one of the main goals of the Adi Hindu leaders was to criticize Hindu religious rituals and ceremonies

receiving a law degree, Ram Charan rose to prominence for organising local Adi Hindu organisations around the state of Uttar Pradesh and utilising his legal expertise to defend Dalits in court battles. A. P. Chaudhary, *Picchre tatha Dalit Brag ke Mahan Neta Rai Ram Charan ka Jivan Charit tatha Unke Sanshipta Karya*, Samyank Prakashan, New Delhi, 1973, pp.5-40.

⁵⁴ Chandrika Prasad Jigyansu, *Adi Hindu Andolan ka Prabartak Sri Swami Acchutanand Harihar*, Lucknow: Bahujan Kalyan Prakashak, 1968, p.7.

⁵⁵ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.14.

⁵⁶ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*, p.201.

⁵⁷ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.15.

and to urge their audience not to participate in them.⁵⁸ Swami ji organised many meetings to spread awareness among Dalits, which are as follows:

Meetings and conferences organised by Swami Acchutananda

Date	Place	Chairman/President	Discussion/Demand
1921	Anaz Mandi, Shahdara Delhi	Swami Acchutananda	This discussion was based on several questions regarding the home place of the Aryans; who were the original inhabitants of India and so on.
1922	Virat Acchut Sammelan in Delhi	Swami Acchutananda	As the indigenous people of this land, we demand "Mulki Haque" (national rights).
1927	Adi Hindu Conference at Kanpur	Swami Acchutananda	He demands Swaraj from British Government.
1928	Adi Hindu Sammelan in Bombay	Swami Acchutanand met Dr. B.R. Ambedkar	In order to get the untouchables special status and representation, he addressed a memo to the Simon Commission. Additionally, he stated that "we simply want to live with honour and respect and don't seek the British government's

⁵⁸ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*, p.205.

			pity."
1930	Akhil Bhartiya Adi Hindu Sammelan' at Allahabad	Swami Acchutananda	Swami Acchutanand gave the details of earlier All India level conferences of the Adi Hindu movement held at Delhi, Bombay, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Allahabad, Meerut, Madras and Amaravati.
1932	Adi Hindu Conference at Gwalior	Swami Acchutananda	He delivered a ferocious speech at this conference about how history has been distorted and how the untouchables are responsible for creating their own accurate version of history.
May 18,1932	All India Depressed Classes Conference in Kamthi in the Central Provinces	M.L.C. Madras	Dr. Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates during the Round Table conferences was supported by Swami Acchutanand. A resolution stating that "we will swim with a distinct electorate and sink with a joint electorate" was overwhelmingly adopted by the conference.
1932	Second All-India Untouchable	Ramlal Sonhar	Swamiji renamed the Adi Hindu Sabha to the

	Conference at Kanpur		Scheduled Caste Federation during this conference. Swamiji established Kanpur as the Adi Hindu movement's hub. The Swamiji Adi Hindu newspaper was also distributed at this gathering.
1933	Virat Adi Hindu Sammelan' at Gwalior	Swami Acchutananda and his Associate	The goal of this conference was to liberate thousands of untouchables from the barbaric custom of untouchable new brides being molested by local Hindu castes or landowners. He criticises the government in this lecture for its practise of bestowing honours on landlords who cruelly abused untouchables, killed their family members, and insulted the modesty of their women.

Source: Shyamlal Baudh President of Swami Acchuta Smarak Samiti Kanpur (also see) Chandrika Prasad Jigyashu, Adi Hindu ke Pravartak Sri 108 Swami Acchutanandji Harihar Jivani Sidhant aur Bhashan, Hindu Sudhar Karyale , Lucknow, 1960.

Swami Acchutananda placed the most emphasis on providing education to Dalits, which the followers of the Adi Hindu movement became in the entire United Provinces.⁵⁹

The Adi-Hindu movement essentially had two messages. First, it aimed to get rid of the inferior social standing of castes engaging in unclean activities. This movement significantly attacked the Hindu religious and classical norms imposed on the untouchables. Due to this, there was a frontal attack on the prohibition and boycott of the untouchables in the sphere of work in urban society, even though the emphasis of this movement was not so much on caste oppression and exploitation as on Hindu traditional prohibition and boycott.⁶⁰

Adi-Hindu intellectuals endeavoured to figure out, on a historical foundation, how untouchability started and how it was permanently imposed on the untouchables. Acchutananda claimed that "untouchables" had also enjoyed a wonderful golden age, which he referred to as the age of India's pre-Aryan indigenous rulers. This class had a state, a capital, forts, and a civilization during this period. They have said that when the Aryans invaded this country and conquered India with their deceitful knowledge, the original Hindu locals were civilised, honest, and free from the understanding of deceit that they could not equal the crafty Aryans. Although the local was a valiant and skilled fighter, through trickery and treachery, the Aryans made him their slave and first forced him to do humble work, then permanently labelled him untouchable and of the inferior caste and boycotted him in many ways.⁶¹ As a sort of social identity, the Aryans gave the untouchables awful metaphors like demons and devils and designated themselves as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, which drove them to live a privileged, dignified identity and high life.⁶² The Aryans built the social system. It was dubbed the Varna system in principle and the caste system in practise.

Although Acchutananda has argued about the native Indians as well, saying that there is a difference between the Shudras and the Untouchables, After the arrival of the Aryans in India, those who accepted the subordination of the Aryans and continued to adopt the Varna system in

⁵⁹ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, p.76.

⁶⁰ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, pp.16-17.

⁶¹ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, pp.18-19.

⁶² Chandrika Prasad Jigyansu, *Adi Hindu Andolan ka Prabartak Sri Swami Acchutanand Harihar*, p.8.

their practise were called Shudras, but on the contrary, those who did not accept the subordination of the Aryans under the guise of self-respect gradually became weak and became untouchables. The untouchables were transformed because of their work in class. But even after this, those who fled to the forests and mountains are called tribals. By proving this, the Adi Hindu philosophy, in fact, was, according to the demand of the time, trying to unite the Shudras, Untouchables, and Adivasis, whose general culture, location, and ethnicity were the same.⁶³ Swami Acchutananda, like Ambedkar, recognising the limitations of his movement, focused his political attention only on the Shudras and the untouchables, not spending his energy on uniting the Adivasis with the Shudras and the untouchables. If these two groups had been politically united, the total would have been around 20 crore, representing the majority of the country. Swami Acchutanand used Phule's term "*Bahujan Samaj*" to indicate this class, and to activate it, Swami Acchutanand also established the "All India Untouchable Caste Reform Association" in 1919.⁶⁴

Adi-Hindu thinkers had a historical golden age, which was also an egalitarian society, during which they claimed a separate lineage of this deprived class and established the Bhakti religion as their fundamental religion. Although bhakti dharma was rooted in *Hindutva* philosophy, Acchutananda considered such arguments unfounded and claimed that Hinduism was a religion of inequality, privilege, and caste-specific benefits, while bhakti dharma, in contrast, was a religion of common welfare and an egalitarian religion. As a result, the oppressed classes should engage in social and political activities by declaring *Bhakti* to be their religion.⁶⁵ And the focus should be on eradicating the caste system because the Aryans used the caste system as a political weapon against the untouchables, which was given legitimacy in the form of Vedic law. While the *varna* system and the caste system have deprived the untouchables of proper opportunities and fundamental rights, making them poor, illiterate, and powerless, due to which they are forced to do inferior work."⁶⁶

⁶³ Chandrika Prasad Jigyansu, *Adi Hindu Andolan ka Prabartak Sri Swami Acchutanand Harihar* p.78.

⁶⁴ Chandrika Prasad Jigyansu, *Adi Hindu Andolan ka Prabartak Sri Swami Acchutanand Harihar*, p.86.

⁶⁵ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.20.

⁶⁶ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.19.

According to Khare, the untouchable leaders of the Adi Hindu movement, especially Acchutananda, not only presented the ideology of radical equality and the strategy to improve their day-to-day lives but also created political culture and organisational resistance for the civil rights of the untouchables.⁶⁷ In fact, in the early 1930s, mass organisation and political strategy were adopted, and its leaders laid the foundation for bargaining in the public policy-making process and in representative institutions in favour of Dalits.⁶⁸ That's why the Adi Hindu movement gained momentum in 1922 when Gandhiji boycotted the visit of Prince Wales to India. In fact, Acchutanand strongly opposed the non-cooperation movement and declared that "Congress is an organisation of *Dwij* Brahmins," who are as foreign to Indian Dalits as the British. In fact, he spoke in favour of British rule in place of Congress, saying that only colonial rule can provide fundamental rights and opportunities for promotion to the underprivileged.⁶⁹ To take further advantage of this, in 1927, Shyam Lal Yadav, realising the current situation, called the "All India Adi Hindu Deprived Class Conference" in Allahabad. Babu Baldev Prasad Jaiswar and Rai Saheb Nanak Chand Dhusia helped a lot in making this conference a success.⁷⁰ Therefore, the Adi Hindu movement developed the identity and consciousness of the untouchables in the Dalit movement and politics. It went beyond religious social upliftment and established itself as a political interest group in institutional politics.⁷¹

Political attempts to deny the existence of millions of Dalits

In 1918, when the non-Brahmin and backward classes launched agitation for their own representation in the existing assemblies, Gangadhar Tilak declared in a public conference held in Sholapur, "I do not comprehend that the oil-extracting Teli, Tamoli, Dhobi, etc. are non-Brahmin and backward classes. Why do these people desire to go to assemblies?"⁷² In truth, the

⁶⁷ R. S. Khare, *The Untouchable as Himself Ideology and Pragmatic among the Lucknow Chamars*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p.78.

⁶⁸ Ramnarayan S Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Pramanent Black, Ranikhet, 2012, p.165.

⁶⁹ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.345.

⁷⁰ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*, p.202.

⁷¹ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.24.

⁷² B. R. Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhiji have Done to the Untouchables*, Thakkar and Company, Bombay, 1945, p.198.

distinct representation concept was first used in Indian politics in 1909. Only Muslims profited from it at the time. When the constitution was re-examined in the year 1920, such a facility was extended to non-Brahmins in that constitutional amendment. The untouchables are still deprived of it. There was an attempt to satisfy them by nominating them for one or perhaps two seats in various provincial legislatures.⁷³ Meanwhile, in the United Provinces, in 1920, the Jatav of Agra nominated Khemchand Boharae to the State Legislative Council, where he served for two terms. Following this, Boharae requested in the Legislative Council that at least one member of the Jatav community be appointed to each United Provinces district board, which the government accepted and appointed Boharae to. He held office from 1922 to 1930. At the same time, he proposed—and it was also accepted—that a member of his community be assigned to each municipal board, town area committee, and special area committee in the United Provinces. In this fashion, Khemchand Boharae became a member of the Agra Municipal Corporation Board from 1926 to 1928. Not only this, but he was also called in 1928 to testify before the Simon Commission Election Committee.⁷⁴ On the other hand, Babu Ram Charan was nominated as a Dalit representative in the State Legislative Council on December 27, 1927, and he also testified in favour of Dalit voting rights on behalf of the "depressed class" before the Simon Commission on December 6, 1928, and strongly supported the demand for voting rights in favour of Dalits.⁷⁵ In addition, Dharam Prakash was nominated to the Meerut District Board from 1930 to 1932, Pyarelal Kuril to the Agra Board, and Mahadev Prasad to the Gorakhpur District Board as untouchable members in 1930.⁷⁶

Previously, when the Simon Commission arrived in Lucknow on November 28, 1928, the local Adi Hindu Sabha, led by Ramcharan and Shiv Dayal Singh Chaurasiya, staged a street play and a demonstration at the Charbagh railway station to present the demand for untouchables. He tried his best to put political pressure on the commission. In order to accomplish this, the Adi Hindu movement established the Adi Hindu Depressed Class Association, also known as the *Akhil Bhartiya Hindu Mahasabha*, as the apex organisation of the United Provinces in 1925. This

⁷³ Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 16, Ambedkar Prathishthan, Samajik Naye Adhikarita Mantralaya, New Delhi, 2000, p.174.

⁷⁴ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, pp.78-79.

⁷⁵ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.173.

⁷⁶ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.53.

organisation also brought together urban untouchables and worked closely with other Hindu leaders.⁷⁷

In fact, the drafters of the 1919 Montague Chelmsford Report explicitly acknowledged the problem of the untouchables (underprivileged representation and lack of fair opportunities) and determined that they would make the best possible arrangements for their representation in legislatures, but the presidency of Lord Southborough, the committee assigned to advise on a franchise and voting system, utterly ignored them. But the Government of India did not approve of his indifference and declared, "They (the untouchables) form one-fifth of the total population and have not been granted any representation in the Marley Minto councils. It has been referenced multiple times. But simply to highlight that, in the absence of satisfactory constituencies, nominations have been made for them. It has not been mentioned here: what is the status of these people? Nor does it indicate how many nominations it has suggested for these candidates or how much representation has been proposed. It has been claimed that British India should constitute one-fifth of the overall population. Seven out of around 800 seats should be reserved for the untouchables."⁷⁸ Therefore, the administration promptly recommended that the committee quadruple the number of seats assigned to the untouchables.

When the Lothian Commission came in 1932, it was faced with the problem of first ascertaining the exact number of untouchables and then demanding their representation in proper proportion. For this, the Commission urged the various provincial governments to submit details about the definite number of untouchables settled in their area.⁷⁹ However, the Hindus suddenly changed their attitude, and the figures given by the Simon Commission about the number of untouchables in India were refuted. In the United Provinces, the *Dwij* representatives even said that there was not a single untouchable in the province. The reason for this was that by then the Hindus had realised the danger of openly accepting the status of untouchables. Since this meant

⁷⁷Mata Prasad, *Baharat Me Dalit Jagran Aur Uske Agradood*, Samyank Prakashan, New Delhi, 2010 p.58.

⁷⁸ Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 10, Ambedkar Prathishthan, Samajik Naye Adhikarita Mantralaya, New Delhi, 1996, p.140.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.143.

that Hindus would get representation in the assembly according to their population, some of them were taken and given to the untouchables.⁸⁰

As a result, the Lothian Committee was advised by the United Provinces Suffrage Committee that only the untouchable classes should be referred to as Dalits. According to this criterion, there is no problem of untouchability in these provinces. The only exceptions are Bhangi, Dom, and Dhanuk. Their total population, including the touchable classes, is only 5,82,000, while Babu Ramshay, the member representing the untouchables in the Provincial Voting Officers Committee of the United Provinces, has said in his opinion that the number of untouchables in the United Provinces is 114,351,117. Another Dalit representative, Rai Saheb Babu Ram Charan, believes there are 2 crores of Depressed Classes in the United Provinces.⁸¹ But in 1931, according to the census commissioner of the United Provinces, the population of untouchables was fixed at 1 crore, or 26 lakhs; according to the provincial government, 68 lakhs; and according to the Suffrage Committee, it was stated to be only 6 lakhs.⁸² Such wide ambiguity was directly the result of the non-Dwij policy of the Dwij government.

Round Table Conference, Poona Pact, and Dalit Politics in the United Provinces

During the Round Table Conference on Dalit Franchise, Ambedkar stated that since property and educations were made qualifications for suffrage, then the unorganised Dalit Untouchables, on the basis of a geographical factor, have been completely isolated from the policy-making process in political administrative institutions. So, as it has already been decided, the immediate solution can only be separate representation franchises for Dalits. If Dalit untouchables are not an integral part of the Hindu community, then it becomes imperative that they be given separate voting rights as well as separate reserved seats and representation at the political-administrative level so that they can do their all-around development without any fear.⁸³ But a situation of conflict arose

⁸⁰ Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 9, Ambedkar Prathishthan, Samajik Naye Adhikarita Mantralaya, New Delhi, 1998, p.23.

⁸¹ Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 10, p.145.

⁸² Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 16, p.16.

⁸³ Vidhyut, Chakrobati, *Social and Political Thought of Mahatama Gandhi*, Routledge, U. S. Canada, 2006, pp.104-105.

between Gandhi and Ambedkar on this subject, and both of them declared themselves to be true Dalit benevolent representatives. When the Jatav leadership of Agra became aware of the dispute, they wrote a letter in support of Ambedkar, along with other untouchable groups in the province, saying that Ambedkar was their true well-wisher and not Gandhi. This letter was significant from a political standpoint at the time because it indicated that the Jatavs had become aware of untouchability and their rights at the national level.⁸⁴ In the 1930s, one of the main divisions among the Dalit leaders was between the proponents of joint electorates with reserved seats, such as Bohre Khem Chand, the president of the All India Shri Jatava Mahasabha (and vice president of the All India Depressed Classes Association), and those who supported Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates, such as the United Provinces Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association. This also happened because the All India Depressed Classes Association (which was formed in 1925 under the leadership of M.C. Raja) opposed Ambedkar's conversion policy.⁸⁵ As a result, Ambedkar's concept of egalitarian society was bound to be opposed in this organization. Second, this organisation focused more on sanskritization in the Hindu caste system against the conversion policy and moved into the Gandhian camp due to Ambedkar's opposition to this organization. Although this organisation did not even support Congress, it practised politics according to the policy of appeasement.⁸⁶

As far as the Adi Hindu movement is concerned, in October 1931, Adi Hindu leaders Ram Charan and Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu addressed 2000–3000 untouchables in Lucknow. This huge public meeting was also organised in Kanpur and Allahabad, whose front was handled by Swami Acchutanand and Shyamlal Yadav. Gandhi and the Congress were directly targeted at these massive meetings, with these leaders declaring that they themselves would have to fight alone (along with Ambedkar).⁸⁷ Now he cannot fulfill the demands of his rights and fair opportunities by depending on Congress. Not only this, other leaders like Acchutananda, taking drastic steps against the Gandhian approach, made a direct demand: "Who would be the ruler of India after independence?"⁸⁸ In fact, Swami Acchutananda appealed for complete independence

⁸⁴ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, p.81.

⁸⁵ D. C. Dinkar, *Swatantrata Sangram Main Acchuto ka Yogdan*, Siddharat Books Publication, New Delhi, p.81.

⁸⁶ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*, p.207.

⁸⁷ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, p.28.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.29.

and freedom for all castes and religions, not just the *Dwij* caste. In addition, Swami Achutanand also criticised the government's policy against landlordism because *Dwij*s and landlords have been the biggest exploiters of Dalits and women, so there is no ideal place for Dalits in Swaraj like Congress. In fact, Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu movement criticise the Rajah Munje Pact, considering it anti-Dalit.⁸⁹

Knowing the political importance of untouchables during this time, Gandhi used the word "*Harijan*" for untouchables on the basis of political ethics and further strengthened the foundation of *Harijan* politics in Congress. But Ambedkar used the word *Dalit Varg* (depressed class) instead of *Harijan* in the demand letter of November 4, 1931. He had already demanded that the untouchables be called "non-caste Hindus." He believed that the word "*Harijan*" was a symbol of hatred.⁹⁰ According to Mark Juergensmeyer, "Ambedkar's move was an Ambedkarite alternative to Dalit politics," while Lynch called it a "turning point."⁹¹ In this way, untouchable politics got divided into *Harijan* and Dalit politics. Despite this, untouchable politics intensified. When a separate franchise for the untouchables was accepted at the Round Table Conference, Gandhi went on a fast unto death in protest. Ambedkar had to bow down to Gandhi's insistence, which resulted in the Poona Pact on September 24, 1932. Under this agreement, separate franchises ended, but the number of seats reserved for Dalits was increased from 73 to 151. Due to this, 20 seats were reserved for Dalits in the United Provinces.⁹² After this, on September 28, 1932, Gandhi established the "All India Anti-Untouchability League," which was renamed "Harijan Sevak Sangh" in December 1932.⁹³

In 1933, Gandhi launched two movements for Dalit upliftment. The first movement was toward temple entry or Dalit upliftment. He took on the personal responsibility of running that movement in two ways. The first was to open the Guruvayoor temple for untouchables, and on the same lines, other temples in the country were also to be opened and constructed for untouchables. The second was the passing of the "Temple Entry Bill" by Ranga Iyer in the

⁸⁹ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.344.

⁹⁰ Maheshwar Dutt, *Gandhi, Ambedkar aur Dalit*, Radha Publication, New Delhi, 2005, p.31.

⁹¹ Sudha Pai, , *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, pp.51-52.

⁹² *Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 16, p.101.

⁹³ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.118.

Central Legislature.⁹⁴ Initially, Gandhi was unsuccessful in getting the Guruvayoor temple opened on the lines of his first objective, but when Gandhiji went to Kanpur in 1934, he got 25 new Hindu temples built for Dalits. Later, temples were also built in other places in the United Provinces. But this type of temple politics did not have much effect on Dalits. However, Congress leaders tried their best to capitalise on this move. But it proved to be more controversial. The constructive work of the Congress and the *Harijan* upliftment programme were successful to a certain extent in the upliftment of the Dalits in the United Provinces. As a result, on the one hand, the Dalits failed to bring about "social structural transformation," and on the other hand, the All India Depressed Classes Association also became disillusioned with Congress. Its president, M.C. Raja, believed that the joint franchise under the *Dwij* leadership of the Congress was not only Dalit friendly, as the Congress's anti-Dalit strategy had destroyed the freedom of the Dalits.⁹⁵ Therefore, again in this organization, by showing their consent to the Ambedkarite option, they cooperated with it. However, some Dalit leaders in Agra remained trapped in the Sanskritization trap. On November 8, 1939, the British government agreed to Sundarlal Sagar's request to legalise the use of the term "Jatav" for the Chamars of Agra.⁹⁶ When this happened, the Educated Jatav Yuvak Mandal of Agra declared in its conference in 1939 that Jatavs have nothing to do with the Adi Hindu movement because this movement is very harmful to the Jatav dynasty. So the Mandal workers and members of the Jatav Adi Hindu movement would not be a part of it. If he does so, he will be considered guilty of breaching the board's code of conduct.⁹⁷

Dalit politics and movement from the perspective of party politics

Ambedkar says, "Elections to the provincial assemblies in accordance with the Government of India Act 1935 were held in February 1937." It was an opportunity for Congress to enter the elections. It was also the first opportunity for the untouchables to elect their representatives. Unlike M. C. Raja's hope that the Congress would not create any disturbance in the seats reserved for the untouchables, these hopes were dashed. They had two objectives. The first was

⁹⁴ Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 16, p.256.

⁹⁵ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, pp.303-304.

⁹⁶ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, pp.344-46.

⁹⁷ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability (Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India)*, pp.80-81.

to get those safe seats to form their majority so that Congress could form the government.⁹⁸ The second goal was to demonstrate Gandhiji's claim that Congress actually represented the Untouchables, as well as the Untouchable Congress. In fact, Congress' claim was partially true when it received 16 of the 20 reserved seats in the United Provinces.⁹⁹

In 1944, Dalit leaders of Agra, such as Manikchand Jatav Veer, Gopichand Peepal, and Shyam Lal Yadav, etc., organised a Dalit conference in the presence of Ambedkar. The United Provinces Scheduled Caste Federation (UPSCF) was formed at the same time as a branch of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation. On this occasion, Ambedkar said, "Untouchables are not a sub-branch of Hinduism, but they are the main element of Indian national life, and this class is as special and important as the Muslim class."¹⁰⁰ So this was the first time that the Dalits of the United Provinces openly expressed their political future with the All India Scheduled Caste Federation at the national level. Leaders and organisations from Meerut, Agra, Lucknow, Mathura, Kanpur, etc. had joined this political party, as well as Agra Jatav Mahasabha, Kanpur Chamar Mahasabha, Allahabad Hindu Ravidas Mahasabha, and other organisations that merged with this political party on their own wish.¹⁰¹

Although its main demands were more or less the same—separate representation for scheduled castes, reservation in education and jobs, and strengthening Dalit representation by getting seats in legislatures, ministries, and job royalties—for this, it hoped to get its share of political power so that the condition of Dalits could improve in independent India. Dalits would never be able to uplift themselves in such a situation, and it seemed at the time that the British would transfer power to Indian *Dwij* and political parties in the near future. The All India Scheduled Caste Federation fought elections for reserved seats in 1946 to achieve the desired result, but it was heavily defeated by Congress *Harijans* in strongly nationalist and *Dwij*-dominated constituencies. As a result, the Dalit movement's and political parties' demands suffered greatly when they were sacrificed in the final stages of resolving the Hindu-Muslim dispute. However, the All India Scheduled Castes Federation organised a nationwide Satyagraha

⁹⁸ Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar *Sampuran Vangmaye*, Vol. 16, p.100.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.101.

¹⁰⁰ Sudha Pai, , *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.54.

¹⁰¹ Sudha Pai, Ibid, p.55.

movement in cities such as Mumbai, Pune, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, and Wardha at the same time. This compelled the Bombay Assembly to reach an agreement with Ambedkar in July 1946. On this basis, the Bombay Legislative Assembly passed the Untouchability Abolition Act.¹⁰² Although the United Provinces government did something similar in its first term in 1937, when it told every district officer that "Dalits should be allowed to use public places, water taps, wells, roads, public establishments, and public property,"¹⁰³ the Dalits will have the same rights as the *Dwijis*. In fact, proper action would be taken against those who oppose it. Perhaps this is also the reason why "Congress Harijan politics" got an edge over Dalit politics during the 1946 elections in the United Provinces. However, the All India Scheduled Caste Federation's requests were supported by Lord Wavell in his letter to Gandhi on August 15, 1944. He remarked, "The Scheduled Castes comprise an essential and separate feature of the national life of India." "A shift of power to Indians in India would make its wealth essential."¹⁰⁴ Something like this was supported in the Cabinet Mission of April 1946. But in the end, the British government did not fulfil its promise and created only three categories—general, Muslim, and Sikh—completely ignoring Dalit interests. They were included in the category of minorities, whose status and authority were likewise not decided by the government. This produced a surge of rage among the Dalits. Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram fiercely opposed it, but nothing was gained. Similar voices were also raised by Hariprasad Tamta, Chaudhary Girdhari Lal, etc.¹⁰⁵

Ambedkar arrived in Agra on March 10, 1946, to attend the conference of the Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation, which was chaired by N.K. Shivraj and Rao Bahadur Manikchand. He declared that "scheduled castes will not welcome any type of Swaraj in which the majority will rule with the help and consent of the minority."¹⁰⁶ The Satyagraha movement began for the second time between March and May 1947. This movement could not be long and successful because it was run by the Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation without the help of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation. This movement, in particular, was based solely on anti-Congress policy, and it was constrained by its previous objectives. The movement was

¹⁰² J. Michael Mahar, *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, p.239.

¹⁰³ Ghanshyam Shah, *Dalit Identity and Politics*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, p.262.

¹⁰⁴ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.56.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp.62-63.

¹⁰⁶ K. Chancharika, *Aadhunik Bharat Ka Dalit Aandolan*, University Publication New Delhi, 2003, p.101.

based only on anti-Congress policy. The initial strategy of this movement was decided at the annual conference of the party in Agra and Firozabad from March 1–2, 1947. About 3000 delegates from almost all over the province participated.¹⁰⁷ The Legislative Assembly passed another social disqualification bill related to scheduled castes. This bill primarily permitted untouchables to engage in any type of economic work or business while also subjecting them to social discrimination. But this failed to satisfy the intentions of the UPSCF. In fact, by May, it was certain that India would soon become independent. Untouchability and its practice was made a criminal act in the Constituent Assembly. But a dramatic event took place during this period, when on July 2, 1947, the Congress nominated Ambedkar as the Congress candidate from the Bombay Legislative Council and later nominated him as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly. The first law minister of independent India was also appointed. Ambedkar's move was portrayed as a "good understanding" between the All India Scheduled Castes Federation and the Congress, which should actually be called the honeymoon period of Dalit and Harijan politics.¹⁰⁸ In this situation, prominent leaders of the Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation, Pyarelal Kuril, Nandlal Jaiswal, and Shyam Lal Yadav, also supported the Congress. While Gopal Singh of Punjab's All India Scheduled Caste Federation joined the Socialist Party, he called Ambedkar's political move an "opportunistic surrender" to the Congress.¹⁰⁹

On April 25, 1948, the fifth annual conference of the Uttar Pradesh Schedule Caste Federation was held in Lucknow, in which about 7,000 people participated. Ambedkar made it clear in this speech that his true goal was Dalit welfare, not opportunism. We should organise ourselves as a third party so that, when the time comes, we can negotiate with Congress and the Socialists to help the Dalits, serve the interests of the backward classes, or become their proper

¹⁰⁷ Shankranand Shastri, *Poona Pact Banam Gandhi*, Samyank Prakashan, New Delhi, p.50.

¹⁰⁸ R. S. Rawat, *Making Claim for Power: A New Agenda in Dalit Politics of Uttar Pradesh, 1946-48*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.37, No.3, July 2003, pp.585-612.

¹⁰⁹ Sudha Pai, , *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.63.

alternative. In fact, it is a favourable time for the United Provinces' 1.5 crore untouchables and 2 crore backward people to band together for their own interests.¹¹⁰

Sudha Pai writes, "Although Ambedkar was Law Minister, he could not spend much time on Dalit discussion. In fact, after resigning from the government in 1951, he devoted all his attention to this. During this period, however, the All India Scheduled Caste Federation and the Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation continued to work together. And it was also declared a national-level party by the Election Commission. But in the ensuing parliamentary and assembly elections, it failed to meet the criteria of a national-level party. It could not win a single seat in Uttar Pradesh. Furthermore, Ambedkar himself was defeated in the Bombay North constituency. The UPSCF's failure did not spell the end of the Dalit movement and its power struggle. They had learned from their failure and began to look for ways to work around the limitations of identity politics. After Ambedkar's death, his followers formed a broad-based party, the Republican Party of India, which could attract the masses on a large scale and also be able to compete with other parties in terms of ideology and program."¹¹¹

At the end of this chapter, it can be said that, like other states in Uttar Pradesh before independence, the political expression of the deprived communities of society started taking place in the early decades of the twentieth century. Which began with socioeconomic deprivation and spread to political rights? In the political societies of Uttar Pradesh between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th century, there was a lot of socio-political discussion on the status of these deprived communities, their pride, and the opportunities available to them. Where first of all there was a conflict about their socio-political existence, then the question of supreme status was raised by the Dwijos, where their historical identity, existence, and the factors of socio-economic cultural deprivation were debated, and from where two routes were created for them. The first sanskritization was based on Hindutva and a reformist approach, and was followed by the second anti-Sanskritization, which prioritised radical identity over Hindutva and a reformist approach. There was a political debate on this too, and in the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji was looking for political possibilities on the Hindutva approach and Dr.

¹¹⁰ Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu, *Babasaheb ke Pandarah Vyakhayan*, Bahujan Kalyan Prakashan, Lucknow, 1990, pp.79-83.

¹¹¹ Sudha Pai, , *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, p.64.

Ambedkar on the radical approach. However, some important discussions emerged from this type of conflict, which undoubtedly contributes to the Dalit movement's multifaceted political identity; in fact, it is the legacy of a historical debate that has created possibilities for a Dalit political party like the BSP today. It is the result of this that, instead of integrated identity and political possibilities in the touchable and untouchable caste communities after independence, separate caste-community identity and political possibilities was seen.

Chapter-Four

Dalit Intellectuals in Uttar Pradesh

With the rise of the educated intelligentsia, Uttar Pradesh witnessed social, political, literary, and other reforms. However, these reforms had their beginnings long before the colonial era. An effort has been made in this chapter to examine renowned intellectuals from the Dalit perspective in Uttar Pradesh. Kabir and Ravidas presented the social inequalities in an intelligible manner. They were the first to speak up against social disparities. In order to disprove the irrationality of caste Hindus' previously advanced concepts of exploitation, Dalit intellectuals studied the philosophy of Kabir and Ravidas. The social reformers and literary geniuses of the late 19th and mid-20th centuries were many. From U.B.S. Raghuvanshi, Swami Acchutanad Harihar, Hiralal Dom, Chandrika Prasad Jigayashu, Biharilal Harit, Bhagwan Das, Cheddilal Sathi, Om Prakash Valmiki, Surajpal Chauhan, Tulsiram various persons belonging to various fields contributed towards reforming the society. They are all cited in Dalit intellectual literature for their work promoting freedom and fraternity, as well as working to achieve social equality. This chapter examines the origins of Dalit literary creation in north India, with a particular emphasis on the ways that Dalit literary institutions and literary practises changed in response to the shifting social and political landscape of the 20th century.

Dalit literature and its Historical Significance

The relationship between literature and history is close because a country's literature reflects the lives of its citizens in all facets. According to some academics, "literature is the mirror of society." As a result, it becomes a crucial resource for reconstructing the history of the country. The lives and circumstances of the speakers of vernacular languages are also depicted in vernacular literature. They serve as a crucial source of information that is necessary to reach the past when recreating regional histories. The literature of Dalit intellectuals in Uttar Pradesh was intended to bring to the attention of the modern world and future generations their suffering and struggle for equality. Their writing differs from non-Dalit writing. This work is unlike non-Dalit literature in every way, including subject, tone, language, and thoughts presented. U.B.S. Raghuvanshi's "Shri Chanvar Purana," Sunder Lal Sagar's "Jatav Jeevan and Yadav Jeevan," Swami Acchutanand Harihar's "Manusmiriti Hume Jala Rahi Hai," Hira Dom's "Acchut ki

Shiqayat," Chandrika Prasad Jigyashu's "Sant Pravara Ravidas," and Om Prakash Valmiki's "Joothan," etc., give voice to the voiceless, the Dalits. There is connectivity and a similarity present in the writings of Dalit intellectuals because they have undergone certain common experiences and shared common thoughts.

Dalit literature can be used as a reliable resource to comprehend the nature of the Dalits, their system of exploitation, and India's caste system and untouchability. It helps readers understand the struggles of those at the bottom of society. It provides us with a personal lens through which to understand Dalits. What was his ancient situation, and how did the term "untouchability" belong to him? Who is to blame for his terrible situation? A Dalit's own mistakes, or "Karma," or those of his community, or the traditions and customs designed with vested interests by the exploitative established class where is he placed in the history of modern India? What role did he play in British India? Under colonial control, was his quality of life better or worse? Was he simply a servant to the caste Hindus and a sub-servant to the colonial rulers? In other words, were they overburdening Hindus and colonial rulers at the same time? Who was their true enemy- Untouchability, colonial overlords, Hindu castes, or poverty? Was their fight for equality and peaceful coexistence or for independence? How they got there and who was leading them inspired them to pursue social justice as they went from a position of suffering in silence to one of claiming their own identity.¹ All of these questions can be partially, if not completely, answered by Dalit literature. Their literature portrays their conception of the world and their socioeconomic circumstances, as well as their identification and equality-fighting efforts. This section broadly divides the reconstruction of the Dalit people's history and their views into three categories based on their literature. First, institutions dedicated to Dalit literature were founded between 1900 and 1930. I pay close attention to this time period as a result, situating it into the long-term perspective of literature as a context for social participation. Second, during the 1940s and 1970s, a period of increased prominence for Dalit institutions' activism represented by the SCF and the RPI, Dalit literature was linked to political and religious forms of assertion. Third, as the BSP expanded, the "Dalit" identity gained popularity in north India, which brought about a fresh change in the field of Dalit literature.

¹ Raman Kumar, (edited), *Hindi Dalit Kavita: Aandolan aur Jagriti ke Pakshdhar*, Siddhart Books Publication, Delhi, 2021, p.62.

U.B.S. Raghuvanshi

In Aligarh, Raghuvanshi practised law. The Shri Chanvar Purana, which was compiled about 1910 and released in Kanpur, asserts that the Chamar Jati were originally a group of strong Kshatriya kings who were given the name "Chanvars." The "Chanvar Purana," which was allegedly discovered by a rishi (sage) who resided in a cave in Tibet's high Himalayas and translated it from Sanskrit into Hindi for publication, is said to be the source of Raghuvanshi's work.² The *Chanvar Purana* attests that the Chamars' original name was *Chanvar*. "It tells us that during the *dwija kula* (pure or pious age), the current Chamars were powerful rulers of the *Suryavanshi* (royal Kshatriya) Chanvar dynasty. Raghuvanshi is aware that the sweeping claims made in the *Chanvar Purana* may raise questions about the text's authenticity. As a result, he offers a reward to anyone "who can prove that *Chanvar Purana* is false." According to him, the text's authority comes from India's Puranic tradition. Given that Muni Narada, also known as *Shri Narad Bhagwan*, is the narrator of both texts, he draws the attention of Hindu society by writing, "It is commendable that our Hindu brethren have such faith in the Puranas, and it is our humble request that they show similar devotion to the *Chanvar Purana*."³ He goes on to say that the Chanvar dynasty is mentioned in the Mahabharata's *anushasan parva* (section) as a Kshatriya caste that lost its standing due to its members' disregard for "Brahmanical knowledge." Lord Narada tells the story in the *devalok* (the home of the gods), describing the dynasty's illustrious past, its causes of dissolution, and how it came to possess the Chamar. According to the *Chanvar Purana*, the birth of Saint Raidas in the Chamar community will signal the restoration of its former status.⁴

According to the *Chanvar Purana* and *Suryavansh Kshatriya* (both published by Jaiswar Mahasabha), the *mala* (Bhakti literature) includes many stories about Raidas' greatness in fifteenth-century Hindu society and his popularity among the ruling families. According to these two texts, when Saint Raidas arrived in the *devalok*, the truth about the Chamar and Chanvar dynasties was revealed in the presence of Lord Vishnu. When he arrived, "the terrified *devatas* began to bow down at Lord Vishnu's feet as the words "*Chamar, Chamar*" began to echo

² R.S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2012, p.124.

³ Ibid, p.125.

⁴ Makhan Das, *Sri Chanvar Purana*, Siddhart Books Publication, Delhi, 2018.

throughout the *devalok*." Oh my God, "what a terrible tragedy, a Chamar in the *devalok*?"⁵ At Lord Vishnu's request, Narada tells the story to the entire world, as well as the terrified *devatas*. During the *Satyug* era, the Chanvars were India's and the world's most powerful dynasty. They ruled the planet for many years and were instrumental in spreading the Vedic faith. He goes into great detail about this dynasty's glorious lineage and the people who lived prosperous lives under its rule.⁶

The greatest Chanvar king was Chamunda Rai, who was also the last king of the dynasty and was responsible for the eclipse and disappearance of the *Chanvar vansh* (lineage). After much agonising, the king decided to sacrifice his son to save the *vansh* after a *rishi* warned him of Chamunda Rai's danger. However, the rani (queen) tricked him into killing her maid Shramkala's son instead. Shramkala assisted the rani by offering her son voluntarily in addition to suggesting the solution. The king passed away in sorrow and guilt, believing he had killed his own child. The rani declared that the prince was still alive after he passed away. Everyone was happy to hear the news, and Chamunda Rai was appointed as the new ruler.⁷

Chamunda Rai followed the *varnasharam dharm* (education, marriage, and family) rules, eventually backing away from social life to become an ascetic. For his zealous penance and devotion to the Lord, he received widespread acclaim and Vishnu's respect. Chamunda Rai's rising fame alarmed the *devatas*, so they plotted to undermine him by interfering with his devotion to Lord Vishnu and interrupting his prayer. They plotted with one of his opponents to exact revenge for his humiliating defeat at the hands of Chamunda Rai. Chamunda Rai's adversary, disguised as Shiva, questioned Chamunda Rai's devotion to and loyalty to Vishnu when he pointed out that he had no statue of Vishnu and had succeeded in portraying the god as *Sagun* (having form) rather than *Nirgun* (formless).⁸

The Vedic religion's tenets are diametrically opposed to the *Sagun* style of devotion. When Chamunda Rai adopted it, Lord Vishnu disguised himself as a *Shudra* (a low caste) to test

⁵S. Krishna, Dalit 'Literature from Below' towards Democratic Consciousness, *Indian Journal. com*, Vol.14, Issue1, 2018.

⁶ S. S. Gautam, and R. M. S. Vijayi, *Chamar Jati : Itihas aur Sanskriti*, Gautam Book Center, Delhi, 2018, p.19.

⁷S. B. Hunt, *Hindi Dalit Literature and the Politics of Representation*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2014, p. 39.

⁸ R.S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, p.126.

Chamunda Rai's devotion. The *Chanvar Purana* goes into great detail about this encounter. The shudra was disturbed by Chamunda Rai's worship and questioned his devotion to Vishnu because he had adopted the *Sagun* from the worship and was quoting Vedic verses to back up his claims. Chamunda Rai was already irritated when he saw a Shudra reciting the Vedas. He chastised the Shudra, reminding him that his caste does not have the authority to do so. When Lord Vishnu heard this, he manifested in his authentic form and "replied that in this world, a Shudra is one whose actions (karma) make the person a Shudra." "A man is not who he is simply because he was born into that family."⁹ The Vedas claim that actions, not birth, determine status. Chamunda Rai asked for forgiveness after realising his error, but an incensed Lord Vishnu cursed him and his descendants, demoting them to the status of Chamars and untouchables, which is even lower than Shudras. As a result, the *Chanvar Vansh* and its history were both erased from the earth.¹⁰

Lord Vishnu relented in response to pleas from several gods, including the sun god, who was hiding in a cave. When Saint Raidas, a *rishi*, is born and brings Vedic knowledge back to the Earth and eliminates all ignorance, the Chanvar dynasty would be revived during the *Kalyuga* age (the current Dark Age). His presence would enable this caste to shed its label of "untouchables" and reclaim its rightful place as a *Kshatriya* caste.¹¹

Sunder Lal Sagar

Shri Sundarlal Sagar was born in 1886 in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. Shri Sundarlal Sagar received no formal education. However, he did learn to write and read. He was of the Jatav caste. He joined the Arya Samaj in order to oppose caste-based Hinduism. He strictly followed the rules of the Arya Samaj, which included vegetarianism and temperance. He resolved to free the untouchables from Hinduism's slavery. To fight orthodox Hinduism collectively, he founded and registered the Jatav Mahasabha in Agra on February 16, 1918. He preached against drinking alcohol, eating beef, and child marriage. He attempted to instil new blood in his brothers.¹² On November 8, 1939, the government agreed with him because he referred to his people as Jatav. He was knowledgeable about Sanskrit literature and comparative religions. He wrote *Jatav Jivan*, which

⁹ S. B. Hunt, *Hindi Dalit Literature and the Politics of Representation*, p.40.

¹⁰ Satnam Singh, *Chamar Jati ka Gauravshali Itihas*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2017, p.43.

¹¹ R.S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, p.126.

¹² R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, M D Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, p.321.

was first published in 1924 and republished in 1929 as *Yadav Jivan*.¹³ The first section of the book delves into the Jatiya Chamars' claim to Yadav status. Part 2 is a discussion of Sagar's advice to the Jatavs on "clean" social and cultural practices. Sagar also outlined a development strategy for the Jatav caste and provided information on the Jatav Mahasabha's goals and objectives.

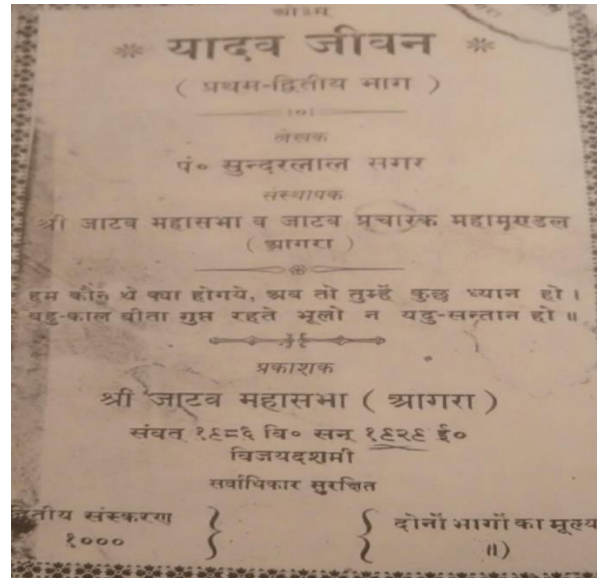
Sunderlal Sagar implores as to who wrote the history of his caste in an effort to educate his community? The author instructs a naive *Jatav* in the book in the form of a question-and-answer format, and we learn about each nation, country, lineage, and caste through its history. According to Sagar, the pure *Yaduvansh* clan's degraded and impure status is due to a lack of knowledge of the community's history and past. "It's a great tragedy that our *Jatav* brothers can't respond appropriately to the arrogant casteist's questions about their identity."¹⁴

Sagar backs up his claim that Jatavs are Kshatriyas with evidence from modern sources as well as the *Puranas* and folklore. His first example comes from personal experience, which was one of the factors that led him to revise the book. He asserts that two Hindu lawyers opposed his attempt to have his last name listed as *Yadav* on the voter list. The commissioner of Agra, R. L. H. Clarke, accepted his claim about the Jatavs' social status after he challenged their judgement in court. Sagar quotes Clarke: "Sunder Lal Yadav has written a book (*Jatav Jiwan*), which has been produced expressly to show that, all Jatavs are really Yadavas".¹⁵

¹³ Sunderlal Sagar, *Yadav Jivan*, Shri Jatav Mahasabha, Agra, 1929, p.22.

¹⁴ R.S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, p.127.

¹⁵ Om, Prakash Singh, Evolution of Chamar and Jatav Mahasabha for Dalit Society in United Provinces, *International Journal of Scientific & Innovative Research Studies*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, 2015.



Source: Advocate Guru Prasad Madan, President of Dalit Sahitya Academy Allahabad.

Sagar makes reference to Swami Atma Ram's 1888 book *Gyansamundra*, in which he discusses the Jatavs' Kshatriya status and *Shivgotra* ancestry (the lineage of Lord Shiva). He cites three sources: volume 4 of Edwin T. Atkinson's *Gazetteer* (1881), which mentions the Jatavs' superior status in comparison to the Aharwariyas; and Chohte Lal Kshatriya's *Brahman Decisions*, which refers to the Jatavs as Kshatriyas. J. S. Nesfield's *Brief View of the Caste System of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (1882) Sagar then turns to *puranic* and folkloric sources to tell the tale of Parashuram and his vow to annihilate all Kshatriyas.¹⁶ According to him, the Jatav ancestor fought against Parashuram. But the Kshatriyas were defeated, and to escape persecution, the Jatav disappeared from the earth by hiding in the forests, becoming artisans to hide their Kshatriyas identity and in the process losing their “pure” status. Hindu discrimination Against Jatav began at the same time. According to Sagar, the word "Jatav" is a corrupt or *apabhramsa* form of the word "Yadav." He links Raja Yadu and Krishan to the Jatav lineage on the authority of the Mahabhart.¹⁷

¹⁶ Sunderlal Sagar, *Yadav Jivan*, pp.20-29.

¹⁷ Sunderlal Sagar, *Yadav Jivan*, pp. 34-38.

Shri Ramnarayan Yadavendu

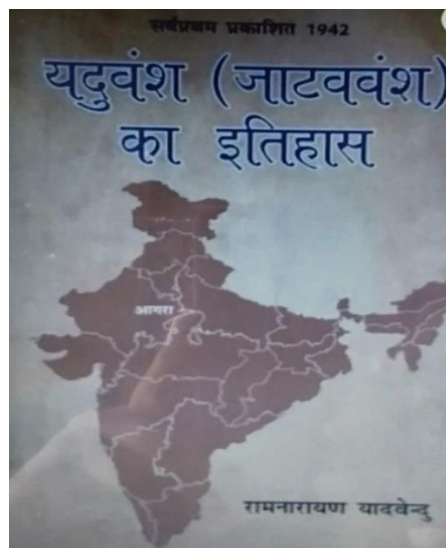
Shri Ramnarayan Yadavendu was born in *Agra*, Uttar Pradesh, to a *Jatav* family in 1909. His father, Shri Dalchand Yadavendu, worked in the construction Department. Shri Ramnarayan Yadavendu received a B.A. and LL.B. degree from Agra University. Later he began his legal career. He joined the Arya Samaj and adhered to its rituals and laws in the letter. He established a school in Agra for children from lower socioeconomic classes, continuing his grandfather's legacy of charitable work. Shri Raranarayan Yadavendu made an effort to get people to give up bad habits like eating meat, consuming alcohol, getting married as children.¹⁸ He had a close relationship with Dr. Manikchand Jatav Veer's associate. They invited Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to speak at the Agra Conference on Scheduled Castes. Shri Ramnarayan Yadavendu and Nathilal Shastri helped Dr. Manikchand establish the Jatav Veer Mahasabha in 1937–38.¹⁹

He came to know Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar perfectly. After India's partition, he worked as a resettlement officer after serving as a "public officer" in 1945. There are numerous books by Shri Yadavendu. He published a lot of Hindi books. With the help of the Jatav Veer Mahasabha, Ramnarayan Yadvendu published an even longer book in 1942, titled *Yaduvansh ka Aitihas*, in Agra. In addition to providing a thorough history of the various Jatav organisations and biographical sketches of the Jatav Mahasabha members, Yadvendu repeated many of the arguments made in *Jatav Jivan*.²⁰

¹⁸ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p. 374.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.374.

²⁰ Ramnarayan Yadavendu, *Yaduvansh (Jatavvansh) ka Athihas*, Sidharat Books, Delhi, 1942, p.140.



Front page of Yaduvansh ka Itihas by Ramnaryan Yadavendu

Other than this book, he wrote many books like *Rashtra Sangh Aur Vishwa Shanti: Bharat Ka Dalit Samaj; Bharatiya Sanskriti Aur Nagarik Jeevan; Bharatiya Shasan Aur Nagarik Jeevan; Bharatiya Neeti Vidnyan; Gramya Swarajya: Manav Jeevan* (1950); *Vishwa Dnyan Bharti*.²¹

Heera Dom

Heera Dom was a *Bhojpuri* poet from a lower caste who contributed to Dalit literature. He is credited with creating the first poem about the Dalit. He was a Dalit poet from the *Dom* caste, which is one of the lowest-ranked castes in the Hindu caste system. He was born in 1885 in Danapur, Bihar. Some scholars also claim that he was from Varanasi. "*Acchut ki Shiqayat*" is written in *Bhojpuri*. It was published in the Hindi magazine *Saraswati* from Allahabad in 1914.²² In this poem, Dom has expressed the trauma of his Dom community in literary form. The first and second stanzas of the poem are as follows:

Hamani ke rati din dukhawa bhogata bani

Hamani ke saheba se minati sunaibi

²¹ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.375.

²² H. Dom, *Acchut kee Shiqayat*, Sarswati Publication, Allahabad, 1912.

Hamani ke dukhawa bhagawanao na dekhta te

Hamani ke kabale kalesawa uthaibi

Padari saheba ke kacahari me jaibija

Bedharama hoke ramgreja bani jaibija

Haya rama! dhasarama na choḍata banata ba je

*bedharama hoke kaise muhawa dekhaibija....*²³

(Translation in English)

Day and night we are suffering,

We will share our grief with the ruler.

Even God is not listening to our problems

Don't know how long will we suffer.

We go to churchman's court and

Become English after conversion.

Oh lord, conversion doesn't work

How to show our impious face.

There are five verses in this forty-line poem, and in each verse there are five social realities which the poet Heera Dom has put forth unambiguously in the whole poem: social system, caste structure, religious supremacy, general exploitation, and the mentality of exclusion of Dalit as untouchables. But questions have been raised; he puts God in the dock, about a hundred years ago, and asking such questions is a revolutionary concept in Dalit poetry.

Heera Dom was the first to raise the issue of Dalits in literature, and he is a supporter of revolutionary consciousness. He is a poet who uses his voice of resistance to promote equality, brotherhood, and human values. Heera Dom's poem depicts the early twentieth century's socioeconomic and religious conditions, as well as the contradictions of social life and the miseries of Dalit life. Questions have been raised about the superiority of castes, the social status of Dalits, and the double treatment meted out to them from an empirically realistic standpoint, and attacks have been made on the varna system and caste structure, which are based on deeds

²³ Mahaveer Prasad Diwedi, *Sarswati Magazine*, Vol.2, Issue 15, Allahabad, 1914, pp.512-513.

rather than birth. Work and labour, he believes, are the foundations of man's dignity and superiority. It is worth noting that while the noble poets of Hindi were engrossed in worshipping God by elevating him, Heera Dome was questioning God's power in *Bhadralok*. There was no need to be concerned because this poet, who exposed its reality, was providing a democratic interpretation of society through his experience and arguments, as well as presenting his revolutionary concept for social change in the context of Dalit consciousness.



Heera Dom

Source: Sarswati Magazine by Mahaveer Prasad Diwedi

Swami Acchutanand Harihar

Swami Achuthananda was a multi-talented man who was a poet, dramatist, and journalist. He published and edited the 'Adi Hindu Monthly' in 1925. His journalism had infused consciousness among the downtrodden classes in North India. He was the father of Dalit journalism.²⁴ He was influenced by the Arya Samaj, but he also bravely exposed the Brahminical system's suppression policy towards Dalits. In 1912, a collection of his poems was published as a

²⁴ Mata Prasad, *Bharat main Dalit Jagaran aur Uske Agardoot*, Samyank prakashan, Delhi, 2010, p.68.

book. *Mayanand Balidan, Ramraj Nyaaya, Adivansh ka Danka*, and other major texts by Swami are still in high demand among Dalit communities.²⁵

Swami Achhutanand's poems were evocative, with the main goals of educating the Dalits about their glorious history and lifting them out of their plight at the time. He had indeed given a new dimension to Dalit poetry. Swami Acchutanand did helpful and revolutionary work by infusing his peculiar folk style into the narrative history of Dalits. Criticizing Manusmriti, Swamiji has expressed his views in the following poem: *Manusmriti Humko Jala Rahi Hai-*

Nis din Manusmrti yah hamako jala rahee hai

Upar na uthane detee neeche gira rahee hai

Braahman kshatriy sabako banaaya aphasar

Hamako puraane utaran pahano bata rahee hai

Daulat kabhee na joden gar ho to agar ho to chheen le vah

Phir neech ke hamaara dil bhee dukha rahee hee hai

Kutte va billee makkhee se bhee bana ke neecha

Ha shok, graam baahar hamako bas aa rahee hain

Hamako bina majadooree bailon ke sang jote

Gaalee va maar us par hamako dila rahee hai

Lete begaar khaana tak pet bhar na dete

Bachche tadapate bhookhe kya julm dha rahee hain

He Hindu kom sun le tera bhala na hoga

*Ham bekason ko 'Harihar' gar too rula rahee hai*²⁶

²⁵ Mata Prasad, *Bharat main Dalit Jagaran aur Uske Agardoot*, p.346.

²⁶ Rajpal Singh, *Swami Achhutanand Harihar, Byaktitva and Krititva*, Siddharth Books, 2009, p.72.

(Translation into English)

Day in and day out, this Manusmriti is burning us, burning us,

Not letting us climb up, it is degrading us, degrading us,

While Brahmins and Kshatriyas are allowed to rise and rise,

“Wear your old clothes,” for us is the advice.

No wealth can we earn, what we save is not secure,

Sheer depression is our lot, since we are always dubbed impure.

Lower in stature than dogs or cats or flies,

Provided no habitation under the village skies,

We labour like bullocks, with no returns to await,

Just abuses and thrashings are our fate.

Our toils are enforced, not even food as recompense,

Our children wail with hunger, their torture makes no sense.

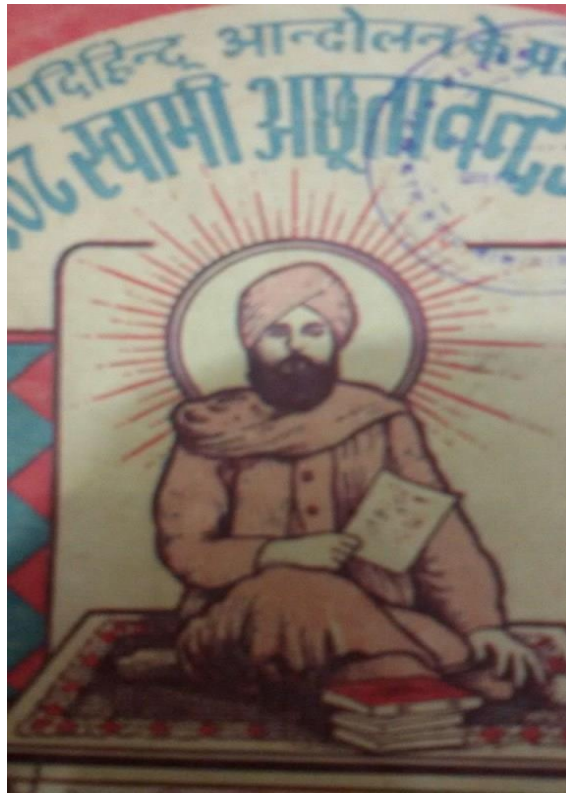
O listen O Hindus, on you only misfortunes will descend

For shedding the tears of innocents, and for their suffering without end!

Swami Achhutanand Harihar's poem "*Manusmriti Humko Jala Rahi Hai*," written between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is no doubt one of the earliest statements, in Hindi, made by a member of the so-called "untouchable" castes of Hinduism against Hinduism's varna based social order. What is remarkable about the composition is that, in addition to its sharp critique of the exploitation and oppression inherent in the birth-determined caste system, it is also an articulation of a radical self-consciousness on the part of a caste subject who belongs to the most oppressed ranks of India's Hindu population.²⁷ In fact, Achhutanand

²⁷ T. Basu, *The Dalit Personal Narrative in Hindi: Reflections on a long Literary Lineage*, *Center for Biographical Research*, Vol.40, Issue No. 1, University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.

used the term "Dalit" to describe a signifier of the outcaste communities' politicized and oppositional self-awareness long before it became popular in other parts of India, such as Maharashtra, where it was popularised decades later by anticaste organizations such as the Dalit Panthers. Thus, in one of his best-known verses, "How Long Will the Dalit Lie Dormant?" Achhutanand writes, "Manusmriti's inhuman laws will cease to frighten once the Dalit, the deprived, and the outcastes arise and unite,"²⁸. Achhutanand's writings, both in verse and prose, frequently refer to the "under castes" as a collective entity whose sorry plight he attempts to record through stirring narratives of resistance.²⁹



Swami Acchutanand Harihar

Source: The front page of *Adi Hindu Aandolan ke Pravartak* by Chandrika Prasad Jigayashu

²⁸ Rajpal Singh, *Swami Achhutanand Harihar, Byaktitva and Krititva*, p.72.

²⁹ Rajpal Singh, *Swami Achhutanand Harihar, Byaktitva and Krititva*, p.73.

Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu

Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu, who was born into a Kalwar family, was a thinker, writer, translator, editor, publisher, and social activist all rolled into one, like most other protagonists of the modern renaissance. He was a prolific writer who lived for 83 years. He lit the *Bahujan* revolution's lamp.³⁰ He joined India's fight against the British at Gandhi's request and assurance that *Bahujans* would be given full rights in independent India. He was imprisoned several times for his active participation in the Indian Independence Movement.³¹ The British government declared three of his works, *Swadeshi*, *Kaumi Badshah Jawaharlal Nehru*, and *Charkha*, to be incendiary and seized them. But his optimism soon faded. After India gained its independence, he didn't take long to realise that Brahmanism, not democracy, had taken root in the nation.

He wrote so many books in Hindi including *Aadi Nivasiyon Ki Sabhyta*, *Mohini Vidya*, *Picchda Varg Commission Ki Reportand Ishwar aur Gudde*, *Sant Pravar Raidas*, *Ravan Aur Uski Lanka*, *Shri 108 Swami Achhootanandji*, *Shiv-Tatva Prakash*; *Bhadant Bodhanand Mahasthivir*; and *Babasaheb ka Jeevan Sangharsh*, *Lokshahi Banam Brahmanshahi*, *Haihay-Vansh ke Shreshtha*, and *Nari-Jeevan ki Kahani*, etc.³²

Jigyasu provides ample information about the life and works of Raidas in his book *Sant Pravar Raidas*. He disproves Raidas' participation in a Brahmanical conspiracy and successfully refutes the poet's critics' illogical and contradictory claims. Raidas is portrayed as a symbol of the impending social revolution. This 1959 book was the first to disprove the widely held belief that Raidas' Guru was the Brahmin and Brahmanist Ramanand.³³

Aadi Nivasiyon ki Sabhyata by Jigyasu was a product of the Adi Hindu Movement. Achhutanand held that the *Dwijs* were the offspring of the Aryans from outside India, whereas the Shudras (including Ati-Shudras) were the country's original inhabitants. Both Dalits and Backwards, including Jigyasu, were part of Acchhutanand's movement. Jigyasu took part in the public meetings of Acchhutanand and often addressed them. To carry on Swamiji's work, Jigyasu wrote a book called *Bharat Ke Aadi Nivasiyon Ki Sabhyta*. The book was over 1,000 pages

³⁰ Mata Prasad, *Bharat main Dalit Jagaran aur Uske Agardoot*, p.73.

³¹ Angne Lal, *Uttar Pradesh Main Dalit Aandolan*, Samyank Prakashan, Delhi, p.17.

³² Kanwal Bharti, (edited), *Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthavali*, Vol.1, Vol. 2, Vol.3, Vol.4, The Marginalised Publication, 2017.

³³ Kanwal Bharti, (edited), *Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthavali*, Volume 2, p.35.

long.³⁴ Bodhanand wrote the foreword to this book, which was reprinted five times. In his foreword, Bodhanand writes, "It is sad and shameful that the glorious past of India's backward and Dalit castes is entirely missing from books on history in Hindi... It is our sincere hope that the original inhabitants of our India will grasp the essence of this useful book."³⁵ The book begins with a small poem by Jigyasu:

"Aadi niwasi bandhu! Lijiye, yah nij gaurav ka itihaas,

Arya-jati ne chal-kaushal se jiska kar diya tha sab nash,

Padhiye ise mitakar man kee sab durbalta, bhram, tam, traas

*Hriday kamal yah khila karega navjivan ka divya prakash"*³⁶

(Translation into English)

"O" my indigenous inhabitant brother, here is the history of your glory,

Which the Aryan had obliterated through deceit,

Read it and get rid of the weakness, misconceptions, darkness and the pain of your heart,

Your heart will bloom under the divine light of this new life".

Jigyasu is also credited with bringing Dr. Ambedkar's writings to the attention of Hindi speakers. He had written a biography of Ambedkar called *Babasaheb ka Jeevan Sangharsh (Sampoorna Jeevan Charit)*. The book was released in sixteen different editions. This 145-page book taught the Hindi-speaking population about Ambedkar's struggles. Omprakash Valmiki writes in his book *Jhoothan* that Ambedkar's struggles and ideas were introduced to him through the above book. Jigyasu also translated many of Ambedkar's books into Hindi. Among them were *The Annihilation of Caste* (1964), *The Untouchables* (1968), *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* (1969), *Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables* (1966), and *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis, and Development* (1966). In 1972, he

³⁴ Kanwal Bharti, (edited), *Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthawali*, Vol.2, p. 15.

³⁵ Kanwal Bharti, (edited), *Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthawali*, Vol.1, p.35.

³⁶ Kanwal Bharti, (edited), *Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthawali*, p.43.

published *A Pen Portrait: Philosophy, Social Reform, and Social Revolution*, a book about E.V. Ramasamy Periyar in Hindi.

Jigyasu was a passionate supporter of the emancipation of women as well as the Shudras and Ati-Shudras, much like Jotiba Phule, the founder of the Bahujan Renaissance (Dalits and Backwards). In addition to writing *Nari Jeevan Ki Kahani*, he translated Dr. Ambedkar's book on the advancement and marginalisation of women. The book opens with the claim that, at first, men and women were on an equal footing and that women weren't treated as men's slaves. "Evolutionary historians claim that in the beginning, both men and women were free," the author adds. None of them were better than the others. They may be buddies, but the women were not the men's property, and they both found their own food.³⁷

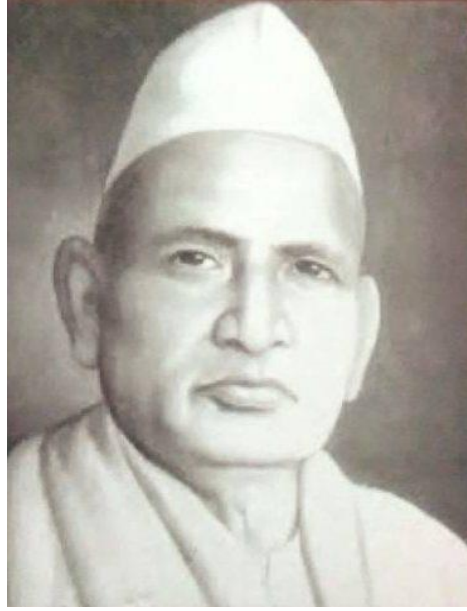
Jigyasu, like Ambedkar, blamed the Brahmanical system and scriptures for women's enslavement and declared that the Buddhist era was an era of women's liberation. "In India, women could only breathe freely during the Buddhist eras. However, this was only a 500-year period, after which the managers of the Hindu religion enslaved women once more through rigid norms and smooth talk."³⁸

Jigyasu is also credited with popularising and broadening the Buddhist concept in the *Bahujan* tradition. According to his writings, he transplanted the *Bahujan* renaissance initiated by Jotirao and Savitribai Phule in the Hindi belt- renaissance in which the Shudras, Ati-Shudras, and women (*Bahujans*) join hands to free themselves from the slavery of Brahmanism and resolve to build an egalitarian society. Needless to say, such a society can exist only after the caste system, or Brahmanism, is abolished. He wished to establish people's rule (*Lokshahi*) in the country by removing the rule of Brahmanism (*Brahmanshahi*).³⁹

³⁷ Kanwal Bharti, (edited), *Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthavali*, Vol.4, p.147.

³⁸ Ibid, pp.149-150.

³⁹ Ibid, Vol.4, p.158.



Front page of Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu Granthawali by Kanwal Bharti

Bihari Lal Harit

Bihari Lal Harit (1913-1999) published *Jatav Bhajanavali* in 1938 from *Jatav Sabha*, Shahdara, and Delhi. One of his ghazals in it is as follows:

Kaise Karen is Dard mein Soya nahin jaata.

Munh ko kaleja aa raha roya nahin jaata.

Neechata pramaan se hirada hamaara jal raha,

Na gaanth bal na baanh bal na vidya ka kuchh bal raha.

Bojha begaar ka dhoya nahin jaata..

Khaakar hamaaree kamer ko dhanavaan ban gaye.

Hamako haivaan samajh khud insaan ban gaye.

Do aane mein khet ab boya nahin jaata..

Telee ke bail banakar din raat kolhoo mein chale.

Khaane ko khal tak na milee phir kaho kis vidh hon bhale.

Naahak piran duniya se bhee khoya nahin jaata..

Svaamee to eeshvar hai sabake jagat ke paalak pita.

Phir ho svaamee kaun se koe bhee isako devata.

Naadaan bihaaree se to har toiya nahin jaata..⁴⁰

(Translation into English)

How shall we do it, we can't sleep in this agony

Overwhelmed by grief we cannot even cry

The status of lower caste is burning our hearts

There is no weight left in knots, physical labor as well as in education

And we can no longer carry this baggage by becoming their forced laborers.

They have eaten our hard earned money to become wealthy.

They have made us inhuman to show them human.

Now we cannot sow crops in two annas

Though we have put blood, sweat and tear into it.

But still are unable to even get the share of unwanted crops just for our survival

Then how we will become independent

We cannot even go away from this world of pointless punishment.

Master is the lord who is the foster father of everyone's universe or the creator.

As he is the creator and destructor of laws

⁴⁰ Biharilal Harit, *Jatav Bhajnavali*, Jatav Sabha, Shahdara, Delhi, 1938, p.17.

Nadan Bihari cannot bear this situation anymore for his survival.

The poet is describing the suffering of the Dalit working class. His biggest pain in the feudal system is having forced labour taken from him. He no longer wants to carry that burden. This forced labour has followed him everywhere. He had neither money nor a healthy body, nor could he attain an education. Those who ate his earnings became rich; he remained poor. Even so, he is regarded as a devil, and the people who live off his labour refer to themselves as human beings. The wages of working in the field day and night like Teli's ox are only two annas! How long will this exploitation and forced labour continue? The poet wants freedom from this exploitation, but he does not have a way of liberating himself. That's why he hates God. He does not understand this simple argument: If God has made this order, then why would he destroy it? And if God didn't make the law, what does that mean to him? He must only destroy the oppressors and the oppressed.

Bihari Lal Harit came into contact with Dr. Ambedkar in 1941–42. He got the opportunity to listen to the latter's views. As a result, a new aesthetic consciousness developed in his poetry as well. With new vigor, a short booklet of eight of his poems was published in 1946 under the name "*Achhooton ka Paigambar*." At the beginning of this booklet, there are four "couplets," as follows:

Ab to laga hai dosto aazaar bheem ka.

Dil se na door hovega, yah pyaar bheem ka..

Rakt hai naadee mein gaurav purushon ka karen.

Danka baja den duniya mein ek baar bheem ka..

Naujvaanon aap ka hee khaas hai karttavy.

Jhanda utha do milakar ke ek baar bheem ka..

Gunavaanon se bhee khaas kar ye hee apeel hai.

*Ghar-ghar mein phaila daaliye prachaar bheem ka..*⁴¹

(Translation into English)

Comrades! Now everywhere there is agony of Bhim.

We cannot separate this love for Bhim from our hearts

Till you have blood in your veins honour the gentlemen.

Let's play the drums for once in this world with the name of Bhim

Comrades! This is your duty specifically.

Let's raise the flag of Bhim once collectively

Even this is my request to the geniuses

Do not leave the any household from campaigning about Bhim.

The advertised list of other books written by Bihari Lal Harit on the last page of this booklet shows that till 1946, two more books of his had been published on the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar: "*Achhooton ka Betaj Badshah*" and "*Achhooton ki Pistol*." These books could not be found. The text of the first hymn in "*The Prophet of the Untouchables*" is as follows:

Bheem baba to jag mein autaar ho gaya.

Prakaash ka jamaana hai ab to prakaash hai..

Uth jaag achhoot jaati ab too kyon niraash hai.

*Tere jagaane vaala bheem ab to naahar ho gaya..*⁴²

(Translation into English)

Bhim baba has become now manifestation in this world.

⁴¹ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, Shahdara, Delhi, 1946, p.2.

⁴² Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, p.2.

This is the era of light and now we can see the light also.

Wake up! All the oppressed castes why are you sad now?

Now Bhim who is our guiding light has become fearless like a lion.

In the 1940s, Dr. Ambedkar made the question of Dalit emancipation the main and central question in the national movement. This question was posed to the Hindu leaders, who were demanding *Swaraj* from the British. Dr. Ambedkar wanted to solve this question even before India gained independence: in whose hands would the governing power be in an independent India, what would be the system, and what would be the status and role of the Depressed Classes in it? At the political level, this was the first battle in the known history of India that was completely led by Dr. Ambedkar. Congress and Gandhi did whatever they could to weaken this fight, but the majority of the depressed classes were with Dr. Ambedkar, who continued this fight with full enthusiasm and did not weaken till independence was achieved. This enthusiasm is depicted by the poet in these lines:

Bheem baaba maidaan mein lo ab saj gae.

Ki khudagarjon kee shakl pai saadhe teen baj gae..

*Ek boodhe ka dil to taar-taar ho gaya.*⁴³

(Translation into English)

Now Bhim baba' incarnations are decorated in the grounds

And this has made the egoistic oppressors furious.

And an old man's heart has been shattered into pieces.

This old man was none other than Gandhi himself, who wanted to retain the lower classes in the Hindu system. But the Dalit people were ready to make any sacrifice for Dr. Ambedkar on the question of their emancipation. That's why the Dalit poet wrote:

Saare achhoot hain ab apanee bisaat par.

⁴³ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, p.2.

Kurabaanee ye kar denge baaba kee baat par..

Hamane poochha hai sabase, ikaraar ho gaya..⁴⁴

(Translation into English)

Now all the Dalits are infuriated

They will sacrifice their lives on one command of baba

As, they have accepted this truth when we have interrogated.

In 1940, there was a huge rally of the Jatav community in Delhi's *Anaj Mandi*, in which people raised their hands and accepted the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. The above lines express the same "*Ikraar*." In the second hymn, the poet has called Dr. Ambedkar the curator of the sleeping community. Here are some examples:

Uth meree sovatee kaum tera rakhavaala aa gaya.

Tera sookha pada chaman tha.

kiya khudagarjon ne daman tha.

Sookhe birave seenchane ko ye maalee aa gaya⁴⁵

(Translation into English)

Awake! My unconscious community!

Your protector has come

Your dead decayed orchard which was looted by the oppressor will flourish now

Because your Gardener has finally come

⁴⁴ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, , p.3

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.3.

In this poem, the poet has used the word "*Qaum*" (community) for the depressed classes. *Qaum* refers to caste, so it is used in the sense of class consciousness. Indeed, the Dalit castes realised that the reason for Hindu oppression of them was that they were not Hindus but a distinct *qaum* (community). This awareness was given to him by the movement of Dr. Ambedkar. He claimed that the world's barbaric atrocities against Jews were committed because they did not want to live in harmony with Christians. But Dalit are subjected to atrocities in India because they want to live in harmony with Hindus. From this, it can be made clear that the Dalit are not considered a part of the *Hindu Rashtra*.

In the year 1942, Dr. Ambedkar was elected a Labor Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, a position he held till 1945. As a labour minister, he did very important work for Dalits and laborers. The work he did in the interest of Dalits during this period had never been done before. His efforts also resulted in the first social labour charter. Due to his efforts, for the first time, the Dalit problem came to the center of Indian politics. The depressed classes wanted change, and Dr. Ambedkar became their biggest hope for this change. This hope is expressed by the poet in these verses:

Gordhan bihaaree likhe karaaree. Navayuvakon karo tyaaaree.

Khabar len main thaaree, bheem sa khyaaalee aa gaya.

*Uth merree sovatee kom tera rakhavaalee aa gaya.*⁴⁶

(Translation into English)

Gordhan Bihari whose words are sharp as knife

Now inspire the young generation to get ready

And tells that an idealistic man like Bhim has come now to retrospect all the oppression

Awake! My unconscious community! Your protector has come.

⁴⁶ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, p.3.

Dr. Ambedkar's fight had such a wide impact on the depressed classes that people started celebrating his birthday (April 14) like *Diwali*. The poet has given a grand picture of this day in this hymn.

Sab mil apane bhavan sajao.

Bhaant-bhaant ke rang lagao.

Sundar chhavi niraalee.

Aaj aayee hai bheem divaalee..

Khush hokar tyauhaar manaayen.

Baant mithaee bachche khaayen.

Khush ho haalee-paalee,

*Aaj aae hai bheem divaalee..*⁴⁷

(Translation into English)

Come everyone let's decorate our houses together.

Use different shades of colour

To celebrate the beautiful, graceful and distinctive Deepawali of Bhim today

Celebrate the festival with happiness

Distribute the sweets among children

Everyone will be happy

Bhim Diwali has come today.

This was the time when Dr. Ambedkar's "Scheduled Caste Federation" and the Dalit class of the country were getting organised under its blue flag. Dalits expected such a change from this

⁴⁷ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, Ibid, p.4.

struggle, which could free them from social slavery. What were the poet's hopes for this blue flag? He depicts them in this hymn.

Khoye adhikaar dilaayega jay bheem ka jhanda.

Chhuvaachhoot mitaayega jay bheem ka jhanda..

Is jhande ka maan, karega saara hindustaan,

Abhimaan gadh ko dhaavega, jay bheem ka jhanda..

Visalesan banakar aaj, karega achhooton ke sab kaaj.

Bhookhon ko naaj dilaayega, jay bheem ka jhanda..

Gordhan bihaaree likhe karaaree, ab navayuvakon karo tyaaree..

Saaree kaum jagaavega jay bheem ka jhanda..⁴⁸

(Translation into English)

This flag of Jai Bhim will help us to regain all our rights

This flag will vanish the untouchability

This flag will be honored by everyone in Hindustan

This flag will help in gaining pride

It will become catalyst today to aid the untouchables in every dispute

This flag of Jai Bhim will help the poor starving people to get the crops

Gordhan Bihari whose words are sharp as knife

Now inspire the young generation to get ready.

This flag of Jai Bhim will awaken the entire community.

⁴⁸ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, p.5.

This poem reveals that by 1945–46, Dr. Ambedkar's leadership had assumed revolutionary significance among the depressed classes, especially the Dalit community in the Hindi heartland, and the slogan "Jai Bhim" had become popular. Ambedkar had become a messiah and a deity for them. This is evident from this "Sarotha" (prosody) verse of the poet:

Suno bhaarat ke nar naaree ham pujaaree baaba bheem ke..

Koe pooje daee devata koe pooje chandee.

Galihaare ka sayyad pooje jaakar ke musatandee..

But pooje dhonga chaaree, ham pujaaree baaba bheem ke..

Bhaarat kee achhoot jaati ko ab apana ghar soojha.

Bheemaraav bhaarat mein apana sahee devata pooja..

Jise pooje gordhan bihaaree, ham pujaaree baaba bheem ke. .⁴⁹

(Translation into English)

Listen! Ladies and gentlemen of India we are worshipper of baba Bhim

Some worships deities and Gods while some worship chandi (devil)

The chief of passageway worships evil

These hypocrites worship the clay idols and we are worshipper of Baba Bhim.

Finally the untouchables of India are able to see their home

When Bhim Rao bharat worshiped their true God,

Worshipped by Gordhan Bihari and we are worshippers of Baba Bhim.

This shows that in the 1940s, Dr. Ambedkar was already revered among the Dalit class. Certainly, it was the result of his struggle, which awakened the sleeping community and breathed life into the dead. Those who did not know how to speak started speaking, and those who used to

⁴⁹ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, p.5.

bow like a bow started standing up with their chests stretched and their heads raised. If someone brings such a big change to a sleeping community, then he is worthy of worship for that community. The poet has rightly expressed it in these words:

Bhaarat kee achhoot jaati ko ab apana ghar soojha.

Bheemaraav bhaarat mein apana sahee devata pooja..⁵⁰

(Translation into English)

Now the untouchables of India are able to see their homes

When, they worshiped their true God Bhim.



Front page of 'Shri Ravidas Bhakt Ki Jhanki' and 'Acchton ka Paigambar' by Bihari Lal Harit

Bhagwan Das

Mr. Bhagwan Das was born on April 23, 1927, into an untouchable family. He obtained an M.A. in History from Punjab University and an LL.B. from Delhi University. Mr. Das authored numerous books in Urdu, English, and Hindi on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Untouchables,

⁵⁰ Biharilal Harit, *Achhooton ka Paigambar*, p.6.

Scavengers and Sweepers, Human Rights and Discrimination, and other topics. Among them are *Thus Spoke Ambedkar* (Vol. 1 to 4, Eds.), *Ambedkar on Gandhi and Gandhism* (Eds.), *Ambedkar ek parichey ek Sandesh* (Hindi), and *Main Bhangi Hoon*, (the story of an Indian sweeper); *Kya Valmiki Acchut they?* (Hindi); *Dr. Ambedkar aur Bhangi Jatiyaan* (Hindi); *Dr. Ambedkar: Ek Parichay Ek Sandesh* (Hindi); *Bharat Mein Baudh Dhamm ka punar Jagran evam Samasyaen* (Hindi); Dr. Ambedkar's role in the revival of Buddhism in India.⁵¹

Bhagwan Das' *Main Bhangi Hoon* is not just any ordinary book; it is a depiction of the social, political, psychological, cultural, and religious history of the Bhangi community and is the product of his in-depth research and lifetime of study. He claims that this is not his autobiography but rather "the story of all the untouchable castes." He makes a note that "Untouchable castes may have different names, jobs, and professions, but their attitudes and level of animosity toward untouchables have not changed." "The abuse, deprivation, weaknesses brought on by deprivation, and atrocities against people have not changed."⁵² As a result, this book serves as both the Bhangi community's and all untouchable castes' ideology. The plan to accomplish the Annihilation of the Caste, if that is the objective, is laid forth in *Main Bhangi Hoon*. "Yesterday's king and master is today's slave," Bhagwan Das concludes in his speech, but "today's exploited, oppressed, and enslaved can again become the ruler and governor of the country tomorrow."⁵³ The goal of this book is to convey that. This book has been given to us in the form of a narrative by Bhagwan Das. There were no sections in the book. The writing is organised like a tale. Some individuals might find this off-putting, but it was done to maintain the appearance that this narrative was being recounted by a regular person.

In this book, Bhagwan Das discusses a wide range of subjects, including the impact of Buddhism, Brahminism, Islam, British colonisers, and Gandhism on the community; how the Bhangi community came to be known by different names (such as *Dom*, *Domar*, *Chuhra*, *Halalkhor*, and so on); how Lalbeg became Balmiki; and how unassuming, helpless people were duped and forced to live at the whim of their exploiters. This lengthy history also shows that the socio-cultural-political history of the town is not a single tale that can be recounted or described in a linear narrative, but rather that various elements, both favourable and unfavourable, have

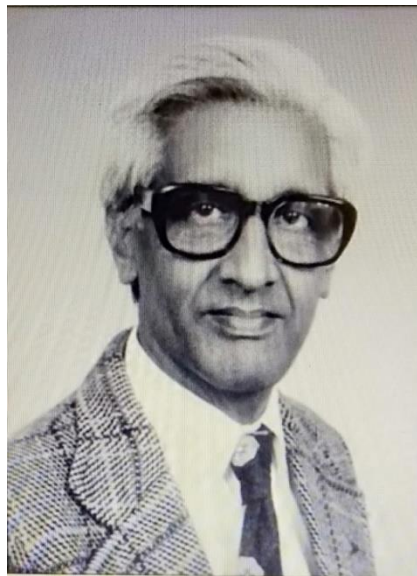
⁵¹ Information Source: Darapuri, S., R., Dalit writer and Activist, Retired Police Officer (IPS), Lucknow, June 2020.

⁵² Bhagwan Das, *Main Bhangi Hoon*, Gautam Book Center, Delhi, 1981.

⁵³ Ibid, p.33.

contributed to and countered it. Furthermore, there are still misunderstandings in the neighbourhood concerning the elements that had favourable impacts and those that had negative ones.⁵⁴

The various governments in this nation have all played significant roles in the spread of these misconceptions. These governments misrepresented the community's history in order to maintain their hold on power by portraying positive and negative aspects as the same. This book is crucial for dispelling these false beliefs.⁵⁵ Already, the community's more enlightened members are raving about this book. This book instills hope in the sanitation labour castes and serves as a guide to them.



Advocate Bhagwan Das

Source: Dr. S. R. Darapuri (Retired IPS)

Om Prakash Valmiki

In his autobiography, *Jhoothan*, Om Prakash Valmiki discusses the lives of Dalits who were forced to live in poverty and endure subhuman or inhuman treatment in a caste-based society where untouchability is practiced. He mentions that the practice of untouchability was so deeply entrenched, that touching cats, dogs, cows, and buffaloes was acceptable, but touching a *Chuhra*

⁵⁴ Bhagwan Das, *Main Bhangi Hoon*, p.20.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.32.

(member of a lower caste) caused contamination or pollution. The author also discusses forced labour, which was prevalent in rural India and trapped the majority of Dalits. He claims that, in addition to receiving payment, his mother used to work in the (Upper Caste) homes, raising cattle dung and cleaning the residences. Instead, each pair of animals received 2.5 kilogrammes of leftover grain, leftover bread from each house in the afternoon, and specially made husk bread brought to give to the *Chuhra*. *Jhoothan*⁵⁶ as sometimes found in a *Bhangan* basket. The *chuhra* would sit outside the doors with large crates while the *baraatis* ate at weddings. *Juthi* plates were placed in those baskets, which were collected following the wedding procession. When it rained, *Jhoothan* puris were boiled in water and eaten with salt and chilli. During the dry season, puris were kept dry in the sun.⁵⁷

Chuhara was also in charge of raising the animals in the village, according to Valmiki. Even the dead animals in whose houses they worked had to be disposed off. In exchange, they received no pay. It used to take 4-6 people to raise an animal. So it took time to assemble the people to lift the animal. Raising a dead animal is extremely difficult. Rope and bamboo are tied to its legs and have to be lifted by arm. The labourer receives nothing but abuse in return for this work. The leather market in Muzaffarpur sells dead animal hide for 20 to 25 rupees. Laborers who transported the dead animals were rarely paid more than 10–15 rupees for their hide.⁵⁸ This used to be the given amount in earlier days of insufficiency.

Valmiki was intensely aware of being denied access to resources that are essential to society since he was a conscious Dalit who had experienced various kinds of marginalization. His biography claims that despite humiliation and abuse from upper caste students and teachers during his time in school and college, Valmiki never gave up on his quest to pursue higher education. He was the first graduate in his village because of his perseverance and hard work. He encouraged the members of his caste to enroll their kids in school.⁵⁹ The Dalit consciousness was cultivated by Valmiki among his people. Because of his comprehension of Dr. Ambedkar's ideology, he was able to do so. He finds it upsetting to observe his neighbours carrying out the

⁵⁶ "Joothan" refers to **scraps of food left on a plate, destined for the garbage or animals**. India's untouchables have been forced to accept and eat joothan for centuries, and the word encapsulates the pain, humiliation, and poverty of a community forced to live at the bottom of India's social pyramid.

⁵⁷ O. P. Balmiki, *Jhoothan*, Vol.1, *Autobiography*, Radhakrishna Publication, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.46.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.47.

same customary tasks unopposed.⁶⁰ He recounts his personal biography as well as the difficult moments in his community life. In this sense, Valmiki's life narrative is also his community's tale.



Om Prakash Valmiki

Source: (Photo was taking from Facebook)

The autobiographies of Tulsi Ram (*Murdahiya*), Mohandas Naimisharay (*Apne Apne Pinjare* Parts 1 and 2), and Surajpal Chauhan (*Triskrit*) all provide excellent sketches of the Dalit consciousness.

Dalit intellectuals expressed their views on the social, political, and socioeconomic conditions of today. They have made an effort to get to the bottom of the caste system and the stigma associated with being untouchable. They debated, countered, and rejected the exploitation theories put forth by the so-called *dvijas*, such as the "Karma Theory" and others, and instead came up with their own explanations for the origin of Dalits and the idea of untouchability. They have asserted that these theories support their claims that they are the original inhabitants of this land and that they are equal to everyone else.

⁶⁰ O. P. Balmiki, *Jhoothan*, p.91.

These theories created the necessary atmosphere for the emergence of a thrust for freedom among Dalits. They have started realising that they were not born untouchables; they were made untouchables after birth by the Hindu caste. They began to question the attitude of caste Hindus toward them and developed a desire to be free of economic slavery, political subjugation, and sociocultural dependency. They wanted to live a life of freedom and dignity. With the assistance of Dalit intellectuals, Dalits have realised that freedom does not imply independence from colonial rule but rather freedom from fellow Hindus' attitudes toward Dalit freedom, the stigma of untouchability, and poverty.

Dalit intellectuals have not failed to demystify the existing notions about them, which were justifying their exploitation by caste Hindus. They were successful in fulfilling the historical need of searching for their own identity in the socio-political and cultural situation created by colonial rule. They have utilised print media for the spread of their ideas, first and foremost to awaken the Dalit. Dalit are also human beings with all the rights to lead their lives with dignity and prosperity- this was the major point of thrust in all their writings.

Chapter-Five

Caste Association in Uttar Pradesh

This chapter will focus on the emergence of caste associations in United Province in its socio political and cultural situations. These Caste Associations also promoted social justice and equality. Initially these associations were established as part of social reform movement in early 19th century. They encountered several clashes with other social groups while attempting to advance their social status and Sanskritize themselves. In order to establish themselves as legitimate groups in society, these organisations frequently conducted conferences.¹ In this chapter, an attempt has been made to examine some of the causes that contributed to the establishment of caste associations and their struggle for identity formation.

During this period, caste groups, federations, and clusters became more prevalent. These groups aimed to improve the respective caste's standing not only culturally but also economically, educationally, and professionally. In order to take measures toward reaching a more honourable status in society, certain castes with a desire to raise their social standing organised conferences for their members and established caste-based councils.²

A caste established a caste association in order to complete the Sanskritization process. In order to achieve this, a number of caste sabhas have emerged. Each *sabha* was fiercely committed to upholding the honour of its own caste. Furthermore, these *sabhas* aimed to change caste practises in terms of Sanskritization distinction.³

¹ Mata Prasad, *Bharat Main Dalit Jagran Aur Uske Agardoot*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2010, p.55.

² Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implication*, University of Chicago Press, 1981, p.30.

³ R. Swarupa Rani, *Women Social change and Politics in early 20th century*, (M.Phil. Dissertation, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad).

The *sabhas* that claimed high rank ran assistance programmes for people in their own caste. The highest-ranking *sabhas* undertook humanitarian actions for the members of their respective castes. The *sabhas* were engaged in a range of endeavours, such as the formation of journals, the endowment of scholarships, and the building of schools, colleges, and hospitals.

In India, the Dalits became a social class with a voice. Public attention was drawn to Dalit activism, assertion, and mobilisation approaches. Particularly in the context of the emergence of sharp inequalities as a result of the globalisation process, Dalit activism has gained prominence.⁴ This chapter argues that Dalit associational politics in north India has a lengthy and rich history. Numerous Dalit caste organisations on the one hand and organisations founded by well-known figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar on the other have consciously developed Dalit political engagement. This chapter focuses on how associational politics in India actively promotes the process of identity construction.

The process of mobilising caste or class unity in order to organise lower castes for the pursuit of their goals is referred to as associational politics. This practice gave rise to lower-caste political activism and assertion.⁵ At first glance, majority of Dalit political activity appears to be limited to the attempts of well-known individuals like Jotiba Phule, B. R. Ambedkar, Swami Acchutanand, and others, were associated with the united province marginalized community movement.

For the first time, colonial ethnology established a standard paradigm for social groups perceived as impure or untouchable. Several untouchable castes were divided into primitive,

⁴ V.M Ravi Kumar, Discourse on Dalit Identity: A Study of Dalit Politics in Uttar Pradesh 1900-1950, *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, Volume-3, Issue-5, 2018, pp 180-186.

⁵ Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, The Political Role of India's Caste Association, *Pacific Affairs*, University of British Columbia, Volume-33, No. 1, 1960, p.6.

criminal, and nomadic castes. The term "depressed castes" refers to a group of castes that are involved in a variety of occupations and who share certain criteria such as untouchability, marginalisation, poverty, and social exclusion.⁶ On a second level, the colonial era made use of the approach of creating dual identities. While distinct untouchable castes organised themselves into their own caste groupings in the social realm, homogenised identities such as depressed castes and Adi Hindus started to develop in the political sphere. This practise simultaneously shaped class and caste identities in India.⁷

The development of simultaneous activities of depressed caste organisations at one level and the creation of a Dalit identity movement at another is one of the most obvious features of the Dalit movement and activism in Uttar Pradesh.⁸ The second is committed to uniting Dalit castes and creating them as a class, whereas the former is committed to mobilising particular castes. The creation of organisations and political parties served as a major conduit for the political process in colonial India. These organisations were established in order to fight for political rights, advance social change, affirm cultural norms, and safeguard the interests of particular groups (such as caste and religion).⁹ The United Provinces' Dalit political system was impacted by this paradigm shift. A number of oppressed castes established organisations to promote socio-cultural collectivity and speak with a unified voice.

Some of these associations include the Chamar caste, which is numerically the largest caste within the depressed caste, the Chamar Mahasabha, Ravidas Mahasabha, and Jatav Mahasabha; the Passi caste in Lucknow forms the Passi Mahasabha; the Dhobi caste forms the

⁶ V. M. Ravi Kumar, *Discourse on Dalit Identity: A Study of Dalit Politics in Uttar Pradesh 1900-1950*, pp. 180-186.

⁷ R. Swarupa Rani, *Women's Associations in Telangana*, Book Link Corporation, Hyderabad, 2003, p.27.

⁸ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, M D Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, p.69.

⁹ K. Chancharika, *Aadhunik Bharat Ka Dalit Aandolan*, University Publication New Delhi, 2003, p.84.

Dhobi Mahasabha; and the Balmikis form the Balmiki Mahasabha.¹⁰ These groups met the needs of particular castes in terms of reformism, politics, and other areas. In addition, caste organisations strove to further their cultural ideals by opposing child marriage and wine use and encouraging education as a method of development. The practise of helping people create their caste-based identities was one of these organisations' most important tasks. Depressed castes have, thus, employed a wide variety of models to express themselves: Sanskritisation, martial race, Buddhism, Dalit identity, Harijan identity, and so forth are among them.¹¹

The Arya Samaj

Unquestionably, the Arya Samaj was essential in changing Dalit society in several parts of India. In the United Provinces, this reformist involvement was also evident. Although it did so within the confines of a culturally conservative worldview, it did labour with the enthusiasm of missionaries to reform and offer a better life for Dalits. However, its primary objective was to restore the glory of the Aryan civilization. To address the social stigma of untouchability, Arya Samaj started a daring reform process. It challenged the idea that the institution of untouchability is sanctioned by Scripture and asserted that it was a stain on the illustrious Aryan culture. It initiated a number of changes in the United Provinces, including permitting children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to attend public schools and libraries and take part in the Samaj's religious activities. Dalits now had a place in the United Provinces' associational and organisational politics. It also pushed the Dalits to adopt a new way of life.¹² Even while the

¹⁰ K. Chancharika, *Aadhunik Bharat Ka Dalit Aandolan*, p.93.

¹¹ E. M. Hardtmann, *Dalit Movement in India: Local Practices and Global Connections*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p.169.

¹² Swami Dayanand Saraswati, *Satyarth Prakash*, Arya Sahitya Prachar Trust, New Delhi, pp. 250-376.

Arya Samaj adhered to a traditional Hindu ideology, it did allow Dalits considerable room and gave them training in political and organisational activity.

The Chamar Mahasabha

One of the largest Dalit groups was the Chamar, which was primarily found throughout the United Provinces. This caste worked with leather and made shoes. Nearly all of the traditional roles of this caste had been gradually abandoned, so this was no longer practiced. Regarding political and development initiatives, Chamar's economic situation has become crucial; numerical dominance also contributed to this.¹³ As a result of the Sabha, they had established a high position in the traditional Hindu social order. The Chamar Mahasabha raised concerns about untouchability and the exploitation of traditional forms. Agricultural labour, leather crafting, and assistance to staff and officials, in particular, had become the focus of traditional opposition.¹⁴ The "Chamar Mahasabha" was established in Mainpuri in May 1924 after political and social agitation at the grass-roots level had gathered in several areas of the United Provinces.¹⁵ A variety of initiatives were taken by this Mahasabha to advance the Chamar caste. These regulations included everything from social reforms to political rights. Resolutions passed in assemblies held throughout the state's 24 districts frequently referred to the Chamars' vegetarianism and the purity of their way of life. Some Sabhas even went so far as to levy fines in order to impose their new purity standards on the rest of Chamar society.¹⁶ In Pratapgarh and the surrounding areas, Baba Ram Chandra, a well-known peasant leader in Uttar Pradesh,

¹³ M. Sharma, *Workers and Leather Industry in Kanpur (1861-1947): Transition from Craft to Factory Production*, Shri Krishna Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, p. 165.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.167.

¹⁵ Ramnarayan S Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Pramanent Black, Ranikhet, 2012, p.131.

¹⁶ PAI, (Police Abstract of Weekly Intelligence), Criminal Investigation Department Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, from 1922 to 1928.

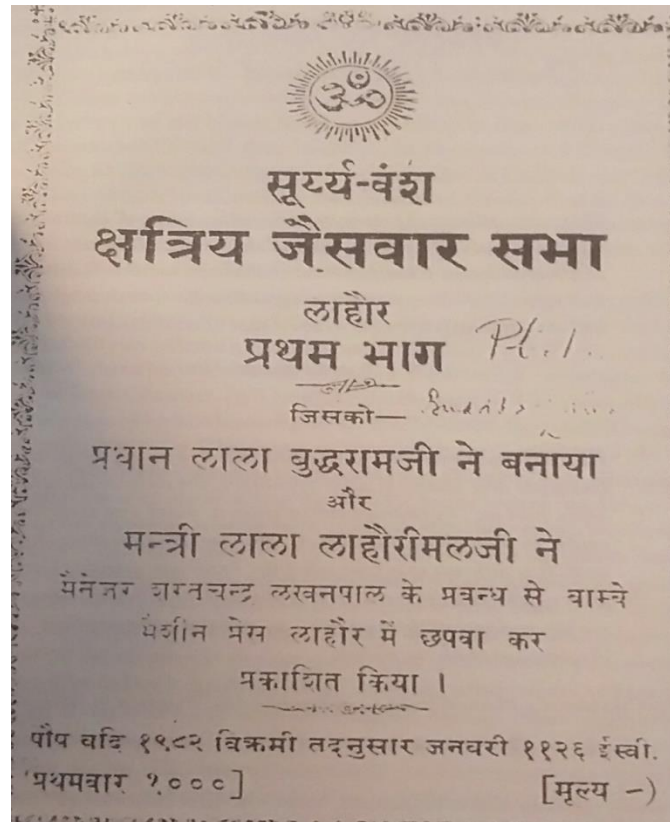
attended Chamar Sabha meetings. Gorakhpur was a significant hub of reform and protest in eastern Uttar Pradesh, especially in the Eata and Padraona tahsils. In July 1926, the Chamar Mahasabha passed a resolution outlawing the removal of carcasses, skinning of animals, tanning, and the impure and defiling business of making leather in various Benaras neighborhoods.¹⁷ Interesting details include the Chamar's refusal to fix and stitch shoes in Moradabad; Siana quasba in Bulandshahar's refusal to skin dead animals; and Rajpura quasba in Badaun's termination of Mochi's employment. The Bhangies purchased the annual hide contract from the Chamars in Saharanpur town.¹⁸ During the Kisan Sabha agitation in 1921–1922, the Chamars of Awadh ran an anti-Bedekhali and anti-Begari campaign. Protests against the begari continued even after the election. In a number of western UP districts, including Meerut, Moradabad, Bulandshahar, Aligarh, Sharanpur, Bijnour, Etah, and Kanpur, there were strong anti-Begari protests. An item in the Hindi Weekly Pratap states that the Raidas Sabha of Kanpur organised a two-day meeting in April 1928 to promote the abolition of begari and other rituals of a like nature. However, the promotion of vegetarianism and cleanliness was more visible in eastern Uttar Pradesh's Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Benaras, Ghazipur, and Gorakhpur than protests against begari. For their *dasi* jobs, Chamar women in eastern Uttar Pradesh's Rudhali and Basti districts requested payment.

The British understood and accepted that they were destined for an unreachable fate due to their "impure" origin and "unclean" occupation, which was the core problem for the Chamar activists. The Chamar group resisted the British and Hindu views of their past and present by writing caste histories and actively mobilizing. In addition to their political mobilisation, the Dalit

¹⁷ PAI, July 18, 1926.

¹⁸ M. Sharma, *Workers and Leather Industry in Kanpur (1861-1947): Transition from Craft to Factory Production*, p. 140.

community's socioeconomic conditions were improved by social reform movements backed by the Mahasabha.



Source: R. S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability : Chamar and Dalit History in North India*, Page No. 119.

Akhil Bharat Varshiye Nishad Sabha

The Mallah Community was a part of the Central Provinces' Dalit class. The Luniya community is connected to the Mallah community. Both these communities planned and formed the provincial sabha known as "Nishada Sabha." It was established in Lucknow in the 1920s by Rai Saheb Babu Ram Charanji. He was the Sabha's general secretary. The Sabha's primary goals

were to organise the Mallah community and advance civil rights.¹⁹ In order to spread knowledge among the underprivileged masses, he launched the periodical Nishad Samachar.²⁰ The community of Mallah encouraged the government to give instructions to the district and municipal boards so that they could implement the educational benefits offered to the underprivileged. They reacted badly to the government's decision to strike some topics from the list of seminars that were scheduled. Additionally, they sought the creation of a classification of oppressed groups immediately from the Governor-General and the Governor of the United Provinces, as the Franchise Committee had delegated this duty to the Delimitation Committee.²¹

Jatav Mahasabha

With regard to the lower-class movement, this league was extremely significant. A caste-based movement was used to fortify society and create a strong sociopolitical identity. Leading Jatavs founded the first Jatav group, the "Nagar Jatav Committee," in 1888 in Agra city. This group promoted the vegetarian lifestyle and Vedic teachings of the Arya Samaj.²² The Jatav aristocracy inherited customs from the top caste of Hinduism as a result of the Arya Samaj's clear impact. Through the use of Yagyopavita (Ganeu), they emphasised the importance of following the Sanskritization process. Elite Jatav people started sending their children to government,

¹⁹ Amit Ahuja, *Mobilizing the Marginalized: Ethnic Parties Without Ethnic Movement*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2019, p.56.

²⁰ Amit Ahuja, *Mobilizing the Marginalized: Ethnic Parties Without Ethnic Movement*, p.57.

²¹ Uttar Pradesh State Archive, File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Department., File Heading- Revision list of Scheduled Castes (Depressed Classes), Cover No- 2nd, October, 6, 1935, p.24.

²² Uttar Pradesh State Archive, File No. - 78 (3)/1938, GAD, File Heading- Representation of Depressed Classes, March 5, 1938, p.5.

missionary and Arya Samaj schools.²³ Both the Jatav Pracharak Mandal and the Jatav Veer Mahasabha were established by them in 1917 and 1924, respectively. Its primary goals were to improve the educational position and provide the Jatav caste with a new identity and consciousness.²⁴ The Jatav meeting was conducted on October 28, 1917, in Agra by Pt. Sundarlal Sagar. During this conference, Boharey Khemchand (MLC) was elected president, Seth Banwari Lal was elected minister, and the group established the "Akhil Bhartiya Jatav Sabha." In 1930, Ram Swaroop Thekedar founded the Jatav Yuvak Parishad (Jatav youth league). These groups had the desire to strengthen political stability and advance Jatav society. It was known as the Akhil Bharatiya Yuvak Parishad (All Indian Jatav Youth League) from 1935 to 1937.²⁵ The league's focal point was in the Agra region. The demands of the newly developing middle class are reflected in it, as are the characteristics of the lower caste movement. They place a lot of emphasis on the development of Jatav society. It opened a lot of branches all throughout the nation, including in Rajasthan, Punjab, Madhya Bharat (the Central Provinces), and other places.²⁶ Its aim was to develop Jatav society and to provide political firmness. Its main center was Agra and the area around it including Etah, Bareilly, Mutthra, Mainpuri, Etawah,. The important characteristic of Jatav assertion is that they actively collaborated with Dr. Ambedkar

²³ J. Nesfield, *Brief View of the Caste System of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1885.

²⁴Uttar Pradesh State Archive, File No. - 78 (3)/1938, Harijan Sewak Department., File Heading- Proposed Deputation of the India Jatav Youth League, p.3.

²⁵ File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Department., File Heading- Revision list of Scheduled Castes (Depressed Classes), p.8.

²⁶ O. M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974, p.77.

and attempted to communicate their socio political anxiety more sharply than any other Dalit community in Uttar Pradesh.²⁷

Pasi Mahasabha

The Pasi Mahasabha actively participated in strengthening the Dalit voice in the United Provinces. The Pasi community expressed its demands through political assertion as part of the process by which lower castes began to assert themselves for more political rights and economic justice.²⁸ A Bhajan-Mandali was organised in Allahabad by Passi Samaj reformers at the beginning of the 20th century. This Bhajan Mandali's major goal was to educate the Passis through speeches made at weddings and other social gatherings by its members. Vishweshwar Das, a leader in the Bhajan Mandali and a resident of the Allahabad village of Naya Purwa, oversaw the establishment of the Passi Mahasabha in 1915. People began to consider the advancement of society across religious boundaries after the All India Passi Mahasabha was established in 1933 by the reformers of Allahabad's Passi Samaj.²⁹ Branch offices for this organisation were eventually formed in cities like Allahabad, Raibareilly, Lucknow, Barabanki, and others. The Allahabad region is still home to this Mahasabha. The establishment of the All India Passi Mahasabha in 1948 in the Faizabad region, led by social reformer Narayan Das from the same city, was another critical step in the growth of the Passi caste. This caste has attempted to elevate its standing since the late 1930s through sanskritizing, or taking on the practises of the upper castes. It is worth noting that the Pasi Mahasabha worked tirelessly to organise their caste

²⁷ Ibid, p.79.

²⁸ R. Prakash Saroj, *Passi Samaj Darpan*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2011, p.62.

²⁹ Angela S. Burger, *Opposition in a Dominant-Party System*, University of California Press Loss Angeles, 1969, P.48

members and prepare them to fight injustice. Following the Chamar caste, the Pasi community in Uttar Pradesh became a more outspoken and politically active Dalit community.³⁰

Kori Mahasabha

Arya Samaj's influence led to the founding of the "Bharat Varshiya Koli Sudhar Sabha" in 1910 by a few army officers and railway workers. It was established in Lahore under the guidance of Lala Lajpat Rai. The organisation subsequently opened branches in Syalkot, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Karachi, Shimla, and Delhi.³¹ The education of Dalits and social reform were priorities for this sabha. It worked to end practises like child marriage, dowries, drinking wine, and eating meat that were considered obstacles to the growth of Dalit society. They adopt names like Arya, Verma, and Chaudhary to reflect their higher social status. This organization's primary goal shifted to social awareness. It was thought to be a necessary prerequisite for the advancement of Dalit society.³² In 1935, this organisation adopted the name "Kori Maha Sabha" of Lucknow. This organisation adopted resolutions to stop landlord abuse and fund free education for kids. In Kanpur, the Kori Maha Panchayat was founded in 1935. In 1940, this Mahasabha adopted the name Kori Mahasabha. This group urged Koris to vote in the Panchayat Nikaya and Assembly elections, pursue education, and support sub-caste unity. In the United Provinces, this organisation sets up branches.³³ This association promoted progressive views within their community at the grass-roots level by expanding its operations to the district,

³⁰ Ibid, p.49.

³¹ File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Department., File Heading-Revision list of Scheduled Castes (Depressed Classes), Cover No-2, July 23, 1936, p.3.

³² M. P. S. Chandel, *Democratic Transformation of a Social Class*, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 1991, p.49.

³³ File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Department, p.8

mandal, and village levels. It's intriguing that this community does not want to be listed among the depressed castes.

Dhobi Mahasabha

Due to their line of work, Razaks—also known as Dhobis or "washers"—were seen as untouchables.³⁴ The Kshatriya rank of the Razaks, on the other hand, was an attempt by them to construct a more respectable identity. The truth is that they formed an organisation to make requests after realising the value of collective voice. To express the ambitions of Razaks, the All India Razak (Dhobi) Association was established in Lucknow. Jagdish Chandra Solanki served as the group's president. They included representatives from Calcutta, Banaras, Samstipur, Allahabad, Gonda, Almora, Secunderabad (Deccan), Ajmere, Kanpur, Indore, Jatusana (Punjab), Poona, and other cities.³⁵ The United Provinces did not initially identify the Dhobis as a scheduled caste. The government received numerous demands from the Dhobis to be included into the scheduled castes category. On April 15, 1933, the administration informed the Government of India that this representation had been rejected.³⁶ Due to their societal obscurantism, the All India Dhobi Association sought untouchable status. The Indian Secretary of State gave instructions to have them added to the list of scheduled castes after carefully evaluating their circumstances and conducting the requisite investigations. Dalit communities have made significant political progress by speaking with one voice and acting in concert.³⁷

³⁴ William Crook, *The Tribes and Castes of the NorthWestern Provinces and Oudh*, (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Vol-1, 1896.

³⁵ File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Department, September 10 1934, p.8

³⁶ File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Department, p.54.

³⁷ Bhagwan Das and Satnam Singh, *Dhobi Samaj ka Sanshipit Itihas*, Samyank Prakasan, New Delhi, 2018.

Balmiki Mahasabha

Members of this caste performed manual labour as scavengers and sweepers in cities and municipal organisations during the British era. Hindu society's higher echelons traditionally see them as an untouchable community.³⁸ They were able to acquire fresh, liberating, and progressive ideas in metropolitan areas, and this gave rise to the drive for respectable identity and conscience for the defence of civil rights. In Uttar Pradesh, the Balmiki caste is made up of the castes Bhangi, Lalbegi, Hela, and Mehtar. While carrying out their cleaning responsibilities, they engage with the Balmiki community. They eagerly anticipate Balmiki Rishi's birthday since it was on that day that the intellectuals in this neighbourhood began cooperating to better their society on a local level.³⁹ They founded the "Valmiki Mahasabha" as a reform group to oversee the overall advancement of the Balmikis. The sociopolitical history of the Balmikis community serves as a prime illustration of the ambitions for a better life and a respectable identity of the newly developing Dalit urban class. Balmikis had a social awakening in a few towns in eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Balmikis' engagement in politics was particularly concentrated in Allahabad. They were especially fond of the teachings of saints like Ravi Das, Kabir Das, and Ramanand.⁴⁰ However, compared to the other sub-castes, the Balmikis had a higher level of Hinduization since they adopted Rishi (Sage) Balmiki, the author of the Ramayana, as their creator. Balmiki created a link to the Hindu tradition of the upper castes even though he was thought to be a member of a lower caste. Chunni Lal, Balmukund, Chaudhary Sant Ram, Lekhram, Pramod Kumar, and Ishawar Das are just a few of the leaders who became well-known among the

³⁸William Crook, *The Tribes and Castes of the NorthWestern Provinces and Oudh*, p.261.

³⁹ Joel Lee, Jagdish, Son of Ahmad: Dalit Religion and Nominative Politics in Lucknow, *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, Online, 2015. <https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/3919>.

⁴⁰Om Prakash Singh, Dalit Movement and Contribution of Dalit Association in United Provinces, *Journal of Media Culture and Communication*, Vol.-2, No.-3, 2022.

Balmikis. They joined the Ambedkar Mission and took part in its projects as members. A number of these leaders also joined the Buddhist Society, which was founded in colonial-era north India.⁴¹ A Safai Karmachari (Sweepers Union) was created in Delhi under Dr. Ambedkar's suggestion. It didn't last long before being integrated into a group supported by Congress.⁴² Another notable leader who moved from Nagpur to Lucknow was Shankar Rao Damodar, who was in charge of promoting Ambedkar's principles within this community. Babu Mahdeo Prasad made a significant contribution to the development of this team. Under these leaders, the Balmikis carried out a number of strikes to protect their civil rights. Despite organising many strikes, the Balmikis were unable to considerably raise their wages or improve their working conditions.⁴³

Adi Hindu Mahasabha

One of the most well-known Dalit organizations in Uttar Pradesh is the Adi Hindu Mahasabha. In 1918, Swami Acchutanand Harihar founded it in Delhi. The lower castes of Uttar Pradesh have benefited from this organization's efforts to increase anti-oppressive awareness.⁴⁴ He wanted to develop the "sons of soil" narrative by portraying Dalits as India's first inhabitants. He also took part in the promotion by starting schools for untouchable in the Jatav neighbourhood of Agra. The electoral changes in British India were strongly supported by this movement.⁴⁵ The association outlined sixteen points in its demands, including separate elections and representation

⁴¹ V. M. Ravi Kumar, *Discourse on Dalit Identity: A Study of Dalit Politics in Uttar Pradesh 1900-1950*.

⁴² Nicolas Jaoul, *Casting the Sweepers: Local Politics of Sanskritization, Caste and Labour (Book Cultural entrenchment of Hindutva)*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2011, p.275.

⁴³ Ibid, p.282.

⁴⁴ Mata Prasad, op cit., p.59.

⁴⁵ Nandani Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p.6.

for Dalits; the destruction of schools, scholarships, and forced labor; social rights equal to those of the entire Hindu population; the inclusion of untouchables in the police and army; and local boards like the municipality and district board. The Mahasabha requested that the British government appoint members of the lower classes to the legislative council, grant untouchables land cards, and open up opportunities for business ownership and retail.⁴⁶ In order to link Dalit castes together, the Adi Hindu Mahasabha leaders in the United Provinces argued for a broader definition of achhut, or untouchability, in December 1927. Dr. Ambedkar's work in Maharashtra was followed out through Achhutanand and Adi Hindu Mahasabha in Uttar Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh, he advised and instructed untouchable communities to use political mobilisation as a means of breaking free from oppression.⁴⁷ In addition to building numerous locations throughout India, he also started the monthly journal "Adi Hindu." He organised the Adi Hindu Mahasabha convention in Mumbai in 1928, where Swamiji and Dr. Ambedkar made a commitment to advancing Dalit activities. The undisputed fact is that Achhutanand and his association was able to propagate the discourse of Adi as a tool for political mobilization, assertion and identification. The Adi Hindu movement in Uttar Pradesh thus made Dalit political activism possible.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Mata Prasad, p.67.

⁴⁷ Mangal Singh Jatav, *Shri 108 Swami Achhutanand ka Jivan Parichay*, Mangal Bhawan, Tikoniya Murar, Gwalior, 1997, p.31.

⁴⁸ Rajpal Singh, *Swami Acchutanand Harihar*, Rajlakshmi Prakashan, Delhi, 2002, p.48.



Swami Acchutanand, Dr. Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar and the member of Adi -Hindu Mahasabha (Source- Shyamlal Baudh President of Swami Acchuta Smarak Samiti Kanpur).

Scheduled Caste Federation

In the 1940s, many Dalit organisations, including the Kureel Mahasabha, Chamar Mahasabha, Kumoan Shilpkar Mahasabha, Jatav Mahasabha, Raidas Mahasabha of Allahabad, and others, were drawn to the Scheduled Caste Federation to unite under one federation and protest for their identity. After bringing together a number of organisations for lower castes, the Scheduled Caste Federation soon entered the election.⁴⁹ Leaders from different regions of India, including Adi Hindus from Uttar Pradesh, were present to provide their support when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

⁴⁹ R. S. Rawat, op. cit., p. 173.

established the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) in Nagpur in 1942.⁵⁰ Tilak Chand Kureel was chosen as the president of Uttar Pradesh during the second conference of the Scheduled Caste Federation, held in Kanpur in 1944. The federation was important because it called for the following things: a) government-funded Dalit colonies and housing; b) participation in a new Dalit constitution in accordance with the Poona Pact; and c) the repeal of the "Criminal Tribe Act of 1871." Their actions resulted in the arrest of 3,000 people.⁵¹ In 1946 and 1947, the Federation made the decision to start a satyagraha (resistance movement) in the United Provinces in opposition to the Poona Pact, the Congress, and the Cabinet Mission Award for denying their requests for proportional representation and a distinct electorate. Additionally, they pushed for the abolition of begaari, the distribution of Dalit-owned land, the provision of free education and scholarships, and the designation of Dalit employment in the government.⁵² Additionally, this organisation started holding conferences every year in various Indian cities. In July–August 1946 and March–May 1947, the federation organised two further satyagrahas in Lucknow. Due to the Assembly's lopsided representation of Dalits, Satyagrahis frequently staged protests in front of the Assembly to cast doubt on the Assembly's democratic credentials. Poona Pact Ko Wapas Lo was one of the cries they made ("Scrap the Poona Pact").⁵³ Nearly 400 Dalits were imprisoned as a result of the demonstrations, including the president of the United Provinces Scheduled Castes Federation, Tilak Chand Kureel, and prominent federation members including Behari Lal Jaiswar, Piyare Lal Talib, and Shankaranand Shastri. Azamgarh, Etah, Etawah, Kanpur,

⁵⁰ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low caste in North India*, Columbia University Press, 2003.

⁵¹ Mata Prasad, *op. cit.*, p.59.

⁵² R. S. Rawat, p.175.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.175.

Farrukhabad, Fyzabad, Aligarh, Agra, Fatehgarh, Gorakhpur, and other cities all saw demonstrations.⁵⁴

Harijan Sewak Sangh

After 1930, and particularly following the Poona Pact of 1932, Mahatma Gandhiji became significantly involved in the upliftment of Dalits. He established the Harijan Sewak Sangh in 1933. In addition to various local and national branches of the Harijan Sewak Sangh, he also published a newspaper under the name "Harijan."⁵⁵ This organisation worked on a variety of endeavours to help Dalits, including campaigns against untouchability, access to water in villages, access to temples, etc. Gandhi, who refers to Dalits as "Harijans," advocated the following strategies for their advancement:

- Promotion of sanitation and cleanliness among Harijans.
- Improved techniques for performing what are referred to as "unclean jobs."
- If possible, staying away from all meat, especially beef and carrion.
- Avoiding consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- Enrolling children in school to educate them.⁵⁶

United Provinces Adi Hindu Depressed Classes Association

An organisation called the United Provinces Adi Hindu Depressed Classes Association was founded on June 27th, 1942. The political and developmental challenges impacting Dalits were given particular focus by this organisation. In some ways, it exemplifies how Dalit speech and behaviour have changed from identification to political demands. According to this association's

⁵⁴ R. S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability : Chamar and Dalit History in North India*, p. 184.

⁵⁵ Viyogi Hari, *History of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1932-1968*, Harijan Sewak Sangh, New Delhi, 2008, p.167.

⁵⁶ Mata Prasad, op. cit., p.58.

resolution, a provincial Depressed Classes Advisory Board and District Depressed Class Welfare Committees should be established in order to create an effective organisation that serves both the centre and the districts.⁵⁷

1) According to this organisation, the government should recognise the Depressed Classes Provincial Federation for the betterment of Dalits.

2) The Adi Hindu Depressed Classes Conference proposed that the government allocate more funds for the reclaiming department, which is responsible for a large portion of the depressed class's upliftment.⁵⁸

Republican Party of India

Dr. Ambedkar oversaw the final convention of the Scheduled Caste Federation, which was held in Delhi, and the organisation was disbanded. Ambedkar announced in the 1950s that he would create the Republican Party of India to advance equality. He also saw the importance of a political party that was completely committed to advancing Dalit rights, but he was not around to see it take shape.⁵⁹ His supporters were successful in establishing the Republican Party of India in October 1957. As the party's first president, political activist N. Shivaraj served till 1964. As part of its political operations, RPI organised a number of conferences in which Dalit leaders and activists were urged to take part. Nagpur hosted the RPI's first conference in 1957. Later conferences were conducted in Aurangabad (1959), Aligarh (1961), Ahmadabad (1963), Delhi (1966), Nagpur (1969), and Pune (1975).⁶⁰ The Republican Party, in general, is "a party divided

⁵⁷ File.No.38/1934, Harijan Sewak Department, 28 August, 1942, p.2.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 18 August, 1942, p.51-52.

⁵⁹ Sharan Kumar, *Dalit Panther: Bhumika Evam Aandolan*, New Delhi, Vani Prakashan, 2017, p.142

⁶⁰ Mata Prasad, op. cit., p.60.

more along the lines of class than caste." ⁶¹ Ambedkar identified "justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity" as the guiding values that led to the formation of the Republican Party.⁶² It was hoped that all Indians would be able to benefit from these opportunities and benefits. Dalits, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Hindus were among the groups Ambedkar attempted to draw to the event. The Republican Party's catchphrases captured the zeitgeist and showed the party's ideological underpinnings: "Jatavs and Muslims are brothers." Hindus and Jatavs are siblings. Where did Hindus come from? These shouts demonstrate that the Dalit uprisings against Hindu supremacy were waged along caste lines by emphasising their distinct Achuth identity. Instead of fading with time, the idea of a shared Dalit identity has grown more compelling.⁶³ The Republican Party of India attempted to address the major issues confronting Dalits through the political system. Implementing affirmative action, promoting Dalit education, and increasing political representation were all heavily encouraged.⁶⁴

The lower castes association in Uttar Pradesh influenced political education of Dalits. Caste organisations were formed by many ethnic groups of the oppressed class in an attempt to develop a common collective action for the welfare of Dalit society. This chapter sought to demonstrate the process of assertion and identity creation in Uttar Pradesh. These organisations were critical in mobilising people, advocating for civil rights, and providing services to the oppressed castes. The Dalits' ethno- and class-based collectivism grew during their time. The development of the Dalit struggle and the creation of strong democratic parties in Uttar Pradesh were both largely influenced by this collectivism.

⁶¹ Ajay Kumar, *Dalit Panther Aandolan*, Gautam Book Centre, Delhi, 2015, p.33.

⁶² R. S. Rawat, op. cit., p.178.

⁶³ Ibid, p.185.

⁶⁴ Sudha Pai, op. cit., p.74.

Chapter-Six

An Overview of Local Leadership in Uttar Pradesh

In India, the Dalit struggle went through various stages, led by various individuals and groups. In Dalit movement, we have come across the contributions of the national leaders who have made immense contributions through endless struggles. At the local level, many people took leadership to spread the ideas of protest and educated people about the need for justice. This chapter attempts to discuss the life of such local leaders who represent their people. It is not to say that all the local leaders have been covered here. Attempt to talk about most of them in this chapter through whom the grassroots level politics brewed and gained acceptance.

Leadership is a socio-psychological phenomenon that affects all human beings. Because man is a social being who works in groups, he requires constant guidance and direction. The leader is responsible for providing these. According to Gouldner¹, "leadership is a role that an individual occupies at a given time in a given group." A leader serves multiple purposes by taking on multiple roles. His approach to various groups as a leader is influenced by the entire hierarchy of relationships, which also has an impact on him personally.

Any movement is a well-organized effort to achieve well-defined goals. It requires committed and capable leadership to guide it. The aim of the Dalit movement was to free Dalits from untouchability and other incidental vices. It was a difficult task. However, the movement was successful in regaining the Dalits' civic personality and civil rights. This chapter focuses on the leaders who worked for their fraternity. What did they think of the oppressive Hindu social system? What ideology did they follow? How far could they mobilize the illiterate and uneducated masses to become a potential power? What was their role in the movement? How far did they get with their mission? To understand this, one must consider their sociopolitical profiles. The Dalit movement was undoubtedly led by many people, both from the Dalit and non-Dalit communities. The current study, however, is limited to the role of a few Dalit leaders. The socio-political profiles of all those leaders, regardless of caste, creed, region, or ideology, are as follows:

¹ A. Gouldner, *Studies in Leadership*, Harper and Row, New York, 1950, p.20

Jhamlal Ahirwar²

The Dalit leader in Kanpur was Jhamlal Ahirwar, who was born in the Farrukhabad district, but his family had been in Kanpur since Nawabi times. Mr. Jhamlal was born on January 5, 1889, in Kanpur. His family's condition was good; his father used to contract for boots. Till this time, there was a Kuril fraternity in Kanpur, but there was no Ahirwar fraternity, nor was there any *panchayat*. This class used to call itself *Raidas*. Therefore, in order to form his caste *panchayat*, the Ahirwar *panchayat* was formed by calling Aharwalas from Bundelkhand and Jhansi, and Gauri Shankar actively supported him in this. He was a member of several organizations, including the 'District Hindu Depressed Classes Association' and the 'Dalit Caste Education Committee' in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. On April 9, 1938, in Bundelkhand, he was the president of the 'District Hindu Depressed Classes Association' and vice president of the 'Adi Hindu Depressed Classes' and he remained a member of the Dalit Caste Education Committee, Uttar Pradesh, and Kanpur.

Jhamlal ji was the founder member of the 'UP Schedule Caste Merchant Chamber,' whose patron was Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. After the Poona Pact, when many Dalit people were angry with Babasaheb for removing their right to a separate electorate, Jhamlal ji and his colleagues published a book titled "Unpleasant Truth." In this book, Dalits were introduced to the losses caused by the Poona Pact, and anger was expressed against the lessons. This book was published in 1932 in Kanpur on behalf of the Adi Hindu Sabha.

Jhamlal ji's remarkable contribution was also in the social sector; he were kind by nature. He also used to provide financial assistance to educate Dalit people.

Tilak Chandra Kuril³

Tilak Chandra Kuril was born in 1907 in Kanpur. Being actively associated with the Dalit movement, he was also the President of the 'All India Scheduled Caste Federation' as well as the "Uttar Pradesh Shramik Sangh." In 1934, his son, Mahesh Chandra Kuril, who was the chairman

² Source Information: A personal interview with Mr. Suraj Bhan, Jhamlal Ji's son, Kanpur, 25/12/2019.

³ Source Information: A personal interview with Mr. Mahesh Chandra Kuril, Tilak Chandra Kuril's son, Kanpur, 26/12/2019.

of the Municipal Board of Kanpur, was the general secretary of "Harijan Sevak Sangh." He was actively associated with the 'Adi Hindu Mahasabha' and played an important role in Dalit upliftment, along with Swami Acchutanand Ji. He also remained in touch with Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. On November 30, 1928, Sir John Simon, Dr. Ambedkar, and Swami Acchutanand, Tilak Chandra Kuril, along with Girdhari Bhagat, Laxman Prasad, and Karorimal Khatik, attended the "Adi Hindu Conference" in Lucknow.

Periyar Lalai Singh⁴

Periyar Lalai Singh was born on September 1, 1911, at a time when the phase of high-low discrimination was at its peak. His father, Chaudhary Gajju Singh, was an Arya Samaji, and from his time on, his family had deep ties with untouchables and Dalits. Gajju Singh's strong personality, public service, and humanitarian ideas influenced Lalai Singh since childhood. After completing his education, he also remained in government service but retired in 1950.

Chaudhary Lalai Singh ji was an ardent devotee of Periyar Ramaswami Nayakar; hence, he came to be known as "Periyar" Lalai Singh. He closely observed the degraded life of the untouchables. The condition of untouchables in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh was very pathetic when compared to Uttar Pradesh. Mr. Lalai Singh himself had seen and must have suffered during his service period, so his passion for the upliftment of Dalits increased day by day. Even after becoming a Buddhist, he did not hold back in reprimanding the Buddhists. He was a strong supporter of "The Buddhist Society of India," established by Babasaheb Ambedkar, and remained actively involved in its organisational work.

Mangal Singh Jatav⁵

Mangal Singh Jatav was the son-in-law of Swami Acchutanand, who was born on July 13, 1917, in Mewati Tola, district Etawah, Uttar Pradesh. His mother's name was Janaki Devi, and his father's name was Thakur Prasad. In 1932, Swami Ji sent a letter and invited Mangal Singh to his ashram in Kanpur. After Swamiji's death in 1933, he passed the matriculation examination in

⁴ Source Information: Govardhan Singh, Shraddha Suman to Babu Pyare Lal Agarwal of Independent Congress leader, *The Indian National Congress Scheduled Caste, Tribe Cell souvenir*, 1985.

⁵ Mohan Singh Bansal, *Babu Mangal Singh ka Jivan Charitra*, Babu Mangal Singh Jivan Charitra Prakashan Samiti, Ditiya Madhya Pradesh, 1981.

Etawah in 1935. Swami Achutanand used to come from Kanpur from time to time, and after inspecting Mangal Singh's education, he used to give him proper guidance.

After the death of Swami Achutananda, the Adi Hindu newspaper and its press were closed. With the efforts of Jatav Ji, Thakur Chand Kaim of Kanpur took on the responsibility of carrying forward the works of Swami Ji. During his student days, Mangal Singh ji founded the Dalit Chhatra Parishad (Dalit Students' Association).

In the princely state of Gwalior, there existed severe discrimination between the upper castes and the Dalits. Jivaji Rao Sindhia, who assumed control of the princely state in 1936, however, declared equality for Dalits on the occasion of his coronation. Jatavji spent his entire life helping the downtrodden Dalits in accordance with Swamiji's commitment. First off, Jatav gatherings and conferences held in Bayana Bharatpur between 1937 and 1939 raised awareness within the Jatav community. All around, schools were set up so that Dalits might receive an education and rise to prominent positions. He took control of social services after moving to Gwalior. Based on his work, the then-King Jivajirao Sindhia of Gwalior State nominated him for the Praja Sabha. He held influential positions in a number of Dalit social organisations. In Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan, he persisted in his fight for the advancement of the oppressed Dalit community. He received the Bhim Ratna honour from the All India Vrat Nirman Samiti in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. He passed away on May 19, 1996.

Pyarelal Kureel⁶

Shri Pyarelal Kureel was born in Ghatampur, tahsil Purwa, Unnao district, Uttar Pradesh, on December 27, 1916. His father, Shri Manuva Ram Kureel, served in the British Army for many years and retired as a Subedar Major. He was a soldier (Imperial Service Order). After retiring, he returned to his hometown of Ghatampur, but he was unhappy there, so he moved to Lucknow and settled down there. In his village, where there was a prevalent practice of untouchability, he felt insulted. During the period, women from the scheduled castes were not allowed to wear silver or gold jewellery. Shri Manuva Ram was successful in his challenge to this unjust system. He incited his brethren to rebel against Hindu castes. He continued to stay in touch with his

⁶Source Information: Telephonic Interview Ram Aashray, Social Activist, Basant Vihar, Kanpur Road, Kanpur, (16/12/2020).

relatives in his village and elsewhere, even after relocating to Lucknow. The education of Shri Pyarelal Kureel was excellent. He did an L.L.B. and an M.A. He carried on his father's social service work after finishing school. He started his campaign against Brahmanism at first. He often gave sermons to his followers about how Brahmanism had wiped out the scheduled castes. He began protesting the Choudhary regime in the area. On the one hand, the elites abused the community while mediating disputes among its members. The scheduled caste priests and *Bhaktas*, on the other hand, abused the group. They thought they were better than the *Jagtas*. They considered themselves to be superior to the *Jagtas*. As a result, he begged his brothers to abandon the Choudhary and Bhakta systems. He was strongly opposed to Sanskrit socialization. He disliked *Bhakti*. He spoke out against vegetarianism and traditionalism, which polarised society. He urged his community to band together, gather their strength, and stand firm against Brahmanism. He believed that children from scheduled castes deserved an education. In or around 1940, he founded Manuva Ram Primary School and a dormitory in Unnao.

Shri Pyarelal participated in politics. He was chosen to serve on the All India Scheduled Castes Federation's Working Committee, which was established in 1942 by Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. He was chosen as the SCF's UP branch president. He organised a number of party gatherings and conferences and disseminated the party's message across the state. His main responsibility was to promote parties in UP. Shri Pyarelal was designated as a member of the Central Assembly in 1942, the year Babasaheb Ambedkar was elected as a Labour Member to the Viceroy's Executive Council. He served in this position from 1942 until 1946. On an SCF ticket, he ran for the UP Legislative Assembly from Kanpur City in 1946, but he lost. He ran as a Congress candidate for the *Lok Sabha* seat for the Banda district in the first general election, which was held in 1952, and he won. In 1962, he was elected to the *Rajya Sabha*. He delivered a Memorandum of Demands to the parliamentary delegation on February 5, 1946. More than any other community in India, the Scheduled Castes "deserve substantially greater political protection,"⁷ he argued. He thought that a separate electorate should be established to represent the scheduled castes as a distinct entity. In 1940–1941, he and his brother, Shri Niranjanal Kureel, co-founded the weekly 'The Untouchable'; his wife, Mrs. Krishna Pyarelal Kureel, was also a social and political activist. She was the municipal commissioner for Unnao in 1946. His

⁷ S. N. Faridi, S. N. Faridi Presents Hindu History of Urdu Literature, The University of Michigan, 1996.

entire family was involved in community activities. Shri Pyarelal Kureel died on December 27, 1984, at the age of 68.

Shri Gopichandra Pipal⁸

Shri Gopichandra Pipal was born in Yelanganj, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, on June 1, 1901. He belonged to the Jatav caste. His father Shri Mangli Prasad Pipal and his family migrated to Agra in 1905, where they established a shoe factory. In 1940, Shri Gopichandra Pipal successfully completed the Scientific Shoe Fitting and Salesman Course that was provided by a London-based institute in Bombay. After that, in 1940, he started his shoe factory in Agra.

Hiralal Jatav, an untouchable child, was killed in a school in *Hing Ki Mandi*, Agra, in 1914 after unknowingly touching the water pot. He was shocked to hear about this horrific incident. After this incident, he began a formal campaign against Brahmanism. In 1918, he joined the All India Jatav Mahasabha. He met Babasaheb Ambedkar in Bombay in 1931. He inspired him in a unique manner. He organised *satyagrahas* in Lucknow and Agra to forward his demand for the repeal of the sales tax on shoes made by shoemakers.

He became a member of the Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942. He was elected as the Agra district branch's General Secretary. He was the leader of the Agra *Satyagraha* in 1946, which was a part of the SCF program. He spent three months in jail for the same crime. In 1949, he won the election for president of the SCF of Uttar Pradesh. He eventually joined the Republican Party of India. In Uttar Pradesh, he mobilised support for the RPI. For the municipal corporation election, he supported RPI candidates. In 1959, one deputy mayor and 17 candidates were chosen for Agra's 54 seats. He also received a letter from the Agra-based Ravidas Mission on March 18, 1980.

Shri Pipal passed away on July 27, 1989, at the age of 88.

⁸Source Information: Madan Singh Chaudhary, Social Activist, Kanpur, (9/1/2019).R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its leaders 1857-1956*, MD Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1994.

Ramsahai Pasi⁹

Ramsahai Pasi was born into the Pasi fraternity, but he saw all untouchables and individuals from lower castes as one entity. Mahamana Buddha's egalitarian social beliefs had a significant impact on him because he was a member of Mahasthvira Bodhananda's Navratna Committee.

Swami Acchutanand visited him frequently while he was in Lucknow. Swami Acchutananda founded the Adi Hindu movement. Rai Saheb Ramsahai established the "Adi Hindu Library" in his home to carry it on. When the Simon Commission arrived in India in September 1928 to assess the social, educational, and economic plight of the untouchables and was boycotted by the Congress, the Dalits at Lucknow's Charbagh Railway Station formed a commission led by Swami Acchutanand. He was warmly welcomed by Rai Saheb and informed of the social standing of Dalits. Rai Saheb Ram Sahai was instrumental in this occurrence.

After the death of Rai Saheb Ramsahai Pasi, Smt. Rajeshwari is carrying on the tradition of Rai Saheb Ramsahai Pasi's efforts for social integration. The Ram Sahai Pasi Building was later built in Hussainganj, Lucknow.

Ramcharan Mallaha¹⁰

Late Ram Charan Mallah's massive structure in Daliganj, Lucknow, is still standing next to the *Mankameshwar* temple. Since he was born into the Mallah caste, he was known as Shri Ram Charan Mallah. He gained fame as a result of his involvement in society, and he was closely tied to Babasaheb Ambedkar's social movement. He was granted the title of Rai Saheb as a sign of respect. His full name was Rai Saheb Ramcharan Mallah. He was a prominent figure in the field of education; he held B.A. and L.L.B degrees and chose advocacy over a government position. He was a compassionate humanitarian who helped the underprivileged. He had also established a home printing press to disseminate useful component literature.

Prior to meeting Babasaheb Ambedkar, he was an active member of Swami Acchutananda's Adi Hindu movement, through which he first met Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. He established and oversaw Swami Acchutananda's Adi Hindu magazine, which he greatly

⁹ Information Source: Personal Interview Ram Lakhan Pasi, Rajendra Nagar, Fly Over, Aishbagh, Lucknow, (11/10/2019).

¹⁰ Source Information: Interview Mata Prasad, Indira Nagar, Lucknow, (20/12/2020).

influenced. That journal was only printed by Rai Saheb's press. Rai Saheb Ram Charan Mallah also had link with the Buddhist monk Bodhanand via Swami Acchutananda. He became a member of Bodhanand's Navratna Committee, which worked to establish a society free of caste and *varna*. He served on the Navratna Committee. His bond with Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar grew stronger as a result.

Shri Shankar Lal and Shri Nandlal were Raisen Ramcharan Mallah's sons. Shankarlal, like his father, was elected to the Lucknow municipality of Daliganj due to his love for and commitment to social service. Shankarlal ruled the Daliganj region as a king without a throne. When he died at the Vivekananda Hospital, he was unmarried, and he left the Vivekananda Trust his father's massive, multi-story building. Rai Saheb also had a number of other structures built nearby in addition to this one. Parks and roads were built in his honour, but now that his name is no longer visible in the parks, people are losing sight of Rai Saheb's achievements. Nandlala, Rai Sahab's younger son, is a lawyer who works for the Lucknow High Court. He has worked as a public prosecutor for many years.

Shiv Dayal Singh Chaurasia¹¹

Shiv Dayal Singh Chaurasia was born in Telibagh, a village that is known as Kharika in the Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh. His father, Parag Ram Chaurasia, was a businessman; he traded in gold and silver. Chaurasia, who was raised in a privileged family, did a B.A. and L.L.B. from William Mission Canning College in Lucknow before going on to practise law as a barrister. Chaurasia had prioritised extending rights to underprivileged communities from the start.

He worked with Dr. Ambedkar on the Depressed League and went to the first Depressed Class Conference that Bhimrao Ambedkar held in 1938. After the Simon Commission was formed and announced on November 7, 1927, Swami Acchutanand, a worker for the poor, organised meetings in Uttar Pradesh cities including Agra, Allahabad, Basti, Etawah, Farrukhabad, Fatehgarh, and Mainpuri. Leaders of the Adi Hindu Mahasabha, Ram Charan and Chaurasia, engaged in lengthy protests in front of the Simon Commission.

¹¹ Source Information: Cheddi Lal Sathi, Dalit Lawyer and Social Activist, Eldeco Uddhyan, Lucknow (5/1/2021).

When Chaurasia arrived in Lucknow on January 5, 1928, he addressed the commission with a request for the rights of the underprivileged. He worked as an interpreter in front of the commission, translating Hindi into English throughout the memorandum and the evidence of witnesses from different caste organisations in backward society. Additionally, legal counsel was offered to help them articulate their demands. Additionally, he recorded his appearance before the Simon Commission.

Leaders of the Adi Hindu movement claimed special treatment and political rights for the disadvantaged. They asserted that their poor and depressed socioeconomic standing causes them to be given smaller, lower-paying jobs and makes it harder for them to further their studies and find better employment. He said that in Indian society, the Adi Hindu experiences a double whammy: first, he is a victim of British government atrocities, and second, he is a victim of casteist Hindus.

Together with his coworkers from Lucknow, such as Advocate Gaurishankar Pal, Ramcharan Mallah, Badluram Rasik, Mahadev Prasad Dhanuk, Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu, Swami Acchhutanand, and others, he created the Backward Classes League. Later, it spread all over the nation. He had established comprehensive provisions for worker training at his residence, which he had run his entire life.

His life's work included helping the impoverished obtain free legal representation. To propose offering free legal help, he met with Justice H. N. Bhagwati of the Supreme Court. Because of Chaurasia's efforts, free legal aid is now a standard practise in Indian courts, and a law supporting this system was approved by Parliament and incorporated into the Indian Constitution. *Lok Adalats* are a subset of the same legal system. Chaurasia was dissatisfied with the educational position of the *Bahujans*. He believed that the decline and servitude of the *Bahujans* were caused by widespread illiteracy. He used to respect schooling highly due to this reason. "My name is Chaurasia, and I won't pass away until I have eliminated Hindu society's inequalities," Chaurasia once declared. Chaurasia aimed for equality in Hindu society as well as the abolition of social and economic inequalities. The first politician to demand sole representation for women from disadvantaged groups was Chaurasia. According to him, women

from upper castes have higher levels of education, so if the proportion of women is not set individually, the upper castes will receive the full benefits of reservation.

Bhadant Bodhanand¹²

Bhadant Bodhanand was one of those outstanding individuals, brilliant thinkers, and sharp critics who paved the way for society's advancement. He was born in Chunar (Varanasi) in 1874 into a Brahmin family. He began studying the Hindu texts with great zeal but quickly realised that Brahmanism-dominated Hinduism had an inhuman face that had kept the Dalits and the poor in poverty for centuries. He witnessed numerous heinous crimes firsthand. He added, "It is proper for each of you to destroy this Brahmanical varna system and achieve total independence," speaking to the Untouchables (Dalits). It's important to keep in mind that the varna system is a poisoned dagger that has converted 16 crore people into Shudras and Untouchables. This framework is inappropriate for human society. It needs to be destroyed.

Bodhanand devoted his life to helping Dalits and the oppressed advance by bringing Buddhism to the entire nation. His contribution to the "Bahujan Revolution" was noteworthy. In Lucknow, he founded the Navratna Committee in 1928. Later, Bodhanand changed the Navratna Committee into the Hindu Backward Classes League. It was the first organisation in Uttar Pradesh to passionately advocate for the constitutional rights of the Bahujans. The Congress' counter-revolution, however, gobbled up this revolution as well since, as we are all aware, the counter-revolution is always stronger than the revolution. When Gandhiji was in Lucknow, a Hindu Backward Classes League delegation approached him and presented him with a document stating their demands and attempting to remind him of their human rights. After being astounded by the petitions, Gandhiji gave the group the following advice: "In my opinion, you should temporarily suspend this activity. If it expands, there is a possibility that the country may split, which would be bad for the Freedom Movement. Join the freedom movement, all of you. After the country has achieved freedom, our first goal would be to equalise the oppressed and backward castes with other socioeconomic groupings."¹³

¹² Source Information: Bhadant Anand, Budda Vihar, Lalkuan, Rishaldar Park, Lucknow, (17/12/2018).

¹³ Source information: Mata Prasad, *Bharat main Dalit Jagran aur Uske Agrdoot*, Samyak Prakashan, 2010, p.78.

Gandhiji's assurances harmed rather than helped the league's cause. On the other hand, the league's leaders took Gandhiji's word for it and decided to join Congress in the Independence War. Following independence, Gandhiji and the Congress paid no attention to the underprivileged. When its leaders were elected to Congress, the league disbanded. Bodhananda started a new movement called *Triratna*. Dalits were obsessed with *Kabirpanth* at the time. The Kabirpanthis wore a choker around their necks with a sandalwood pendant. However, they were still bound by dogmatism and unable to let go of their Brahmanical beliefs. *Triratna* tried to release Kabirpanthis from the clutches of the Brahmins. Three beads—representing Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha—were strung together in five strands and worn by followers of the movement to symbolise the *Panchsheel*. Bodhanand also reminded them of the teachings of Kabir when he explained the *Panchsheel* to them. He helped them break free from tradition in this way.

Bodhanand, the great reformer, dedicated his entire life to the advancement of Dalits and lower castes. He established a Buddhist Vihara, which later became the centre of Bahujan activity. In the early 1950s, he was diagnosed with cancer. After receiving medical attention at the Chittaranjan Hospital in Calcutta, he was transferred to the Howrah Hospital in Calcutta. But his condition worsened, and he died on May 11, 1952, at the age of 78.

Khemchand Bohare¹⁴

Shri Khemchand Bohare was born in 1875 in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. Shri Nannu Sinh Bohare was the name of his father. He was a respected member of the Jatav community. Shri Khemchand Bohare graduated from Saint Jones College in Agra in 1898. During 1900 and 1901, he worked as a contractor for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway between Bilaspur, Gondia, and Nagpur. Shri Khemchand Bohare left his job and relocated to Agra in 1910.

He began working for the untouchables' betterment after witnessing their plight and realising how unhappy they were. He was a founding member of the Jatav Mahasabha, which was founded in Agra in 1912. He successfully lobbied the aforementioned group to change the derogatory caste name "*Chamar*" to "*Jatav*."

¹⁴ Source information: Mata Prasad, *Bharat main Dalit Jagran aur Uske Agrdoot*, p.76.

He was elected to the Municipality of Agra in 1918 and continued as a member through 1936. Between, 1922-1930, he served as a member of the District Board of Agra. He received a nomination in 1922 to serve in Uttar Pradesh's Legislative Council (MLC). He served as MLC through 1936. Shri Khemchand Bohare proposed to the council that one representative from his group be assigned to each district board in Uttar Pradesh. The request was granted. He also suggested that each municipal board be represented by a member of the community. The proposal was approved. In 1928, he testified before the Simon Commission's Election Committee. He was elected Vice President of the All India Depressed Classes Association, founded in 1925 and currently led by Shri M. C. Rajah. He campaigned from the Agra district constituency in the 1937 provincial assembly election, but he was not elected.

Shri Khemchand Bohare died on January 14, 1960, at the age of 85.

Shri Manikchand Jatavaveer¹⁵

Shri Manikchand Jatavaveer was born in 1897 in Rajamandi, Uttar Pradesh, not far from Agra. Shri Manikchand received his schooling at Saint John's School in Agra. Shri Manikchand genuinely wanted to help others. During those times, untouchability was at its most extreme. As a result, he decided to oppose it. In 1914, when he joined the Arya Mitra Sabha, he started engaging in social activities. He was employed as a teacher at a school established by the Arya Samaj, where untouchable children were accepted. To assist the Jatav community, he founded the "*Jatav Maha Sabha*" in 1917. He received help in this from Pandit Sundarlal Sagar, Khemchand Bohare, Prabhu Dayal Vyas, Babu Ram Prasad, Babu Nandkishore, and others.

He devoted countless hours to providing medical care and comfort to those affected by the 1918 plague in Agra. The Municipal Hospital in Agra's department of epidemic prevention was then given to him. In 1923, he established the *Jatav Swayam Sevak Mandal*. In 1929, he left for Kota, Rajasthan, to serve the area's untouchables for a year. To increase sociopolitical knowledge among the underprivileged, he travelled to several locations, particularly in the princely states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. He started the Agra-based periodical

¹⁵ Source Information: Angne Lal and Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh main Dalit Aandolan*, Gautam Book Center, 2011, p.165.

Jivan in 1936 to spread awareness among his contemporaries. Ramnarayan Yadvendu and Nathilal Shastri of Agra actively helped him with this endeavour.

In the 1937 elections, he was chosen as an independent candidate from Agra for the UP Legislative Assembly. He participated actively in the assembly and spoke out strongly against the Dalit issues. He tried to express and respond to the Dalit people's concerns. With the assistance of his colleagues Shri Nathilal Shastri and Ramnarayan Yadvendu, he established the Jatav Veer Institute in 1937–1938 for the welfare of Dalits. He established a guest house, a library, and schools. He was honoured by having his name engraved on the *Khatena* hostel in Agra, which is still in operation today.

He planned a conference of the Scheduled Castes in Agra while Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was there. The Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Castes Federation was created at the conferral. Dr. Manikchand organised the well-known Satyagraha in Lucknow in 1946. He was therefore taken into custody and held prisoner in Allahabad. The scheduled castes organised satyagrahas in a number of UP locales. He participated in World War II by assisting the British. He exhorted his neighbours to enlist in the military and defend the nation at any cost. He worked to create the Jatav Battalion, but it was abolished during the war. For his assistance with the British administration during the war, he was given the title of Rao Saheb and a position on the UP War Committee.

In the first general elections, which were held in 1952, he was chosen from the Bharatpur (Rajasthan) parliamentary constituency. He participated actively in Parliament. He led the scheduled castes with selflessness and bravery. He would assist Dalits who were the victims of crimes against humanity. He promised to help Dalits who had been victims of crimes against humanity.

On December 28, 1956, he died at the age of 59. He was also known as *Jatav Veer*.

Karan Singh Kaen¹⁶

Shri Karan Singh Kaen was born in 1898 in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, in the Jatav community. His father's name was Shri Niruthamdas Kaen. Shri Karan Singh Kaen earned a B.A. from Agra College in 1926.

He joined Congress and contributed significantly to the campaign for independence. In 1937, he ran for the UP State Assembly on a Congress ticket and was elected from the Agra city district. Later, he was chosen to work as the Uttar Pradesh Minister of Education's Parliamentary Secretary. After meeting Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, he decided to work under his direction. Shri Karan Singh Kaen helped Babasaheb Ambedkar write the book "What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables" by offering crucial statistical information. Shri Karan Singh Kaen joined the SCF around 1944. In 1946, he ran from Agra for the UP Legislative Assembly on the SCF ticket. He was nonetheless unable to succeed in winning the election. He was appointed as a rehabilitation officer after the country gained independence in 1947. He worked until 1959, when he retired. After retiring, he joined the Republican Party of India. In 1962, he unsuccessfully ran for the UP Legislative Assembly from Agra on an RPI platform. He was a committed social worker and an eager Ambedkarite.

On January 12, 1990, he passed away at the age of 92.

Shri Shyamlal Yadav¹⁷

Shri Shyamlal Yadav was born on February 12, 1894, in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. His father, Shri Sukkha Yadav, was a meagre washerman. He started primary school when he was six years old. Only the middle school portion of his education could be finished. Due to the demise of his father, he was compelled to discontinue his studies. Then he started doing laundry to supplement his income. When he was 20, he began organising the untouchables and urging them to abandon caste and sub-caste discrimination. He was appointed secretary of the *Dhobi Samaj* in Allahabad. He organised the All India Dhobi Conference in Allahabad in 1921. It was a huge success.

¹⁶ Source Information: Prabhu Dayal Vyas Advocate, Agra, Uttar Pradesh (12/11/2020), Angne Lal and Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh main Dalit Aandolan*, Gautam Book Center, 2011, p.166.

¹⁷ Source Information: Guru Prasad Madan, Thornhill Road, Civil Line, Allahabad, (15/1/2020).

He had been actively involved in politics since 1924, under the direction of Swami Achhutananda. Shri Shyamlal Yadav became a very active leader in the Adi-Hindu movement. He put in a lot of effort to make the Adi Hindu movement popular throughout Uttar Pradesh. He organised the All India Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Conference in the Allahabad region of Myohal in 1927. Adi-Hindu leaders from across the country attended the conference. Babu Baldev Prasad Jaiswar and Rai Saheb Nanakchand Dhusia were extremely helpful in organising the meeting. They supported him in every aspect of his sociopolitical activities. Shri Shyamlal testified on behalf of the untouchables before nearly every commission appointed by the British government. The British government gave him the prestigious title of 'Rai Saheb' in recognition of his helpful nature, zeal for missions, and cooperation with the authorities. In the 1937 elections, he ran in the Allahabad district for the UP Legislative Assembly. However, he lost the election to Shri Hari Jaiswar, a servant to Pandit Nehru. Supporters of Pandit Nehru voted for Shri Jaiswar. They overlooked the contribution to missions made by Rai Saheb Choudhary Shyamlal. He joined the Scheduled Castes Federation, which was headed by Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. Rao Bahadur N. Shivaraj of Madras founded the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, and Shri Shyamlal Yadav was a member of its executive committee. He ran for the UP Legislative Assembly from Allahabad on the SCF ticket once more. However, in the 1952 elections, he was elected to the UP Legislative Assembly. He counseled his brothers on how to organise and educate themselves. As a result of his inspiration, many people became well educated and qualified to hold important positions in the administration.

He died on June 5, 1959, in Allahabad, at the age of 65.

Babu Nandlal Chaudhary¹⁸

Shri Babu Nandlal Chaudhary was born in Allahabad in March 1862. He belonged to the Chamar caste. His father's name was Shri Gopal Lal. He graduated from Allahabad's Government High School. He worked for the weather observatory. He decided to fight untouchability after witnessing the negative effects of casteism and untouchability on his community. He used to counsel his brothers on how to raise their children with high moral and cultural values. He

¹⁸ Source Information: Guru Prasad Madan, Thornhill Road, Civil Line, Allahabad, (15/1/2020).

believed in the saints, and *Sant Ravidas* was his spiritual guide. He used to share the saints' lessons whenever he could. He later became a passionate supporter of the Adi-Hindu movement. He and Swami Achhutanand founded the Adi-Hindu movement in Allahabad Uttar Pradesh. He was chosen as the Chaudhary of the community, and as such, he made decisions and mediated conflicts among community members. He wrote the book *Panch Bhasha*, which contains court rulings in various disputes. He was enthralled by poetry. He was a poet himself. *Radhika Virah Aur Udho-Upadesh* is a collection of his poems.

He died on September 16, 1941, at the age of 79.

Bhikhu Lal Kuril¹⁹

Bhikhu Lal Kuril is the first leader of the Dalit movement in the Doab region. He was born in 1904 in Ajuba, Allahabad. Bhikhu Lal was against the feeding of superstition. First of all, he attacked the worship of gods and goddesses in the household; along with this, he condemned the feudal and Manuwadi systems, forced labour, bonded labour, and the movement to remove the carcasses of dead animals. He was recognised as a living example of self-respect. He had made an indelible impression on the Doab of the Begari Bandi movement, which had begun around 1923–24. Among his companions were Swami Atmadas, Swami Mangal Anand, Durga Prasad Chowdhary, Babulal, and others. Bhikhu Lal influenced society through social awakening movements such as Sant Ravidas Jayanti, Sant Kabir Jayanti, Swami Achyutanand Remembrance, Ambedkar Jayanti, Buddha Jayanti, and the Dalit Exploited Victims Conference. Initially, he was influenced by Arya Samaj's social reform works. The Adi Hindu movement, the Schedule Caste Federation, the Republican Party, and other organisations laid the groundwork for a political movement. He passed away in 2004.

Shri Patramsingh²⁰

Patram Singh Jatav was born in 1900 in Mehrauli, Delhi. His father, Daulat Ram Jatav, was the manager of a small shoe factory. Patram Singh could study only until the seventh standard at Jatav Mission School, New Delhi, but he had very good knowledge of Sanskrit along with Hindi and English.

¹⁹ Source Information: A personal interview with Advocate Guru Prasad Madan, Allahabad, 2/1/2020.

²⁰ Source Information: M. R. Vidrohi, *Dalit Dastavej*, Samyank Prakashan, New Delhi, 2011.

He was influenced by Ramchandra Dehloi of the Arya Samaj in the early days. As a result, he adopted Arya Samaj. He was strictly against idol worship and followed Arya Samaj's rules, including being a vegetarian. Later he came in contact with Devi Singh Jatav and Swami Acchutanand, who were followers of Babasaheb. He was also a supporter of separate electorates. While he was against the name "*Harijan*" given by Gandhiji to the untouchables, he also asked Gandhiji the question: "If the untouchables are Harijans, are the upper caste people the children of the devil?" Gandhiji himself was unable to provide an answer. Patram ji had joined the Scheduled Castes Federation since its inception; later, he also became the secretary of the Federation's Delhi unit and became its president in 1951.

He contested the first general election in 1952 on a *Janasangh* ticket from the outskirts of the capital but was defeated by Naval Prabhakar of the Congress. Patram Singh Ji was a poet and book author. He wrote many songs for Dalit emancipation. The books written by him, like *Jati Updesh*, *Sangathan Yukti*, *Acchut Baharat*, *Bhakta Ravidas*, *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Ka Jivan Charitra*, etc. were special. His books were thought-provoking and inspiring.

On May 14, 1972, he died at the age of 72.

Babu Khurram Das²¹

Babu Khurram Das had a strong personality. He was an extraordinary warrior, fearless and unwavering in his commitment. Khurram Das had received first-class marks in all of his examinations up to M.A. and L.L.B.; even after receiving first-class marks, he refused to work for the government because, as a student, he witnessed and experienced the oppression and harassment of Dalit society. This was the reason that he adopted the profession of advocacy for a living, and through that, he continued to fight dedicatedly for the honour of the Dalit society. Khurram Das ji was born in the Hardoi district on November 21, 1922. His father's name was Shri Lochan Das. From Hardoi, he passed his high school and intermediate exams. He graduated from Lucknow University with a B.A. in 1955 and an L.L.B. in 1957. In 1958, he received his advocacy registration and the distinction of being Hardoi's first Dalit advocate. After passing the B.A. and L.L.B., he was selected for judicial service in 1970 and increased the pride of Dalit society by becoming a judge.

²¹ Angane Lal and Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh main Dalit Aandolan*, p.80.

He met Babasaheb Ambedkar at the Royal Hotel Lucknow in 1951, when Babasaheb visited Lucknow; at the same time, he became the coordinator of the Scheduled Caste Federation of Hardoi district and, in 1952, organised the first meeting of the Federation in Hardoi district. Roaming around the district, he brought Dr. Ambedkar's mission to Dalit society. Babu Khurram Das Ji started the Dalit honour ceremony in the form of *Bhimrao Ambedkar Jayanti*.

Later, when the Scheduled Caste Federation was abolished and the RPI was established, Babu Khurram Das also joined the RPI and, from time to time, held various positions in the party at the national and state level and took it forward and protected the scheduled castes and tribes. Khurram Das used to give special importance to education to protect Dalit honor, so he established the Dr. Ambedkar School in Hardoi, which is flourishing today and being looked after by his sons. He passed away on January 31, 1995.

Dr. Gaya Prasad Prashant²²

Dr. Prashant's name is associated with the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh. From the beginning of his life until the end, he fought for Dalit honor. He was born on May 9, 1925, in the district of Malihabad, Lucknow. Early education was provided in Malihabad, and secondary education was provided at K.K.C. Lucknow. He was a student who had revolutionary ideas from the time he was a student.

Prashant Ji was trying to awaken Dalit society while also instilling political consciousness in that society. Following independence, the Congress government paid no attention to the Dalits and maintained a sense of neglect, resulting in reservation and educational, etc. facilities remaining nominal and limited to paper only because untouchability was prohibited in the Indian Constitution. By closing the Scheduled Caste Federation, Babasaheb Ambedkar and his colleagues formed the Republican Party of India in its place, but Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar died soon after. N. Shivraj organised the RPI's all-India level in this case. But in 1962, the RPI contested the general election; in this election, the party contested in Uttar Pradesh under the direction of Gaya Prasad. Prashant elected 11 MLAs, reached the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, and elected three MPs; Honorable Professor BP Maurya was one of them. The

²² Source Information: Vijay Bahudar, Retired from Department of Basic Education, Mawaiya, P. G. I, Lucknow, 24/09/2021.

Republican Party of India again started the movement at the all-India level in 1964–65. Agra was at the forefront of this movement, where Master Man Singh was guided by MLA and Babu Khemchand, and Prashant was its coordinator.

After 1956, Dr. Prashant Saheb became more inclined towards Buddhism, and along with social and cultural consciousness, he turned his direction towards the propagation of Buddhism. He urges the Dalit community to take responsibility for the nation's security. *Dalit Ka Satyagraha Aandolan*, *Soshak Soshit Samvad*, *Ambedkar Inkilab*, *Poona Pact Ki Bhumika*, *Scheduled Caste Federation se Republican Party Tak*, and *Dalit Itihas Ke Aeaine Main* are his best-known works. In fact, he was a selfless man who had given up government service three times to serve society. He was also a prolific writer of diverse literature.

Several Dalit leaders made an effort to better their brethren during the period under consideration. Here, an effort was made to incorporate as many significant Dalit leaders' socio-political biographies as feasible. It was the contribution of these leaders along with the popular national leaders that led to the progress that Dalits have made till date. The entire mobilisation had to happen at a local level where a strong force was required to awaken the Dalit community. These leaders took a leap to amalgamate the Dalit and stand for their cause.

Chapter-Seven

Conclusion

This study is essentially the history of the Dalit movement and struggle in India, with particular reference to Uttar Pradesh. It is done with a special emphasis on the discourse and practice of identity formation and political consciousness among the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh. In so doing, an attempt has been made to explore the structures, processes, and strategies that are manoeuvred in the domain of identity formation and political consciousness by Dalits. In short, this study is a documentation of the politics of identity formation and consciousness and its implications in contemporary times for Dalits in Uttar Pradesh.

This study examines the scene and dynamics of the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh with the goal of capturing the social and political aspects of discourse and practices surrounding the Dalit movement and struggle. The goal of this research was to mobilise Dalits in order for them to fit into the new paradigm that colonial and post-colonial administrations were constructing.

This study has gathered material from a range of sources to develop the conceptual idea of the Dalit struggle in Uttar Pradesh. Those sources included are archival sources consisting of census records, district gazetteers, and proceedings of many departments in the British administration in the United Provinces, works of Dalit intellectuals, activists, and thinkers, interviews, etc. Apart from this, material is obtained from William Crook's "The tribes and castes of the north-western provinces of Agra and Oudh" to record the ethnographic profiles of distinct Dalit castes. Besides this, an endeavour has been made to collect information from Hindi sources, such as Dalit history, pamphlets, etc. These materials are being explored to develop a conceptual portrait of Dalits' identity formation and political consciousness. In summary, this study aimed to comprehend the history of the Dalit struggle by exploiting both archival and vernacular data.

The famous statement by E.H. Carr¹ that history is an unending dialogue between the past, present, and future is highly important in the context of identity construction among Dalits in

¹ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is history?* Penguin United Kingdom, 2018.

Uttar Pradesh. Dalits made major endeavours throughout the British colonial period to carve out a distinct consciousness and identity based on self-respect and human decency. Sanskritization, Adi ideology and Adi-Hindu identity, Buddhist identity, and other strategies are used to elevate the status and dignity of Dalits. This process produced a large body of knowledge, symbols, and personalities that articulated the need for a new identity and political consciousness. This thesis suggests that in the post-independence period, the Republican Party of India methodically rearticulated what Dalit intellectuals in British India had already established. As a result, this study adopts a historical and contemporary analysis of the Dalit movement based on identity formation and political consciousness processes to analyse the dynamics of Dalit politics in the past and present, as well as the role of history in shaping it.

It is commonly assumed that colonial modernity, guided by reason and rationality, had a significant impact on India's cultural and social practices. This study contends that colonial modernity is extremely plural and has an impact on the lives of many communities, particularly marginalised communities. During British rule in India, Dalits began to mobilise and redefine their identity and consciousness in contrast to the traditional identity that had been assigned to them. This mobilisation and assertion resulted in a thriving anti-Brahman and Dalit movement across India. This movement articulated a lively discourse on non-Brahmanical identity for the lower sections of Indian society, in addition to criticising Brahmanical religion. In various parts of India in general and the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) in particular, the Dalit movement attempted to create a dynamic and respectable identity and consciousness for former untouchable castes, now known as Dalits.

This study indicates that the Dalit movement in India in general and Uttar Pradesh in particular fought for the rights and improvement of Dalits. This study attempted to capture the implicit and explicit political consciousness and identity formation components of the Dalit movement. This part of the Dalit movement, according to this study, was principally aimed at the liberation of Dalits from oppression and putting them on the path of progress by gaining access to social resources that had been denied to them by custom and tradition for several centuries. It is this component that our study attempts to examine and document.

This study has been organised into seven chapters. All chapters are designed with the purpose of narrating the underlying theme of the Dalit movement and, of course, the context as well. This task was accomplished by focusing on a specific theme of the Dalit movement in each chapter, which explains the specific theme before moving on to the next theme. This is the way the chapters of the study have been organised to prove the hypothesis of identity formation and political consciousness among the Dalit movement in India and Uttar Pradesh.

The first chapter dealt with the conceptual and schematic concepts of the study. This chapter described and highlights the research topic, objectives, hypothesis, methods, conceptual framework, a thorough review of the literature, and a brief note on the chapters of the study. This chapter also discussed the key features of the study and its intended goals. The chapter sought to illustrate the concept of the Dalit movement and its philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, which this study attempts to document and highlight.

In this thesis, chapter two dealt with Dalit ethnographic documentation in Uttar Pradesh and provides us with a larger picture of Dalit caste groups in Uttar Pradesh. The chapter also demonstrated, on a brief note, the historical and geographical conditions and their population in the United Provinces and the lineage of the term "Dalit." This study proposed a study of Uttar Pradesh that focuses on the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of fifty-six sub-castes that have traditionally been considered untouchables or impure castes by caste Hindu society. Discussing Dalits' untouchable past and venerable present, along with gender, caste, and patriarchal relations in society, the stereotypes and prejudices regarding Dalit women are examined.

The third chapter of this study revealed the discursive sphere of Dalit intellectuals, which belongs to Dalits and other marginalised people. The birth of the Dalit movement was connected with the outpouring of copious and powerful writing reflecting on the issue of Dalit emancipation. Dalit literature had shifted from the passive supplication and pleading of an earlier age to a greater level of revolutionary consciousness while posing a challenge to the established order. Non-Dalit writers have dealt with concerns of caste and untouchability in their writings, but their creative expressions were not able to touch the deep psychological reality of Dalit agony. At best, they remained supportive but did not offer any organised attack on the actual oppressive structures.

Dalit literature has created a large area for the rise of Dalit intellectuals. They were also active in the formation of new concepts and were producers of new knowledge that was based on their genuine social experiences. The rise of Dalit Bahujan writing, which encompassed women and other downtrodden castes, heralded the beginning of Dalit literature. Its content is not merely the manifestation of their introspective manner of thinking, but is substantially geared toward the planned new revolution, which would modify the present status of Dalits and other oppressed masses. Thus, Dalit literature is growing with immense potential for emancipatory fervour along with the Dalit movement.

The fourth chapter of this research aimed to contextualize the process of Dalit consciousness and identity development as it was influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors during British colonial control in the United Provinces. In particular, the expansion of the leather industry, urbanisation, and access to modern education allowed Dalit communities to absorb new rationalist ideals and laid the framework for reform movements to erase the stigmatised identity imposed by conventional societal standards. Through caste associations like Chamar Mahasabha, Jatav Mahasabha, Pasi Mahasabha, Kori Mahasabha, and others, as well as the Adi-Hindu movement and others, this study tries to capture the rise of the Dalit movement and the articulation of a new dynamic identity in Uttar Pradesh.

The fifth chapter of the thesis examined Dalit political consciousness and identity construction in Uttar Pradesh. It progressed from the history of associational politics to the history of India's democracy. It identifies the shifting forms of Dalits' political inclusion, democratic social order, identity construction, and political consciousness. This thesis examined the Dalit movement and political assertion with a focus on Dalits. In addition, it documents Dalit participation in socio-cultural movements as well as Dalit relations to identity and political consciousness in Uttar Pradesh, where two routes were built for this purpose. The first was Sanskritization, which was founded on Hindutva and reformist ideologies. The second was anti-Sanskritization, which prioritised radical identity over Hindutva and reformist viewpoints. There was also political debate on this at the Round Table Conference, where Gandhiji was looking for Hindutva political possibilities and Ambedkar was looking for radical political possibilities. However, some important discussions emerged from this type of conflict, indicating that the Dalit movement, politics, political consciousness, and identity are all interconnected. Indeed, it is

the legacy of this historic debate that creates opportunities for a Dalit political party like the BSP today.

The sixth chapter of the thesis is based on the oral histories of leaders of Dalit Movements from around the country. Several Dalit leaders worked to improve their community during the time period under consideration. An attempt was made here to include as many notable Dalit leaders' socio political biographies as possible. The contributions of these leaders, as well as those of popular national leaders, have resulted in the progress that Dalits have made to date. All mobilisation had to take place at the local level, where a powerful force was needed to awaken the Dalit community. These leaders took a risk in order to unite the Dalits and advocate for their cause. The final chapter of the study discussed the study's conclusion and main findings.

The main crux of the identity formation process among Dalits of the United Provinces is the process of demanding and commanding respectable social recognition from the non-Dalit population. It resulted in a diverse set of approaches, techniques, and tactics. Identity construction and political consciousness in the United Provinces can be divided into three major frameworks. To begin, Dalit intellectuals advocated for reform within a Hindu context influenced by Arya Samaj's viewpoints. It implies that the social and cultural status of Dalits within Hinduism can be improved by changing the detestable habits they frequently engaged in. It has been claimed that removing restrictions on the consumption of meat, non-vegetarian cuisine, and alcohol, as well as embracing upper-caste customs such as sacred thread, will raise the social status of Dalits. This movement was evident in the tactics of various caste organisations claiming Surya Vanasha, Chandra Vanasha, Rajput, and Brahmanical origins. The second trend was to promote Swami Atchutanand's Adi-Hindu Dharma and the "sons of the soil" concept. According to this movement's radical ideology, Dalits were India's first occupants and were persecuted by Aryan invaders. This method sought to legitimise Dalits in India by portraying them as the forefathers of authentic and pure Indian culture and civilization. In reality, the Adi philosophy provided Dalits with a political and cultural platform from which to address their demands to the Hindu populace and the British administration. The third tendency in the identity development and consciousness process is the Buddhist identity trend, which was started by Iyoti Thass from Madras and later accepted by Dr. Ambedkar. In order to advance their social

position, Dalit intellectuals in the United Provinces attempted to link Dalits and Buddhism. These are some of the primary paths that Dalit castes in Uttar Pradesh have chosen and implemented in terms of identity development and consciousness-raising.

There is no doubt that the Dalit Movement has significantly altered Indian society's long-standing hierarchical structure. It has promoted among the many castes and classes of people the democratic principles of liberty, equality, and social justice. Concerns about Dalits' political awareness and identity development were raised by the Dalit movements. The practises of untouchability and discrimination were fiercely opposed. The movements allowed Dalits to participate in mainstream politics, and they now hold significant administrative posts all over the nation. Dalit literature inspired intellectuals to stand up for their rights and uphold their dignity in a culture that valued hierarchy. The Dalit movement was a direct protest against the higher caste and class, and they have been exerting significant political pressure on the government ever since. As a result, the Dalit movement has developed into a potent social movement that can significantly improve the socio-economic and political circumstances of Dalits.

Even now, we can see that the modern Dalit movement's strategy hasn't changed much. The pre-independence Dalit movement deserves credit for the rather well-designed current Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh. The Dalit movement's conflicting and contradictory themes need a fresh evolution from time to time. The effects of various socioeconomic and political programmes on the lives of Dalits should be investigated at both the micro and macro levels, with a focus on scientific examination of the effects of various social-economic programs. It is only through such scientific investigation that a true impact of the various social and political programmes on the condition of the Dalits can be discerned.

Dalits are no longer a meek, submissive class. Significant changes have occurred in Dalit social, political, and economic life. As a result of the year-old movement, Dalits are demanding equal participation in Indian society's social, economic, and political systems. Dalit actions have been noted worldwide. The Dalit Movement is gaining traction everywhere because it was nurtured by our forefathers during our time of the study. This is a continuous process. The Dalit movement in India is an unfinished movement that will last for a long time.

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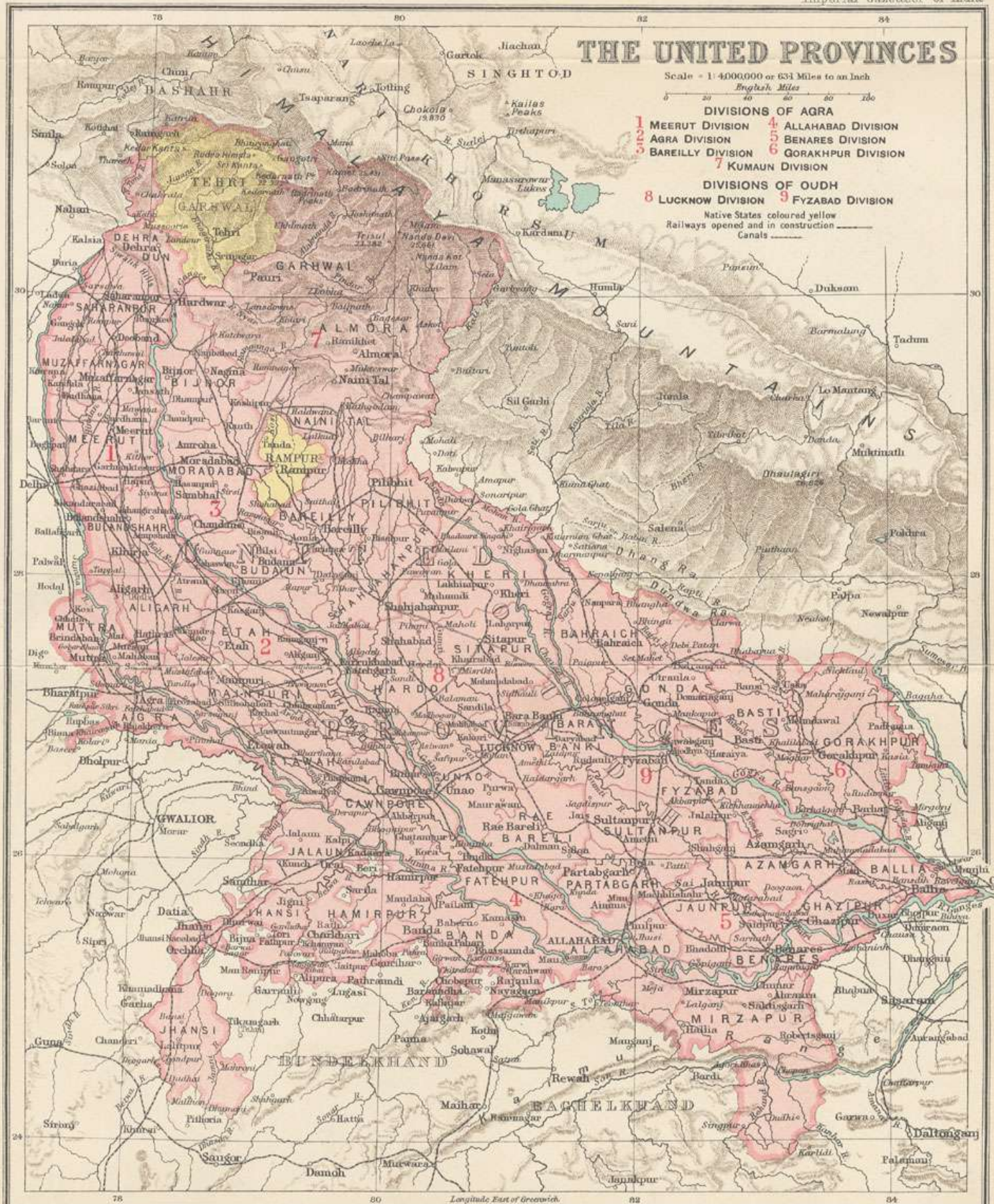
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- Territories permanently administered by the Government of India PINK
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- Railways shown blue

The figures indicate heights in feet





DALIT LITERATURE AND DALIT MOVEMENT IN INDIA*

BY

Sangeeta Kumari*

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of History, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

Abstract

History testifies the presence of social division in every society, in terms of caste, class and gender. It characterized by discrimination, exploitation and subordination that raised peoples demand for liberty, equality and fraternity. This idea of liberty, equality and fraternity, that forced people to protest in the form of movements. The Dalit Movement also began as a protest movement in India. Dalits also called as Dasyu, Dasa, Atisudra, Panchama, Untouchable Outcasts, and Depressed Class. They face Socio-cultural exclusion, economic deprivation and political exploitation of many centuries in Indian society. Hence, they began to protest with the help of literatures and forming organization like the Dalit Panthers, which came to be recognized as the Dalit Movement. The main objective of the Dalit Movement was to establish a society in India based on social equality, liberty and fraternity. The constitutional identity, however, fails to capture the true picture. The real picture is something different which will be reflected in this paper, in the light of the four books including Debrahmanising History, Poisoned Bread, The Prisons We Broke and Dalit Visions.

Keywords - Panthers, Dalit, Exploitation, Hegemony, Movement

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Introduction

History testifies the presence of social division in Indian society, in terms of caste, class and gender. Dalits are the people who are economically, socially, politically exploited from many centuries. Unable to live in the society of human beings, they have been living outside the village depending on lower level of occupation, and lived as untouchable. This exploitation is due to the discrimination followed by age old caste hierarchical tradition in the Hindu society. This hierarchy has been the cause for oppression of Dalits in each and every sphere of society.¹ It has subjected them to a life of poverty and humiliation. The Dalit, who have been exploited by the upper castes, lag outside the Varnasrama theory and were referred to as outcasts in India. India got independence, but the Dalits were not allowed to live a life with dignity and equality. Dalit movement is a struggle that tries to counter attack the socio cultural hegemony of the upper castes. It is a movement of the masses that craves for justice through the speeches, literary works, dramas, songs, cultural organizations. So it can be called as a

¹ Joshi, Prakash Bal, "Dalit literature in India: Review Voice of Protest", The Hindu, August 8 2019.

movement which has been led by Dalits to seek equality with all other castes of the Hindu society.² The main objective of the Dalit Movement was to establish a society in India based on social equality, liberty and fraternity. The constitutional identity, however, fails to capture the true picture. The real picture is something different which will be reflected in this paper, in the light of the four books including Debrahmanising History, Poisoned Bread, The Prisons We Broke and Dalit Visions.

Significance of the Word Dalit

The term 'Dalit' is a Marathi word literary meaning 'ground' or 'broken to pieces'. It was first proposed by some Marathi-speaking literary writers in Maharashtra in 1960s in place of terms like 'Harijan' or Achchuta. Before the use of this term, Dr. Ambedkar himself had used alternative terms like 'Depressed Classes', 'Exterior' or 'Excluded' caste, 'Bahishkrit' to refer to the poor and downtrodden.³

Dalit Movement: A Historical Critique

The Dalits in India are at present categorized under the marginalized sections of the society. If we trace back to the historical periods it will be found that the root cause is the formation of the Caste System which actually led to the oppression of the other categories of oppressed classes of India. It was with the Aryans who entered the country from Middle East and settled in the fertile land of the Ganges after a fight with the indigenous people of the civilization. The people, well versed in the techniques as shown in historical aspects, were defeated by the Aryans. The Minority Aryans defeated the majority Dalits by the use of their tactics of Divide and Rule, as assumed by Braj Ranjan Mani⁴ because without doing so they won't be able to defeat the majority. The Brahmins had retained this tactic even today. Later in the Vedic period, the formation of the Rig Veda laid the foundation of the oppression of the people in their own land, with the Purusha shukta in its tenth book. It was later in the 5th century that people of Shudra Varna were transformed to untouchable. And this led to beginning of the Brahmin domination accompanied by Dalit exploitation. A Brahman is a great God, whether he is learned or imbecile and the Brahmins should be respected in any way, even if they indulge in a crime. These are the religious texts of the Hindus, which strives for an unequal society, a society where a certain group of people are given the status of God, in total contrast with the other group who are considered even worse than animals. Is it that the Arya-Brahmins, devised the institution of Varna and thereby caste, in order that they consider themselves as the supreme. By putting themselves in the supreme position, they actually wanted to attain superior status, a life of dignity, and aspired to be obeyed by everyone in the Indian society. Caste, the creation of man and not God, is now rooted firmly in the Indian society,

² Joshi, Prakash Bal, "Dalit literature Reflects on Dalit", The Hindu, March 19 2002.

³ Shah, Ghansyam, "Dalit Movement and Search for Identity", Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 1995, p.34.

⁴ Mani, B. R. , "Debrahmanising History-Dominance and Resistance in Indian Society", Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2005, p. 78.

through the religion of majority Hinduism. Gail Omvedt⁵ in her book *Dalit Visions*, equated Hinduism with Brahmanism. The caste ideology is founded in the twin religious doctrines of Karma and Dharma. And that it was the basic duty of every individual to maintain Dharma which was to retain the social structure based on the Varnasrama theory. Not only Manu, Kautilya, another Brahmin, also emphasized on retaining the Caste structure as the basic structure of Indian society that cannot and should not be changed. Formulated 3500 thousand years back, the Vedas are ruling Indian society even now, through its instrument Hinduism. It is controlling the minds of the people which made the minority groups the Brahmins to be the policy makers of the country. And in order to retain their position they have devised myths.

During the Buddha period, the Aryans tried to monopolize resources. For economic control and social status they monopolized resources. Universally, control over land as a resource for production and certain other resources were regarded as making for high status. Thus began the real exploitation. With their control over land, the Dalits lost their livelihood and began to be degenerated to the status of animals. The practice of untouchability and the lack of knowledge made them to believe all those superstitious and unreasonable myths formed by the cunning Brahmins. They were deprived of the three basic needs of society food, shelter and clothes. Deprived of food, they filled their stomach with stale pieces of food and dead animals as if they were not humans.⁶ In the story *Cull in Dangle's Poisoned Bread*⁷, written by Amitabh, it was explained how the Dalits struggled even to have pieces of bone of a dead beef. Words will be less to explain the situation of the Dalits in that particular story. They covered their body with pieces of rags stitched together. So called high castes the Brahmins gave food to the beasts but not to the Dalits. The Brahmins got polluted if the shadow of the Dalits fall on them but their food do not get polluted when cooked by the firewood brought by the Dalit women, in which many a times the blood of their cut fingers get stacked. This is an indication of the fact that the rules made against the Dalits are basically for their own benefits.⁸

Dalit Movement

The Dalits began their movement in India with their basic demand for equality because they struggle to inequality in society as having firm belief in the ideal of equality. The barbaric practices bound against the Dalits, led them to protest against the caste based hierarchical system of India, that has divided Indian society on the basis of caste, class and gender. The Dalit movement that gained strength

⁵ Omvedt G., "Dalit Visions: The Anti-caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity", Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2006, p.122.

⁶ Sharma, S. K., "Social Movement and Social Change", B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1985, p. 122

⁷ Dangle A., "Poisoned Bread", Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2009.

⁸ Jogdand, P.G., "Dalit Movement in Maharashtra", Kanak Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p.71.

**EMERGENCE OF DEPRESSED CASTE ASSOCIATION AND THEIR ROLE IN IDENTITY
FORMATION 1900-1950**

Sangeeta Kumari Ph.D Research Scholar Department of History, Hyderabad Central University,
Hyderabad

Abstract

In India Associational Politics is a product of Colonial political modernity. In this practice, Caste Associations played an important role in identify formation and socio political assertion of community. The main objective of this paper is to document the History of Dalit Politics by focusing on history of caste association establish by Dalit and non- Dalit. This paper tried to examine the history of Depressed Class Association in Uttar Pradesh during the period of 1900-1950. This paper proposed that the associational politics of Dalit has along and rich history in North India.

Key Words: Dalit, Associational, Depressed Class, Identity, Assertion

Introduction

Associational politics is product of Colonial political modernity in India. In this process, Caste Associations played an important role in identity formation and socio political assertion of community. During the National Movement Caste was an important source of mobilization of people. Indian society is based on Caste hierarchy. The Depressed class Association had played an important role in the development of Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh. These Associations could be defined as try to get the aim by the people of lower caste of a group. Association is nominated on the basis of their specific aim and definite caste and sub caste.

Studies on identity formation of Dalits in the Uttar Pradesh rooted in the alteration for tracing the roots of Dalit assertion (Bandhopadhyay: 1997)¹. In these studies, emphasis has been given to role of important personalities and their contribution for making Dalits a powerful political force. The idea propounded by important Dalit leader like Jotiba Phule, Sahuji Maharaj, Periyar, Narian Guru, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had significant impact on Dalit of Uttar Pradesh, for not only generated new ideas but also provoked them to initiate a platform to articulate their demands. These moved is only aimed to fight against deep rooted prejudice and atrocities against Dalit. Dalit leaders played an important role; he started a vast movement in Uttar Pradesh to grow a general awareness against inequality towards lower caste people are not only Uttar Pradesh while in whole North India. All the people of depressed classes glim to develop their Caste Association. People felt to associate for the development of Education, Economics status, Social status, and Religious Status in lower caste and they started to make caste/ sub caste association which in process now a day also. These associations do work of awareness in Dalit society (Kshirsagar: 1994)². The main objectives of these associations were to remove casteism, caste inequality and superstition and grownup for liberty, equality and fraternity.

From the late 19 century, rural areas had begun to migrate Lucknow, Kanpur and Allhabad where demand for the menial services they performed for expanding. After the uprising of 1857, British military and civil administrations were consolidated in the town and army cantonments and civil stations were reassembling on a large scale. Urban provincial growth was coupled with the extensive expansion of sanitary infrastructure and municipal services, which created the demand for scavengers, sweepers. Moreover, British bureaucrats, civil servants and military who settled in the towns, required domestic

¹ Bandhoupadhyay, Sekhar. "Caste, Protest and Identity in Colonial India: The Namsudras of Bengal 1872-1947", London: Curzon, 1977.

² Kshirsagar, R.K., "Dalit Movement and its Leaders 1857-1956", New Delhi: M.D. Publishers, 1994.

servants. Untouchables group, such as Mehtars, Bhangis, Chamars. Mochis, find jobs in cantonment and civil line. In Kanpur chamar and mochis, who were often skimmers and dead animal or leather worker in the country side, were also employed in the newly developing leather factories. In the towns, the untouchables joined as laborer of the higher castes, and worked as a paid employee servant of the British, and at times in factories (The district Gazetteer of Kanpur: 1909)³. Colonial sociology and British classification of caste groups on the basis of occupation incline to 'fix' the untouchables in particular kind of urban jobs, especially as sweepers, scavengers and skimmers or handlers of dead animals. Nor were the untouchables able to bring up into trades and occupations, other than impure ones such as leather work (Joshi, C.: 1985)⁴. The untouchable also had very little opportunity to enter educational institutions, both because of the expense and these institutions were usually unwilling to accept untouchable students. Being illiterate, they were rarely employed in the lower government services. The untouchable had lived on the village periphery; in the towns, they similarly had no access to the residential areas of higher castes. In the rare cases when they lived in urban slum area along with people of other castes, their houses formed separate blocks (Gooptu: N.: 2001)⁵. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, therefore, the untouchable migrants to the towns were exposed to two opposite trends. On the one hand, caste domination to a large extent conclude to be a feature of occupational relations and on the other hand, continued caste distinctions in employment or educational opportunities and settlement patterns, as well as their general poverty, thwarted economic or social improvement (Mendelsohn and Vicziany: 1998)⁶. Devotionalism or bhakti had been the dominant form of Hindu worship in medieval north India for several centuries. From the latter part of the 15th century, bhakti became dissimilarity into the saguna and nirguna traditions (Hess, Linda: 1983)⁷. At the same time faith in the partial embodiment of god in the person and words of poet-saints (guru or sant) such as Ravidas or Kabir, who are considered figures of esteem? While saguna bhakti represents the dominant version of north Indian devotional Hinduism, Nirguna bhakti developed partly in opposition to it among lower castes as a heterodox devotional alternative, and partly to resist hierarchical, brahmanical Hinduism through an egalitarian religious message (Hess, Linda: 1983)⁸. William Crooke reported that many bhakti sects in rural areas, especially in the case of heterodox bhakti sects of lower castes, were closed groups, which practiced sustainability in their activities and followed strict rites of beginning (Crook: W.: 1896)⁹. In the early 20th century, however, faithfulness to bhakti religion and the esteem of Kabir, Ravidas and other lower-caste saints became much more widespread among urban untouchable migrants in Uttar Pradesh (Briggs, G.W.: 1920)¹⁰. They also often added the terms Kabirpanthi, Shivrinarayani or Ravidas/ Raidas after their names to indicate the gurus whom they admire. Temples dedicated to bhakti saints were also newly constructed in the early 20th century. Shivrinarayani Sant Sampradaya was initiated in Allahabad by the untouchable chamars, who came to the towns to work in the British cantonment as

³ The district Gazetteer of Kanpur, 1909, p.104.

⁴ Joshi, C., "Bonds of Community, Ties of Religion: Kanpur Textile workers in the early 20th century", Indian Economic and Social History Review, 1984, p.254.

⁵ Gooptu, Nandini, "The Politics of Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.119.

⁶ Mendelsohn and Vicziany, "The Untouchables: Subordinating, Poverty and the State in Modern India", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p.24.

⁷ Hess, Linda, "The Bijak of Kabir", North Point Press, San Francisco, 1983, p.25.

⁸ Ibid, pp. 86-87.

⁹ Crook, William, "The Tribes and Castes of the North- Western Provinces and Oudh", Calcutta, 1886, Vol.-2, pp.184- 188.

¹⁰ Briggs, G.W., "The Chamar", London, 1920, p.210

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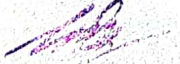
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