Dalit Movements in Undivided Andhra Pradesh
A Study of Identity and Autonomy

A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Political Science

By

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mr. G Chandraiah has carried out the research work embodied in the present thesis entitled ***"Dalit Movements in Undivided Andhra Pradesh; A Study of Identity and Autonomy"*** for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, under our supervision. We declare to the best of our knowledge that no part of the thesis is earlier submitted for the award of any research degree in part or full at any University.

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I dedicate this thesis to

My Parents
Srimathi Gopani Chandramma and Sri (late) Gopani Balaiah
And
People who sacrificed their life and inspired the anti-Caste Struggles

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work embodied in the present thesis entitled ***"Dalit Movements in Undivided Andhra Pradesh; A Study of Identity and Autonomy"***, is an original research work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. G. Haragopal and Sri B. Chandrasekhar Rao, Department of Political Science, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, School of Social Sciences from the University of Hyderabad. I declare to the best of my knowledge that it is plagiarism free thesis and no part of this thesis is earlier submitted for the award of any research degree in part or full any other University and hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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Abbreviations

AP	: Andhra Pradesh
BSP	: Bahujan Samaj Party
CPI	: Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	: Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI(ML)	: Communist Party of India (Marxist -Leninist)
CPUSI	: Communist Party of United States of India
DAFODAM	: Democratic Action Forum of Dalits and Muslims
DARAKAM	: Dalita Bahujana Kalakarula Rachahitala Vedika
DBSU	: Dalit Bahujan Students Union
DMS	: Dalit Mahasabha
INC	: Indian National Congress
KNPS	: Kulanirmulana Porata Samithi
KVPS	: Kula Vivakshata Porata Samithi
MRPS	: Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi
MSP	: Mahajana Samaj Party
MSV	: Madiga Sahitya Vedika
NGO	: Non Governmental Organisation
NTR	: Nandamury Taraka Rama Rao
OBC	: Other Backward Classes
PDSU	: Progressive Democratic Students Union
RPI	: Republican Party of India
SC	: Scheduled Castes
SCF	: Scheduled Caste Federation
ST	: Scheduled Tribes
TDP	: Telugu Desham Party
TMS	: Telangana Maha Sabha
TRS	: Telangana Rashtra Samithi
VIRASAM	: Viplava Rachahithala Sangam

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Chapter-I

Introduction

Chapter - I
Introduction

Introduction

In India, it is often believed that people born in a particular community or caste in which his/her destiny and social status is determined. This status also determines the traditional duties which are abiding: they are prohibited from doing any other work based on the hierarchy that each caste is placed in the Hindu social structure. Thus predetermination of people's life is directed, constructed, controlled and conditioned in a given caste hierarchical or graded unequal relations which are legitimized by Hindu scriptures.[1] Thus the caste system is rooted in Hindu mythology. According to Purushsukta in Rugveda it proclaims that there are four Varnas: Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vyshas and Shudras which come from different parts of body of creator Brahma. The Brahmans come from his mouth, the Kshatriya from his shoulders, the Vyshas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet to perform different social functions. The Varna and caste system over a period of time is perpetuated and got divided into many castes. Ati-Shudras are outside the Varna system and are considered to be untouchables or Avarnas now they are popularly called as 'Dalits'. The graded inequality is the constant source of hierarchical relations and exclusion and discrimination.[2] This caste ridden social relations lead to exclusion, social suppression, discrimination, economic exploitation and political alienation of Dalits, women and Shudras etc. These inhuman practices are continued even after sixty seven years of independent India.[3]

In any society, the dominant ideologies subvert their subordinates by denying the critical understanding or any ideology of protest that can change their submission into a transforming force that would reconstruct the world and make it more egalitarian. It

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[1] Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). Dr. *Babasaheb Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches.* Bombay Published by Education Department of Maharasta, Volume, 3, p.100.

[2] Dumont, Louis. (2008). *Homo Hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, p.72.

[3] See Shah, Ghansham., Harsh Mander., SukhadeoThorat., Satish Deshpandy and Amita Baviskar. (Ed.), (2006). *Untouchability in Rural India*. New Delhi, Sage Publication. This book documents the various forms of the caste discrimination within civil society and institutions.

perpetuates ignorance, disunity, slavery among the suppressed. Hence the Brahmanical hegemony has colonized the productive communities of Dalitbahujans which historically normalised the oppressed castes experience of discrimination, exploitation and humiliation through state and civil societal organisations. In Gramscian terms this phenomenon of hegemony governs the everyday relations of people and become a source of functioning of institutions. This process of hegemonisation of oppressed life world produces the docile subject, who is alienated from the material and cultural capital in their survival. In Louis Althusser expression the state repressive and ideological apparatus continue to exclude and discriminate the oppressed[4]. The materiality of caste lies as it is a division of laborers' as Ambedkar put it. So, unless one addresses the caste problem at its roots one can't talk about substantial change in socio, economic relations of people. The numerous studies[5] enable us to critically understand the changing roots and forms of caste manifestation even in the changing globalizing market economy.

The continuous atrocities, violence, exclusion and humiliation endanger the human agency of oppressed (Dalits) and negate their freedom, equality, dignity and self respect[6]. Against this oppressive caste and Brahmanical order there are many struggles throughout Indian history. In Ambedkar's view Indian history has been a conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism, Brahmanism representing the counter revolution while Buddhism a revolution. Buddhism was a first revolutionary struggle against Karma and God centric interpretation of social relations which had great impact on the legacy of anti caste thinking.[7] The early material philosophy of Shramanic tradition negated the Brahmanic world view. Subsequently there was Bakti movement which challenged the

[4] See Althusser, Louis. (2012). *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. New Delhi, Critical Quest

[5] See for economic discrimination in globalised economy and Indian market system Sukhdeo Thorat, Katherines. (Ed.), (2010). "Blocked by Caste; economic Discrimination and Social Exclusion in Modern India", New Delhi, Oxford University Press. See for caste violence on Dalit Smita Narula. (1999). "Broken people; caste violence against India's untouchables", Human rights watch, see for caste violence and discrimination on Dalit women Aloysius Irudayam, S.J Jayshree, P Kangubhai and Joel G Lee. (2011). "Dalit women speak out; caste, class and Gender violence in India. New Delhi, Zoobhan Publication.

[6] Guru, Gopal. (Ed.), (2009). *Humiliation: Claims and Context,* New Delhi, Oxford University Press, Pp 210-215.

[7] Ambedkar, B.R. (*1987). Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*. In Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writings, and Speeches, Volume, 3, Bombay Government of Maharastra. p. 275

Brahmanical hegemony. Although Bakti movement focused on the direct relation between individual and God during medieval period, in many ways it was protested against Brahmanical hegemony and gave a sense of spiritual democracy to lower caste. The Basaveshvara's Veerashivism in Karnataka in particular and South India in general influenced many untouchables and productive communities to keep away from Hindu fold. In north India Kabir, Santu Ravidas had great influence on people's life and their historical memory.[8] In Kerala Ayyankali, Narayana guru organized the Pulayyas and Edavas against caste discrimination. The Iyyotha Thassar invocation and embracing Buddhism also made oppressed communities to connect themselves with Buddhist tradition. The non-Brahman inspired by Periyar and self-respect movement greatly contributed to the oppressed castes consciousness to fight against Brahmanism. The self respect movement, no God, no religion formulation also continue to inspire many people till today.

In Maharashtra in early nineteenth century Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj movement provided a new interpretation of Brahmanical myths such as Avataras. His contribution along with Savitri Bai Phule helped in fighting against caste-class oppression. Phule through his writings and struggle emerged as father of social revolution. In North India Swami Achutananada, Mang Ram also mobilized and organized oppressed particularly Dalits for their emancipation. Both from Orissa Bhima Bhoi[9] and in West Bengal Namasudra movement[10] qualitatively contributed to the anti caste consciousness. These various minor and major protests across India clearly indicate the democratic upsurge against oppressive caste structure and played significant role in shaping and reshaping the anti caste agency and legacy.

Given the historical legacy the imperative for the Dalit deconstruction and construction of history is increasingly being felt by their organic intellectuals emphasising the need for

[8] See for various Bakhi movements both in South and North India Omvedt, Gail. (2008). *Seeking Begumpura*. New Delhi, Navayana Publication. And Govinda Pillai. P. (2013). *The Bhakti Movement; Renaissance and revivalism*. New Delhi, Aakar Publication.
[9] See Bettina Baumer and Johannes Beltz. (2010). *Bhima Bhoi; Verses from the Void*. New Delhi, Manohar Publication
[10] See Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar. (2005). *The Namasudra Movement*. New Delhi, Critical Quest.

the oppressed to construct their own self, identity, autonomy, narratives and texts. It is widely felt that the contribution of Dalitbahujans has been denied by the dominant caste for centuries. The dominant national leadership not only hegemonised the leadership but also revalorized and imposed the Hindu Varnashrama dharma ethos on nationalist struggle claiming that these struggles are fighting against colonial power and for Hindu Swaraj. The struggle for freedom movement led by upper caste leaders invoked the grand narrative of independency from British by masking their Brahmanical hegemony through cultural nationalism for which Gandhi, Tilak, Savarkar were in forefront. This nexus between power and culture made the Savarna leaders to hold leadership positions and claim that they were national representatives often by denying Dalitabhujan contributions and portrayed them as sectarian and anti national.[11] Thus Ambedkar, Gandhi debate assumes historical importance to understand the colonial and post colonial socio, political struggles by Dalits. The two contrasting perspectives of Ambedkar for annihilation of caste and Social Democracy and Gandhi for Varnashrama dharma, Hindu Swaraj or Rama Rajya continue to influence the post colonial movements and politics.[12]

In the wake up of the invisible conflict between subaltern and caste Hindus India got independence on August 15, 1947. This independence said to be everyone's, but Ambedkar's 'caste question' remained unresolved hence relevant even after sixty seven years of independence. However, immediately after independence the constitution makers formally formulated and elaborated vision and objectives of the constitution towards inclusive democracy and anticipating equality among people, the Indian constitution's vision stands for a republic, democratic, secular and socialist society. Hence it made everyone a citizen eligible for basic rights. It was formally announced that untouchability practice is legally punishable and the affirmative action in terms of reservation quotas is constitutionally promised for Dalit and Adivasis in education, employment and political representation. The development and change was promised. The adoption of five year planning system, agricultural and industrial development

[11] Aloysious, G. (2008). *Nationalism without a nation in India*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, pp. 214-228

[12] See Nagarju.D. (2010). *the flaming Feet and other Essays*. New Delhi, Permanent black. Suhas Palshikar. (1996). Gandhi-Ambedkar interface; when shall the twain meet? *EPW,* August 3, pp.2070-2072

promised and equal distribution of resources and opportunities. The green revolution technology and instruments in agricultural production accentuated modernization process towards social change. But the initial policy level changes broadly benefited the land owning castes at local level holding the power positions and structures at various levels. Thus the promise of redistribution of resources, the partial implementation of reservation policy and increasing inequalities and the hegemonic power politics all resulted in people's assertions at grass root level. In the united Andhra Pradesh those who got some institutional access also came forward in mobilising and organising the Dalits for their due share. The large mass who has not got anything from state also actively took part in the ongoing agitations. Thus Dalit as historically marginalised communities emerged as new change agents towards 'New Democratic Revolution'. The Dalit assertion after post independence took various forms and levels. The present study aims at capturing the Dalits assertions and its implications to their autonomous politics and identity formation in united Andhra Pradesh.

Who is a Dalit? / Understanding the Category 'Dalit'

Categories or concepts in political explanations and analysis have their own carriers and trajectories. These categories help us to understand the power relations and ideological constructions depending on the time, place and the specific economic and cultural context. It also helps us to know the politics of those who coin and use these categories. Today the category Dalit becomes a part of local to global academic and activist agenda across different socio cultural situations.[13] The word 'Dalit' is often comes into public discourse and most of the people use it in their writings, speeches, debates, discussions and analysis. Etymologically, the Dalit, (depressed or broken people), the root word of this is *"Dal";* the adjective of "Dal" is *"Dalit".*[14] The term Dalit in Sanskrit is both noun and adjective. It may be used for all three genders, masculine, feminine and neutral. The meaning given to *`Dal'* in the dictionary is: crack, open, and split and so on. When it is used as a noun and adjective it means burst, split, scattered, dispersed, broken, torn as

[13] Guru, Gopal. (Ed.), (2005). *Atrophy in Dalit Politics,* Mumbai, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, p.66.
[14] It is found on page 471 of the Oxford Sanskrit English Dictionary, new edition, 1964, edited by Sanskrit scholar, Sir Monier Williams. And also it found in Dravidian and many other languages.

under, destroyed, crushed.[15] In Moles worth's Marathi-English dictionary (1975 reprint of 1831 edition) the meaning of Dalit is ground broken or reduced to pieces generally.[16] These entire English terms sum up the position of a segment of Indian people who are discriminated, excluded, exploited and humiliated in the name of caste and religion. People, who are (Scheduled Castes (SC), Tribes and Shudras and women) crushed and cramped and discriminated by the Hindu religion and its caste hierarchy, positively asserted and declared themselves as Dalits. This identity has been popularized with the emergence of Dalit panther movement in Maharasta during mid 1970s. It advocated that Dalits to be proud of the Dalit culture and history.[17] The earlier nomenclatures of Dalits, vies, Untouchables, Outcaste, Panchamas, Atisudras, Avarnas, Antyajas, Namasudras, Chandalas, Pariahs –basically as un-seeable, and unapproachable, Chandalas were in use during different phases of Indian history and in different parts of the country. The British used the terms 'Depressed Classes' and Exterior class to notify Dalits, meaning they were kept away from Hindu society.[18] Gandhi preferred to call them *"Harijan"* which he borrowed from a Gujarati Brahmin Narasinha Mehta. Ambedkar had objections against calling them *"Harijans"* because they found it derogatory, insulting to be called fatherless.[19]

Dalit as a category; in fact, was used in 1930s as a Hindi and Marathi translation of "Depressed Class". It was used for Scheduled Castes in British period. In 1930s, there was depressed classes news paper titled "*Dalit Bandu*" (friend of Dalit). The word was also used by B.R. Ambedkar in his Marathi speeches.[20] It is also found during Nizam period where the organisation called "Dalit Jatiya Sangh" worked for the upliftment of the untouchables. Ambedkar broadly described Dalit in his fortnightly "*Bahishkruit Bharat"* that the Dalithood is a kind of life condition which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalits (untouchables) by the social,

[15] Messey, James. (1995). *Dalits in India*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, p.15
[16] Zelliot, Eleanor. (2005). *From Untouchable to Dalit*. New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, p.267
[17] Louis, Prakash. (2003). *Political Sociology of Dalit Assertion.* New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, p. 145.
[18] Ibid, p. 135.
[19] Ibid, p. 140.
[20] John C.B. Webster. (2007). *Who is a Dalit.* In S.M. Michal (Ed.), (2007), *Dalits in Modern India*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, p.76

economic, cultural and political domination of the caste Hindu Brahminical order. Ambedkar often deployed similar categories depending on the context; with the colonial state he used the category of depressed classes, with caste Hindus he used the category "*Bahishkruit*" meaning totally outcaste. In the domain of politics he used the term 'Scheduled Caste'. Ambedkar in an effort to politically radicalize and effectively mobilise untouchable, he used the term "*Pad Dalit"*, meaning those who crushed under the feet of the Hindu social order.[21]

Scholars have also written about the Dalits in different ways. Those using class analysis associated Dalits with categories such as peasants, agricultural labor, factory workers etc. This kind of understanding one could see in the writings of subaltern historiography and movements like Dalit panther. Those who are using the communal analysis considered Dalits as part of Hindu religious[22] fold practicing the specific caste rituals and beliefs,[23] In order to differentiate caste specificities scholars also use sub-subalterns to refer Dalits and anti caste thinkers as caste radicals.[24] The Dalit panthers manifesto defined the term in broader sense. It includes the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, neo- Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion.[25] In the same vein the Dalit Mahasabha of Andhra Pradesh (Manifesto, 1986) has defined that Dalit are the people who are being exploited, discriminated across castes and are represented in the sphere of culture, economic and politics in the name of caste and religion of Indian society.[26] In Babu Rao Bagul view "Dalit" is a revolutionary category for its hermeneutic ability to recovery of emancipator potential of the historical past of Dalit culture and values. He argues that this category has a greater capacity to reach out to a larger section

[21] Guru, Gopal. (1998). The Politics of Naming, *Seminar* -471, November, p.16.
[22] Generally if Dalits convert into Christianity they are legally considered into OBC (C) category. This means that to claim the status of Scheduled Caste (SC) they are forced to remain entangled as Hindus. So, this legal category culturally bound the Dalits into Hindu fold.
[23] Opt, John C.B. Webster. (2007). p.76
[24] Kancha Illiah. (1995). *Caste or Class or Caste -Class: A Study in Dalit Bahujan Consciousness and Struggles in Andhra Pradesh in 1980s*. Research Paper Submitted to the Centre for Contemporary Studies. Nehru Memorial Museum Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi. And Rao, Anupama. (2010). *The Caste Question*. Permanent Black, New Delhi.
[25] Omvedt, Gail. (2008). *Dalit Visions.* New Delhi, Orient Long man, p.72
[26] Sambashiva Rao, U. (Complied, 2005). *Dalita Rnanninadam*, Idireeta Publications, Hyderabad, p.11

of people. In Bagule's view this category is based on a materialist epistemology and is not a mere linguistic construction. It is a category historically constructed through the revolutionary struggle of the Dalit.[27]

Gopal Guru argues that the category "Dalit" is not a metaphysical construction. It derives its epistemic and political strength from the material and social experience of the community. The category Dalit takes ideological assistance from Buddha, Marx, Phule and Ambedkar and in the process becomes man-centered rather than God centered unlike the Gandhian connotation of Harijan does.[28] He further elaborated that the category Dalit chose to radically distance itself from the state constituted categories like the Scheduled Castes, (SC) Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Castes (OBCs).[29] However in practice the identity 'Dalit Bahujan' is also widely used in scholarly writings and public discourse, in which Dalit is referred as Scheduled Caste and Bahujan referred as Shudras or other backward classes.[30] Although these categories appeal for some unity and work towards some political goals, the existing historical and socio-economic disparities and heterogeneity always put limitations in realizing the identity in everyday relations of people's life. In order to recognize the lowest of the low within Dalit and taking their deprivation into consideration Bihar Government created a category called 'Mahadalit'[31] for whom government creates special provisions. Scholars have also called the lowest of the low as 'Ati-Dalit'[32] by differentiating lower invisible SC minority caste from numerically dominant caste.

However the Dalit identity its sustainability and the meaning it generates and the meanings people attach to it lie in the very objective condition in which Dalit category operate. In the recent past most of the time the debates in academic writings and political discourse have reduced Dalit equal to Scheduled Caste only. So, the validity of Dalit is

[27] Ibid, p.15
[28] Gopal, Guru. (Ed.), (2005). *Atrophy in Dalit Politics.* Mumbai, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, pp. 69-71
[29] Ibid, pp.72
[30] See Illaiah, Kancha. (1996). *Why I am not a Hindu*. Samya Publication, Kolkatha
[31] See Kunnath, George. (2013). Compliance or Defiance? The case of Dalits and Mahadalits. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 5(1): 36-59.
[32] See Narayan, Badri. (2015). Democracy and Identity Politics in India: Is it a Snake or a Rope. *EPW*, Vol-no16, April 18.

depending on to what extent it can universally represent the realities of other identities which exist within it. There are many smaller castes within the Dalit like Madiga, Mala, Adi-Andhra in (A.P), Adi-Kanada, Holayas, Madigas (Karnataka), Palas, Parayas (Tamil Naidu) Chamars (UP, Bihar), Chamars, Mahars, Mathangus (Maharasta) Valmiki and Bangi (Punjab) and so on. These identities too exist at grass root level and represent different degree of socio, economic inequalities. The assertion of those identities can challenge the hierarchy and democratize the social relations at various levels.[33] It is articulated at various levels among the Dalit. This existence of multiple identities, both the individual and the collective, certainly questions validity of the artificial imposition of the categories. Thus; we have different categories representing multiple identities within the Dalit situation.

The contemporary SC sub categorization movements by Madigas in Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, Arundatiyars in Tamil Nadu, Mangs in Maharasta, and Valmikis in Panjab raised the historical challenges to Dalit movement. Hence these movements argue that different heterogeneous castes legally clubbed into SC category for administration purpose is oblivious to sub-categories. The category 'Scheduled Caste' (SC) is used by Government for all welfare schemes and implementation of reservations benefits. In practice this category is available to some section of dominant, educationally mobile caste within Dalits. So they demand the SC categorisation to benefit the lowest among low. Further they argue that how can a Scheduled Caste be homogonous when there are heterogeneous castes with specific socio, economic condition. And also they argue that the Dalit category may outwardly represent some commonality historically important in political domain. But its problematic has to be addressed the mobile and beneficiary castes for within the Dalits like Mala, Mahar and Chamars tend to hegemonise the Dalit identity but diversified socio cultural aspects of other Dalit groups below them are never focused. If untouchability is one of an important demarcation to distinguish Savarnas and avarnas (Dalits), the 'hierarchy of untouchability' within the untouched (Dalit) makes Dalit category more ambiguous. Therefore one has to understand the Dalit category in its

[33] See Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). *The Dalit Movement and Democratisation in Andhra Pradesh*, No-13, East-West Center Washington Working Papers. Washington.

multiple senses and in ever changing conditions. The ability to stimulate transformative politics of Dalits depends on the recognition of lowest of the low among Dalits and willingness to address recognition and redistribution question from its roots in order to consolidate untouchables-oppressed to fight against caste class oppressions.

Contextualizing the Dalit Autonomy and Identity

In contemporary political theory the concepts like autonomy and identity drew considerable attention in understanding and conceptualizing the human agency and its formation, these concepts become core aspects in colonial and post colonial modernities. In caste hierarchical system the "self" of the individual is controlled, conditioned and constructed through the caste relations. The very formation of "self" in the system depends on the caste location in which the individual is born. Because, in this system persons don't have choice to choose and decide their social position, it is pre determined by birth that will continue until his/her death. The force of retaliation against this oppressive structures by anti-caste movements and Dalit liberative struggles have cultivated an anti caste subject, it became the source of the "Dalit agency". Therefore it is important to explore and understand the two concepts in the Dalit movement.

Autonomy

Etymologically the English word Autonomy is compound of two Greek words that is *Autos* meaning "self" or "ours" and *nomos* meaning "law". Hence originally in Greek Autonomy carries the meaning of oneself, one's laws, self rule etc.[34] The concept is used in an exceedingly broad sense. It is used sometimes as an equivalent of liberty, sometimes as equivalent to self rule or sovereignty, sometimes identical with freedom of the will. It is equated with dignity, integrity, individuality, independence, responsibility and self-knowledge. It is identified with qualities of self-assertion, with critical causation, with knowledge of one's own interests. It is related to actions to beliefs to reasons for acting, to rules to the will of other persons to thoughts and to principles. Some scholars distinguish autonomy from freedom by insisting that freedom concerns particular acts

[34]Bevir, Mark. (Ed.), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume I, New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp.101-104

while autonomy is a more global notion, referring to states of person.[35] The underlying idea of the concept of autonomy is "self–mastery". This means both mastery over one's self and one's self not being subservient to others. It is well expressed in Isaiah Berlin's characterization of people's wish for what he calls "positive liberty".

> 'I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons by conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; doer-deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted on by external nature or by other men as if I were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realizing them… I wish, above all, to be conscious of myself as thinking, willing, active being and bearing responsibility for my choices and able to explain them by references to my own ideas and purposes'.[36]

The two dimensions of autonomy are well brought out in above statement. To be autonomous requires, first of all, that one have a developed self, to which one's actions can be ascribed. This in turn requires consciousness of oneself as being who acts for reasons, whose behavior can be explained by reference to one's own goals and purposes. The other dimension of autonomy requires freedom from external constraints. An autonomous person is not someone who is manipulated by others, or who is forced to carry their will. An autonomous person has a will of her or his own, and is able to act in pursuit of self-chosen goals.[37]

In contemporary moral and political philosophy autonomy is an important concept at least in the sense that Autonomy is a basic feature of human dignity, this property or capacity of human beings that makes human worthy and potential bearers of rights. It

[35]Dworkin, Geralad. (1997). *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy. UK,* Cambridge University Press, pp. 13-20
[36] Lindley, Richard. (1986). *Autonomy.* London, Macmillan Educational Ltd, p.198
[37] Ibid, p.6

also allows assigning the responsibilities, duties and obligations to persons as moral agents. Greeks understood Autonomy as communal or collective autonomy. It is understood that society is governed, reproduced by historically contingent, continuously changing man made laws rather than extra social laws given by God or nature. To be more clearly the self conscious people participate and deliberate in deciding the nature of good and justice within the political process. For Greeks Autonomy essentially communal polis (Government) is autonomous, governed by the laws in which people collectively deliberate and participate, free from any external force. Therefore Greeks saw individuals fundamentally as political or social beings, standing in relation to others from birth to death and incapable of realising their freedom outside polis. Thus Greeks understood Autonomy essentially communal and historically situated contingent and required socialization to make citizens more capable agents to participate in political system.[38]

Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy attracted more attention in understanding the human agency and Autonomy in the context when the Government and the state institutional mechanism fail to govern and deliver the justice and basic human values. Kant argues that 1) Autonomy is an innate capacity which is shared universally by all rational human beings. This capacity is available to all on introspection. 2) Kant conceived Autonomy as acting from a self given law conforming to the practical reason (freedom) 3) Kant contrasted autonomous action determined by causes outside the individual will 4) Finally Kant perceived that Autonomy as an innate capacity of individuals, which could ultimately be exercised irrespective of prevailing social, economic or political conditions.[39]

The liberal discourse also uses the concept of autonomy widely; in fact it is one of the core values of this philosophy. The autonomous person plays various roles in liberalism in constructing liberal principles. It serves individual as a citizen and bearer of rights, liberties, primary goods etc in flourishing the moral and political commitments. Further it

[38] Bevir, Mark (Ed.), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume- I, New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp.101-104
[39] Ibid

ascribes autonomy to persons to critique the oppressive conditions in which liberation is considered fundamental justice. The liberal approach in its political system deals with political power and social justice. So, the state neutrality is an important aspect in recognizing and considering the individual Autonomy. However the state neutrality is controversial. One of the views of understanding autonomy is 'procedural' or substantive argument. To exercise autonomy one should also have material and enabling socio-cultural environment (positive Autonomy). In the procedural identification of desire can help in choosing and determining the self rule. But the question is how any individual can choose and determine the choices and statues and justice without taking into consideration of identity. So 'self'' and identity formation, these articulations are important dimensions to understand the autonomy.

Generally Autonomy is understood as individual autonomy and not a group property. If autonomy treats individuals as rights bearers and moral beings taking responsibilities without referring to institutions, traditions within which they live and act. This tendency to disconnect individual's autonomy from identities shape their values, choices and consciousness and works counter to the autonomy of the individuals. So, the communitarians like Michal Sandel[40] and Charles Taylor argue that how can anyone pre choose autonomy without their community values and cultural life. Thus these critiques also focus on the way the liberal conception of individual autonomy deeply undermine the constituted identities like caste, class, gender, race and ethnicity etc. This valorization of liberal model of individual Autonomy puts ideal person who is free to choose and travel in whichever identity he/she wants without looking into the structures of unfreedom and structural constrains. The concept also faced the serious critiques from feminists claiming that the concept is inherently masculinity that it is inextricably bound up with ideals masculine character with assumptions about selfhood and agency that are metaphysically, epistemologically and ethically problematic from a feminist perspective

[40] See Walzer, Michael. (1983). *Spheres of Justice; A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York, Basic Book

and with political traditions that historically have been hostile to women's interest and freedom[41].

Given the above critiques the aspect of relative and relational autonomy becomes an important way of understanding the autonomy. There are two ways of understanding the relational autonomy one regards agents as intrinsically relational because their identities or self-conceptions are constituted by elements of the social context in which they are embedded. Another regards agents as causally relational because their natures are produced by certain historical and social conditions. The distinction between intrinsically and causally relational agency points to a corresponding distinction between relational conceptions of autonomy. Broadly relational conceptions can be divided into constitively (or intrinsically) relational conceptions and casually relational conceptions. The postmodernist critique is that the notion of autonomy is a kind of conceit or illusion of the enlightenment conception of the subject. Thus it is charged that the defenders of autonomy still cling to the Cartesian idea that consciousness can be transparently self-aware or to the Kantian view of persons as rational self legislators. There is no pure self - determining free will that somehow escapes the operations of power, nor is there a pure self, there to be discovered through introspective reflections. Agency must be re-conceptualized not as a matter of individual will but as an effect of the complex and shifting configurations of power.[42]

The contemporary traditions like communitarians and Marxist reject the idea of personal autonomy which liberals defend. These traditions believe that the realization of personal autonomy is depending on the social, political relations in which individuals live. They pursue Autonomy is communal achievement whatever autonomy is come to individual have to be achieved through communal and socialization process and excised in social dependency. So, those who believe the contemporary notion of autonomy the political theory become exercise to life the tradition who the modern notion and retain the Greek classical notion of Autonomy for which the political theory has to produce the

[41] Catriona Mackkenzie and Natalie StolJar (Ed.), (2000), *Relational Autonomy*. Oxford University Press, New York, p.3
[42] Ibid, pp.10-11

understanding the means of generating, maintaining and reproducing historically contingent communal autonomy and socializing individuals capable of participating in communal autonomy as engaged citizens.[43]

Taking clue from communitarian and Marxist insights into consideration, Dalit autonomy can be explained in complex relations. The construction and formation of Dalit identity and autonomy could be understood with group character. Because, given the caste system the identity and social status of individual depends on his/her caste not on his/her capacity, intellect and economic position. So, the construction of "Dalit Self" does not merely depend on defining the "other", rather it depends on its own historical, cultural and material experience. Hence the autonomy articulations of Dalits historically rooted with anti caste philosophy and epistemological tradition in reclaiming its agency. The process in which it engages with the anti caste legacy to reclaim its agency in order to challenge the layers of caste power structures. This can be understood on the crucial conditions of circumstances that create the political subject who forms the self through political practices and whose hermeneutics can be understood only in the context of collective actions and contentious politics.[44] It is different from freedom, because freedom is essentially a value, while autonomy is essentially a category of power. It is different from self-government because, while understanding the contradictory history of autonomous practices in politics there also lay the essence of understanding its significance as a principle of politics.

Dalit autonomy has to be understood in the collective politics of the untouchable both in reclaiming their agency and building the struggle against Brahmanical hegemony and caste power structures. However since the Dalit identity is politically constructed with the demarcation of untouchability between untouchables and Savarnas and there are also less important issue addressing smaller castes within Dalits; hence any assertion from the

[43] Mark Bevir, Mark. (Ed.), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume -I, Sage Publication, New Delhi, pp-101-104

[44] See Samadar, Ranadhir. (2005). *The Politics of Autonomy; Indian Experiences.* New Delhi, Sage Publication

lowest will add the value dimension to the Dalit autonomy in creating the moral universe against Brahmanical world view.

Identity

Etymologically the term identity has a long history- deriving from *Latin* root *idem* implying sameness and continuity.[45] The question of 'identity' is being vigorously debated and has continuous place in social and political theory. In essence the argument is that the old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and subjects which are undermined and silent.[46] Identity is the fundamental defining characteristic of an individual or group where on the one hand it is a concept which embodies our sense of uniqueness as individual beings and as members of groups sharing values and beliefs and on the other it is an intensely political field in which the expansion of critical theory has allowed the emergence of competing voices demanding space for recognition of often unspoken subjectivities.

Identity is in part a uniquely personal, internal sense of self, but at the same time it relates to that person's place in society and how they are categorized, and the flow of dominant cultural meanings and the power relations contingent on it. The political ideologies produce highly inflectional discourses which construct very different views of individual and collective identity. Identity is a work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others; constantly being re-appraised and very much linked to the circulation of cultural meanings in a society. Social identity is not only important in understanding the complex nature of the individual, but the assumptions made concerning social identity are of central importance in the way we think socially and politically and in the organization and construction of the socio, economic, ideological and political system. Furthermore, there are constant efforts to escape, fix or perpetuate images and meanings of others. These transformations are apparent in every domain, and the

[45] Scott, John., and Gordon, Mapshall. (2009). *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford University Press, p.330

[46] Hall, Stuvart. (1999). *The Question of Cultural Identity*. In Stuvart Hall, Devid Held and Tony Mcgrey (Ed.), (1999). *Modernity and its Futures*. Cambridge, Polity Press with Association with Open University, Blackwell Publisher Ltd, p.274

relationships between these constructions reflect and reinforce power relations. These non-class ideologies recognize that class has importance in shaping our social identities but claim that class should not be seen as the sole or even the overarching influence. It is argued that we are united but divided by things other than class and those national characteristics where we are historically suppressed and have socially constructed barriers like gender, caste, race and ethnicity etc among our relationships. Proponents of these ideologies will often claim that they are arguing beyond class rather than oblivions of class. If we are to understand social identity, we are urged to look beyond the predominantly economic dimensions of class. Self- determination remains the praxis of resistance, even while we relearn the true ways in which identities are formed and the realistic possibilities of autonomy in a world that interdependence is not only economic and environmental but, just as importantly, cultural and social.[47]

Modernity and its changing conditions also produce multiple identities to individuals and groups. The question of identity emerge when one raises a question 'who am I? Stresses on what he/her position is in the society. It also emerges when one is misrecognised, not recognised, alienated when one feels his/her existence is in danger. The ideal underpinning aim is to fight against exploitation and discrimination to realize the human potential. Although the democratic political system provides citizenship for individuals to participate equally in the political process, the citizens in their everyday life confront multiple identities which create the political field for dominance and resistance. The new social movements which are often cover cultural identities like gender, race, language, caste, region, ethnicity; gay brought a debate on the philosophical and ontological understanding of identity formations and its contesting terrains. Broadly there are approaches from contemporary scholarly debates one according to Charles Taylor the identity formation is simply self-realization and self discovery. It is a search for a distinct human personality and authenticity of human self. This self discovery cannot be possible in isolation because; individuals are always located in community and shaped by it. The formation of individual identity takes place through dialogue with other. So it is relation

[47] Alcoff, Linnda Martin., and Eduardo, Mendieta. (2003). *Identities.* USA, Blackwell Publishing, pp.20-35.

with others. Hence the question of recognition becomes an important aspect in identity formation. Two the second approach William Connolly argues that identities are not formed through self realisation rather constructed through a process of self-differentiation. Individual and groups acquire a sense of their distinctness not by working towards authentic selfhood, but by differentiating themselves from others in specific and ever-changing contexts. So, every identity is depending on the difference. The approaches have implication on political theory. Taylor claims that the self esteem is key for self identity therefore there are good grounds for recognition. Hence the good society can be formed by not only redistributing resources in just manner but should also recognize the identity groups. Taylor argues that recognition is a cultural survival. His premise being that ethic of authenticity, cultures also have unique features. Hence the recognition in terms of creating legal frame works for protecting this culture.

Critique by Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib, Amy Gautmann argue that the aim of recognition should not prevent cultural demise, but broaden and deepen the democratic project of eliminating oppression from their perspective, the public recognition of collective identities. Amy Gutammnan argues if human identity is created through dialogue with others, the dichotomy posed by some political theorist between atomistic and socially constructed individuals is therefore false. If human identity is dialogically created and constituted, then public recognition of our identity requires politics that leaves room for us to deliberate publicly about those aspects of our identities that we share, or potentially share with other citizens. A society that recognizes individual's identity will be a deliberative, democratic society because individual identity is partly constituted by collective dialogue.

Ernesto Laclau (1990) uses the concept of "dislocation" of structure is one whose centre is displaced and not replaced by another, but by "a plurality of power centers; late modern societies. Further argues that they are characterized by difference; they are cut through by different social divisions and social antagonisms which produce a variety a different "subject positions" i.e. identities for individuals. If such societies hold together at all, it is not because they are unified, but because their different elements and identities

can, under certain circumstances, be articulated together. But this articulation is always partial: the structure of identity remains open. Without this, Laclau argues, there would be no history. Further he argues that dislocation has positive features. It unhinge the stable identities of the past, but it also opens up the possibility of new articulation in the forging of new identities, the production of new subjects, and what he calls the re-composition of the structure around particular nodal points of articulation.[48] The hierarchical caste system determines the individual identity and social status by birth itself in India in particular and south Asia in general. Ambedkar argues that

> "The four classes are … (n) not only different but unequal in status, one standing above the other. In the scheme of Manu, the Brahmin is placed at the first in rank. Below him is the Kshatriya. Below the Kshatriya is the Vaishya. Below Vaishya is the Shudra and the below Shudra is the Ati-Shudra or the untouchable. This order of precedence among the classes is not merely conventional. It is spiritual, moral and legal. There is no sphere of life which is not regulated by this principle of graded inequality".[49]

The principle of graded inequality he argued has been carried into the economic field too. It does not recognize equal need, equal work or equal ability as the basis of reward for labour. Its motto is that in regard to the distribution of the good things of life, those who are reckoned as the highest must get the most and the best and those who are classified as the lowest must accept the least and the worst[50]. In Ambedkar and Phule's view caste is core of Hindu social order, and caste is legitimized and given a divine basis and religious sanction though the sastras. It is based on the doctrine that men are created from different parts of divinity. Such doctrine has generated the belief that it must be divine will that remain separate and distinct.[51] Given the above observations on caste system, the identities which emerged in this can characterize the one hierarchical two fixed before birth three historically imposed fourth legitimized through Hindu scriptures fifth

[48] Laclau, Ernesto. (2007). *Emancipation(s)*. London, Verso Publication, pp. 20-35.
[49] Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). *Who are the Shudras*. Ambedkar Writing and Speeches, Published by Education Department Government of India, Volume- 3, p.107.
[50] Ibid, P.111
[51] Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). *Dr.B.R Ambedkar Writing and Speeches*. Published by Education Department Government of India. Volume: 1, p.100.

degraded with purity and pollution six it is not person oriented (not depend on his/her capabilities and consciousness) but caste (group) oriented (caste duty) seven Untouchability. Therefore the Dalit identity formation would form or emerge as an anti caste identity (subject) and function as an ideological, social, and political identity to challenge the hegemonic caste hierarchy. It generates the sense of assertion and articulation to deconstruct the Hindu social order and reconstruct the voice of undermined, unspoken subjects (identities) which are historically anti caste. The Dalit identity here is used in the context of understanding the identity emerge in the praxis of recognition (cultural) and redistribution (material) against the hegemonic power structures in realization of freedom, rights, justice, equality of individuals and groups. Dalit identity is not a metaphysical construction. It derives its epistemic and political strength from the material and social experience of the community. It is this social construction of "Dalit hood" which makes it authentic and dynamic rather than passive and rigid. It is also understood in its multiplicity in the context of emerging lower Dalit assertions.

Understanding the Dalit Movement

Liberal Perspective

Liberalism is a label for a diverse political family of ideas and positions, political values, state and its mechanism. Gradually this approach got more attention in social and political theory[52]. The gradual differentiation of state and civil society contributed to the development of liberalism. The liberalism emerged broadly against state absolutism, religious and feudal suppression[53] and focused on individualist outlook. In core the liberalism emphases on these principles one natural rights of individuals two separation of powers three rulers constrained by rule of law fourth the state must respect certain kind of rights five the authority of rulers rests ultimately on the consent of the ruled. The theory of liberal constitutionalism is the first and most basic model of a liberal political regime.[54] The political thinkers like John Locke, James Mill, Thomas Hobbes, Adam

[52] Bevir, Mark. (Ed.), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume Two, New Delhi, Sage Publication, p.795
[53] Ibid, p.796
[54] Ibid, p.797

Smith and Immanuel Kant contributed to the development of liberal ideas and liberal philosophical branches. Across the variety of liberal streams of thinking a) the individualist b) egalitarian c) Universalist d) meliorist aspects make the liberalism unique from other streams of thinking.[55] The enlightenment period added new ideas and strength to liberal values. The liberals propose the natural liberty which helps individuals to shape their values according to their wish. This means that the governmental power should be restricted to the provisions of security and enforcement of just laws, which enable people to engage in private planning and reach enforceable agreements with one another. This idea is central to the branch of classical liberal tradition. Later on the idea of consent and contract played a role in liberal social theory.[56]

The contemporary liberalism is dominated and qualitatively reoriented with John Rawls's 'A theory of justice' (1971). The contemporary one liberalism affirms the toleration of diverse ways of living and beliefs, or what Rawls call 'conceptions of the good' two its aim to reduce the inequalities. The freedom and equality is part of political morality of contemporary liberalism. Hence one of the central principles of the contemporary liberalism is distributive justice.[57] However Communitarian[58] thinkers primarily reacting against the neo-Kantian liberal political theories of philosophers like John Rawls, Robert Nozick and Ronald Dworkin four theorists in particular associated with this recent communitarian critique of liberalism are Michael Sandel, Alas dair MacIntyre, Michael Walzer, Will Kymlica and Charles Taylor. Machal Walzer argues that arguments about justice must start not from abstract theorizing but rather from the shared understandings of communal practices. Liberal theory seems oblivious to the fact that we are members of families and communities before we identify ourselves as individuals with distinct interests and rights. Michel Sandel critique Rawls idea of original position, how can any person can forget his constitutive identities and association and choose the procedure. Taylor further critiques that liberalism misunderstands the social nature of the self. We

[55] Gray, John. (1998). *Liberalism*. Delhi, World View Publication, p.xii
[56] Mark, Bevir. (Ed.), (*2010). Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume Two, New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp.798-799
[57] Kymlicka, Will. (2002). *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, pp. 53-55
[58] Communitarianism is a broad tradition of political thought that emphasizes the moral and political value of community.

become individuals only because we learn a common, socially created vocabulary and set of practices that enable us to conceive of ourselves and act as individuals. Liberals emphasize on 'atomism' over virtue. Liberals focus on conception of person as essentially rights bearing agents. MacIntyre suggests that point cruelly missing from liberal's theory is a communal understanding of the good life that includes the account of associated virtues required to lead such a life. In essence communitarians are emphasizing on community virtue and pluralism, good life.

Often some scholars consider Dr.Ambedkar as constitutionalist liberal thinker and located Dalit movement within new social movements frame work or a movement for some policy level benefits within the liberal constitutional methods. The Indian liberal sociologists studied the Dalit movement through various models like one the theory of relative deprivation or reference group two the structural strain /stress theory. M.S.A Rao a sociologist applied the relative deprivation theory to study the Dalit and backward class struggles. According to this theory the relative deprivation between caste and group is primary cause for emergence of struggle.[59] But this theory is critiqued by Gopal Guru, who argues that relative deprivation theory not only prevents Dalit critical consciousness to challenge the broader oppressive structures but also reduces the Dalit movement as a struggle which seeks some instrumental change within the existing system. It tends to develop the zealous about people within their social category or social position. The state and political parties employ various strategies to politicize the relative deprivation to defuse the emerging consciousness of Dalits. Moreover it does not help us understand the conversion movements of Dalits into Buddhism and Christianity.[60]

The structural strain/stress theory focuses on the disequilibrium in the socio-political system and dysfunctional nature of state institutions. The paradox of modernization and industrial development, all these accumulated problems led to tensions between the power holding ruling elite and people's assertion for justice at grass root level. Rajini Kothari in his work argued that the congress system, social disorder, the dysfunctions of

[59] Rao, M.S.A. (Ed.), (2008). *Social Movements in India*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications. Pp.191-216
[60] Guru, Gopal. (1993). Dalit Movement in Mainstream Sociology. *EPW*, Vol-28, No-14, April 3, pp.570-573

state institutions led to the various gross root movements. Kothari further argues that there has been a disjunction between state and society in India which resulted in class movements against upper class/caste, women movements for gender equality, tribal movements for autonomy, regional movements for regional identity and autonomy.[61] He argues that the growing assertion of Dalits can help to critically interrogate the secular forces. The state is expected to play crucial role in ensuring the basic rights and development to this marginal groups. Earlier the grass root movements could not provide the transformative results and the left parties both parliamentary and radicals failed to represent and give due share to these groups in the organisational structure. So the Dalit movement is not about scheduled caste, it is about transformation of the oppressive structures. So, it goes beyond new social movement framework.[62]

Marxism and New Left Perspective

The term Marxism is a philosophical and theoretical world view as a scientific method of understanding human society rather than utopian socialism.[63] The traditional Marxist philosophical and theoretical understanding of social movements is in essence through historical materialism and class struggle. In this approach the history of people is history of class struggle. So, the conflict is the source of dominance and resistance between haves and have nots. The power of dominance lies in the private property (economic), often it is in Marxist philosophy considered as a base which determines the production and human relations in unjust and unequal way. Therefore, Marx, Engels, argued that the inequality perpetuates into political and social life.[64]

The Frankfurt School[65] popularly called 'critical theory' associated with Adorno, Horkhaimar, Fromm, Habermas dealt with many issues which enable us in understanding

[61] Kothari, Rajini. (1994). Rise of the Dalits and the Renewed Debate on Caste, *EPW*, June 25, pp-1589-1594
[62] Ibid
[63] Ritzer, George. (Ed.), (2005). *Encyclopedia of Social theory*, Volume-1, New Delhi, Sage Publication, p.478.
[64]Bevir, Mark. (Ed.), (2010). *Encyclopedia of political theory*, Volume-2, New Delhi, Sage Publication, PP-863-870
[65] Frankfurt school emerged in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s. The tradition of thinking which can be loosely referred to by this label is divided into two branches. The first was centered on the institute of social research, established in Frankfurt in 1923 exiled from Germany in 1933, relocated in the United

human actions beyond economic determinism.[66] The 'New Left'[67] emerged in the wake up students assertions in France and other part of world and against the orthodox economic (Materialists) interpretation of human relations and values and contributed in revising and diversifying within or around the Marxism focusing on the concepts of class, agency, consciousness, culture, ideology, alienation etc. the western Marxism advanced the Marxist thinking with the contributions of Gramsci, George Lucks and Louis Althousser in providing theoretical understanding of human agency and relative autonomy of culture, ideology, human consciousness in appreciating the new social movements.[68]

The debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth over recognition and redistribution within the critical theory tradition recently attracted scholarly attention. In this debate the two concepts recognition and redistribution broadly represented culture and material fields respectively, it deeply explored while Axel Honneth follows monistic approach by developing pluralistic conception of justice by considering three normative spheres of recognition (love, rights and solidarity) in which intersubjective constitution of the subjects operates as separate sphere in advanced capitalist society, It operate within a normative horizon showing that economic process involve fundamentally normative relations of appreciation of different kinds of contributions and performances developed by the social subjects.[69]

Fraser proposes a 'dualistic perspective' which distinguishes the issues of justice concerning the cultural domain from the issues of justice concerning the economic one. According to her we can't remedy the cultural injustices with a politics of redistribution and similarly, we cannot remedy the economic injustices with identitarian politics.

States shortly thereafter and reestablished in Frankfurt in early 1950s. The early orientation of institute is associated with Adorno, Horkheimer, Fromm and second phase is associated with Habermas.

[66] Bottomore, Tom. (Ed.), (2000). *A Dictionary of Marxist thought*. New Delhi, Maya Blackwell, pp.208-212

[67] The New Left covers the broad range of left intellectual and activist and political movements that emerged around late 1960s.

[68] See Anderson, Perry. (1976). *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London, and Verso. Peter D. Thomas. (2009). *The Gramscian Movement*. LEIDEN, BRILL. Louis Althusser. (2006). *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, New Delhi*, Aakar. George Lukacs. (2003). *History and Class Consciousness*, London, Merlin Press, London, New Delhi, Parrot Reads Publishers

[69] Fraser, Nancy and Honneth. (2004). *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political philosophical exchange*. London, Verso.

Therefore she suggests articulating a conception of justice concerning cultural recognition with a conception of justice concerning economic redistribution. This dualist perspective is subjected to the overwhelming normative principle of participation for; for Fraser to guarantee a parity of participation involves addressing economic injustices as well as cultural injustices at the same time.[70]

In India the growing Marxist, nationalist and orthodox Marxist interpretation of history and society, foreign trained historians broadly social sciences scholars called themselves as subaltern scholars attempted to address the south Asian specificities beyond the orthodox economic determinism, by taking Gramscian ideas into application.[71] They claimed that their intention is to write history from below. Understanding collective action in terms of other than grand narratives of nationalist or class struggle is a move that illuminates the meaning and experience of resistance in the context of domination, enabling an appreciation of the contradictions that are intrinsic to subaltern consciousness and collective action.[72] However there are critiques on the subaltern studies Kancha illaiah observe that the subaltern scholars focused on the grand narratives of nationalist thought and peasant struggles and neglected the contribution of gender, caste, anti caste struggles towards subaltern consciousness. However Illaiah's emphasis marks specificities of DalitBahujans. It is argued that they are sub-subalterns.

In the wake up of various local struggles with radical approach like Dalit panther movement in Maharasta and Dalit Sagharshan Samiti leaders attempted to synthesize the Ambedkar and Marxist philosophical approach. The scholars like Gail Omvedt and Sharat Patil also rigorously explored and interpreted Dalit and other oppressed struggles beyond Marxist economic determination through their writings and sympathise anti caste struggles and Marxist thinking.

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[70] See Nancy Fraser. (1996). *Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition and participation*. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Delivered at Stanford University, April 30-May 2. http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_documents/a-to-z/f/Fraser98.pdf

[71] Ranajit Guha. (2011). Gramsci in India: homage to a teacher, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 16 (2) pp.288-295.

[72] See Guha, Ranajit. (Ed.), (2008). *Subaltern Studies*. Voume-1, New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

An Ambedkarite Perspective

Dr.Ambedkar being a synthesizer of the anti caste legacy and thought in India becomes a guiding force for various colonial and post colonial anti caste movements and politics. His entry into Indian political scene radically changed the terms of political discourse which subsequently resulted in asserting the subjugated voice of the former untouchables. Ambedkar through his philosophical enquiry about human nature, the historical process of dominance and resistance, the development of human consciousness and his liberative political practice has radically differed from the existing models of emancipation of oppressed be it from Hindu reformers, communists and liberals in India. He built up the alternative liberative struggles against the existing models. Here Ambedkarite perspective is considered as the core ideas of Ambedkar in particular anti caste thinking in general which produced a coherent new knowledge system and became a historical guiding force for consciousness of the oppressed particularly Dalits. The contemporary Dalit movement takes Dr. Ambedkar's ideas in its understanding and action in particular and anti caste thinking in general. The debate between Gandhi-Ambedkar since its inception had influenced on the Dalit politics and movement. Still the debate is gaining momentum. It is considered not merely a debate between two personalities; it is a debate between two conflicting worldviews of Indian civilization and history, where Gandhi represents Hindu Varnashrama dharma tradition and Ambedkar the Buddhist human philosophy. Ambedkar in his scholarly work traced out the genealogy of untouchables and the roots of conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In his scholarly work 'revolution and counter revolution' he interpreted that the Indian history is nothing but conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism against the conventional understanding of Marxist that Indian history is class struggles, in one of the public gathering of railway workers at Mahad, Dr.Ambedkar emphasized on two fold problem which oppressed have to address;

> "There are in my view two enemies which the workers of this country have to deal with. The two enemies are Brahmanism and capitalism... by Brahmanism I do not mean the power, privileges and interests of Brahmins as a community. By Brahmanism I mean the negation of the spirit of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

> In that sense it is rampant in all classes and is not confined to the Brahmans alone though they have been the originators of it "(Reported in the Times of India, 14 February, 1938)[73]

Ambedkar views the conflict in the form of folds in Brahmanism (Ideology) and capitalism (Material conditions). Ambedkar's systematic investigation into ideological roots of caste system and Hindu scriptures motivated him to understand human suffering beyond material conditions. Hence his implicit emphasis on human consciousness and counter ideological struggle and caste-class praxis are key elements of his emancipatory politics. It is also evident that in his life time he attempted to address these two problems through struggles and political initiations. Ambedkar work in one his 'States and Minorities' presented some remedies to address above mentioned problems. His proposition of 'state socialism' in which land, industries should be under state control are of great worth to explore the relevance. While he is suggesting solution in Buddhism for the fundamental problems of human kind, Ambedkar gave a new and modernistic interpretation to Buddhism in his work of 'Buddha and his Dhamma', Dhukka interpreted as equal to exploitation/suffering. So, in his essay 'Buddha or Marx' he argues that

> "Society has been aiming to lay a new foundation as was summarized by the French revolution in three words, fraternity, liberty and equality. The French revolution was welcomed because of this slogan. It failed to produce equality. We welcomed the Russian revolution because it aims to produce equality, Society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can coexist only if one follows the way of the Buddha. Communism can give one but not all".[74]

Dr. Ambedkar's visionary warning to the people of India is more relevant today than ever before. As long as inequalities continue, the 'one man, one vote-one value' principle which gave the citizens to participate in the democratic process and elect representatives

[73] See Omvedt, Gail. (2002). *Ambedkar and after: the Dalit Movement in India*. In Ghanshyam Shah (Ed.), 2002). *Social Movements and the State*. New Delhi, Sage Publications.
[74] Ambedkar, B.R. (2008). *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writing and Speeches*. vol-3, Dr. Ambedkar Resource Material, Mumbai, Publishing Committee, Government of Maharasta, pp.441-462

part become a ruling class. This has created a great change among untouchables. His emphasis on 'social democracy' and 'state socialism' has greater relevance to today. While submitting the constitution in Constituent Assembly Dr.Ambedkar gave a historic speech on Indian contradictions.

> "On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up".[75]

Dr. Ambedkar's belief in constitutional Democracy is an indication of his strong belief that this can make untouchables and oppressed as equal citizens and bearers of rights against caste hierarchy and make them capable to participate in political process and becomes a ruling class and therefore it is an important aspect of his struggle and politics. His constant political experiment through Independent labor Party, Scheduled Caste Federation and Republican Party towards building autonomous politics for oppressed is case in point. Dr.Ambedkar's ideas also give philosophical underpinnings and reflection of Antonia Gramsci, George lucks, Louis Althusser, Jone Deway frame works. Broadly reflects the neo Marxist and critical theory of understanding and thinking. The anti caste movements gave birth to new ideas, symbols, methods and philosophical and ontological tools for new knowledge production which has greater ability to challenge the caste system. Phule, Dr. Ambedkar's comparison of Dalits with blacks and beyond also indicate the necessity of the solidarity across to fight oppression and exploitation. Gail Omvedt, in her "Dalits and Democratic Revolution" argues that the anti caste Dalit

[75] Ambedkar delivered a speech while addressing the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949.

movement can be classified as "anti systemic movements" because these movements are historically struggling to change the foundations of hierarchical structure of Indian society. In a way these are "value oriented movements as opposed to "norm oriented movements" replacing caste, social oppression, economic exploitation and political domination by egalitarian principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity[76]. The following section deals with the socioeconomic and geographical status of Dalits in undivided Andhra Pradesh to get a broader view.

Dalits: A Socio, Economic Profile

The united Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 and got divided on June 2, 2014 into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Since the study is covering united Andhra Pradesh, a brief socioeconomic profile is presented for broader understanding of Dalits status. The state comprised three distinctive regions namely Costal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalseema. Historically, in terms of development, culture and natural resources these three regions present divergent trajectories. Coastal Andhra consist nine districts Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Vishakapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore. Rayalaseema consist of four districts namely Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Kurnool. And Telangana, consisting ten districts Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda.[77] These regions present vast regional variations in socio-economic and cultural spheres. Historically Telangana was a part of princely Hyderabad state under Nizam rule and Coastal Andhra under Madras presidency. Even in terms of social movements and civil society articulations, these regions present contrasting trajectories. While the 'backward' Telangana region has seen mobilization of rural poor and youth by the communists and radical left on the basis of class struggle along with presence of Dalit movement.[78] The coastal Andhra witnessed agriculture

[76] Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution.* New Delhi, Sage Publication, p.10
[77] See Suri, K.C. (2002). *Democratic process and Electoral politics in Andhra Pradesh, India*. Working Ppaer-180, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK.
[78] See Srinivasulu, K. (2002). *Caste, Class and Social Articulation in Andhra Pradesh: Mapping Differential Regional Trajectories*. Working paper - 179, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK.

development, emergence of Dalit consciousness and major massacres on Dalits.[79] Rayalaseema is a faction prone region where marginalized communities like SCs, STs and OBCs are divided and fragmented into factional groups under dominant caste (Reddies, Kammas etc) leaders. Therefore, these groups never allowed space of caste and class consciousness even though people they experienced exploitation and discrimination. Due to the influence of state level Dalit and radical movements there were some attempts and initiatives. The exploited and the discriminated groups started their assertion against dominant castes.[80] The following table indicates the regional distribution of Scheduled Castes.

Table 1.1

Regional Distribution of Scheduled Caste Groups in united Andhra Pradesh

Caste	Andhra Pradesh	Telangana (inc. HYD)	Costal Andhra	Rayalaseema
Mala and Adi- Andhra	42.8	29.4	57.7	38.0
Madigas	49.2	61.3	36.6	51.9
Relli	1	0.1	3.4	0.0
Others	7	9.3	2.3	10.1

Source: B.N Krishna Committee. (2010). p.369[81]

There are around 62 Scheduled Castes recognized by the state. The numerically dominant castes are Mala and Madiga. These two castes are spread across the three regions (Telangana, Rayalaseema and Costal Andhra). There is a small sub caste or satellite castes affiliated to both Mala and Madiga. In terms of social hierarchy Malas claim to occupy superior position than Madigas, Rellies and Dakkali occupy lowest than Madiga. The recent Sri Krishna committee appointed by the Government, found above statistical trends of Dalits in united Andhra Pradesh in three region of the state. These sixty two castes are spread into three regions. Among them some of the satellite castes like Dakkali, Chindu, Netakani are visible in Telangana but not in Coastal Andhra and

[79] See Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). *The Dalit Movement and Democratisation in Andhra Pradesh.* No-13, East-West Center Washington Working Papers. Washington.

[80] In Rayalseema region Communists are mobilized particularly radical left also had influence in some part of Anatapur, Chittoor etc. But the increasing factional leader's entry into politics created the Factionalisation and criminalization of politics in the region. Often the political parties also encouraged this process for vote bank politics.

[81] Opt, cit, Krishna,B.N. (December 30, 2010). p.369

Rayalaseema, whereas Adi-Andhra, Relli, Godari are not present in Telangana. So, now some of the Dalit organisations are demanding that since the state is divided and the Scheduled Caste list has to be changed to take any further action on SC categorization or for any policy formulation. The following table indicates presence and distribution of various social groups in the three regions.

Table 1.2

Distribution of Social Groups by State and Region (Percentage)

Region	SCs	STs	Muslims	Other Minorities	OBCs	High Castes
Andhra Pradesh	16.2	6.6	9.2	1.7	44.5	22
Telangana inc Hyderabad	15.8	8.9	12.4	1.5	50.7	10.7
Telangana exc Hyderabad	16.9	10.0	8.4	1.2	53	10.5
Hyderabad	8.0	0.9	41.2	3.2	35	11.8
Rayalaseema	16.7	2.9	12.5	0.9	43	24.2
Costal Andhra	16.3	6.0	4.5	2.2	39	32

Source: Census 2001 and NSSO 64th round

Note: 1. the figures are in percentages and may not add due to rounding.

2. Note: * - The OBC proportions were estimated using the NSSO survey data. The proportion of High castes is arrived by deducting the proportion of the rest.

Source: B.N Krishna Committee. (2010) p.360[82]

In the united Andhra Pradesh, the division of Manu's Varna system clearly exists to understand the caste stratification that Brhamans, Vaishays, Kshatriyas, Sudras and Atisudras along with many subdivided castes. According to above table Caste Hindus (High castes) includes the dwijas (twice born castes) the Brahmans, Vaishays, the landowning castes like Kammas and Reddies constitute about 22% of the state's population. Vaishays engaged in the traditional occupation of Trade are omnipresent in the state. Rajus, who claim Kshatriya status are mostly confined to the north and central Coastal regions and constitute less than 1% of the state's population. According to 2001

[82] Krishna, B.N. (December 30, 2010). *Committee for Consultations on the Situation in Andhra Pradesh*. Report, Government of India, New Delhi, p.360

census the non-brahman castes groups such as Reddies (8-10%) Kammas (4-5%) Kapu (10-12%) and Velamas (1-2%) whose main occupation has been cultivation are the most important social groups in the state in terms of numerical strength, land control and access to political power. Reddies and Velamas have been traditionally landlords and constituted the bedrock of the feudal social and political order in pre-independence period. The Kapu category includes Telaga, Balija, Kapu, Munuru Kapu. Through TRS Velamas consolidated in Telangana. Various caste groups with traditional hereditary occupations, mainly artisan and service occupations constitute a large proportion of the population. These castes are today known as "Other Backward Caste" (OBCs). Out of the backward castes listed by the government of the state the major ones include Yadavas, Gowdas, Padmasalis, Rajakas, Mangalis, Kamsalis, Mudirajus, Boyas, Wadderas, Upparas, Kummaris, Kammaris, Medaras, Pallekaris, Perikas, Gandlas, Bhatrajus and Kalavanthvulu. They represent more than 40% of the state population. The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population also spread into three regions but majority of the population present in Telangana region.

Table 1.3

Region-Wide Distribution of Religious Groups, 2001

Region	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Others
Andhra Pradesh	89.0	9.2	1.6	0.3
Telangana inc Hyderabad	86.0	12.4	1.2	0.4
Telangana exc. Hyderabad	90.0	8.4	1.1	0.3
Hyderabad	55.4	41.2	2.4	1.0
Rayalaseema	86.4	12.5	0.9	0.2
Costal Andhra	93.1	4.5	2.1	0.2

Source: AP Statistical Abstract 2009, based on Census 2001

Note: The figures are in percentages and may not add to 100 due to rounding off

Source: B.N Krishna Committee. (2010) p.381[83]

In terms of religious identities, the former of state of Andhra Pradesh is a mosaic of different faiths. Although, Buddhism was said to be the major religion until around the early medieval period but it has become less present. The above table indicates that Hindus consist 89%, spreading in three regions. Muslims consist 9.2%, have a presence

[83] Ibid, p.381

in the urban and semi-urban unorganized service sector in Telangana, Rayalaseema and parts of coastal Andhra and have their own divergent impacts on politics of these regions. Muslims occupy 41.2% in Hyderabad and with effective political impact. Christians also spread across three regions; comparatively Hyderabad and Costal Andhra show more percentage rather than other regions, partly because of historical missionary work and British presence in these regions. Other religious groups are present in lesser number spread across various places. In terms of economic status the income expenditure of these social groups shows variations. The following table present the income and expenditure status of various social groups.

Table 1.4

Monthly per capita Consumption Expenditure Regions and Social Groups (2007-08)

Region /group	All Groups	SCs	STs	OBCs	Other Hindus	All Minorities	Muslims
Andhra Pradesh	971	719	680	860	1484	969	892
Telangana inc Hyderabad	1025	734	734	889	1846	1101	876
Telangana exc. Hyderabad	895	710	726	836	1450	898	855
Rayalaseema	788	590	803	707	1099	755	937
Coastal Andhra	1003	759	570	902	1427	934	841

Source: Estimates from NSSOs 64th round survey, 2007-08, Note: Hyderabad excluded due to small sample size

Source: B.N Krishna Committee. (2010) p.112[84]

The per capita consumption expenditure among Adivasi and Dalits is comparatively less than other social groups. Within Dalits the Costal Andhra Dalits per capita expenditure is higher comparad to Telangana and Rayalseema is this lowest because of per capita income the Costal Andhra Dalits are economically mobile and more accessible to institutional opportunities. In terms of region wise the costal Andhra people have per capita consumption expenditure is higher. Telangana including Hyderabad the Dalit per Capita expenditure is higher. The expenditure level of the castes also depends on the

[84] Ibid, pp.112

constant source of income. Since both Telangana and Rayalaseema provide less work opportunities people are on constant migration, frequent agricultural crisis, less literacy rate are all also matters which have direct impact on low income sources and expenditure than Coastal Andhra. There are many struggles in united Andhra Pradesh for land distribution to Dalits and tribes. But governments failed to fulfill the promises they made. The following table shows land pattern of the Scheduled Castes.

Tables 1.5

Status of Scheduled Caste land Pattern

Scheduled Caste (SC)	As per 2001 Census	As per 1991 Census
Population	49,73,000	1,05,00,000
Working people	30,62000	51,71,920
Landowners / Agriculture Cultivators	7,59,000 (it is equivalent to 23% of working people)	6, 60,585 (12%)
Agricultural labour	17, 56,908 (57%)	37, 26,590 (72%)

Source: Koneru Ranga Rao Committee (2006) p.2[85]

The Koneru Ranga Rao committee on land was constituted in the context of peace talks between Maoists and government and continuous pressure from Dalits and left organisations. The committee was constituted in 2006, with eight members under chairmanship of Ranga Rao. They found that there are many irregularities in the land distribution to Dalits and Adivsis and the target of land distribution to these communities achieved limited result. Further it also heed that although there was excess land under government, the attempts proved ineffective in distributing land to Dalits. The committee argued that from 1961 to 1991 one lakhs Scheduled Caste people lost their lands. The above table also indicates that in 1961, 23 percentages of Dalits had some land in 1991 it declined to 12 percentage and also 57 constitute agricultural laborers among in 1961 increased 72 % in 1991. It clearly shows that on one side the failure of government land distribution scheme and increasing in agricultural labors pushed Dalits into distress which resulted in distress rural migration to various places across India. Anantapur and Mahaboobnagar districts present incidence of extreme out migration. After 1991, the state also started withdrawing from the welfare schemes to marginalized groups because

[85]Ranaga Rao, Koneru. (Committee, 2006). *Land Committee Recommendation*. Hyderabad , Government of Andhra Pradesh, p.2

of structural adjustment programme and LPG process. This process have dual effects on one side it affected their caste occupations which directly impacted on their livelihood options and the other side increasing private sector which effected reservation policy, the percentage of unemployment increased among Dalit youths. In terms of literacy rate the 2014 census present that Telangana state is 58.9 (Male-68.0, Female-49.9), Andhra Pradesh total Scheduled Caste literacy rate 64.5 (Male-71.7, female -57.4).

Problem of the Study /Statement of the Problem

Dalit movement in India emerged as an alternative democratic struggle against caste-class oppression and Brahmanical hegemony. The presence and articulation of untouchable struggles vary from region to region and time to time.[86] In north India Adi-dharm and Adi-Hindu movement by Mangooram and Swami Achutananda, Kabeer Path and Santu Ravidas Panth have great influence on people's life. In South India movements like Adi-dravida, Adi-Andhra, Adi-Kannada, Basaveshwara's Veerashivisam took place and asserted their identity and challenged the caste Hindu hegemony.[87] The increasing consciousness among untouchables made them search for new identities and claims for socio-economic and political rights. The dismal life conditions of these communities fortified various identities which gave them positive hope and relief from the oppressive and stigmatized identities. Throughout the Indian history untouchables fought against ascribed, abusive and oppressive identities and struggled for respectable, dignified identities. This fight in essence aimed at transforming caste and the social relations. However Ambedkar's entry into Indian political scene qualitatively changed the terms of depressed classes agenda and struggles. Ambedkar being a well educated and a statesman started to consolidating untouchables by building all India level movement. The struggle and debate between Gandhi and Ambedkar became not merely a contestation between two personalities but it is a fight between contrasting vision and understanding of Indian history, caste system and untouchable emancipation etc. Here Ambedkar represented the

[86] See Kshirsagar, R.K. (1994). *Dalit Movement in India and its leaders*. New Delhi, M.D Publication Pvt. Ltd. documented the various organisations and contributed leaders their struggles against caste discrimination and exclusion across states during 1857-1956.

[87] Sugarswan, Reform movements in north India, and Samel,H, Swapna. (2004). *Dalit Movement in South India*", New Delhi, Serial Publication has documented the Dalit movement in South India covering Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka from 1857 to 1950.

anti caste legacy whereas Gandhi represented the Hindu Varnashrama dharma reformist tradition.

During colonial times apart from Ambedkar Dalit independent mobilisation there were various streams like Congress Harijana Sevak Sangh, Communists, Hindu reformist like Arya, Brahma Samajists. Ambedkar during colonial period particularly during freedom struggle questioned Gandhi, Congress hegemonic politics, Brahma, Arya Samajist tendency of homogenizing untouchables within Hindu fold without addressing the caste hierarchy and untouchability. Further he also questioned the communist orthodox interpretation of Indian state and society without taking caste and Brahmanical hegemony into consideration. Hence Ambedkar searched for autonomous struggles and politics led by oppressed particularly Dalits. In order to build this movement he connected and consolidated Dalit assertion.

Both Telangana under Nizam rule, Andhra under Madras presidency were influenced by Ambedkar movement. Ambedkar's visit to both the regions helped to organise various Dalit leaders under Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF), which had considerable influence on both regions. Hence apart from the regional Dalit articulations in both the regions Ambedkar's initiatives attempted to consolidate the scattered groups. Hence it become an important aspect in locating contemporary Dalit movement in its historical roots to understand Dalit claims for socio, political rights, the strategies of resistance and strategising their political programme. After Ambedkar particularly after formation of Andhra Pradesh, the Dalit activities were on decline. The RPI and other Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu, employees associations could not make big difference and could not politically consolidate Dalits. The scholarly research work on Dalit movement shows the gap in exploring the Dalit politics and mobilization between 1950 until 1985; hence it is also an important aspect in understanding and exploring reasons why Dalit politics were not vocal in this period. And why a majority of Dalits at grass roots level were attracted to radical left movement, these are some of the questions worth exploring both in the context of regional specificity and structural challenge to Dalit politics. This present study is an attempt to enquire into some of these motions.

Although there are a few studies exploring diversified Dalit mobilization in both Telangana and Coastal Andhra regions, there is a need to deeply comprehend these diverse forms of Dalit assertions and its specificities in the context of growing regional assertions and changing nature of caste manifestation. The studies which carried on Dalit movement brings partial account of regional specificities or tend to focus on Coastal Andhra caste mobilization in the wake of caste violence on Dalits and Telangana for class mobilization under radical left movement. This ambiguous demarcation either undermines Dalit assertions in their everyday life or caste manifestation in the complex objective realities in each region. Further Rayalseema is either subsumed as part of socio, cultural milieu of Costal Andhra or neglected its regional specificity in studying the caste operation and Dalit assertions.[88] Hence it become an important area of exploration to study deeply how feudal nature of Telangana manifest in the caste, how advanced agrarian Costal Andhra mediate the caste relations and Rayalseema factional group rivalries hold the caste power and its implications on Dalit assertions in its concrete terms. Further in all three regions how dominant caste plays role in perpetuating caste hegemony against Dalit assertion is addressed in the study.

In the mid 1980s qualitative change has taken place in Andhra politics in terms of change in the government from the long ruling congress national party to regional TDP Government. The formation of TDP within short time has consolidated the hold of Kamma dominant caste. And it is also period where the left movement engaged at grass root mobilization. The political consolidation of Kamma caste strengthened caste arrogance that led to brutal attacks on Dalits in Coastal Andhra. The Dalit massacre in Karamchedu in 1985 changed the caste discourse. It is argued that the post-Karamchedu Dalit assertions have consolidated Dalits and their identity formation. However after thirty years of experience of Dalit movement and its numerous fractions and fragmentations force us to see the identity formation in its concrete terms and in the emerging complex multiple contradictions and power relations. Hence the following

[88] Srinivsulu,K. (2002). Working paper -179, demarcated Telangana region under class mobilisation Coastal Andhra for caste mobilisation this is inadequately addressed the caste question and caste violence in both regions, Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). East-West, Working Paper, not covered the Rayalaseema region.

questions demand more scholarly attention in that how the dominant caste nature and regional specificity determine the form of caste manifestation? How does Dalit movement address and addressing multiple contradictions within Dalit movement? Also to know whether Dalit identity got consolidated, if it is so what is its form of formation. What are the emerging challenges to Dalit identity formation and its sustainability? These are some of the questions which are important for research. After emergence of Dalit Mahasabha a debate was initiated on caste-class approach and Dalit and communists movements and their understanding and programme. This debate greatly influenced the Dalits, women, communists and rights organisations. Subsequently from both the Dalits and communists some attempts were made to build the movement with caste-class praxis. The study aims at understanding and exploring lessons from these experiences.

After one decade of Dalit Mahasabha movement and its influence on social movements, the mid 1990s brought radical departure in Dalit movement in terms of sub caste movements and mobilization. The emergence of MRPS (1994) popularly known as Dandora posed serious questions to Dalit movement and its leaders. The failure of Dalit movement to address the Dandora questions led to intense mobilization by Madigas for their own identity and redistribution of SC reservation to lowest among low. This struggle for classification of Scheduled Caste (SC) reservation into ABCD categories in united Andhra Pradesh has generated a nationwide debate and added a new dimension to Dalit discourse[89]. Ramachandra Raju Commission appointed by Government of Andhra Pradesh recommended SC categorization. In 1999 the TDP Government passed a GO and implemented the categorization for four years. In 2004 the Supreme Court rejected and suggested constitutional amendment for SC categorization. Although many untouchable castes are constitutionally clubbed under the category of SCs and Dalits in socio, political realm these categories constitute many castes which are historically carrying the specific conditions and culturally diversified experience, hence these categories are heterogeneous. These differences manifested in emerging articulations and struggles within Dalits in various states. There are contested views, arguments and mobilization

[89] See Muthaiah, P. (2004). Dandora: The Madiga Movement for Equal Identity and Social Justice in A.P. *Social Action*. April-June, 2004. Vol. 54

and counter mobilizations around the issue. The movement has created ground a greater debate around the questions, they one can SC (Scheduled Caste) be a divisible category into A, B, C and D in order to benefit the lowest among low? Second Can Dalit category represent the diversity of the different caste groups within Dalits? Three what are the legal and policy level challenges to SC categorization? Four can the struggles for recognition and redistribution within Dalits leads to division of Dalits? The contemporary Dalit movement is on an ambiguous state and not being able to address the emerging internal problems of this kind which also has as all India nature.

The above analysis and questions show the need of research on Dalit movement, its changing nature of identity formation and autonomous politics within the regional specificity. Further, failures and achievements of Dalit politics and the emerging internal challenges to the Dalit movement is also an important aspect of contemporary Dalit movement across the state. The present study aims at addressing some of these problems.

Objectives and Scope of the study

The present study is entitled "*Dalit Movements in united Andhra Pradesh: A Study of Identity and Autonomy"* critically evaluates various phases of Dalit movement. It analyses the post independence Dalit assertion and consciousness within the caste- class social relations. The study broadly focuses on the following objectives;

- To study the post Karamchedu (1985) Dalit movement and its impact on Dalit consciousness.
- To study role of Dalit literary production in shaping the Dalit consciousness and identity.
- To explore and analyse regional specificity of caste violence and Dalit assertion.
- To critically analyze Dalits initiatives and attempts towards caste-class praxis.
- To study and analyze the context of Madigas' (MRPS) SC reservation categorization movement (1994) and its implications to Dalit movement.

In order to provide better perspective and analysis of the Dalit movement the study covers the three geographical regions (Rayalaseema, Telangana and Coastal Andhra) of united Andhra Pradesh. Understanding both nature and scope, to capture the complexity it also took into consideration of the contemporary developments of other part of India and tries to see Dalit movement in the holistic perspective.

Hypothesis

The study formulates the following working hypothesis.

- The series of major vibrant incidents brought out the multiple contradictions and shaped the Dalit consciousness and Identity.
- The Dalit attempts and initiatives towards autonomous movement and politics suffered from the internal contradictions and external hegemonic politics.
- The regional historical specificities or the nature of sociopolitical culture of the regions influence the pattern of caste violence and the nature of Dalit assertions
- The assertion of lowest among Dalits is the result of deep rooted inequalities both within Dalits and outside.

Methodology of the Study

The material for the present study gathered has been from secondary as well as primary sources. The secondary sources include government reports, mainly reports of commissions on Scheduled Casts and the state assembly debates, the parliamentary debates and commission reports on reservations in general and SC reservation categorization in particular. Further it covers books and published articles and publicity material (Pamphlets, manifestos, recorded songs, and poetry) issued by Dalit organisations, civil society groups and movements in the state.

For deeper exploration of Dalit assertion in its concrete terms two incidents each from three regions, Telangana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema. To understand contemporary Dalit response to caste violence the Laxmipeta incident (2012) is also covered. In the study each incident is considered a specific case. A pilot study was conducted before actual field work to get basic information and to test the Schedule in the field. Part of the

field work, researcher visited and stayed in the case study villages (Karamchedu, Chundur, Vempenta, Papili, Jadimalkapuram, Kalvakol) and the village where MRPS emerged as a force in the history of Dalit movement. The Schedule is prepared to elicit three kinds of information 1) the context of incident, the reasons for incident, and the socio, economic and political conditions of the village 2) the post incident strategies (organizations, networks), and forms through which Dalits and various caste groups articulated and asserted. 3) It also focused on the changing nature of external and internal factors of Dalit movement particularly Dandora movement.

The study adopted qualitative research method too. A part of this method was used in collecting primary data through taking extensive face to face personal interviews. A tape recorder and field notes were other tools. The interviews were held in Telugu with semi structured schedule with open ended questions. The schedule elicited information from one Academicians; doing research and writing on Dalits, two Movement Leaders: heading different caste groups and organizations, three Activists: who are working and organizing Dalits at various levels (in Local, Urban and institutions), four Grass root level members working in organizations and movements, five Poets, writers and cultural artist: producing creative literature on Dalits and affiliated caste life, culture and ideology 6) Dalit politicians elected for different political positions through various political parties. The respondents have been selected through snow ball method from three regions (Telangana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema). The gender proportion also was taken into consideration. The exploratory method has been used for analysis of field data, incidents and the processes of Dalit Identity formation and the Dalit autonomous articulation and the changing nature of Dalit consciousness.

Chapterisation

The work is organised as follows.

Chapter-I *Introduction*: the chapter deals with introduction to the study which includes broadly understating the category 'Dalit', contextualizing the Dalit identity and Autonomy, the perspectives of Dalit movement, the profile of socioeconomic conditions

of Dalits. Further the chapter also delineates the objectives and hypothesis and methodology of the study.

Chapter-II *The Historical Roots of Dalit Movement*: The chapter traces out the historical roots and trajectories of Dalit movements in both Telangana and Coastal Andhra. It outlines influence of the ancient Buddhist and medieval Bakhti protest movements on Dalit assertion. It also covers the non Brahman movement in Madras presidency and its impact in stimulating the non-Brahman consciousness against the Brahmanic hegemony. While focusing on the Dalit mobilization in colonial period and their political claims, the chapter attempts to understand the leading leaders who represented diverse approaches under various organisations, activities and ideologies for Dalit emancipation. In order to understand the post independent or post Ambedkar Dalit mobilization, it focused on three streams of political processes between 1960-1985 viz a) Congress hegemonic politics and Dalit accommodation b) Dalit social base of left mobilization and c) Dalit independent mobilization and politics.

Chapter-III *Dalit Identity; Caste, Region and Dalit Assertion*: The chapter aims at exploring the Dalit identity articulations in the complex historical regional specificity of Telangana, Costal Andhra and Rayalseema by engaging and explaining two major episodes from each region. Here each one considered as case and seven case studies (including contemporary Laxmipeta, 2012) in-depth are included. All these incidents have taken place after Karamchedu incident (1985). The intention behind taking these case studies is to see and understand layers in and nature of caste conflict in which Dalit assertion takes place and challenge the caste power structures. The analysis of these case studies clearly brings out multiple contradictions rooted the political economy and culture of the specific regions. It also dealt with the dominant caste power operation and ideological state apparatus which charaterises the nature of caste violence and multiple contradictions. Finally the analysis of these incidents post agitations is to explain and analyze its role in shaping and reshaping the Dalit consciousness.

Chapter-IV *Dalit Autonomy*; *Understanding Historical and Contingent Articulations:* the chapter focuses on the initiatives and attempts of Dalits towards autonomous articulations and politics. While dealing with historical and contingent factors of Dalit autonomous activities, it also deals with the context in which formation of Dalit Mahasabha and its impact on Dalit consciousness. It presents a detailed account of Mahasabha activities, nature of mobilization and overall experience of Mahasabha. The chapter also explores Dalit and left parties' attempts and initiatives towards caste-class praxis. It analyses Dalit political mobilization after Karamchedu with some historical milieu; it also attempts to comprehend the electoral performance of Dalit parties. Further it analyzes the launching of BSP, its strategies, mobilization patterns, the electoral performance and emerging challenges. The chapter explores historical roots of MRPS (Dandora movement-1994) demand for rationalization of SC reservation and its implication on Dalit movements and politics.

Chapter-V *Dalit Literature; Understanding Consciousness and Identity:* this chapter deals with Dalit literary works and their role in shaping Dalit Consciousness in challenging Brahmanic hegemonic cultural practice and ideology which colonized the productive Dalit life world. The new consciousness questioned and challenged the Brahmanical cultural ideology and aesthetics. The gamut of Dalit literary writings creatively engaged in producing counter hegemonic ideology. The chapter delineates the way the organic intellectuals, activists, writers, artists and singers articulated their experience through various genres like poetry, songs, plays, art forms, novels etc in creating the Dalit public sphere. It presents relation between Dalit movement and Dalit literary writings. It traces out roots of non Brahman and non Dalits writings on Dalit life and analyzes the radical break in the very nature, articulation and content of the Dalit literary discourse in the post Karamchedu movement. The literary movement over a period of time played crucial role in the formation of Dalit self, identity and deeply engaged in creating alternative symbols, cultural practices. Finally the chapter presents analysis of emergence of Dandora literature in the context of SC reservation categorization movement from below. This phase shows the lowest among low within Dalits started producing literature and raised many historical questions. The writers

involved in this production argue that Dandora literary production deepen the democratic spirit of Dalit literature and expanded Dalit literary horizon.

Chapter-VI ***Conclusion:*** this chapter carries the conclusions emanating from thesis enquiry.

Chapter–II

The Historical Roots of Dalit Movement

Chapter – II

The Historical Roots of Dalit Movement

Dalit Movement and Socio-Cultural Roots

The chapter seeks to explore historical socio-political roots of the contemporary Dalit Movement which has had profound socio-cultural assertion of the past traditions. The movement mainly emanated from multiple historical factors and legacies of the three regions, namely; Telangana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. Basava's Veerashaivism, Hindu social reformism, the material conditions created by colonial rule, the propagation and missionary works of Christianity and Islam and the mass radical anti-colonial assertion profoundly influenced the colonial and post-colonial Dalit movement.[90] In this chapter, the historical roots of the four phases of the Dalit movement and politics will broadly be discussed. These phases are: (i) Socio-cultural reform movements, (ii) Non-Brahmin movement, or the movement against Brahmin hegemony, (iii) The Early Ati-Sudra movement, or the emergence of Non–Aryan identity, both in Nizam rule and the Madras Presidency, and (iv) Congress Hegemonic Politics and class based mobilisation.[91]

1) Socio-Cultural Reform Movements

Historically, the Charuvakas, Lokayautas and Buddhism were the first philosophical and humanitarian movements against caste hierarchy and brahmanical hegemony. The 'Sanga', or Buddhist philosophy and practice in life, brought a sense of democracy, equality, fraternity into the lives of the people[92]. As Ambedkar stated: "Indian history is the history of conflict between revolution and counter revolution of Buddhism and Brahmanism",[93] Buddhism, as a movement, spread across the country and outside the country and it challenged the then prevalent theories about God and Karma. Buddhism, as a humanistic philosophy and anti caste movement, had a profound influence on the

[90]Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). *Dalit Movement in A.P: a Study of Identity and Consciousness*, unpublished PhD thesis, Centre for Political Science, JNU, p. 25.

[91] For more details see Gail Omvedt. (1994). *Dalits and Democratic Revolution*. New Delhi, Sage Publications and Ratnam, K.Y. (1997)

[92] Omvedt, Gail. (2005). *Buddhism in India-Challenging Brahmanism and Caste*. New Delhi, Sage Publications, pp.1-22

[93] Ambedkar, B.R. (1987). *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*. In Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches. Volume 3, Bombay: Government of Maharashtra, p.275

socio-cultural traditions in the then Andhra region. According to many historical evidences, Andhra had been a separate region and state under the first dynasty, the Satavahanas around the third century B.C.[94] Andhra was a strong base for Buddhism. Emperor Ashoka of third century B.C., who gravitated to Buddhism, noted his connection with Andhra in his rock edict near Gooty. Numerous ancient Buddhist inceptions throughout Andhradesha at Battiprolu, Gantasala, Guntupalli, Amravati and Nagarjunakonda reveal a well-known Buddhist culture with popular appeal. Because of deep roots of Buddhism in Andhradesha, a distinctive version of Buddhism singular to the region, called Nagarjuna Buddhism, emerged in due course[95]. The Buddhist roots in Telangana are found in Badankurthi (Adilabad), Kotilingalu, Thambalapally, Pashigam, Munugulagutta (Kareem Nagar), Kondapur (Medak), Geeskonda (Warangal), Panigiri, Thirumalagiri, Vardhamankota (Nalgonda), etc.[96]

The Bhakti Movement was an important phase in the history of the Indian reformist tradition. Roughly this period spanned from 7th to 17th centuries A.D. Between these periods, many Bhakti movements, both in south and north India emerged. The decline of Buddhism and Jainism and the subsequent socio-political context created the conditions for the emergence of reform and Bhakti movements. The two streams of reform traditions, that are Veerasavivism, led by Nayanars, and Vaishnavism, led by Alwars in South India, became prominent in the lives of the people. During this period, one could also see many reform movements all over India. Thiruppan Alwar and Nandanar among the Alwars and the Nayanars of Tamil Nadu, Namdev and Chokamela of Maharashtra were among many untouchable saints. Andal and Karaikkal Ammayar, in Tamil Nadu, Akka Mahadevi, in Karnataka, Mirabai, in Rajasthan, and Lal Deb, in Kashmir, were among the most famous Bhakti poets and mystics of that period.[97] Sects, like Kabir Panth, and that of Ravidas, also flourished in North India. Both Veerasaivism and Vaishnavism were influenced by the reform tradition whose impact on Andhradesha was

[94] Padma and A.W.Barer. (Ed.), (2008), *Buddhism-in the Krishna River Valley of Andhra*. State University of New York Press, United States of America, pp.1-10.
[95] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.25.
[96] Eemani Shivanagi Reddy. (2012). *Telangana Boudham-(Buddhism in Telangana*, 18th Mallepally Rajam Memorial Lecture, published by Mallepally Rajam Memorial Trust, Godavarikhani, pp.11-14
[97] Govinda Pillai, G. (2013). *The Bhakti Movement; Renaissance or Revivalism*. New Delhi, Aakkar Books Publication, pp.7

great. Basava[98] founded Veerashivism. His teachings called Vachanas are all in people's language which anybody can easily understand. In a way, the very choice of local language was in itself a negation of the Sanskrit hegemony. According to Atluri Murali:

> "The Virasaivism of Basavesvara was monistic in philosophy and monotheistic in religion. It militates the preceding cultural and religious traditions, especially the ritualized, institutionalised and hierarchies aspects of Hinduism and Jainism, during the tenth and twelfth centuries temples and mathas have become very important religious centers around which revolved the life of people. With increasing land-grants the temples and with the hegemony of the ideology of Varna dharma the priestly class came to dominate the agrarian and artisanal production and social life. The popular classes have resented the revivification and social hierarchy and the restrictions on social mobility at a time when the material activity was expanding. This was the social religious and material context in the Deccan ideology. As an ideology, Virasaivism had sought to change all that was negative in Hindu culture.

Further argues:

> Virasaivism propounds that each human should realise Shiva through his /her Kayaka (dedicated labour). Work is worship" (Kayakave Kailasa was the sacred dictum for Virasaiva saints. Since Shiva created this world through His inner power, no work is demeaning. Even the meanest labour is 'worship'.[99]

By bringing work to the level of Shiva, Basava undermined the hegemony of priestly castes and challenged the distinction between purity and polluted work. This elevation is also an indication of nothing but making 'dignity of labour' as a primary value of production relations thereby recognising the value of contribution of sudra and ati-sudra labour. Further, Basava denounced the caste system, the rites of animal sacrifice and the subjugation of women to men. In the social sphere, he encouraged widow remarriage,

[98] Basava was born in a Brahman family at Ingaleshwar Bagevadi in the district of Bijapur. During his childhood itself, he rejected the Brahmanical orthodox life and left his home. His followers included: Allama Prabhu, Akka Mahadeva, and Siddharama.

[99] Murali, A. (1994). *Cultural-Ideological Traditions and Legitimization Process in Andhra: Twelfth to Eighteenth Centuries*. Dr.Garigipati Rudrayya Chowdari Endowment Lecture-2, 15th December 1994, Ramachandrapuram, East Godavari district, AP. pp. 6-7.

opposed child marriages and promoted inter- caste marriages and inter-dinning.[100] Many Sudras and untouchables, like Malas and Madigas converted to Veerasaivism. Prominent among them: were Katakota (who was a Shepherd, Mechayya (a washer man), Gundaiah (a potter). Guddav was a well-known untouchable women devotee[101]. The Palkuriki Somanadha's Basava Purana and Panditaradhya Charitra are the two major literary works in Telugu which vividly portray the conflict between Brahmanism and Veerasaivism.[102] Veerasaivism and Vaishnavism developed simultaneously in the Deccan region. The teachings and preaching of Ramanuja favoured social equality, while caste becomes an issue in the Andhra region. Velanati Chodas of Vengi and the Haihayas of Palnad patronised Vaishnavism. Brahmanayudu, who was a ruler of Nalagama (1170AD) of Palnad (Guntur District), was influenced by Vaishnavism. According to V.Ramakrishna;

> "Brahmanayudu of Palnad (of the Recharla family of the Velama caste) was a Vaishnavite by faith and introduced certain reforms in social spheres. According to the ballad, Palanati Veeracharitra, Brahmanayudu appears to have discarded caste and custom and encouraged the heterodox practice of inter-dining among people belonging to different castes. Among his followers Kannama Dasu, an untouchable, was made the commander-in-chief of his armies and was looked upon as his favourite. By a fusion of castes, Brahmanaidu created a new 'caste ' 'Padma nayaka kula' - the caste of heroes".[103]

Brahmanayudu encouraged inter-dining, called "Chapakoodu," in all lower castes and caste Hindus were asked to sit and eat together. Brahmanayudu attempted to create new social relations, by initiating reform in Vashnavism. However, there are critics which argue that these reforms were under the influence of Sanskrit version of Brahmanism. It was felt that attempt to create composite castes called "warrior caste" was under the influence of Sanskrit version of the Guna hierarchy ranking which worked internally in

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[100] Ramakrishna, V. (1983). *Social Reform in Andhra*. New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, pp-39-41.
[101] Padma Rao, Katti. (1998). *Caste and Alternative Culture*. Madras, Gurukul Lutheran Theological Collage and Research Institute, p.112
[102] Opt, Cit, Murali, A. (1994). pp.3
[103] Opt, cit, Ramakrishna, V. (1983). p.41.

the selection.[104] However, in the later phase of Veerasaivism and Vaishnvism in 16th and 17th centuries failed to carry the same spirit. Perhaps the entry of Brahmans diluted the Saivite movement. In fact, the new castes like Jangamas, Linga Jangam, Nulaka Chandaiah and Lingayats emerged out of this process. However, it contributed to some social change against orthodox Brahmanical traditions.[105] One of the earliest Hindu saints who spoke against caste prejudice was Annamacharya.[106] He disapproved of caste in his "Sankirtanas".[107] He was identified as a poet in the tradition of the Alwars, and Vaishnava Bhakti poets. He used the language of common man to state many things worth remembering:

> "The high-level land of the Brahmin and the low flat level of the Chandala (untouchable) are the same". There is no high and low; Sri Hari is the soul of all". "A Mala (untouchable) who worships the Almighty, but eats beef, is a better Brahmin than an ascetic who does not think of Vishnu, though he is a learned Vedanti". "What does it matter, what caste is a Haridas (devotee of Vishnu)"[108].

During the 16th and 17th centuries, there were two important personalities who became sources for reforms. They were forceful critics of the caste system and oppressive prejudices. Those two rebels were Vemana and Veera Brahmam whose teachings and preaching's had a great impact on the common people. Vemana was a rebel poet philosopher who belonged to the Sudra Reddy caste from Rayalseema. He was a wandering naked poet who critically commented and exposed the contradictions and hypocrisy of human life. His writings were collected and made available to people by C.P Brown. According to Kancha Illaiah:

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[104] Opt, cit, Murali, A. (1994). P.5-6
[105] Opt, cit, Ramakrishna, V. (1983). p.42
[106] Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya was a mystic Saint composer of the 15 century. He was the earliest known musician of South India to compose songs called "Sankeertanas". Annamacharya was born on May 9, 1408- lived up to February 23, 1503 in Tallapaka, a remote village in current day Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh, India. It is told that he composed around 32,000 Samkeertanas on lord Venkateshwara and Alivelumanga.
[107] Kirtanas are a kind of devotional songs Thousands of Kirtanas are available and documented
[108] Padma Rao, Katti. (1998). *Caste and Alternative Culture*. Madras, The Gurukul Lutheran Theological Collage and Research Institute, p.111

> "Vemana's literary construction shows that he was strongly rooted in the sudra productive culture. Unlike Molla, he chooses to write in colloquial Telugu. His productive idiom, his anti-Brahmanical ideology and deep understanding of the sudra culture is an indication of the tension between the Sankritized Brahmanical notion and the sudra productive notions of life."[109]

Further, adds:

> "He constructs morality around atheism, agnosticism, rationalism, feminism and of course, anti-casteism. His poetic text reflects as many plural cultures as the Dalit Bahujan castes, tribes and sects that exist in the Telugu country. Hinduism for him was an idol-worshipping negative practice. In several subtle forms, he brushes aside Sankaracharya's philosophy of the soul and body being separate entities".[110]

His influence was explicit when he praised Shivakavulu and Navakavulu. His poetry genre was popularly called "Vemana Shatakam". Pothuluri Veerabrahmam was popularly known as Brahmam Garu born in Vishvabrahmana family. He grew up in a family where his father was head of the Veerasahiva monastery (Peetha) at Paaghni in the Karnataka region. Veerabrahmam got influenced to this tradition; he started to preach and propagate his teachings in the form of 'Kalagyana Thatvalu'. V.Ramakrishna observes:

> "Veerabrahmam condemned the hierarchical system of caste and believed that Vedic knowledge could be gained by one and all. Accordingly, he had among his disciples men from several castes. He pleaded for the discontinuance of idolatry and strongly criticised superstitions. He advocated reforms in marriages and stated that girls should be married only after they had passed the age of puberty. He admitted women into his order and made them eligible for sainthood. Another significant aspect of his philosophy was his trenchant criticism of untouchability and pollution".[111]

[109] Kancha Illaiah. (2010). *The Weapon of the other*. Delhi, Pearson, p.114.
[110] Ibid, p.119
[111] Opt, cit, Ramakrishna, V. (1983). p.46

Many people become follower of Brahmamgaru. After he passed away, some of his disciples like Siddaiah, Eshwaramma, Yadla Ramadoss and Yagantivaru carried his message and teachings to the common people and spread his teachings through songs, and so on[112]. In the early nineteenth century in Andhradesha, there were also many non-Hindu alternative semi-religious cults all of them emerged from lower castes and had influence. These sects challenged the caste system and were anti Hinduism. Nasaraiah founded the 'Nasaraiah sect' which is popular among Madigas, in particular, and untouchables, in general, in the Coastal Andhra region. Nasaraiah was influenced by the Islamic principles of egalitarianism.[113] He tried to emulate a model of Islam as an emancipatory doctrine for the untouchables. His main tenets were social equality, good moral conduct, and worship of only one god, discarding idol worship and spreading unity among the untouchables. Nasraiah made disciples and sent them out to preach. He made no distinction of either caste or sex. Women, as well as men, passed through the initiatory rites and then went forth to make converts. One of his earliest converts seems to have been a Madiga, who made a guru and sent out to convert people to this sect. They realised that theism of Nasraiah was better than the polytheism of their village cults. Belonging to the Nasraiah sect raised the social scale of Madigas.[114]

Due to industrialisation in England in the early 19th century, the British Government started some reforms under two aspects: 1) Evangelicism 2) Utilitarianism or liberalism.[115] According to G.A Oddie, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), one of the earliest Christian missionaries, worked for massive Christian proselytisation. Around 1860-1900, in the Godavari–Krishna districts of Andhra, the CMS opened many English schools which welcomed caste Hindus and also untouchables into these schools. The number of baptised untouchables steadily rose from 1,650 (in 1869) to 3,500 (1882), to 9,000 (1885) and 22,000 (1905). The CMS mission prepared the ground for mass conversions. V.Ramakrishna observes:

[112] Ibid, p.46
[113] See Kshirasagar, R.K. (1997). *Dalit Movement in India and its leaders*. M.D Publications Pvt. Ltd
[114] Rauschenbusch Clough, Emma. (1899). *While Sewing Sandals*. London, Asian Educational Service, P.59
[115] Opt, Cit, Ramakrishna, V. (1983). P.48

"The first signs of missionary activity go back to the year 1597 when two Jesuit fathers and a Brother were at the court of Venkateshwarlu in Chandragiri (now in Chittoor district) where they stayed till 1615. Their efforts were not much of a success. Fr. Maudnit was the first to convert among the Telugus, the first converts being a widow and her four children in 1701. Punganur became the cradle of the Telugu Christians, from where Christianity gradually spread to Venkatagiri (Nellore district) which became a big Christian settlement and later to Krishnapuram, Hindupur (in Anantapur district) and China Ballapuram (Bellary district).[116]

He further observes:

"After the decline of Jesuism by the 1750s, a new era in Christian Endeavour began in the wake of the Evangelical revival which was sweeping the west during the last years of the 18th century… In south India, this new wave of Evangelism was spearheaded by five societies, namely, the society for the propagation of Gospel, the London Missionary society, the Church Missionary Society, Wesleyan Mission and the Free Church Mission of Scotland".[117]

In the field of utilitarian or liberal field, the British Government brought in many reforms

"In the fields of revenue administration and judiciary, abolition of slavery, sati and female infanticide legalising widow marriages. They launched educational programme presumably to improve the 'decadent' Indian society. Both evangelical and utilitarian trends got submerged in their attitudes towards education. Wood's Dispatch in 1854 settled all conflicts regarding educational policies conclusively and the state assumed responsibility for educating the masses of its subjects".[118]

In 1874, the Kambal couple started their missionary works after that they moved to Secunderabad in 1875 and established the "Telugu Baptist Sangam" (TBS) where they worked among the army personnel. Later, the TBS extended its activities to Nalgonda.

[116] Ibid, p.49
[117] Ibid, p.50
[118] Ibid, p.56

American Baptist Mission" (ABM) worked and established its Sangams in Hanumakonda, Nalgonda, Jangam, Suryapet, Madira in the Telangana region.[119] The "Church of England Zenana Missionary Society" was launched in 1875 in Khammam and other parts of Andhra. The main objective of mission was to work among lower castes and Muslim women. In 1939, they started the "Mary Vikasa centre" to teach and serve the orphan women.[120]

Reva Jone Wesley had started "South Asia Methodist Mission" in England. People like G.Vinklan, J.E Robertson worked in spreading missionary work while they started working in building the railways in Secunderabad. In 1872, the 'Methodist Sangam' was started. This Sangam opened Stanley Girls' School (1921) and the School for Bible Training (1909). Through various social services, it extensively worked in Vikarabad, Sirvancha, Jaheerabad, Tandur, etc[121] (M. Mosses, 40-44). The Veslian Mission also worked and established its missions in Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Jagital, Siddipeta, Nizambad, Sangareddy, Aaleru, Medak, etc. The Medak Church was founded by Challes Wakar Pasnet in 1914.[122]

Deccan Foreign (Videshi) Missionaries came to India in early 1800. However, in 1880, it reached Deccan and divided the region for missionary work. These were: 1) North-Weslians Sangalu 2) Western-Methodist Sangalu 3) South -Mennonite Brother Sangalu 4) East Baptist Sangalu. These missions extensively worked, particularly among untouchables. In fact, the education, health conditions improved and untouchables got spiritual freedom by entering into Christianity from feudal relation and caste oppression.[123]

The reform initiatives brought some changes in the social relations of the people in the particular regions. The Parthana Samaj in Coastal Andhra and Arya Samaj in Telangana

[119] Moses, M. (2004). *Andhra Pradesh Christian Sanga Charitra*. (Christian Church History of Andhra Pradesh), Paddisonpet, Christian Truth Press, P.34
[120] Ibid, p.38
[121] Ibid, pp.40-44
[122] Ibid, p.49
[123] Ibid, pp.86-89

contributed to mobilising and organising the untouchables, in the process, helped in the social mobility of the untouchables. The Parthana Samaj was established in 1878 by Kandukuri Veereshalingam (1848-1919) in Rajahmundry and its leaders worked among untouchables. Veereshalingam established schools with the help of Pittapuram Maharaj. He also fought against sati, child marriage, bride price, caste prejudice, etc. Among others who worked for social reform were Chilkamarthi Laxmi Narasimham, Raghupathi Venkat Ratnam Naidu, Narala Setti Devendrudu, Vemula Kurmayya, Guduri Rama Chandra Rao, Vemuri Ramji Rao, Nallapati Hanumantha Rao and Vellanki Krishna Murthi. Chilkamarthy Narsimham established the Rammohan School for untouchable boys in Rajahmundry in February 1909. Pittapuram Maharaj himself opened many schools and hostels; many early untouchable educators and leaders benefited from this initiative. Some of them were Boyee Bhemana, Bojja Appalaswamy, Pamu Rammurthy, and Nadipudi Ganapathi Rao (ex MLA).[124] However, these reformist initiatives did not challenge the foundational legitimacy and inequality of caste system and untouchability and women oppression. The Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh also took its inspiration from Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's Satyashodak Samaj Movement (1873) in Maharashtra and the non–Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu, and Sri Narayana Guru's and Sri Ayyam Kali's social reform struggles in Kerala.[125]

2) Non-Brahmin movement (or) Movement against Brahmin hegemony

Non-Brahman movement is one of the phases in which the Brahmin hegemony was challenged. However, it is often equated with the non-Brahman movement of Tamil Nadu where a strong movement politically and culturally sustained for some time in the colonial period, in south India. Telugus were always in forefront in the non- Brahmin movement in India.[126] Justice Party leaders like Rajas of Panagal, Bobbili, Pithapuram, Chellapali and Venkatagiri and Munuswamy Naidu and Sir C.V Reddy were Telugus. While understanding the non-Brahmin movement, one has to see why the non-Brahman movement consisted of non-Brahmins? Who were the people who took active role in the

[124] Ramalaxmi, P. (1995). *Reform Movement in Godavari District: (1878-1939) An attempt towards Social Justice.* Dr. Garigipati Rudrayya Chowdari, Endowment Lecture-3, December 15th, 1995, pp.10-12.
[125] Ibid, p.30
[126] See for more details Pandian, M.S.S. (2008). Brahman *and Non-Brahman*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

movement and what was the political economy of the context which was operating in the protest? These important questions arose due to the agrarian economy of Andhra which became the base for emergence of the non-Brahman movement in the region. The construction of big dams in the Krishna-Godavari deltas, particularly of anicuts on Godavari near Rajamandry (1850), Krishna at Vijayawada (1855) and Pennair at Nellore (1862-63), expanded the irrigation projects and canals which radically transformed the agrarian production in the region.[127] The dominant caste groups who were having the land under the canals benefited more than the lower castes. Umaramaswamy observes;

> "In the Telugu country, the groups who are elite from Reddies, Kammas and Velamas, Balijas were a part of the non-Brahmin movement. All these communities, substantially landowners, had a tradition of political dominance. What they lacked to claim high status effectively were modern western education and ritual status. It will be obvious as we go along that it was the Brahmin monopoly over ritual status and government jobs which these castes systematically attacked".[128]

Among the dominant castes, the Vaishyas were the first to protest and challenge the Brahman hegemony. Mamidi Venkaiah (1764-1835) often used to overturn the rules laid down by Brahmans and the Varna Order. He could not tolerate the discrimination by Brahmans and performing the rituals in the Puranic tradition for Vaishyas. In order to overcome discrimination and challenge the Brahman hegemony, the Vaishyas decided to perform rituals on their own. The matter went to court, which ordered that Vaishyas had right to get rituals according to Vedic traditions, but do to perform these themselves.[129] However, Mamidi Venkaiah later on shifted his residence with the support of Vaisyas in Machilipatnam and started his work by organising the Vaisays. Meanwhile, the Brahmins met under 'Vidwan Mahasabha' in 1825 and decided to do perform the rituals in Puranic traditions for non-Brahmins. When the case went to court, the verdict (1845) was against

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[127] Opt, cit, Ramalaxmi,P. (1995). p.12.
[128] Ramaswamy, Uma. (1978). The Belief of the non-Brahmin Movement in India: the Andhra Case. *Asian Survey*, Vol-18, No-3, 1978, p.291
[129] Suri, K.C. (2000). *Non-Brahmin Movement in Andhra -A study of the Nature of Protest against Brahmanical order in Andhra during Colonial times*. Dr. Garigipati Rudrayya Chowdary Endowment Lecture-7, 25th Febrauary, p.15

Vaishyas. This verdict compelled Vaishyas to work more intensively against Brahmin hegemony[130]. Raghupathi Venkatratnam Naidu who belonged to the Telaga (Kapu) caste was a great reformer from Machilipatnam. He worked against Brahmin hegemony and the system of having dancing girls (nautch-women). The Samineni Mudhu Narshimam (1792-1856) Kappu) classical text 'Heetasuchini' described the reformist traditions in the religious and literary fields. The books brought out how it is important to write in the language that common people could understand to transmit knowledge against the Brahmanical Sankritised language. He also suggested reforms in religious rituals like widow remarriage, abolition of child marriages, health issues, etc. Later on, this text and his work inspired many reformers in Andhra, which could be seen in the works of Veereshalingam and his contemporaries.[131] Although it started in Tamil Nadu in the Telugu speaking world, there was articulation of non-Brahmin concerns which are reflected in the writings of Suryadevara Ragavaiah Chowdary (year of birth not known-death 1937). The book 'Brahmanetharodyama Thatvamu' (1936) delineates that Brahmins were legitimating the religious rules for their hegemony. Therefore, Chowdhary said that one has to define the hierarchy of people by gunakarma (good conduct) - not by birth[132]. The proposers of non-Brahmin movements argued that Swaraj meant Swaraj of Brahmin imposed by the Congress nationalists during the British imperial rule.[133] The Kamasalas (goldsmith) caste also started to challenge the Brahmin hegemony by calling themselves as 'Vishvabrahmans'. In Sudurperi village of Chittoor district, a controversy arose between Marga Sahayachari, a Vishwabrahman, and Panchangam Gundayya, of the Sahachari caste. The verdict came on December 5, 1818 on behalf of Kamsalies (goldsmiths) that "the plaintiffs (Vishwabrahmans) could perform all their ceremonies and functions with vedic language, etc.[134]

The non-Brahmin Sangam was formed in 1917. It emerged in the context of many historical initiatives and incidents. Some of the incidents deserve to be mentioned here.

[130] Opt, cit, Ramalaxmi, P. (1995). p.15.
[131] See Muddhu Narsimha, Samineni. (2008). *Hithasuchini*. Hyderabad, Peacock Classic
[132] Suryadevara, Raghavaiah Chowdhary. (2012). *Brahmanetarodhyama Thatvamam*. Vijayawada, Palllavi Publication, PP.3-8
[133] Opt, cit, Suri, K. (2000). p.8
[134] Ibid, p.16

The Kollur incident in 1916 is important. It was alleged that Kamma students were denied the right to study the Vedas in Krishna district, the Brahmins registered a notice that Kammas should not be allowed to study Sanskrit. At Kothavaram in the same district, Brahmins protested against using suffix of 'Chowdary' in the place of 'dasa' by the Kamma caste, etc. This and many such incidents contributed to the intensification of Non-Brahmin consciousness among the Kamma caste that later became active and started taking a leading role. Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary, in his literary writing, deconstructed many Hindu texts with non-Brahmin consciousness.[135]

The entire non-Brahmin movement was organised around the belief that Brahmins were hegemonising and legitimising the Hindu texts for their supremacy. The non-Brahmin movement also challenged the domination and disproportionate representation of Brahmans in state institutions and administrative positions. Further, they also argued that Brahmans were Aryans who came from outside. Therefore, non-Brahmins, the Dravidians, were the true inhabitants of this land.[136]. According to Uma Ramaswamy:

> "The thrust of these exercises was to claim Kshatriya status for these castes. The Kammas, Reddies and Velamas were willing to grant Kshatriya status to each other as well as to some allied castes with similar status. They found the Varna scheme convenient for this purpose, even though they found the caste system irksome. The non-Brahmin leaders claimed that Brahmin status should depend on birth. Even Thripuranneni Ramasamy Choudhry (TRC), an eminent leader, was caught in this contradiction. TRC argued that it was necessary to differentiate the non-Brahmin castes from one another. He claimed that the Kammas, Reddies and Velamas were Kshatriyas and superior to sudra non-Brahmins such as the Golla, Kummari. While he encouraged marriages between sub castes, he did not greatly favour inter-caste marriages. Non-Brahmin thinking on social differentiation was turning out to be a curious amalgam of status based on personal qualities, occupational differences and birth in the Varna scheme".[137]

[135] Opt, cit, Ramaswamy, Uma. (1978). p.292
[136] Ibid, p.293
[137] Ibid, p.295

In the process of the movement, these persons could not turn their orientation and activities towards asking the foundational questions of annihilation of caste. Hence, all these ended up by establishing their specific caste organisations like 'Adi Velama Sreyobhi Vardhini Sangam' in 1907, Reddi Mahasabha and Kappu Association in 1913.[138] It is posited that largely the movement from the beginning dominated by the upper non-brahmins: Kammas, Reddies, and Velamas. Even within these castes, many of the leaders came from princely families. They also presented the elitism in their programmes and action. Non-Brahmin movements, instead of rejecting the hierarchical principle, drew heavily on it to restate their position. The activities of the caste associations, the competing claims to superiority and Kashatriyas status and above all, the notion of self-help, whereby each caste sought to promote its own interests did not contribute to the emergence of a broad based movement[139]. They also started caste-specific journals to consolidate and strengthen their caste organisations.[140] Most of the dominant caste opened education special funds for their caste students. They also opened caste-based hostels and provided scholarships for education. They also arranged intra-caste marriages, strengthened the endogamy relations. They also sought to provide employment opportunities within their castes.[141] In the process, as Ambedkar rightly pointed out, the non-Brahmin movements questioned Brahmans, instead of Brahmanism. These failed to recognise the internal differences. The rhetoric promises and symbolic questions did not include untouchables. In fact, these developments re-imposed caste hegemony, perpetuated caste violence in post-independent India as in the case of the massacre by Kammas in Karamchedu (1985) on Madigas, massacre by Reddies in Chundur (1991) and the brutal killings of Dalits by Kapus in Laxmipeta (2012).[142]

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[138] Opt, cit, Suri, K.C. (2000). p.19

[139] Opt, cit, Ramaswamy, Uma. (1978). P.297

[140] It is estimated that there were around 18 Caste-specific journals like: Brahmana Patrika (Brahmins), Swadharma Prakasini (Neogi Brahmins) Kshtriya Patrika (Kshtriyas), Vaikshnasa (Vaikanasa Sect), Reddi Rani (Reddies), Chowdari (Kammas) Telaga Sanghabhivardhani (Telagas), Panchanan (Viswabrahmans), Vaishnava Patrika (Vaishnavas), Devanga seva (Devangas, Padma (Padmasali) Nayaka (Velamas) (cited in Inna Reddy *Social Reform Movements in Andhra (1920-1947*), 1998, PhD thesis, submitted in the Department of History, University of Hyderabad.

[141]Inna Reddy. (1998). Social *Reform Movements in Andhra (1920-1947*). PhD thesis, submitted in the Department of History, University of Hyderabad, p.296

[142] These three incidents are discussed in detail in next chapter-III

3) The Early Untouchable Movements (or) the Emergence of non–Aryan Identities

The Dalit assertions in both Telangana of Nizam rule and Andhra of Madras Presidency carried two different trajectories; yet, the Scheduled Caste leaders visited various places in these regions, exchanged ideas and extended their solidarities in fighting caste discrimination. In terms of geographical and political conditions, these regions are different. While Coastal Andhra had the choice between autonomy and integration, Hyderabad witnessed a radicalised autonomous, but later factionalised, Dalit movement. Each gained inspiration and strength from the other. The Coastal Andhra Dalit movement had an extensive rural base, while the Hyderabad region witnessed an active factionalised Dalit leadership restricted only to urban centres, such as Hyderabad and Secunderabad from 1900 to 1950. Many organisations were established and many leaders emerged in Telangana and Andhra regions. The following sections will deeply analyse the movement in both regions.

Hyderabad State under Nizam Rule

The rise and growth of Dalit movement signified the collective self mobilisation of Dalits for self respect, dignity and social justice. This movement also created and produced different identities in the process of searching for their past identities, like Adi-Andhra, Adi-Hindu, Adi-Dravida and Dalits. These identities were owned and defended by Dalits, depending on their social and political context.[143] Dalit self-identity was constructed and articulated in terms of a critique of Brahmanical Hinduism, caste ideology and hegemony. Thus, building the constructive movement against the caste system and untouchability were the recurring themes for the Dalit leadership in Telangana.[144] In the Hyderabad state, the “Jagan Mitra Mandali" was the first organisation which worked for the untouchables. Bagya Reddy Varma.[145] was associated with this organisation. As Bagya Reddy Varma was actively engaged in sensitising and organising untouchables, he renamed the 'Jaganmitra Mandali' as "Manya Sangam." This Sangam too worked for the

[143] See Guru, Gopal. (2004). *Understanding Dalit Category*. In Gopal Guru (Ed.) Atrophy *of Dalits Politics*, Dalit Intellectual Collective, Bombay, Vikas Adyana Kendram.
[144] Satyanarayan, A. (2010). *Dalit Movements in the first of half of the 20th Century: a study of Andhra and Telangana*. Presented in the Workshop, Organised by Centre for Dalit Studies. P.1.
[145] Bagya Reddy Varma original name was Madari Bagayya. The very titles of Reddy and Varma clearly indicate that Bagya Reddy aspired to work within the structure with a reformist approach.

upliftment of the untouchables. However, there were many groups within the Hyderabad Scheduled Caste leadership.

Leaders like Arigay Ramaswamy, Shamsundhar, B.S Venkat Rao and H.J Subaiah also became active leaders who launched various organisations. Bagya Reddy Varma also started "Bagyanagari Patrika" in Adi-Hindu press. Simultaneously, he wrote and published writings on untouchable history culture and rights. These included works like: *Purana Charitramu*; *Bharatha Kanda Pracheena Jathulu* (History of the ancient Tribes of India), *Veera Suratha Manjari*; *Mala Pillanu Raakumarudu Pendliyaduta* (Royal Prince marrying a Mala girl). His writing traced the pre-Aryan and royal roots of untouchables. He also wrote pamphlets in Hindi and Telugu to communicate with his supporters across caste and religion. Pamphlets like *Antudhoshamu Mannarela* (Why cannot they do away with the practice of untouchability) and Madya *Nisheda Keertanaloo* (Songs against Alcohol consumption) were widely circulated to sensitise the masses[146]. In his Patrika, he published and popularised alternative symbols for the Adi-Hindu movement and people like Adi-Hindu nation flag which consisted of two colours Swastik on top with a bow and arrow and a wheel in the middle of the flag. These symbols were considered to be indications of the pre-Brahmanical past, culture, history, etc.[147] The reformist initiatives of Bagya Reddy Varma made him to associate with the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj. Some of these organisations also helped him to continue his activism. He considered that his activities like the fight against the devadasi system and consumption of arrack were for the development of untouchables. Dalit leaders established various organisations which contributed to the empowerment and emancipation of Dalits in the Nizam period. Details of some such organisations are given in the Appendix-I.

The Dalit Movement was carried on by a number of caste associations led by a galaxy of Dalit leaders in Telangana. Notable among them were Bhagya Reddy Varma, Ariga

[146] Jangam, Chinnaiah. (2008). *Dilemmas of Dalit Agendas; Political Subjugation and self Emancipation in Telugu country 1910-1950.* University of Pennsylvania, Centre for the Advanced Study of India. (Paper Presented in Conference on 3-5 December, 2008), Pp.8-9.
[147] Ibid, p.10.

Ramaswamy and B.S Venkat Rao as the "Great trinity" of Dalit struggle for emancipation in the erstwhile Hyderabad state. "Jagan Mitramandali" was established in 1906 by M.V. Bhagya Reddy Varma.[148] One of the laudable services of Bhagya Reddy to the community was the prevention of the dedication of Devadasis who led a disgraceful life of prostitution and formed an organisation under the name "Adi-Hindu Murali Nivarana Mandali" to stop this evil practice.[149] However, the partiality of Bagya Reddy Varma and his followers towards the Mala community led to the formation of "Arundateeya Mahasabha" on 1st June, 1931 by P.R Venkat Swamy, Ariga Ramaswamy in collaboration with Garika Mallesh Rao and B.S Venkat Rao, Suravaram Pratap Reddy and Krishna Sharma. Except Mallesh Rao and Suravaram Pratap Reddy, the others were Arunthatiyas[150]. The Hyderabad State Depressed Classes Association, led by Arigay Ramaswamy and Konda Venkata Swamy, carried on the activities of Adi-Hindu Jatiyonti Maha Sabha for the upliftment of untouchables. M.L Audaiah B.S Venkat Rao and Arigay Ramaswamy actively participated in these activities.

Bhagya Reddy Varma's service in the field of education was laudable. He established schools for the girls of untouchables in the localities of these people. About 34 schools were established under the leadership of Bagya Reddy Varma to promote educational facilities of 'Adi-Hindus'. For this, he collected contributions from philanthropists.[151] More than 2500 children were studying in around 20 schools in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The following Table will depict the growth of education among the untouchables.

[148] Goutam, M.B. (1991). *Bhagyodayam; Maadari Bhagyareddy Varma Life Sketch and Mission*. Hyderabad, Adi-Hindu Social Service League Trust, p.1
[149] Ibid, p.30
[150] Venkatswamy, P.R. (1955). *Our Struggles for Emancipation.* Volume-1, Secundrabad, Universal Art Printers, Secunderabad, pp.60-61
[151] Ibid, p.41

Table 2.1

The aid Sanctioned for the Education of Dalits in Hyderabad state

Year	No. of aided Schools Specially for Dalits	No. of Dalit Students	Sanctioned Govt.aid (annually)
1923	21	4,994	7,890
1928	40	4,994	5,148
1932	44	6,623	5,622
1933	57	8,642	7,572
1938	66	10,612	8,880
1944-46	199	20,429	2,50,000
1946-47	188	-	1 Crore

Source: Shymal, H, Swapna, (2004) *Dalit Movement in South India*, New Delhi, Serials Publication. p. 114[152]

The Nizam Government came to the rescue of the school in a critical juncture by merging them into Govt. schools. The Dalit leadership negotiated to get Rs. 1 crore for improvement of education. According to the Hyderabad State Depressed Classes Organisation, it submitted a memorandum containing 10 demands to the Nizam's government on 15th December, 1940 for the promotion of education in Dalits. The following was the list of demands.

1. To grant free ships bursaries and scholarships to all depressed classes, in order to help them to continue their studies and to encourage them to go for foreign education.
2. To provide at least one free hostel in each district exclusively for the depressed class students and sufficient contribution should be granted for the construction of the hostels in the city.
3. To provide free boarding and lodging to all college students in the college hostels of Osmania University.
4. To encourage the depressed class students desirous of pursuing foreign studies in medicine, engineering and law.

[152] Shymel H,Swapna. (2004). *Dalit Movement in South India*, New Delhi, Serial Publication, p.141

5. To provide suitable appointments for the educated men by reserving proportionate numbers of posts in public service (Civil and military).
6. To introduce free compulsory primary education throughout the state.
7. To establish night schools for adults, labourers working in different industrial factories and rural areas in the state to impart education to them.
8. To constitute an advisory board consisting of officials to advise the government on the beneficial needs of the depressed classes.
9. To establish separate primary schools for depressed class students in the villages.
10. To recruit depressed class students in industrial schemes and other capital works and to appoint teachers and inspectors of government schools from this community.[153]

The caste associations of Dalits were divided into four factions by the end of the 1940s. These were: Adi-Hindu Social Service League (under M.B. Gautham, B.R. Varma), Arundateeya Mahasabha (under the guidance of Arigay Ramaswamy), Hyderabad Depressed Classes Association (under the leadership of B.S Venkat Rao) and Hyderabad state (Adi-Hindu) Scheduled Castes Federation under the leadership of J.H Subaiah). Arigay Ramaswamy started an organisation, known as "Independent Scheduled Castes Federation" with the broad objective to strive for the unity of Dalit organisations. However, the Dalit movement in Telangana was already divided due to traditional caste cleavages of the sub-castes. The leadership ambitions of Dalit leaders also contributed for the factions in Dalit movement. P.R Venkat Swamy and other educated Dalit leader documented the ongoing history of those times:

> "Bagya Reddy claimed the leadership of 20 lakhs Adi-Hindus of Hyderabad state. But a major portion of his public service was devoted for the Malas only. He was not in favour of the abolition of sub-castes among the Adi-Hindus. He wanted the Malas and Madigas to live separately. He was not in favour of inter-dinning, not to speak of inter-marriages of Malas and Madigas".[154]

[153] Ibid
[154]Opt, cit, Venkatswamy, P.R. (1955). p.26

Bagya Reddy Varma, being a Mala, turned out to be partial towards the Mala sub-caste. This was proved in two instances. The first was on the issue of ownership of Adi-Hindu Bhavan. For a number of years, the Bhavan was a contentious issue between the Malas and the Madigas. (Muthaiah). Bhagya Reddy sided with the Malas under the plea that not a single Madiga contributed to the building fund and also changed the name into Mahanti (Mala) Adi-Hindu Bhavan.[155] B. Shamsundhar was one of the important Dalit leaders who worked for the welfare of untouchables and Muslim unity in the Deccan region. His active involvement in organising and mobilizing had great influence. The 'Moolbharati' concept made him to campaign on the slogan 'We are not Hindus.' His organisation, "Bheemasena,' also gave strength to the youth at the grassroots level, since he was well educated. His fluency in languages like Urdu, English, and Marathi also enabled him to work across Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka. Even today, some of his followers are running the 'Mool Bharati B. Shyam Sunder Memorial Society, in Gulbarga, in Karnataka. Due to the internal conflicts, political differences and leadership ambitions, after 1950, most of the Dalit leaders were drawn towards the Congress Party and the Communist Movement.

Coastal Andhra under Madras Presidency

The decade of the 1920s witnessed the emergence of the Dalit movement and raised consciousness among Dalits. Due to the increase in agricultural commercialization, this phase witnessed a unique situation in Andhra. It laid the foundation for the extensive spread of the movement in rural areas that led to the development of an autonomous Dalit movement. Commercialisation eroded the customary caste and Jajamani ties which had bound Dalit labourers and helped Malas and Madigas to move forward in socio-economic arenas. Many artisans and village servants were displaced from their customary callings and occupations by fresh technologies and a new structure of government.[156] These economic changes created political turmoil, which led to an increase in Dalits consciousness.

[155] Ibid, p.43
[156] See Gail Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and Democratic Revolution*. New Delhi, Sage Publication.

Many other factors contributed to bringing about consciousness and as a result, motivated Dalits to take part in the contemporary socio-political movements. During the period from 1920 to1930s, Christian missionaries started working in Dalit localities. While establishing educational institutions, they undertook ameliorative measures that sought to increase self respect of Dalits. Due to these Dalit assertions, the Madras government responded by establishing a labour department to work for the development of the Dalits in the Presidency area. Commercialisation of agriculture, major irrigation dams on the Krishna, Godavari rivers and similar actions also helped in the upward social mobility of many Malas and Madigas. The Burmese factor also accelerated the Dalit Movement**.** Thousands of Dalit labourers, particularly Malas, migrated each year for work on the docks at Rangoon in Burma from the late 19th century onwards. Some of them stayed back even after their contract period expired and managed to pick up new trades. In Burma, they availed of educational facilities and earned money. On back to their original homelands, some of them took direct part in the movement. Other devotedly financed it. Later, many Dalit leaders visited Burma to gather resources for their movements[157]. Most of the energetic Dalit leaders of the 1920s drew inspiration from the Sevashram, established by a Brahmin reformer, Guduru Ramachandra Rao, at Gudiwada in Krishna district in 1912. He invited Dalit activists to work in the Ashram to guide the Dalits untouchable cadre who later worked in the rural areas that included Sundru Venkaiah, Kusuma Ventkataramaiah, Naralasetti Devendrudu, Kusuma Darmanna, and many others.[158] .

The early 20th century Dalit movement in Andhra broadly brought out four political trends: (a) As autonomous Ambedkarite movements, which showed the inconsistency of choices between autonomy and assimilation; (b) The Dalit movement affiliated to the Congress-led national movement of the colonial period like Harijan Sevak Sangh politics; (c) Mobilisation under the Communists, and (d) The Non-Brahmin movement.[159] In all

[157] Satyanarayana, A. (2007). *Society Economy and Polity in Modern Andhra*. New Delhi, Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, pp.248-294
[158] See Yaganti, Chinna Rao. (2003). *Dalits struggle for identity; Andhra and Hyderabad 1900-1950*. New Delhi, Kanishka Publishers Distributers.
[159] Ibid.

these spheres of mobilisation, Dalits participated and worked for the realisation of a casteless society and dignified life – and not merely for material benefits.

The resistance of Dalits to Sanskritisation and reformist, integrationist tendencies resulted in their organising themselves. The Dravidian movement, which gave birth to the identity of Adi-Dravidians,[160] led to the construction of certain radical regional identities by the Dalits themselves; for example, Adi-Andhras (Telugu speaking untouchables) and Adi Karnatakas (Kanada speaking untouchables). The basis of identity was conviction of Dalits that they were inhabitants of the country, i.e., sons of the soil. This thought gave fillip to autonomous Dalit movements, even though Gandhian reformists, Hinduism, Communist and non-Brahmin inclusion methods worked out at the mass level[161]. The word Adi-Andhra came into use in the post 1917 time when the Dalits, all over South India, were drawn towards the non-Aryan theories of the Dravidian movements, for identifying themselves as Adi-Dravidian, Adi-Hindu, Adi-Karnatakas, original sons of the soil. In 1931 census, both Malas (6, 65,000) and Madigas (6, 12,000) were listed under the Adi-Andhra category.[162]

The initiation or beginning, of Adi-Andhra Mahasabha conference in 1917 created enthusiasm among Dalit leaders. In the initiation of this conferences the Hindu reformer, Guduru Ramachandra Rao, played an important role and called a meeting in Bejawada, which was labeled as the first Provincial Panchama Conference; (4 to 6 November 1917). Bhagya Reddy Varma presided and Sundru Venkaiah was the chairman of the welcome committee. In the very initial days of the meeting, Bagya Reddy Varma, in his presidential address, after mentioning the carnages of caste Hindus on Dalits and their miserable plight, Varma stressed that the supposed untouchables were the distinctive inhabitants of India and opposed the term Panchama and justified the application of the term Adi-Andhras. Thus, the Dalit movement in coastal Andhra began to be called the Adi-Andhra movement. He argued that the term Panchama (the fifth order) was nowhere

[160] The new name for Tamil speaking untouchables
[161] Opt, cit, Omvedt, Gail. (1994)
[162] Opt, cit, Samel, H, Swapna. (2007). p.86

to be mentioned in Puranas, or other Hindu texts, and that the Dalits were sons of the soil who had been the rulers of the country. Amazingly, the very next day, all the banners and signs of the venue were altered to Andhra Desa. For first Adi-Andhra conference the delegates rejected the term Panchama.[163] Subsequently, the following series of conferences were organised:

Table 2.2

Provincial Adi-Andhra Mahajan Sabhas (1917-1938)

S. No.	Year	Venue	Chairman
I	1917	Vijayawada	Bhabya Reddy Varma
II	1921	Gudivada	Bhagya Reddy Varma
III	1922	Eluru	Bagya Reddy Varma
IV	1924	Guntur	Kusuma Venkatramaiah
V	1925	Anantapur	Bagya Reddy Varma
VI	1926	Venkatgiri	Devendrudu
VII	1928	Narsapur (W.Godawari)	Bhagya Reddy
VIII	1929	Vijayawada	Audinarayan
IX	1930	Anantapur	Devendrudu
X	1935	Rajahmundry	Kusuma Venkatramaiah
XI	1936	Vizianagaram	Kurmaya
XII	1938	Tallanevu, (East Godavari)	Bhagya Reddy Varma.

Source: Samel, H, Swapna, (2007), *Dalit Movement in South India*,[164] pp. 85.

In the conferences, Dalit leaders passed many resolutions including a resolution demanding the right of untouchables to use water from common wells. Most of the resolutions were appeals to the government to appoint a labour commissioner in each district; to permit free education to the children of depressed classes; not to charge the porambok land given to extend the advantage of the depressed communities, till they give adequate yields for three years constantly; to remove the condition of age limit of 16 years for awarding scholarship to them; to assign Adi-Andhras in the vacancies that would hereafter occur in various departments. The conferences also demanded abandonment of the repressive custom of dedicating women in the name of God as Devadasi / Joginis. They also strongly condemned the practice of suffixing/ prefixing demeaning terms like Gadu, Vadu, Vore, Vose to the names of the Dalits. These

[163] Ibid
[164] Ibid, p.85

prefixes/suffixes were humiliating terms identifying the Dalits with their servile position. Conferences also suggested constituting of working committees consisting of important Adi-Andhra leaders in various villages. The resolutions incorporated the demand for reserved seats for the Adi-Andhras from the panchayat level to the legislative Assembly; sanctions against those opposing admission of Dalit children into schools; job reservations and formation of labour cooperatives and credit banks; and demanded for waste land for Dalits.[165]

At the same time, nearly 12 political conferences were organised in different parts of the Andhra districts. They sought to expose the atrocities committed on the Dalits by the caste-Hindus. The geographical spread of these conferences (provincial, taluk, and town and village levels) suggests that Adi-Andhra Mahasabha succeeded in drawing the rural masses into its fold. A critical study of the content of the resolutions passed in different places indicates that Dalits were basically resentful of the monopoly of socio-economic, cultural and political possessions by the upper castes. After the first Adi-Andhra conference of 1917, Dalit activities and their organisational base improved significantly. Many associations/organisations emerged. They established agricultural labourers associations, field labour credit societies and educational institutions and hostels for Dalits.[166]

After establishment of labour department in 1920 in the Presidency, the rising consciousness among Dalits throughout 1920-1930s led to their organising numerous activities such as establishing field labour societies, schools and hostels for the needy Dalits. With the support and encouragement of Talari Gopal Rao Naidu, the then district assistant labour commissioner, Vundru Tataiah established the first Adi-Andhra Credit Society in 1922 under his presidentship, with Golla Chandraiah as its secretary. Vundru Tataiah, himself as big land owner, supported this society. Golla Chandraiah, who convened the first East Godavari Adi-Andhra Maha Sabha at Amalapuram with the help of the labour department, arranged 200 acres of land for Appanivanilanka Adi-Andhra

[165] Ibid, pp. 84-86
[166] Ibid, pp. 84-87

credit society for agricultural purposes and five acres of land was given for the house sites in 1922. He also established credit society in almost all Dalitwadas of Rajolu Taluk of East Godavari district. Goda Venkanna established the Adi-Andhra Field Labour Credit Society at Challapalli in 1922. Through this, he extended loan facilities to Adi-Andhras. His friendship with the Maharaja of Pitapuram enabled him to obtain 100 acres of estate land for the credit society. In Amalapuram, Ambati Gangisetti established many credit societies and acquired land for these societies and Bojja Appalaswamy established a credit society at Kandikuppa and acquired many hundred acres of banjar lands. He also established another society at Polamurupadu of Kakinada Taluk and acquired 300 acres of endowment board lands for the society. This credit society provided financial support to Dalits small farmers and agricultural labourers during the off-season. They also arranged scholarships and other financial support to Dalit students without any interest. Soon these credit societies were expanded throughout the region. Along with credit societies, against the background of extensive illiteracy, Dalits established day and night schools for Dalit labourers, vocational institutes for women and many hostels. Also, the Adi-Andhra leaders' established new schools renovated the old schools established by Christian missionaries. At the same time, there were also separate schools established by the British government.[167]

Dalit leaders had established schools since the early years of 1920s in colonial Andhra. Among them, a significant one was a school established at Ponnamandu in 1922 by Vundru Tataiah. When the upper caste Hindu teachers refused to teach Dalit children, Tataiah utilised his previous Burma relationship and brought Dalit teachers from there to teach in the Andhra Dalit schools. He financed construction of school buildings for Dalits at Anantavaram, Allavaram and Mogalakuduru. In the early part of the 1930s, Bojja Appalaswamy established a school at Kandikuppa with himself as a manager-cum-headmaster.[168] Another Dalit intellectual who worked in this direction was Jala Rangaswamy along with his wife, Jala Mangamma. He established schools at

[167] Opt, cit, Yaganti, Chinna Rao. (2003)
[168] Ganumala Gyaneshwar interview on 17th , November, 2012, Hyderabad

Ramadasupeta, Kontamuru, Polamuru, Rayudupakalu and Palacharla. They also established a night school at Kolamuru and financed the teachers.

Individual enterprise for educating the Dalit children was not lacking. In 1928, Jala Rangaswamy established first separate Dalit hostels for girls and boys. Afterwards, several hostels came up, including one at Mandapeta in 1930 by Eeli Vadapalli. He also established the Laxmi Manufacturing Training School at Ramachandrapuram. It is said that he begged in order to provide food to the students of the hostels. His admirers honoured him with the titles Sevadhuarandara and Mahatma of Adi-Andhra. He established a journal, *Jaibheem* and authored many works, including *Nimnajatulacharitra* (History of oppressed). Several more hostel were established; one at Rajolu in 1936 by Golla Chandraiah, Babuji Harijana hostel by Pandu Laxmanaswamy at Rajahmundry; Gandhi memorial Harijana boys hostel at Recharlapeta by Pachipala Ramaswamy; Adi-Andhra hostel by Moka Miraiah at Kakinada; and Harijan hostel by Medidi Narayanamurthy at Tuni. Many of these hostels functioned without grants from the government. They also conducted cultural programmes to educate and organise the Dalit students.

One of the inherent models of Harijan political mobilisation, i.e., Gandhian approach was a kind of gradualist, reconciliatory and co-optive inclusion. Further, 'Gandhian-Congress ties worked at two levels, through the Harijan Sevak Sangh, which was a caste Hindu organisation which had immense funding with good organisational arrangement, but also through the 'League' they mobilized Dalits for pro-Congress. In colonial Andhra, Gandhiji led the Congress political mobilisation process followed both ways to mobilise the Dalits into its fold. First, Dalits were drawn towards Congress leaders like Kala Venkata Rao, Kasinaduni Nageswara Rao and P. Seetaramaiah who was sociable with the then Dalit leaders. These leaders slowly integrated Dalits into the Congress party. The second technique was that of Harijans organising under the Congress banner. This began with the construction of Andhra division of the Harijan Sevak Sangh at Vijayawada in November 1932. Gandhiji's trip to Andhra at that time ensured entry of most of the Dalits into the Congress fold. Two caste Hindu reformers, K. Nageswara Rao and M.

Bapineedu, were the president and the general secretary of Harijan Sevak Sangh, while two Dalits, Vemula Kurmaiah and Narellasetti Devendrudu were its joint secretaries. Both Dalit leaders had been vibrant in the Dalit movement in Andhra. Afterwards, they were integrated into the Congress.

By 1940s, an autonomous Dalit movement, which became somewhat radical in the 1930s, started declining and almost all the Dalit leaders were incorporated either into the Congress or into the Communist movement (which was gaining in strength in the later part of the 1930s). It may be somewhat an exaggeration but true to a large extent that more than 90 per cent of the Dalits were within the Congress by 1947 in Andhra. Sardar Nagappa, one of the living legends of the Andhra Dalits, was educated at Kurnool. He joined the Congress Party in 1930 at the age of 19. He organised Bhajans in order to develop consciousness in Dalits and encouraged many of them of the Telangana region. He was elected to the Madras State Legislative Assembly in 1937 and 1946. He, along with wife, Amaravatidevi, participated in the Quit India Movement for which he was detained for a year and six months and his wife was detained along with their son. Both of them offered Satyagraha and courted, arrested a number of times. His inputs to the Constituent Assembly were of immense significance. Afterward, both Nagappa and Amaravatidevi were highly extolled as freedom fighters and Dalit reformers[169]. Another couple who participated in the freedom movement worth mentioning is Jala Rangaswamy and his wife, Jala Mangamma. They attended the Congress conference of Kakinada in1921. Later, they worked as teachers at Anandani Niketan, which was established by Gandhiji in 1928 at Chagallu in West Godavari District. They worked for three years as campaigners of khadi and anti–untouchability programmes. Both wife and husband were suspended from their jobs for participating in the Congress-led activities for freedom. Jala Rangaswamy was a creative writer and author of *Malasuddi*, which was banned by the government. He wrote various historical works, dramas and poetry such as *Ahimsa, Andhra Asprusyata, Nirudyogi,* and *Antranivarevaru?*

[169] Opt, cit, Kshirasagar, R.K. (1994)

The aforementioned Dalit leaders enthusiastically participated in the national political movement at the state level within the fold of the Congress Party. But they could not succeed in bringing about radical changes in the lives of the Dalits. Gandhian programmes related to Dalit's development appeared to be more symbolic than concrete. The central thrust of Gandhi's visit to Andhra in 1932-33 was to campaign against the immoral practice of untouchability and secure temple entry for the Harijans. In fact, during that time, temple entry for Dalits was an ongoing debate in the Madras Legislative Assembly. On 1st November 1932, Dr. P. Subbarayan, the Chief Minister, introduced a Resolution in the Madras Legislative Council on the right of the Untouchables to enter Hindu temples. This was seconded by T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar. However, the conventional Hindu Organisations like the Varnashramaswarajya Sangam, preempted the government action, for its intervention in religion. It was argued that the Legislative Council had no authorisation from the electorate to pass a Law on this issue. It was also argued that the temple entry was not connected to the question of upliftment of the low castes. The Governor General refused to approve Dr. Subbaroyan's Bill passed by the Madras Legislative Council.

In the process, the Communists ventured in the Dalit Wadas, a fertile ground for Communists, because they formed bulk of landless agricultural labourers. Communists interacted with Dalits essentially as a part of working class/labour movement and entered much more powerfully than any other movement did in the early parts of 1940s In the 1940s, many Dalits were fascinated by the ideas of Marxism and Socialism and joined the Kooli Rakshana Samitis (labour Protection Leagues) of Guntur, Tenali, Nellore and Vijayawada organised by the Communists. In his report to the central committee of the C.P.I in 1935, P. Sundarayya acknowledged that the party was at that time was focusing more on organising the agricultural labour than the peasantry. To begin with, he commenced work in Nellore and formed Alaganipadu Agricultural Labour Union. Its aim was 'to standardise by means of Legislation, daily wages, annual salaries and to see that a minimum wage was given to provide for a reasonable life.

At the same time, in Guntur, J. Ramalingaiah and others worked out a programme for the development of an agricultural labour movement which quickly spread to other districts. Several village associations were created and agricultural workers were mobilised in large numbers. These labour associations were known as Kooli Rakshana Samities (Labour Protection Leagues). The first labour protection league was established in Guntur and after four months, on 1st July 1935, another was formed at Nellore with Ravi Adiseshaiah as its general secretary. On 10th October 1935 at Bezawada a Labour Protection League was established under the secretaryship of Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu and an Executive council at Eluru was established on 4th February 1936, with Tadi Appalaswamy as its secretary. Labour protection Leagues were further formed on 1st July 1935 at Bandaru, 19th July 1935 at Madras, in August 1935 at Tenali under the leadership of Polepeddi Narasimha Murthy, Kakumanu Narayana, Tummala Venkataramayya and Muktevi Madhavacharya. To manage all these regional and district level samities, the Madras (state) Labour Protection League was established in 1935 on 15th August under the secretaryship of P. Sundaraiah. These leagues basically were established by the Communists with the aim of providing space for Dalit labourers to fight against landlords and also create awareness among Dalits about the exploitation of labourers by the local landlords.

Local level struggles for better wages were organised and many of these were fairly aggressive. From 1945 to 1948, Dalits organised strikes mostly for the increase of wages under the banner of the 'Cooli Sangam' (Labour Association). Slowly, these strikes for wages turned into political strikes (Rajakiya nirasana). Even after independence, Dalits protested against the state with black badges and gave slogans; 'This is not independence, we have not yet got independence and Red Flag Zindabad' on 5th August 1948. They all felt that the lives of Dalits had not changed after independence, the only change being replacement of brown lords in the place of white lords. The later developments suggest that Pre–Independence peasants, workers and labour movement, under Communist leadership, sacrificed interest of the rural Dalits and other poor to those of the rich peasants**.** This compromise led to critical reading of entire Marxist theory and practice of communist movement suggest that the upper caste leadership of that movement failed to

understand the Indian social realities**.** This is a historical fact that irrespective of the party, there was no change in their oppressive caste ideology. The Andhra Communists had made no secret of their pro-rich peasant stand within the party. They openly stated it in a 1948 report of the Indian Communist Politbureau, which stressed two major 'tactical rules of thumb'.

- In delta areas, the force of labour population would be serious for re-distribution of the rich landlord's lands to poor people. But we must act carefully on it.
- Propaganda should be carried on to persuade the rich landlords about the just demands of workers and we should strike compromises with such of those rich Ryots who follow us. Guarantee should be given that we should not touch the lands of rich Ryots.[170]

The communists could not create a leader from among the Dalits and they remained only at the level of cadres or at the most village–level representatives, in spite of their educational qualifications and sincerity of participation at state level and national-level politics. Most of the Dalits who were communist activists remained as activists, without even getting a formal membership in the party. The only exception was Konada Surya Prakasa Rao, who was made president of Agricultural Labour Union (henceforth ALU) from 1941 to 1943. He finally left the organisation due to strong anti-Ambedkar and anti-Dalit stand of the Communists in 1944. This is evident in their official recognition, wherein one of their resolutions, the ALU categorised the Muslim league as a 'political party,' but they called the Scheduled Caste Federation as a communal organisation. Prakasa Rao circulated a dissenting note emphasising the economic and social deprivation of Dalits and the need for unity of the toiling masses. Finally he argued that social upliftment was even more important than economic upliftment.

However, none of the peasant organisations such as Kisan sabhas, Ryot Coolie Sangams, or Kisan Samities, recognised role of caste and neglected the issue of caste exploitation of the Dalit masses, even conceptually. The issue of demand for waste lands, poramboks and forest lands were never given a special place in Kisan Sabha's programmes, nor did

[170] See Yaganti, Chinna Rao. (2003)

the Communists recognise the way in which Vethbeger was expressed in terms of castes or that it represented the traditional feudal form of caste exploitation of labourers. Though both issues were taken up in the independent Dalit movement, the Left failed to deal with the economic implications of caste.

Dalits: between Congress Hegemonic Politics and Class-based Mobilisation

At a critical juncture, the Andhra Pradesh state formation took place in 1956. In the face of opposition by the Telangana leaders, Coastal Andhra Congress leaders lobbied with the Congress High Command. The Communists were in favour of Vishalandra. The upshot was the 'Gentlemen's Agreement' which paved the way for the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh. However, the state formation changed the terms of politics and political mobilisation in three regions of the state. Regional and caste fraction groups continue to influence Congress politics. After the state formation, Dalits were mobilised and organised under three streams, namely, (i) Congress Hegemonic Politics and Dalit Accommodation (ii) Communist Mobilisation, and (iii) Independent Dalit mobilisation. The following sections deal with these streams in detail.

a) Congress Hegemonic Politics and Dalit Accommodation

Since its inception, the Congress Party has been claiming to be representative of all classes and castes in India. Its popular appeal and strategies have been targeted towards cooption, absorption and extending patronage to the marginalised sections of the Indian society. Since the Congress is not a cadre based party, it has depended on the landed gentry at the local level for people's mobilisation and party activities. The Congress absorbed many Dalit leaders into the party after formation of the state. In 1957, there were 43 Scheduled Caste elected legislators-all elected on Congress tickets. Majority of these leaders previously worked in independent Dalit organisations during the Nizam's period. Some of the leaders who emerged out of Harijan Sevak Sangh were Damodaram Sanjeevaiah Vemula Kurmayya, Ragavulu, Kota Punnaiah, Goka Ramaswamy and B.S Murthy. Notable among those who joined the Congress ranks from the autonomous Dalit movement were Arigay Ramaswamy (1885-1973) and Butti Raja Ram (1911-1979).

K.R Veeraswamy, a Mala educated leader, worked in the Scheduled Caste Federation as the organising secretary. He then worked in Dalit Jatiya Sangh and the All India Depressed Class League. However, the Gandhian influence and Congress politics attracted him. During the 1940s and 1950s, in Secunderabad and Hyderabad politics, there was political competition among Dalits; interestingly most of them belonged to the Mala community. Sri Veeraswamy contested as an independent candidate from one of the Secunderabad wards on a reserved seat in the municipal elections in 1950. However, he was defeated by Smt. J.Ishwari Bai, his own sister-in-law and an independent candidate. Later, in 1948, he contested as a Congress nominee in the First General Elections held in 1952 from Kalvakurthy for the Hyderabad State Legislative Assembly, he won in the election. In 1957, he contested from Kama Reddy as a candidate of Peasants and Workers Party for the AP Legislative Assembly, but was defeated by T.N Sadalaxmi.

Dalit women representatives were also accommodated into the Congress. One such person was Rajamani Devi (1920-1985). She was one of the important persons who worked in the Scheduled Caste Federation. Later, she became joint secretary of the SCF Hyderabad on 16 July 1944. Later on, she was elevated to the president of women section of the SCF. Kshirsagar observes: "in the first General Elections held in 1952, she had successfully contested for the Hyderabad legislative Assembly on SCF ticket. But later on, she was accommodated in to the Congress party. The same candidate contested on a Congress ticket from the same constituency in 1957, but could not get elected. These are all bearing us how the Congress Party accommodated and encouraged Dalits to fight against Dalit candidate in reserved seats. Again, she contested in 1967 as an independent candidate, but was defeated. She became a member of Legislative Council in 1976"[171]. Another important leader was Arigay Ramaswamy (1885-1973) belonging to the Mala caste. He worked for the upliftement of the untouchables and formed 'Suneetha Bala Samajamu', 'Adi-Hindu Jatiyonnanti Sabha' and 'Independent Scheduled Castes Federation' in 1944. However, he was nominated as a member of the Constituent

[171] Opt, cit, Kshirsagar, R.K.. (1994). pp. 304-5

Assembly and then to the Provisional Parliament from 1950-52. In the first General Elections, he contested as a Congress nominee (1952) for Hyderabad legislative assembly from Vikarabad seat and got elected. He was also inducted as deputy minister for agriculture and civil supplies, Government of Hyderabad from 1954 to October 1956. He was elected (1957) on a Congress ticket for AP Assembly from Vikarabad constituency. Again, he was elected unopposed from the same constituency in 1962, 1967. He was minister for social welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh from 1967 to July 1969.[172]

One of the women Dalit leaders influential and courageous was T.N. Sadalaxmi (scavenging community). She was very active since her youth days in Nizam provincial Dalit movement. Her political journey is interesting and indicates different facets of activism and leadership in various movements from the beginning. In the processes of her active involvement in politics, she was attracted to the Gandhian movement and was involved in Congress politics. During 1930-40, in the Nizam's state, the independent Dalit movement was led by different Dalit groups, but majority of them belonging to the Mala community were attracted to Dr. Ambedkar's movement. Except Mudigonda Laxmaiah, whom Sadalaxmi considered as her political guru, the rest all belonged to the Mala community. Since Sadalaxmi was working in the Congress, she was influenced by Babu Jagjeevan Ram (Chamar leader). Whenever Jagjeevan Ram visited Hyderabad, he stayed in the houses of Laxmaiah or Sadalaxmi. She contested from Sultanabad, Karimnagar in the first General Elections in 1952, but lost. In 1957, she contested on a Congress ticket from Kamareddy assembly constituency (reserved) and got elected. In 1960, she was elected from Nizamabad Reserved Constituency. She also worked as a Deputy Speaker (1960), minister for endowment department (1963-64) and social welfare ministry. In 1969 'Jai Telangana' movement, she extended her support to the student's hunger strike. Later, involved herself in leading the movement, and organised and mobilised lakhs of people. The formation of Telanagan Praja Samiti' was an important turning point in the history of the Telangana movement. She was one of the founders of the 'Telangana Praja Samiti'. Later, she worked as president and vice president of this

[172] Ibid, pp.166-7

organisation. However, because of upper caste male domination, the TPS was captured by Chenna Reddy - and Sadalaxmi was sidelined.[173]

Coastal Andhra also had many Dalit leaders who were co-opted and accommodated into the Congress party. The Gandhian nationalist movement and Harijan Sevak Sangh activities attracted and accommodated many emerging leaders from Costal Andhra. B.S Murthy from East Godavari district was elected secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Harijan Sevak Sangh in 1935. Later, elevated as its president from 1940-49. He was elected as a member of the Madras legislative Assembly in 1937-1945 and was minister for Industries and labour of the then Madras Government from 1937-39 and from 1946-47[174]. In 1952, he contested in general elections for the Lok Sabha from Eluru (G and SC) constituency as a candidate of Kisan Mazdoor Praja party and got elected. In 1957, he contested from Kakinada (G and SC) Lok Sabha constituency on a Congress ticket and won. He got elected from Amalapuram (SC) Constituency in 1962, 1967 and 1971 for Lok Sabha. He was deputy minister for health and family planning from 1962-67 in the union Government. Another leader Vemula Kurmayya (1903-1970) was born in Mallavaram village Krishna district. He had actively participated in the Adi-Hindu movement. He was attracted to the Gandhian movement and Congress politics and worked as a joint secretary of the Andhra provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh in November 1932. The president, Sri Deshodaraka, Nageshwar Rao Panthulu, was famous for his social reforms. Vemula Kurmayya got elected in 1937, 1946 for the Madras Legislative Assembly on a Congress ticket. He was Harijan welfare minister in the Prakasam ministry from 1946-49. He contested for the AP legislative Assembly on the Indian National Congress ticket in 1955 from Gudivada (SC) constituency and got elected. Again, he contested from the same constituency in 1962, but was not successful.[175]

From Rayalaseema also, many people were attracted to Gandhian and Congress nationalist movements. Sri Sardar Nagappa was born on 6th October 1911 at Kurnool. He

[173] Gogushamala, (2011). *Nene Balani-Sadalaxmi Bathuku Chitrana*. Hyderabad, Hyderabad Book Trust, pp.172-222
[174] Opt, cit, Kshirsagar, R.K. (1994). p.280
[175] Ibid, p.365

belonged to the Mala community. From 1930, he started working for the upliftment of the Dalits. He used to organise regular Bhajans to sensitise the untouchable communities in the locality. In the process, he was elected to the erstwhile Madras State Legislative Assembly in 1937 from Kurnool constituency. Again, he elected on a Congress Party ticket from the same constituency in the year 1946 and later to Legislative Council in the year 1947. In the first General Elections, held in 1952, he contested as a KMPP (Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party) candidate from Nandyal (G) Lok Sabha constituency, but was defeated. In 1967, he contested for the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly as a Congress nominee from Alur (SC) constituency, but lost.[176]

Sri Bojja Appalaswamy (1913-2013), born in East Godavari District, worked for the upliftment of untouchable castes was elected as president of Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) to Amalapuram Taluka. He studied in "Adi-Andhra hostel" which was started by Pittapuram Maharaja and for some time, he worked as head master of a school started by him in his own village, Bojjavaripeta. After resigning his post, he joined politics. He contested on a Scheduled Caste Federation ticket from Coastal Andhra in 1952, 1953 and 1955 and won. In the 1952 election, in double constituency on behalf of SCF, Bojja Appalaswamy and Nadimpally Ramabadraraju defeated Congress members (Kalavenkat Rao and Pandu Laxmanaswamy). In 1953 elections, Appalaswamy contested against P. Laxmana Swamy and won by 42,808 votes. After that in 1955, from Allavaram, he defeated the CPI candidate S.R Rao by 3036 votes. Bojja Appalaswamy was the first Dalit to be appointed to the TTD (Tirumala Tirupathi Devastanam) Board and T.N. Sadalaxmi was the second. Bojja Appalaswamy was attracted to Brahma Samaj activities which were reflected in the naming of his sons and daughter. Further, he was also actively involved and led many struggles for land to oppressed people in East Godavari district. In a way, the Scheduled Caste Federation addressed many issues and motivated people to involve them in its struggle.[177]

[176] Ibid, p.282
[177] See Neeli Zenda, (Telugu by monthly magazine) Volume 6, issue 6, August 16-31, 2013

The Congress Dalit leaders worked as Pyraveekars in doing some work to their communities, while the Congress Dalit representatives attempted to bargain with the party for implementation of the electoral promises like adequate budgetary allocation, allotting loans, houses, subsides, etc. The Congress also used Dalit representatives to put a check on the dominant caste factionalism within the Party and to diffuse autonomous Dalit politics and mobilisation. The divergent interest of power centers were involved in running the Congress Party which was beset with groupism, casteist feelings, regionalism, factionalism, etc. The Kammas of Coastal Andhra, Reddy of Rayalaseema, Brahmins and Velamas of Telangana dominated agriculture and industry and controlled politics. Damodar Sanjeevaiah was appointed as chief minister to stem the growing factionalism. However, Sanjeeviah's initiatives towards Dalit welfare altered the support of upper castes, which campaigned against him and ensured his removal from the chief ministership. During this time, the central Government ear marked budgetary allocations of 15 percentages for SC, 7 percentages for ST out of total budgetary allocation. However the funds were utilized for purpose other than SC, ST development.

During the late 1960s/early 1970s, two movements impacted Dalit consciousness. One was the 1969 separate Telangana state agitation; the second was the 1972 separate Andhra movement. The Telangana movement was the result of violation of Mulki rules and non-implementation of gentlemen agreement. This discontent led to the separate Telangana agitation. These agitators were placated making P.V Narasimha Rao (a Brahmin) from Telangana as the state chief minister in 1971 and promised six points formula for development of Telangana region. P.V Narasimha Rao was not favoured by the dominant Reddy and Kamma castes who tried to make 'life most difficult' for him since he took major policy level changes which attracted Dalit Bahujan masses. He inducted more Dalit Bahujan cabinet ministers increasing their number from 17% (1970) to 30% in order to attract Dalitbahujan members. In his cabinet, out of 29 ministers 10 were Dalit Bahujans. With a view to weaken the Reddy, Kamma caste domination, he introduced land reforms (Ceilings on agricultural holdings) Bill in 1972. The upper castes felt that this policy hit their interest. The landed gentry led a delegation to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to withdraw the laws. Narasihma Rao also brought a radical change in

local government in Panchayats and Zilla Parishads to weaken the domination of Kammas and Reddys. During the 1970s, 15 Zilla Parishads out of 21 were occupied by Reddys and out of 324 Samiti presidents; half were controlled by Kammas and Reddys. More than 64 percentages of the Panchayat presidents were either Kammas or Reddy. In a way, upper caste hegemony existed in all government institutions and power positions. As a result, the upper caste started the separate Andhra movement in 1973. Since the upper castes were in the forefront, leaders of the marginalised groups like M.R Krishna, B.S Murthy, K. Punnaiah, Nandadas, T.Anjaiah, Konda Lakshman Babuji, Devanand Rao, A.Chakrapani and K. Rajamallu presented their representation to protect the interest of marginalised in the wake up of separate Andhra and Telangana agitations[178]. In order to attract Dalits through popular schemes, the Congress government organised state conferences on marginalised welfare policies.

> "The Harijans were mobilised during the emergency, through government sponsored Harijan Conferences at the District levels and Andhra Pradesh state level. The Harijan Conference and a state-level seminar, under the auspices of the state Government of Andhra Pradesh was held in Hyderabad on April 10, 11, 12, 1976. Planned in a big way, officials, non-officials and people's representatives readily associated themselves with the conference and seminar for mere asking. In these conferences, Ministers, officials, legislators and others and Harijans were informed about official schemes aimed at their benefit. At the district level, these conferences included distribution of house sites, agricultural land, sanctioning of loans for agricultural purposes and distribution of clothes, sewing machines for women, etc".[179]

The Congress government, in order to create a mass party base among the marginalised and to avoid the landed gentry's domination at village level, appealed to the masses through various popular schemes and welfare policies like the 20 point programme. After declaration of the Emergency, some tangible benefits to poor people were provided. The

[178] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.65
[179] Abbasayulu Y.B and T. Tirupati Rao. (1982). *Harijan Movement*. In B.A.V. Sharma and K. Madhusudhan Reddy, (Ed), (1982). *Reservation Policy in India*. New Delhi, Light and Life Publishers, p.272

allotment of housing sites, government bencharai (fallow) or declared surplus land under land reforms, abolition of debts, granting of loans, etc., made the Congress popular among Dalits.[180]

b) The Communist Mobilisation

Eversince the emergence of left movement in India, Andhra and Telangana regions have been greatly influenced by it. Both parliamentary and radical left movements contributed to enriching the consciousness among the people of the regions. It is hard to imagine the modern Telugu people's history without the radical left movement. Since its inception, it has influenced the lives of people in all walks life in the region. The Communist mobilisation and their movement in Andhra started in 1932 with the aim of organising the oppressed including peasants and labourers for bringing about an agrarian revolution. Slowly, the communist movement entered the Nizam ruled area through the 'Andhra Mahasabha', popularly known as 'Sangam' among the people. Andhra Mahasabha leaders like Ravi Narayana Reddy, Baddam Yella Reddy, Devulapalli Venkateshwa Rao and V. Alwar Swamy played a crucial role in building the Communist movement in Telangana and maintained close relations with Andhra communists like Puchapally Sundaraiah, C.Rajeswar Rao and M. Basva Punnaiah. The Communist Party of India unit was opened in Telangana in 1939. In the initial stages, the party worked in Guntur, East and West Godvari and districts in the Madras Presidency and Karimnagar, Warangal and Nalgonda in the Telangana region. Andhra Mahasaba divided into two groups one communists and moderates. In eleventh conference of Andhra Mahasbha held at Bhuvanagiri in 1994, communists dominated the conference and Ravi Narayna Reddy became president. Subsequently the moderates of Andhra Mahasabha formed Nationalist Mahasabha ultimately merged itself into the Hyderabad State Congress. Later the movement continued under Communist Party of India. The party radical armed struggles were against feudal exploitation, money lenders and Deshmukhs and landlords, etc., through armed squads and Dalams. The success of armed struggle created the liberative village zones in around 3000 villages where the Dalams distributed the land to the oppressed.

[180] Ibid, p. 272

However, soon the CPI was split into CPI and CPI (M). The historical split of CPI into CPI (M) helped in expanding the left politics within the democratic set up. However, the failure of both CPI and CPI (M) parliamentary politics building of the people's movements and their style of working towards people agrarian revolution disappointed a majority of the activists and youth in India. Hence rise of Naxalbari in Bengal opening the revolutionary path towards 'New Democratic Revolution'. The Naxalbari Movement characterised Indian society and state as 'Semi Feudal and Semi Colonial'. It was in 1967, there was a peasant upsurge in Naxalbari in West Bengal. Today, the Naxalbari has become a part of the society's revolutionary vocabulary. The name carries an alternative and ideological vision of the revolutionaries. Soon the movement influenced and inspired the Srikakulam tribal assertion in Andhra Pradesh[181]. After the state's brutal suppression, it became resurgent in the Telangana region.

The existing literature on the Dalit movement clearly indicates a considerable gap in exploring the Dalit assertions between 1960s until the Karamchedu incident (1985). In the Telangana region, during this time, there was vibrant class based mobilisation, on one side and Congress patronising politics, on the other. The grassroots mobilisation of radical movement and its frontal organisations had a greater impact on Dalits and other oppressed castes. The questions worthy of discussion are how the rural masses were organised under CPI (ML) group? Does class based mobilisation undermine all other forms of consciousness caste and gender, etc? Why did people see new hope in the radical movement? How the ruling class suppressed the movement? And what are the immediate demands that have really attracted Dalits into of fold the struggle? Some of these questions are worth probing.

Charu Mazumdar, the CPI (M) party secretary of Darjeeling (West Bengal), started to write eight documents between 1965-1967 on the new path of revolution against the revisionist policy of CPI and CPI (M)... The small peasants strengthened the movement under 'Naxalbari O Krishak Sangram Sahayak Samiti'. Subsequently 'All India Co-

[181] Banerjee, Sumanta. (2008). *In the wake of Naxalbari*. Sahitya Samsad, Kolkota, p. 6

ordination Committee of Revolutionaries (AICCR) was formed. Later on, this coordination committee decided to form a revolutionary party to strengthen the party activities across India. Hence, on April 22, 1969, the 'Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)' was formed[182]. Responding to the developments of Naxalbari and national level revolutionary activities in Andhra, some CPI (M) revolutionaries and Medical students started the 'Naxalbari Sangeebhava Committee' in Guntur. Although some expelled CPI (M) members like T. Nagi Reddy, Chandra Pulla Reddy, Kolla Venkaya and D.V Rao initially aligned with All India Revolutionary co-ordination committee, later on, they themselves formed a new committee called 'Andhra Pradesh Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (APCCCR). Hence during 1967, there were two revolutionary groups. One was largely concentrated in Srikakulam and was led by an All India committee. The other, named as Andhra Pradesh Committee, started to work in Godavari Valley by focusing on Khammam and Warangal districts.[183] During this period in Telangana, the socio, economic conditions could be described as:

> "Every caste had to supply its services and goods free of cost to the dora. The peasants were required to supply Vetti nagallu (free supply of ploughs) for a requisite number of days to the landlord; artisans like blacksmiths (Kammari) and carpenters (Vadla) were required to repair the agricultural implements of the dora without any payment. In the case of the agricultural labour castes like the Madigas and Malas (they were called Vetti Madigollu and Vetti Malollu), Vetti services were to be rendered to the landlord for a reserve certain high yielding Palmyra trees for the dora and supply the produce freely; Kummaris (potters) the pots, Chakalis (Washermen), Mangalis (barbers) were to render freely their caste related services".[184]

These feudal oppressive and exploitative conditions made the movement to campaign on two slogans: one Land to the landless poor two all power to peasant committees. The method of party mobilisation was done broadly in two ways: (i) Popular agitations

[182] Venugopal, N. (2014). *Understanding Moist Movement*. Kolkata, Setu Prakasham, p.83
[183] Ibid, p.84
[184] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). p.228

focusing on mass organisation to mobilise and organise people for minimum wages against exploitation and state oppression, middlemen exploitation, and (ii) Intensifying the guerrilla armed struggle from mid 1980s. Since Dalits have been the social base of the party, it took up the immediate problems of these castes.

> "The articulations of the issues in these struggles also showed sensitivity to the caste dimension. These can broadly be grouped into two categories; the first one was the refusal to perform Vetti to the landlord stop pay mamoolls and stop approaching him for arbitration of disputes; the second category consisted of demands for higher wages, which were below the minimum wage prescribed by the law, repayment of huge sums of money collected from the villagers as dandugalu (fines) bribes taken earlier, return of lands which are forcibly seized from the peasants. Further, the landlords were asked to pay reparations for past actions and exploitation".[185]

Apart from these agrarian based struggles, the CPI (ML) party also led the Tendu or Tuniki leaf struggles in forest areas such as Manthani, Mahadevupur in Karimnagar and Adilabad districts, where tribes and other landless poor communities depended on the Tendu leaf. This used to be done by women and children of the landless poor. In fact, this was the only source for their life in the months of April and May. The Tendu leaf is useful in making Beedi (local made cigar), Even today, a majority of the landless people are living on this beedi manufacturing in Karimnagar and Nizambad districts. The collected Tendu leaves must be sold to a contractor at his Kallam - a place where Tendu leaves are sold out by village people. The contractor is the only authorised purchaser because he gets the contract by participating in the auction which is generally conducted by the government. Mostly, the contractors belong to upper castes and the landlord class. A few contractors control the majority of the Kallams. The big contractors used to get the leaf from local Kalledars and the leaf bundles consist of 100 leaves normally. In the mid 1970s, the minimum rate for a bundle was five paise. Even this was not paid properly. Contractors used to exploit the poor leaf collectors and paid only four paisa for one

[185] Ibid, p.233

bundle, The poor people involved in the strenuous collection of Tendu leaves who were to give a requisite number of bundles as Vetti, 'the first bundles brought to the Kallam each day and one bundle each in the name of deities like Pochamma, Maisamma, etc. This scenario gave an impetus to raise the Tendu leaf struggles in the late 1970s in northern Telangana. The CPI (ML) forced the contractors to raise the payment for the bundle and stopped the multifold exploitations of kalledars. Tendu struggle, in fact, provided a social base to the movement in most parts of the Telangana region. Government brought in the 1959 Act of Land Transfers Regulation by offering some welfare schemes finally by mechanism of state had suppressed the movement. During this time, some of the civil societal groups started coming out in support of the Naxalite movement.

> ".... Defence committees with advocates and intellectuals were organised at many places to provide legal assistance to the Naxalites, the defence committees gradually developed into an independent civil liberties organisation Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) by 1973. In 1970 itself, Viplava Rachayitala Sangam (Virasam-as it is popularly known) 'Revolutionary Writers Association' was formed by young writers as well as there were some important writers association who went on openly propagating the path taken by Naxalbari-Srikakulam and exhorted people to revive that path. Jana Natya Mandali formed in 1972 added and expanded the cultural and intellectual work to spread the message of Naxalite politics".[186]

After so many divisions and disintegrations, the Andhra Pradesh CPI (ML) committee took the initiative to form the central organising committee to rebuild the party and adopt a mass line approach and start frontal organisations. However, the state imposed the emergency from June 25, 1975. However, the CPI (ML) COC formed the radical student union in 1974. Immediately after lifting of the emergency, the RSU revived and RYL was formed in 1978. This organisation went to the villages to study the socio-economic conditions. Raitu Cooli Sangam in 1981 and 'Singareni Karmika Samakhya' (Sikasa) in 1982 were formed to organise people belonging to all walks of life. To achieve these

[186] Opt, cit, Venugopal, N. (2014)

demands, the RCS adopted means like demonstrations, gheraos, strikes and social boycotts. Since these radical movements involved loss of material benefits for the landlords, they adopted two methods to control the revolutionary movement: one) use of the local gang force and try to divide the RCS taking advantage of local divisions among the exploited classes. Thus, beating up workers, raiding their houses and unleashing terror became a common feature of the landlords. Two) the second method used by landlords was direct involvement of the state machinery, i.e., police and military forces were used to suppress the peasant struggle. In response to the state's violence, the party armed forces retaliated with greater violence. Thus, the entire area was declared a 'disturbed' area, under the Suppression of Disturbances Act, 1946. In fact, this Act was brought out by Nizam to suppress the anti- Nizam armed struggle and this was also used by Madras Presidency to control the people's struggles in coastal Andhra. Both the Sangams united in their demand for an increase in the wages of the landless agricultural labourers and the beedi and cigar industry workers for better treatment of farm servants.

The party started the councils for peoples uprising for mobilising and organising people to fight, it is also to look after the land distribution. The people's court was also started to find out the class enmities and delivered judgments and implemented than. The party gave a slogan 'go to village' campaign taken by both RSU in second conference at Warangal February 1978. The RYL held its first conference in May 1978 in Guntur. Both organisations together formed small teams and went to the villages. The Party slogan 'Gramalaku Taralandi' (Go to Villages) was historic programme in rebuilding the party activities at the village level. Members of all frontal organisations like Raitu Cooli Sangam, Radical Students Union, (RSU), Radical Youth League (RYL) visited villages, the Jananatya Mandali (JNM) through songs, plays was attracting many rural youth and sensitised people. There were many cases where many cadres were attracted by the revolutionary songs and joined the movement.

> "Go to village' campaign in 1984 covered as many as 50 lakh people in 2,419 villages with 150 teams comprising 1100 students and youth. In that year alone, the student youth teams helped people to set up the RYL and RCS units in 200

villages. In its entirety, the campaign might have covered not less than 12,000 villages and touched at least 3 crore people in seven years".[187]

The party dalams and cadre and leaders visited villages. They invariably stayed in Mala, Madiga wadas (habitations), the shelter, food everything was arranged by people of the village. The team tried to closely involve with the lives of the people to understand the local problems. The party addressed issues like minimum wages, Vetti, Vettichakiri, money lenders harassment, liquor consumption, caste and gender based humiliation. By 1978, the CPI (ML) organisation extensively spread and established its committees in Pedapply, Sirsilla, Jagityala areas in Karimnagar district. These areas became centres of the party activities. The state also increased its suppression. The Pedapally struggle is an important one. During this struggle, Dalits occupied 22 acres land under party leadership. During the emergency period, the party was passive and remained underground, but to continue the activities, the party established the RSU, which mobilised students. The team used to visit social welfare hostels for shelter and attract the youth through songs and dances and used the students for information disseminators. After the emergency was got lifted, all its frontal organisations were organised to rebuild its activities under 'Raitu Coolli Sangam'. A mammoth and historical rally was organized and it is called 'Jagitayala Jaitrayatra' in Jagityala. It was estimated that around 50,000 peasants and workers attended it.

In the wake of the Jaitra Yatra over 800 acres of land was occupied by the Dalits and peasants and lakhs of rupees were collected. Because of the overwhelming presence of Dalits in the radical left movement, it was even branded as the Dalit party or Mala, Madigola party. The autonomous Dalit movements, both at national and regional levels, compelled all the communists, including the radicals left, to recognise the importance of the annihilation of caste. This was evident in one of the documents released “Special

[187] Ibid, p.92

Features of Indian Revolution".[188] It started that there were several special features of Indian revolution and one of them was caste. According to it, "the complete resolution of the caste question is possible only after the present semi-feudal semi-colonial state and society are changed through the new democratic revolution.[189] Thus, having recognised caste as a special Indian social reality, the Communists applied Marx's famous words to the Indian contexts that "all hitherto history of India is the history of class and caste struggles. P.Sundaryya's *History of the Telangana people's struggle*, Nagi Reddy's *India Mortgaged* and Kondapalli Seetaramayya's *Agrarian revolution* have been inspiring works and there is no doubt about this, but they failed in making any systematic critique of either Brahmanism or Hinduism.[190]

In class based mobilisation under the naxalbari movement, the above mentioned factors were not dealt in the agenda and in leadership. Although the rural youth joined the movement due to complex problems (caste, gender and class), the movement started organising through class based mobilisation and the organisation did not allow the peoples (Dalits) experience at the grassroots level which is mentioned above to be in forefront, but does not mean that radical politics did not take up the problem like "Vetti" "bonded labour" "Minimum wages" "Devadasi" "oppression". There are immediate questions and problem which are visual, but dealing with these issues is not strategically enough.[191] It would be expected of the movement to understand the social roots of the problem. This was lacking in the movement. But the problems at the grassroots level continued.

c) Independent Dalit Mobilization

The failure of left movement to address caste problem and the series of atrocities on Dalits, the Congress strategy to subsume Dalit autonomous movement and accommodate

[188] CPI (ML) Peoples' War. (COC). *Special Features of Indian Revolution and Marxists Approach Towards Revolution of those Problems.* Paper presented in the seminar organized by CPM (ML) Janashakthi, Hyderabad, 9-12 March 1995 (Unpublished)
[189] National seminar on the "special characteristics of Indian Revolution" where CPI (ML) where Peoples War also presented a Paper on the Indian Revolution.
[190] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). P.81
[191] Discussion with U Sambashiva Rao, Kattipadma Rao and Gogu Shamala on radical movements in India

Dalit leadership into party structure are all made Dalits to get mobilised on their own platform. After the passing array of Dr. Ambedkar, the RPI was established in 1957 according to Dr.Ambedkar's plan to start an All India level broader political platform to organise oppressed communities[192]. In October 1957, the 'Scheduled Caste Federation' organised a conference in Nagpur. From all over India, representatives attended. At the end of the conference, the central leadership announced that the 'Scheduled Caste Federation' will now run as RPI (Republican Party of India) all over India. Except B.P Mourya from UP, and Vadapally from Andhra, all central committee members were elected from Maharashtra. Yendluri Chinnaiah was one of the representatives who attended the conference from Andhra. Along with him the representatives who attend the conference decided to meet in 1958 in Vijayawada. The Telangana representatives, namely, B.K Jaganatham, Madela Malkaiah, J. Eshwari Bai, and the Andhra representatives, Elli Vadapalli, Ganta Arun Kumar, Konda Surya Prakash Rao, Vase Nageshwar Rao, Subbaswamy, Erlapati Venkanna, from Student Federation B.V Ramanaiah, N.Samal, Arja Venkat Rao, met in Yendluri Chinnaiah's house in Vijayawada. They had wider discussion on the RPI activities in united Andhra Pradesh and its structure and activities. After three months, all these members met in Secunderabad and had serious discussion. The two regional committees decided to merge and formed the "Andhra Pradesh Republic Party of India" (RPI). The new committee was elected for party functioning, Eeli Vadapalli as a president, B.K Jaganatham as a vice-president, J. Eshwari Bai as a general secretary and Ganta Arun Kumar as joint secretary assumed their respective positions. Soon after the new committee formation, public meetings were organised in Vijayawada, Gudiwada, Bheemavaram, Nelluru. In Secunderabad public meeting N. Shivaraj (MP) Dattakatti (MP), BD Kobhragade (MP) attended and addressed the meeting. In this way, party activities started slowly both in urban and rural areas in the state[193].

During the mid 1960s, the RPI launched many agitations against the serious drought, poverty, food scarcity and crisis in agricultural production. In these agitations, many

[192]See Zellit, Eleanor. (2013). *The Ambedkar World*. New Delhi, Navayana Publication.
[193] Endluri. (2009). *Telugunaata Dalitha Udyamama*. Hyderabad, Samantara Publication, p.85

people were arrested and jailed. It also fought for minimum wages, land distribution, etc. However, soon the party was divided into factions at the national, as well as the local level[194]. In Andhra Pradesh, when the then Chief Minister, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy decided to resign in the context of court order in the Kurnool Transport Case, he demanded that Kasu Brahmananada Reddy be made his successor. However, Alluri Satyanarayana Raju was considered to be second leader of the Congress. To overcome the conflict between Kammas and Reddys, the Congress Party chose Damodar Sanjeevaiah as the chief minister. He was asked to prove his majority support in Congress Party. Sanjeevaiah approached RPI leaders Bojja Appalaswamy and Bathinna Subba Rao. Later these two MLAs and RPI president Vadapalli joined the Congress. Since Sanjeevaiah became the chief minister, the Dalit leaders and people moved towards Congress Party. As a result, in East Godawari, in particular, and Coastal Andhra, in general, the RPI or independent Dalit politics got diffused[195]. To spread party activities Endluri Chinniah started an 'Andhra Republican' magazine under 'Dr. Ambedkar Publications Society' in April 1961. However, the party was divided into many parts. There were even more divisions at the national level. Each national leader tried to create his/her own group and this resulted in RPI faction in Andhra Pradesh[196]. The following table traces the growth and fall of Dalit parties vote percentage.

Table 2.3

Table: Votes polled by Dalit Parties in Elections to the Lok Sabha

Party	1951-52	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980
S.C.F (All Indian Scheduled Caste Federation)	6/1 3.70	–	–	–	–	–	–
Republican Party of India	–	1/0 1.6	3/0 0.97	2/0 0.50	4/0 0.26	1/0 0.09	–

Source: Y.B Abbasayulu and T.Tirupati Rao, 1982, *Harijan Movement*, pp- 249-287 in B.A.V Sharma and K.Madhusudhan Reddy (ed, 1982) *Reservation Policy in India*, Light and life Publishers, New Delhi.

Until 1957, many Dalits contested under the banner of the Scheduled Caste Federation. After formation of the RPI, they contested on RPI tickets. In 1957, the Scheduled Caste

[194] Opt, cit, Zelliot, Elenor Zelliot. (2013)
[195] Opt, Yendluri, (2009). Pp. 85-86
[196] Ibid, P. 96

Federation supported the Peoples Democratic Front (PDF). Many Malas like Sumitra Devi (Karimnagar), M.R Krishna (Peddapally-Karimnagar) in Telangana and Swarna Vemadas, Nandadas MP from Nellore contested on Communist Party tickets with the support of the Scheduled Caste Federation.[197] It was also observed that there was close relation between the Congress and Dalits in supporting majority of Mala representatives across political parties. The vote percentage of Republican Party for Lok Sabha gradually decreased. The competing leadership, divisions, lack of sustained party activities and the Party being controlled by a few dominant Dalit castes have all contributed to its failure to secure more votes. The following table presents the performance of the Dalit parties in the state legislative assembly elections.

Table 2.4

Performance of Dalits Parties in State Legislative Assembly Elections from 1957 to 1985

S. No	Year	Party	Seats contested	Won	Lost security deposit	Votes polled	Votes polled (percentage)	Votes in seats contested
1	1957	SCF	2	1	1	20287	0.56	17.11
2	1962	REP	18	0	17	46338	0.40	6.43
3	1967	RPI	11	1	10	36757	0.27	7.75
4	1972	RPI	9	0	8	21357	0.15	4.09
		RPI(K)	13	0	11	53497	0.27	6.03

Source: Election Commission Handbook

In 1967 general state elections, two groups of RPI contested separately and Endluri Chinnaiah, who was working under Awade leadership contested from Nellore for MP seat on the RPI ticket. Though got more than one lakh votes, he could not win. However, J. Eshwari Bai and B.V Ramanaiah, who worked under the leadership of Kobragade, got elected for the state assembly. This group also opposed the alliance with the Congress Party, though the national leadership was in favour of it. It also set up eleven candidatures in various places.[198] The elected RPI leaders actively participated in Assembly debates and questioned the discriminative attitude of the Congress and raised the issues of scholarships, houses and other facilities for Dalits and oppressed groups. Comparatively, the RPI members raised the Dalit question more than the Scheduled

[197] Interview with Ganumala Gyaneshwar on 26th, January, 2015. Hyderabad
[198] Opt, cit, Yendluri. (2009). p.101

Caste representatives of the Congress Party.[199] To strengthen the RPI activities and to spread Ambedkar's ideology, B.V Ramanaya established a socio, economic society called ' Ambedkar Memorial Society' in Hyderabad which became the centre for regular meetings and activities. Annual Ambedkar lectures series on the Dalit movements and politics were organised. He also initiated 'Republican Jyothi' magazine. Later, it was renamed as' Jai Bheem Patrika' which was edited and published by B.H Tirupathi, who earlier worked in the Scheduled Caste Welfare Association. The Ambedkar Memorial society played a significant role in translating Ambedkar volumes into Telugu.[200]

There were many groups working in Andhra Pradesh, to spread Ambedkar's ideas. Endluri Chinnaiah wrote "Ambedkar Jeevitha Charitra" (Ambedkar's Biography) in Telugu. This book became very popular and more than thousands got sold copies within a short time. Till now, this book has been reprinted 12 times. Ambedkarite activities were more in Coastal, particularly East Godwari, because of the active involvement of Andhra Malas. Organisations like Ambedkar Publications Society and magazines like *Andhra Republic, Praja Bandu* played an important part in spreading Ambedkar's ideology during the early 1970s. In the context of increasing atrocities and violence on Dalits, a public conference was organised in 1970 in Adi-Hindu Bhavan. Leaders like Gurram Jashuva, Sardar Nagappa, P.L Subramanyam, K.R Veeraswamy who attended the conference, condemned the violence. The conference also finalised the demands and sent a memorandum to the UNO.[201]

During the early 1970s, many Ambedkar Sangalus were established; Associations were formed all over Telangana region and in other places. K. Komuraiah, general secretary of Scheduled Caste Welfare Associations, B Kattaiah of Warangal who opened many "Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu" and under Pawan Prasad "Jana Chaitanya Natya Mandali" was started in Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Vishakapatnam areas in order to

[199] See for more details M.L Narsimha Rao. (1994). *Sahasamurthy J.Eshawari Bai*. Secundrabad, Srimati J Eshwari Bai Smarak Trust.
[200] B.V Ramanaiah Special article, Samatara Publications
[201] Opt, cit, Yendluri. (2009). p.117

spread Ambedkar ideology through songs.[202] It is also indicative that some of the Dalit leaders during this time started to work at the South India level and for this cause; the leaders gathered in Kerala and decided to work under "Confederation of the Depressed Classes (CDO) which worked in South India. In Vishakhapatnam and Nellore and Warangal, CDOs started its work under the confederation. The annual conferences of CDOs were held in Vijayawada and Hyderabad where Babu Jagjeevan spoke as the main speaker.[203] These activities were confined to employees and social activists in urban areas.

The East Godawari district was the nerve centre for the Dalit movement in Andhra. The Adi-Andhra community took an active part in spreading Ambedkar's ideology. In 1974, the annual meeting of the student Federation was organised in Tanuku. Leaders like B.D Khobragade (MP), D.A Katti and J. Eshwari Bai attended the meeting and addressed the audience and P.V Rao was elected as general secretary of Federation. Later on, the RPI activities were limited to urban centres and employees. The RPI's failure to unite Dalits and build independent politics disappointed the youth in Maharashtra and all over India. The Maharashtra youth organised and started the Dalit Panther Movement with a radical approach, inspired by the ideas of Ambedkar and Marx.[204] These activities soon influenced the Dalit youth all over the country.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu were started which played a crucial role in rebuilding the passive Dalit movement. These organisations were working in alliance with CPI (ML) Raitu Coolie Sangam, Radical Youth League, RSU, etc. Bojja Tarakam played an important role in forming the Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangam in Nizamabad. He inspired and led the Tendu leaf movement against landlords and exploiters.[205]. The Ambedkar Sangam organised Dalits by taking local issues, by organising Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations and installing statues of Ambedkar. The

[202] Ibid
[203] Ibid, pp.119-122
[204] See for more details Lata Murugkar. (1991). *Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra; A Sociological Appraisal*. Bombay, Popular Prakasham.
[205] Bojja Tarakam interview on 20th July, 2012, Hyderabad.

Ambedkar statue installed in 1968 at the Tank Bund in the twin cities became a veritable pilgrim centre for Dalits and a platform for many activities. The government was forced to form separate official committees like Ambedkar and Babu Jagjeevan Ram celebration committees and each year the celebrations are organised with government funding. In 1977, the Andhra Pradesh Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangam committee was formed. Thomas Rao was elected as president, S.S.R Bupathi as general secretary. Persons like J.B Raju, P.V Rao, Prem Kumar and Maisaiah were associated with it. There were many agitations and assertions in the early 1980s, in the context of the ongoing state oppression, on the issue of Masala Veerana temple entry incident movement, the denial of opportunity to Babu Jagjeevan Ram to become the Prime Minister in 1982, they announced the Independence Day as a black day and protested with black badges.[206] In this political context, N.T Ram Rao came up with the call of Telugu nationalism and started TDP. Within a short period, the party came to power and Kammas became powerful. This added strength to their caste arrogance which led to brutal violence on Dalits. The brutal incidents on Dalits and post independence agitations will be detailed in the next chapter.

Summary

The chapter traced the historical socio-political roots of contemporary Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh. It explored of Buddhist roots of anti-caste consciousness in Telugu land; Buddhism, as a first philosophical movement against caste hierarchy and Varnashrama dharma. It has flourished in both Telangana and Coastal Andhra regions. It had greater impact on the lives of people and their thought around Krishna belt. Because of its deep roots in the region, the specific version of Mahayana Buddhism picked up with Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna. The chapter covering the medieval Bhakti movements against Brahmanical hegemony in Telugu land brought out that there were various Bhakti sects within the Hindu fold. Basaveshvara's Verrashivism, which campaigned against caste discrimination and hegemonic ideology, had its influence in the South India, in general, and Karnataka, Andhra and Telangana, in particular. Many untouchables and Sudra castes were attracted and joined Veerashivism to overcome the caste exclusion. Influenced by this philosophy, Vemana wrote extensively against many social evils and

[206] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (2008)

his verses are still having influence on common people. Sects like those of Nasaraiah in Coastal Andhra attracted a considerable number of untouchable castes into their fold and propagated peace and secular ideas through Islamic principles. The Pothuluri Veerabrahmam sect also had influence on many communities, particularly the untouchables and Sudra castes. Pothuluri Veerabrahmam preached against caste hierarchy, purity and pollution practice and inequalities through his "Kalagyanams". His disciple, Eshwaramma, also had a lot of influence in the Telangana region. All these sects worked towards democratizing the social relations and spiritual freedom and preached equality before God, but failed to question the foundational structures of the caste system. Hence, these were subsumed by the Hindu reformist tradition in the later period.

During the early colonial period, many missionary works were started in both Coastal and Telangana regions. The evangelical journey of Church Missionary Society spread its church activities which sought to attract the lower class and caste people. Hence, many of the untouchables converted to Christianity to overcome caste discrimination and to get spiritual freedom. In this process, the church institutional missionary work provided education, health and some material benefits which helped the untouchables in their upward social mobility. The liberal ideas of Hindu reformers also had a lot of influence on the people within the Hindu fold. Various Hindu reformist trends like Parthana Samaj, Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj also helped in bringing reforms and mobilising the untouchables. Reformers like Kandukuri Veereshalingam, Pithapuram Maharaj, Naralseti Devendrudu, Guduri Ramachandra Rao contributed for social reforms and welfare of the untouchables.

The early 20th century witnessed the emergence of movements against Brahmin hegemony in the Madras Presidency. The non-Brahmin movement gained strength under the leadership of Periyar in Tamil Nadu which deeply influenced the Telugu Madras Presidency areas, particularly those led by the economically dominant castes like Kamma, Balija, Kappu and Reddy communities. Although there were minimal attempts to mobilise untouchables under this movement. This dominant caste not only failed to recognise lower castes, but they perpetuated hegemony and caste violence over Dalits in

the later period. Hence, it is considered that non-Brahmin category was strategically used to consolidate the dominant castes. Paradoxically, though the non-Brahmin movement reacted against Brahmanical hegemony, these communities did not change their casteist attitude towards the lower castes (Dalits), which got reflected in the various major massacres in the state.

The chapter further studied in detail the early colonial Dalit movement which emerged in the early decades of the 20th century in Andhra which comprised of coastal region and Rayalaseema of Madras Presidency and Telangana under Nizam rule. These regions provided different trends in the movement as a whole. While the Coastal Andhra had the choice between autonomy and integration, Hyderabad state witnessed a radicalised, autonomous movement of Dalits, which later factionalised the Dalit movement. Each gained inspiration and strength from the other. The Coastal Andhra Dalit movement had an extensive rural base, while Hyderabad had an established active factionalized Dalit leadership restricted only to urban centres such as Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It also witnessed the missionary works and British government policy initiatives which enabled the untouchable community to get educated and avail of some material benefits. This first generation leadership of the untouchable community started to assert their non-Aryan identity and challenged the caste divisions and the practice of untouchability. Both in Telangana (Under the Nizam) and Coastal Andhra (under Madras presidency), separate organisations, like Adi-Andhra, Adi-Hindu and Adi-Dravida were started through which untouchables had asserted identities. Most of these independent articulations were influenced by Ambedkar and by the self-respect movement of Tamil Nadu.

The Congress hegemonic politics and Harijana Sevak Sangh activities subsumed Dalits into the Congress fold and the Communist could not organise the Dalits, nor could the class dilute the caste. The first generation Dalits who benefited from the reforms by the Christian missionary work and colonial policies started organise and mobilising the untouchables under the influence of Ambedkar as a part of national level movement. Interestingly, the leadership came from the Mala community and one could see fractions among them. However, after the 1930s, the movement and leaders were dragged into

different fractions and subsequently the autonomous struggle got diffused. The movement took to three streams;

a) The Congress succeeded in accommodating the Dalits through popular policy promises, the land reforms, Garibi Hatao, 20 Point Programme, SC, ST sub-plan so on for the Dalit accommodation by offering some political positions to the emerging Dalits leadership. The patronising, and accommodative strategies of the Congress Party diffused Dalit autonomous movement and politics. The second stream under the communists created a new hope among exploited groups and Dalits, in particular. The CPI (ML) mobilised and organised Dalits and other marginalised groups against feudal oppression Vetti, landlords, exploitation and discrimination. This movement immediately gave relief to the Dalits and fought against feudal oppression. However, the increasing state repression and the people's desire to participate in the electoral process, the CPI (ML) Maoists inadequate characterisation of Indian state and society and the philosophical praxis on caste question became a big challenge to the contemporary radical left movements. The third streams of independent Dalit mobilising transformed into RPI, Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu and SC, ST Employees Associations could not either consolidate, or build a sustained substantial movement. The competing leadership, the hegemonisation of Ambedkar politics by a few mobile Scheduled Castes diluted the Dalit movement and politics from 1956 to 1985.

Chapter-III

Dalit Identity; Caste, Region and Dalit Assertion

Chapter - III

Dalit Identity; Caste, Region and Dalit Assertion

This chapter will try to carry forward the arguments of the preceding chapter, but in a more focused manner. The previous chapter clrealy brought that the Dalits asserted their identity and negotiated autonomy within the contestation of national and regional power stractures and reformistic agendas. Here, the attempt is to explore and understand the Dalit identity and autonomous articulations after 1985 massacre of Dalits in Karamchedu village in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh state. Although Dalit Mahasabha after Karamchedu created a topdown Dalit identity formation and articulations, it gets started to manifest in the given socioeconomic dynamics and everyday relations of Dalits at grassroots. Hence it becomes an important aspect to see and explore the nature and form of the Dalit identity articulations and autonomy negotiation in the very villages where the major massacres took place and shaped and reshaped the Dalit movement by addressing the questions: one Why Karamchedu massacre has become a landmark event for the emergence of contemporary Dalit movement in united Andhra Pradesh? Two What are the regional specificities in the formation of Dalit identity, or movement? Three what kind of new challenges, or issues, have emerged, or are emerging, from the major incidents which took place after the Karamchedu massacre in the specific regions? How the Dalit movement is addressing these issues? Four what are the discursive multiple identities and mobilisations which have emerged, or are being articulated in the more recent times in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

A majority of studies on the Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh, in particular, and India in general, largely focused on state level phenomena of the Dalit movement, which either inadequately capture or neglect the specificities of the region. The regional specificities within historical socioeconomic, political formations are yet to be adequately addressed for understanding the Dalit movement as a whole. So, the diversified manifestation of Dalit articulations and its constituted political agenda in confronting caste oppression, economic inequality and political hegemony is not present in a linear and uniform

trajectory. It gets manifested in several forms. So it can differ from region to region within a state and among states. Although there is no one-to-one relation between caste and region, everyday socioeconomic and political relations and the manifestation of caste are greatly influenced by political economy, culture and numerical presence of the dominant caste in the region. This, in turn, further influences the pattern of caste violence and nature of conflict. The regional disparities and numerical spread of the dominant caste power relations and the political geography works as contingent and historical factors in the very function of the broader power structures.[207] To understand this process, seven case studies of incidents that occurred in the three regions, namely, Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema, Telangana, Andhra region will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

The Karamchedu massacre was a turning point in the history of entire Dalit movement. The incident became an "event".[208] which changed the terms of discourse in the public domain and reoriented many social groups, like left, women, human rights and political parties. In fact, the beginning of the 1980s was a special phase in terms of socio economic and political churnings in state. In this phase, new political forces emerged from the upper castes, particularly the Kammas through the TDP against the single party domination by the Congress Party (mostly controlled by Reddys in the state). Soon, the political desire of Kammas also consolidated the chunk of other backward classes (which were largely denied their due political share) under the banner of TDP that came to power in the state. Around this time, the left radical movements was also mobilising people at the grassroots level through its frontal organisations like "Rythu Cooli Sangalu" against feudal oppression, campaigning for at least minimum wages, opposing the Vetti system (that obliged persons generally belong to the depressed classes to work without wages for upper class landlords). In various states like Karnataka the 'Dalit Sangarshana Samithi' emerged as social force, in Maharashtra, the Dalit Panther movement created a vibrant

[207] See G. Aloysius, G. (2013). *Conceptualising the Region*. New Delhi, Critical Quest
[208] This incident is considered in Alian Badiou terms as “event", Dag Eric (2014) in his article, the writer treated this as an event to understand the impact and process in which it become part of Dalit subject consiouness in the region. So, in this chapter, this incident will be considered as an event.

consciousness among the Navayana Buddhist Dalits. All these influenced and contributed towards new Dalit consciousness. The rural landholding, rich peasants and landlords, particularly the Kammas who were already waiting for political opportunities, and the newly emerged political groups and communities with agricultural surplus started to exercising and exerting social power over the Dalits and other communities.[209] The first generation and newly educated people from Dalit communities also started asserting their claims and rights. This led to conflicts in various parts of Andhra, in general, and Coastal Andhra, in particular. Therefore, it is important to understand the dominant caste hegemony and lower caste resistance at the local and regional levels.[210] The Justice Punnaiah Commission, which went into the issue of atrocities and violence on Dalits during the mid 1980s and before, stated:

> "The large scale prevalence of the three main disabilities, for the eradication of untouchbaility, the P.C.R Act 1955 was enacted, reveals to the country and Andhra Pradesh state machinery is disinterested to book F.I.Rs, register cases, investigate into them and file charge sheets, though the offences under PCR Act are cognisable offences. I have furnished the names of the villages of each Mandal in each district in which the three disabilities are being practiced. These details demonstrate the poor performance of the enforcement machinery consisting of the inspector of police and sub-inspector of police who are given the power of investigation under P.C.R Act, 1989, which has empowered the deputy superintendent of police to investigate into the offences of atrocities. The voice of the Dalits, the Dalit organisations and social organisations is unanimous in their view that the station House officers (S.I and C.I) are not booking F.I.Rs and not registering cases and hence the P.C.R Act 1955 is being watered down. To falsify this version of the Dalits and Dalit organisations and social organisations, the sub-inspectors or circle inspectors have not produced the evidence showing the cases,

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[209] See Srinivasulu, K and P.Sarangi. (1999). Political Realignment in Post-NTR Andhra Pradesh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol-XXXIV, No-34-35, August 21-28

[210] According to Suhas Palshekar, "The region becomes a theatre of caste conflicts and confers caste with a political economic dimension[210]. He further asserts, "Caste as a social space interacts with the region as a territorial space"

village-wise in each Mandal filed by the sub -inspectors or circle -inspectors in each district in P.C.R Act".[211]

He further stated:

"The statement prepared by the inspector General of police C.I D, show the cases filed under PCR Act, 1955, in the courts against the culprits in each district in 1988. It is appended herewith. The total number of cases filed in the courts under P.C.R Act. 1955 is only 1593 out of which 777 occur in Guntur District, 369 from Praksham district and 119 from Nalgonda District. Though numerous petitions were received by the commission from Kurnool and Khammam Districts, no case from Khammam for 1999 and no case from Kurnool for 1999 were filed under P.C.R Act. Does it mean that disabilities based on untouchability are not being practised in these two districts? Numerous petitions were received from Ananthapur, Cuddapah, Chittoor, Nellore (especially Rapur Mandal in Nellore), Mahabubnagar, Nizambad, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam, Warangal, West Godavari, Karimnagar. The enforcement machinery filed in 1998 only 2 cases in Anthapur district, 2 cases in Cuddapah district, 14 cases in Chittoor District, 1 case in Nellore District, 9 cases in Mahabubnagar District, 2 cases in Warangal District, 6 cases in West Godavari District and 8 cases in Karimnagar District. For enforcement of P.C.R Act, 1955, the sub-inspector and circle inspector are the investigating officers and they are competent to investigate into the cases and file charge sheets. But the figures show that sub-inspectors and Circle inspectors are not interested to book F.I.Rs and register cases under the P.C.R Act".[212]

However, since 1985, a series of incidents took place. Each incident became important in shaping and reshaping the Dalit movements. Each of these had its own specificity; posed many questions which created conditions for a critical discourse and engagement with

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[211] Justice Punnaiah Commission. (2000). *one man commision to inquire into the issues of untouchbaility, attrocities on SCs/STs and suggest measures to eradicate untouchability*, Volume-I, Published by Government of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, p.54

[212] Ibid, p.54

grassroots realities. Hence, in this chapter, it is proposed to understand the major incidents which became politicised and contributed to shaping and reshaping the anti-caste identity, at large, and Dalit identity formation, in particular. The appendix-II included in the thesis brings the major incidents that occurred in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh since 1983. The forms of attack and violence were more or less same in the form of social boycott, rape, burning houses killings, harassing mass assaults. The caste hegemony and social hierarchy have been primarily responsible for the atrocities on Dalits. The economic relations and near-total dependency of the Dalits on the landlords have also made the latter vulnerable to physical violence by the former. Sometimes, the incidents are reported and recorded in various formal and informal records but many more incidents go unreported. Given the nature of the incidents, some of them become more visual and influence the civil society and political process and create a context for the Dalit movement and articulation. Therefore out of the listed incidents here, a few have been selected as case studies for deeper study to see the context of the incidents and the issues posed before the civil society groups and to mainstream politics. The incidents have been well debated among activists, media circles, which helped in shaping the Dalit consciousness. Seven incidents have been taken up for detailed study and for exploring the social, economic and political issues around these incidents.[213] The chronology of the incidents also becomes important to see the trends in the identity articulation. Therefore these incidents are taken up for discussion in a chronological manner.

[213] 1. Incidents are not merely incidents; these are reflections of socio, economic, political system/structures 2. The incidents are outcomes of the social contradictions in the given time and space. 3. The incident may change the nature of debate and discussion on power relations and historical understanding. 4. The incidents of caste conflict are due to the deep-rooted dominance by the upper castes and resistance by the e and Dalits. 5 The incident may become as an historical juncture where the collective expression /voice motivate or create conditions for the organised articulations to change the caste prejudice and formulate the future direction. 6 .The incidents may or may not be a manifestation of the overall system but certainly these are part of the embedded realities of the structures and process. 7. The incidents also help to see the accumulated factors and issues which are involved before such incidents actually take place.

Coastal Andhra

Coastal Andhra, or Coastal, was part of the Madras Province before 1953. The state of Andhra was formed on 1 November 1953. The composite state of Andhra Pradesh came into existence on 1 November 1956 with the merger of the erstwhile Princely state of Hyderabad and the Andhra State in the aftermath of a Gentlemen's Agreement between the leaders of the two regions.[214] Thereafter, in June 2014, the state of Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The present state of Andhra Pradesh is made up of Coastal Andhra (with nine districts, namely, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasham and Nellore) and Rayalaseema (with four districts, namely, Kurnool, Chittoor, Anantapur and Kadapa). The new state of Telangana has 10 districts, namely, Hyderabad, Warangal, Medak, Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda, Karmimnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Khammam and Rangareddy.

The land of the Coastal Andhra region is fertile, with the construction of major irrigated projects over the Godavari and Krishna rivers. These rivers have played a crucial role in the agricultural and industrial development and modernisation of the region.[215] The increasing capitalist agrarian farming facilitated the urbanisation and agrarian based industrialisation in the region. In the process, the dominant castes like Kammas, Rajus and Reddys became entrepreneurs. As observed by Harish Damodaran, it is important to understand three processes that led to the emergence of new capitalist class in India, which also happened in Andhra too. These three are: one Bazaar to factory, two farming to factory, and 3. Office to factory. These processes in Coastal Andhra led to diversified

[214] The gentlemen agreement is an agreement between Coastal Andhra and Telangna leaders for the protection of Telangna people's rights and against discrimination. This agreement was signed by four leaders from both regions. From Coastal Andhra they were: 1. B. Gopal Reddy (the then Chief Minister of Andhra State) 2. N. Sanjeeva Reddy 3. Gouthu Lachanna and 4. Alluri Satyanarayana Raju. From the Telangana Region they were: 1. B.Ramakrishna Rao, 2. K.V Ranga Reddy, 3. M. Chenna Reddy and. 4. J.V. Narsing Rao. Intrestingly, except Gouthu Lachnna, all belonged to Upper Castes.

[215] Haragopal, G. (1985). A Socio-Economic Study of Modern Andhra. *Social Sciecne Probings*, Volume-2, Number-1, March, pp. 47-48

investments in various sectors by the dominant castes who aspired to control the political and state institutions.[216] In Corol Boyak Upadhya's view:

> "The early industrial entrepreneurs of Coastal Andhra were mostly Zamindars and large landlords, rather than ordinary rich cultivators. For example, the new film industry in Madras was heavily financed by Zamindari families of the region, notably the Raja of Mirzapuram. Most of the industries in the region were agro based. The most common were sugar factories. However, other enterprises such as financial institutions and transport companies were also floated by wealthy landlords".[217]

Subsequently, the region underwent various social movements like nationalist, anti-Brahmin, peasant, Naxalite, Jai Andhra and Dalit assertions. The early nationalist movements were led by upper castes. The non-Brahman movement was led by dominant peasant caste Kammas against Brahman hegemony in Madras Presidency. It is said that the various left movements were also largely led by persons belonging to the dominant castes[218]. The British East India Company expanded its trade and administration by bringing the local landlords, rich peasants under its grip.[219] The Christian missionary work and Christian education and social service institutions largely attracted the 'untouchable' communities. Consequently there were large-scale conversions into Christianity. Many persons belonging to the major untouchable Mala and Madiga communities got education and some of them secured employment in the Govt. sector.[220] The Dalit critique against upper hegemony was largely neglected or was politically

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[216] Damodaran, Harish. (2008). *India's New Capitalists: Caste, Business, and Industry in a Modern Nation*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, pp.92-106.
[217] Opt, cit, Corol Boyak Upadhya. (1988), p.1378.
[218] See Selig S. Harrison. (1956). Caste and the Andhra Communists. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol-50, No-2, June , pp.378-404
[219] See China Rao, Yaganti. (2003). *The Struggle for Dalit Identity*. Kanishka Publishers and Distributers, New Delhi.
[220] See Venkat Rao, B. (2009). *Caste and the Convesion Question; A Dalit Perspective on Colonial Andhra*. unpublished Ph.D Thesis, submitted to Department of English, The English and Foregin Languages University, Hyderabad.

accommodated in the Congress politics during colonial period.[221] And Brahmans controlled politics and education. However, this community largely sold land to the agriculture non-Brahman castes like Kammas, Reddys, and Kappus. In the process, these communities/castes, because of strong attachment with agriculture and its production managed to establish themselves as the dominant peasant class in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema.[222] This helped them to engage in strong agriculture business. Many of them reinvested their earning in other businesses such as credit and lending business. The Kammas, Kappus and Reddys also migrated to various places, particularly places having cultivable land. In Telangana, many of them settled in Warangal, Kammam, Nizamabad and Mahaboobnagar districts. The political and regional domination of Coastal Andhra by the upper castes has also culturally hegemonised the state institutions. The stigmatisation and humiliation of Telangana language, culture, literature, festivals and food habits through the film industry, print and electronic media led to fuelling the present conflict between Coastal Andhra and Telangana which largely got manifested in the separate Telangana movement.[223] According to K. Murali:

> "The Ryotwari system prevailing in central Coastal districts of Nellore, Krishna and Godavari brought the change of revenue payment from kind to cash. This change gave rise to landlords becoming moneylenders also. The system of revenue payment in cash and increased agricultural surplus encouraged farmers for further marketisation of agricultural products for profits. These changes invariably led to payment of wages in terms of cash, instead of in kind. In place of annual farm servants, daily wage labourers came into existence. The result of these changes was an erosion of patron-client relationship between the landed upper castes and lower caste/Dalit landless labourers and tenants. The

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[221] See Satyanarayana, A. (2005). *Dalits and Upper Castes; Essays in Social History of Andhra Pradesh*. Kanishka Publishing House, New Delhi and Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). *The Dalit Movement and Democratization in Andhra Pradesh*, Working Paper, East-West Center, Washington

[222] See Satyanaryana, A. (2007)**.** *Society, Economy and Polity in Modern Andhra*. Kanishka Publishers, and Distributors, New Delhi.

[223] Prof. Jayashanker extensively worked on the Telangana region, and its historical 'backwardisation'. He was also actively involved in the separate Telangana movement. His writings have been published both in English and Telugu, the "*Telangana: a Political Demand*" argues that the political, economical and culural domination of the Coastal Andhra is perpetuated in state institutions and caused the policy level discrimination and backwardness of Telangana region.

> monetisation of the agrarian economy, thus, relatively freed Dalit labourers from traditional services to upper castes. The increase in landless labour force and relative freedom for Dalit castes from the 'Sudhra' upper castes led to labour migration from one district to another and even to remote places like Burma".[224]

A majority of dominant peasant castes like Kammas and Reddys asserted themselves in 1920s through N.G Ranga's Peasant Movement and the Communist Parties. The production of cash crops by Kammas and Kappus adversely affected the Dalit labourers. Contrary to this, the agricultural growth rate of the farmers increased. But this did not reach the rural people. Along with the capitalist farming class the rural-urban migration increased, the spread of education and the development of caste consciousness also developed. As a result, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Guntur and Vijayawada became trading centres. The green revolution of the mid 1960s strengthened the capitalist tendencies in the agrarian economy. Scholars like Carol Upadya attributed this to "capitalist farmers". The dominant caste consciousness and networks helped in development of economy, particularly among Kammas. K.Murali posits:

> "The middle caste/sudhra castes such as Kammas, Kappus / Reddys has been adept in utilising the new opportunities created in economic and political spheres by the new political system. The spread of cooperative credit societies, land development banks, sugar cooperatives, government's assurance of substantial price support for farm products, subsidised inputs like water, power fertilizer and institutional credit helped the consolidation of the rich farming class. These dominant castes could effectively corner all the political positions such as panchayat presidents, samithi presidents, MLA and MLCs".[225]

The major dominant caste Reddys, through the Congress Party, Kammas through the TDP and Kappus, through PRP (later merged into the Congress), are emerged as political

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[224] Murali, K. (1995). *Upper Caste Violence on Dalits: Case Studies of Karamchedu and Chundur Massacres.* unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, pp.29-30.
[225] Ibid, p.36

forces in the state. The emergence of the YSRCP further deepened the Reddy domination under Jaganmohan Reddy's leadership in newly formed Andhra Pradesh state. The political rivalry among dominant castes, Kammas, Reddys and Kappus, influenced the state level economy and politics. The emergence of the TDP in 1982 accommodated Kammas and challenged the single party hegemony in Andhra Pradesh politics. The immediate victory of TDP increased the Kamma domination at the grassroots and in state institutions. This qualitatively changed the socio, political process in the region, in post Karamchedu (1985) and Chundur (1991) and the course of Dalit assertion had changed the discourse of social movements in the region, in particular, and the state, at large. The increased level of literacy, which changed the wage labour relationship, brought consciousness among Dalits on their rights. So, in this social context, the major incidents of Karamchedu (1985) and Chundur (1991) are important cases for deeper analysis.

Case: I: Karamchedu

Karamchedu is a village located seven kilometres from Cheerala of Prakasam district. The village is divided into 16 wards. Out of these, eight wards (hamlets) are largely inhabited by persons belonging to the Kamma Community and Dalits reside in the 16th ward. The total population of the village in mid 1980s was around 13,600, which included around 6000 Kammas, about 900 Malas and about 1100 Madigas. The remaining population includes Upparas, Dasus and Muslims who were quite significant in number[226]. The economic conditions and land owing patterns are unequal in the village, as observed by K.Srinivasulu, was:

> "The total arable land in the village was 9000 acres. Most land was owned and controlled by the dominant Kammas, who also owned around 2,000 acres in the neighbouring villages. Benefiting from the irrigation facilities provided by the century-old, British-built Krishna reservoir and the post-independence Nagarjunasagar canals, the fertile irrigated land was the major source of prosperity of the Kamma peasantry which, in the course of time, diversified its wealth into business, rice mills, contracts, transport operation and film production.

[226] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). p.36.

> Thus, Karamchedu counts among its natives some well-known film producers and businessmen. A significant proportion of Kamma farmers regularly migrated to other areas of the state - and even to neighbouring states. They have had a presence in Karimnagar and Nizambad districts in Telangana and Bellary district in Karnataka, where they cultivated tobacco, cotton and other commercial crops on the leased or purchased lands.[227]

On the other hand, the economic conditions in the village are highly unequal among the castes. Most of the Dalits work as daily agricultural labourers in the field of the dominant caste as Paleru (farm hands). The daily wages of both male and female were Rs.12, Rs.8 respectively. It is needless to say that these are less than the minimum wages. Their financial conditions forced them to depend on Kamma landlords for their livelihood. On many occasions, when the labourers ask for their wages, they do not receive them on time. At times, the labourers have to wait for 10-15 days. Sometimes it takes months together. In the case of Dalits, if they ask for early payment the landlords abuse and humiliate and beat them publicly. Out of 9000 acres of cultivable land, Madigas households, 20 families own 20 acres of these only 10 families have permanent pattas, 89 acres of the land owned by 83 households of the backward castes. The temple/endowment, land for management of irrigational tanks, common grazing land and other collective lands of the village are all occupied and cultivated by Kammas. The lower castes are not allowed to participate in public auction for land. Thus, in total, only Kammas benefited from public lands.[228]

During British time, Karamchedu was under rytwari system because of which the revenue system of cash payment. This created conditions for the emergence of money lenders among the Kammas. Consequently, many Dalits became indebted to Kamma landlords and even lost their lands to them in the bargain. The economic differences in the region helped in the strengthening of Justice Party and Congress. The Kamma

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[227] Ibid, p.36
[228] Opt, Murali, K. (1995). p.42

landlord of the village, Jagarlamudi Kuppuswamy Chowdary, applied for Zamindar rights to British administration. The peasant upper castes and agriculture Dalit labourers are associated with communist movement. Interestingly, in Karamchedu, one of the bazars is known as Moscow Bazar where communist sympathizers reside. The first panchayat president was Jagarlamudi Chandramouli. Later, he was elected as an MLA in 1957 on the Communist Party ticket. Another person, Jagarlamudi Laxminarayana, of the village was also elected as an MLA.[229] The village was also influenced by the freedom movement. This is reflected in the instalation of statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Potti Sriramulu in the middle of the village. People recall that Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, Unnava Laxminrayna and N.G Ranga visited their village and collected Rs. 1900 as donation. It is also mentioned that some people from the village also participated in the Gandhian Salt Sataygraha.[230]

Because of their skills in agriculture, many Kammas migrated from Karamchedu to places like Manthani and Mahadevapur in Karimnagar district in north and areas like Karimnagar, Atmakur and Yelesuwaram Talukas. Some of them even migrated to Bellary and Nizambad and started cultivating cotton there. Given the labour relations in the village, Kammas tended to prefer Madigas as tenents and coolies, since the submissiveness of Madigas gave scope to exploit them more. Around 200 Madiga households, out of 325 households, were tenants or share croppers in the village. The tenants had to sound the ashram bell and chant 'Hare Rama' around 4-30 a.m. to wake up the villagers. Even the slightest delay is not tolerated by Kamma landlords.[231] In the village, Kammas have been controlling Dalits and other lower castes through the "Katcheri", a kind of the court, the verdict of which has been regarded as the law of village. At the Katcheri, the seating arrangement depends on land holding status of families of Kammas. So, the people of the village are not even allowed to go to police station and every dispute has to be resolved in the Kacheri itself. This Katcheri is not an

[229] Ibid, p.43
[230] Ibid, p.43
[231] Interview with Duddu Bhaskar Rao on 22nd, June, 2013, Karamchedu. Bhaskar Rao is actively participated in the post-Karamchedu agitations, now; he is actively works for the Bahujan Samaj Party.

elected body, but is body of Kammas, which symbolises Kamma authority over the village. The following incident that happened in Karamchedu shows the domination of Kammas and their behaviour. K.Murali described the incident as:

> "Ten years before the Karamchedu carnage, Upperas, backward caste people, rebelled against wicked Kammas. The latter frequently raided Upperapalem and attacked Upperas (OBC). Venkateshwarlu a Chundunayak leader, tried to organise peasants' for a wage hike. The Kammas beat him up.Venkateshwarlu ran and himself in the Madigapalle (a habitation of the Madigas). The Kammas asked the Madigas to hand over Venkateshwarlu to them. The Madigas rejected this demand. Instead, they categorically said that they would protect Venkateshwarlu even at the cost of their lives. Unable to face the Madigas, Kamma mob went back. From that day, Kammas nurtured hatred against Madigas. Later, they attacked the Malas, but the Madigas rescued the Malas. That incident further angered the Kammas. They were only waiting for an opportunity to settle scores with the Madigas".[232]

Madigas have a lot of self-respect, although they work in Kammas fields in the village. They are all experts and warriors in "Karrasamu."[233] They perform it with sticks to the rhythm of "Billamgodu" tune. So, Madigas never compromised on self-respect and dignity. The new generation of youth started to question some of the conservative practices. The education levels also started slowly going up. In the region since agriculture is based on commercial crops like tobacco, the Kamma community searched for new investment in various fields.[234] K.Srinivasulu observes:

> "The Karamchedu landlords had become very rich. They raised cotton, tobacco and other cash crops, along with traditional crops. They monopolised trade, money lending business and particularly the cinema industry. The Telugu Desam

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[232] Padma Rao, Katti. (1999). *Journey towards Dalit Dignity*. Bombay, the All India Telugu Bahujan Welfare Society, p.221

[233] Karasammu is a kind of skill which is played by sticks, Madigas are experts in this skill most of the time it will help them to protect themselves when they are in danger.

[234] Opt, cit, Padma Rao, Katti. (1999). p.221

> party, which was set up to counter Reddy politics, had its roots in Karamchedu. The village landlord, Daggubati Chenchuramaiah, was related to the TDP leader N.T Rama Rao. His son, Daggubati Venkateshwara Rao, was married to NTR's daughter. Relationship with NTR had only added to the arrogance of Karamchedu Kammas. Police and revenue officials act as the henchmen of the Daggubati family with that, no one could stop the Kammas.[235]

It is obvious that the TDP victory at the state level added to the arrogance of local Kammas. During elections a majority of the Dalits voted for the Congress Party. This was not tolerated by the Kammas and created a clash at one of the polling booths. Protest against humiliation, agitation for minimum wages, etc., angered Kammas who started feeling that they were losing their traditional caste hegemony over Dalits. So, this made Kammas wait for an opportunity to attack the Dalits.

On July 16th, 1985 at 3.30 p.m. in Karamchedu village, two Kamma boys, Potina Srinu and Rayneedu Prasad, were washing a buffalo in the tank located in the Madigapalle. Katti Chandraiah (a Dalit handicapped boy) objected to their dirtying the water tank. When Potina Srinu and Rayneedu were about to attack Katti Chandraiah, a Dalit woman, Munangi Suvartha, who came to the tank to collect water managed to protect the Dalit boy at that time. This became a pretext for the Kammas, who were itching for a fresh quarrel with the Madigas. In the evening, Suvartha's father in law was summoned to the Katcheri to discuss the issue. However, since he knew about the Kamma dominance and biased judgments, he did not go. The Kacheri members said that the issue would be resolved the next day. Meanwhile, the Kammas gathered at a Brandy shop and a group of them went to every household with Srinivas and tried to make all believe that Srinivas was beaten up by the Madigas. They provoked the Kammas to launch an attack on the Madigapalle. The Madigas did not expect the attack. In the early hours of July 17, 1985, a huge mob of Kammas attacked the Madigas.The Kammas mobilised people from seven nearby villages.The mob raided every Dalit's house, and drove the Madigas into the

[235] Ibid, p.222

fields. They terrorised, humiliated and even raped the women. No one was spared, even the pregnant women, mothers and children were beaten up, the entire colony was damaged and the houses were set on fire. The Dalits fled the village in large numbers. They went to the neighbouring Chirala town some eight km away and took shelter in a church. Six persons, namely, Duddu Vandhanam (35), Duddu Ramesh (22), Thella Yeoshiva (55), Thella Moshy (70), Thella Muthaiah (45) and Duddu Abraham (40)[236] lot their lives in the incident and died in the hospital... Koti James, along with Katti Padma Rao, enquired about incident. Among the victims, Tella Laban and Tella Jadson decided to fast unto death for justice. Later, Gadar and other leaders intervened and suggested to advance movement further. The leaders formed a committee called "Karamchedu Badithula Porata Committee" for which Laban was elected as president and Tella Jadson as treasurer. For some time, the activities continued in the Church ground. Later, another place became the center of activism. Many dharnas, rasto rokos were organised. Accoring to Katti Padma Rao:

> "On September 1, 1985 the historic huge "Chalo Chirala" public meeting was organised. Dalits from all over the state poured into Chirala town in Prakasam district to attend the rally, in which more than 3, 00,000 Dalits marched with strong slogans and their emotions, were very high. The strength of the Dalits in this rally caused some consternation in the dominant castes. In this historical meeting, the stage was prioritised exclusively for the Dalits. No members of the dominant castes, howsoever sympathetic to the Dalits, were allowed to share the dais. Dalits at that moment did not want anyone to speak on their behalf. They expressed confidence that they could manage on their own. A very important facet of this meeting was that it was inaugurated by Gaddar, the new democratic cultural revolutionary singer from the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) people war party. He composed a song for the occasion; *Dalita Pululamma, Karamchedu bhooswamuloto Kalabadi nilabadi porusessina Dalita*

[236] Ibid, p.223

Pululamma (Dalit Tigers, who boldly stood up and fought with Karamchedu landlords)".[237]

The act of not allowing upper caste sympathisers on to the dais created a debate. But the meeting ended with the decision to form a new state level autonomous Dalit organisation, called 'Andhra Pradesh Dalit Maha Sabha' (DMS) with the prime objective of consolidating the strength of the Dalits, tribals, backward castes and the minorities. The Sabha also clarified in its historical document "Dalit Mahasabha Manifesto" and spelt out the organisational strategies and objectives of A.P Dalit Mahasabha. The category "Dalit" became popular. Thus, after the Karamchedu movement, the nomenclature changed from Harijan to SC to "Dalits". This category was constructed, created and owned by untouchables. So it became more popular. Moreover, it incorporated all exploited and discriminated classes (SCs, STs, OBCs, women and minorities) as 'Dalits'. The Karamchedu incident created an independent thinking and vision among the Dalits. It clearly critiqued the casteist attitude of the state and its institutions. Many women also actively participated in it. Due to this vibrant movement, the leaders and cadres of all social movements spelt out the distinction between Dalits and non-Dalits. In essence, it asked the question, "Which sides are you are..? Consequently, most of them were forced to take a position on caste.

The Shibiram (camp) where the victims stayed became the centre of Dalit protest and it was filled with anguish and enthusiasm. They disowned the terms *Harijan, Madiga* and *Mala* and emphatically asserted that they were all Dalits. Customary visits are made by various party leaders who made promisies about the "arrest of culprits", "compensations" and restoration of normalcy. The inmates of Shibiram refused to be convinced by these promises. The victims did not allow any political party to come near, lest they try to derive political mileage out of it. They also disowned the members of the Congress and Telugu Desam Parties, who came with huge philanthropic donations. Chief Minister N.T

[237] Padma Rao, Katti. (1999). *Journey towards Dalit Dignity*. Bombay, the All India Telugu Bahujan Welfare Society, p.21

Rama Rao, a Kamma by caste, who declared himself at the time elections as the "Harijan among Harijan", faced the wrath of the Shibiram members.[238] "On 20th July 1985, the government appointed a judicial inquiry commission to look into causes of the Karamchedu incident. The commission was headed by D.P Desai. The Commission submitted its report in August 1987. That was made public in March 1988. This delay in inquiry indicates lack of commitment and interest on the part of the system to Dalit question"[239].

The Karamchedu movement was a battle, a rising flame - an inspiration.[240] It was a symbol of self respect. The movement sharpened Dalits consciousness. It turned out to be a landmark event in the history of modern Dalit movement. The Karamchedu massacre also influenced political parties in the state. The ruling party, headed by N.T.Rama Rao, condemned the atrocities in the State Legislative Assembly, but did not make a reference to Karamchedu.[241] The entire Shibiram was full of anguish[242]. Katti Padma Rao states:

> "The Dalit movement was born out of Karamchedu martyrs' blood; the village became the centre and base of the movement. The matriarchal institution has been the internal strength of any Dalit movement. So, it inspired Dalit women to join the agitation in lakhs. It altered democracy enslaved in shackles... Its construction, propagating and sacrifice became the covenants of the movement. Whenever Dalit were attacked, the movement went there searched, pinned and exposed the caste factor behind such attacks. It questioned the accused and dragged that person to the court. It bared the loopholes in the panel code. It readied Dalit to fight for rights and frame new forms of struggle. In the end, the Dalit movement forced its critics to mimic it simultaneously.[243]

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[238] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). p.19
[239] Ibid, Murali, K. (1985). P.85
[240] Opt, cit, Padma Rao, Katti. (1999). p.220
[241] Opt, cit, Dag Eric Berg. (2011). *Dalits and Constitutional State*. P.178, and Opt, K.Y Ratnam. (1997). p.107
[242] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). p.20
[243] Ibid, p. 234

In the entire state, Dalits and non-Dalits were mobilised. The People's War Group of Naxalites also responded and sharpened the consciousness in the course of movements. As observed by Dag Eric Berg:

> "Karamchedu created reaction much beyond the fold of Dalits. The massacre exploded the myth among the committed social activists. That caste was "a thing of the past". In an interview before his untimely death K. Balagopal, a human rights activist and a Brahmin by caste, emphasised the historical significance of Karamchedu for generation of activists by characterising it as the event that "opened our eyes" to the caste question. In other words, Karamchedu was the brutal massacre that changed the established idea among movements that oppression was a matter of inequalities, feudalism and class by putting caste at the centre of a new and strong direction for activism and debates".[244]

In Cheerala, near the Shibiram (camp, where the surviving victims of the massacre were lodged) residents of eighteen Mala and Madiga petas (habitations) extended their support and served food to the victims. The victims did not allow any political parties and politicians into the Shibiram. They called all the Dalit representatives as political Brokers. Dalit women rejected the 'carrots' offerd by the chief minister. Both Dalit Mahasabha and 'Karamchedu Badithula Porata Committee' filed police and private cases and demanded proper justice and rehabilitation. Because of these, the District Collector and the state Secretary, (Social welfare) S.R Shankaran, took special interest and provided the necessary facilities. In the initial stage, the Government provided five acres of land on the outskirts of Cheerala town for temporarily accommodating the victims. It also started a domestic industry and provided daily work to the victims near the Shibiram. The committee demanded jobs, land and construction of houses. After one year or so, the government purchased a separate land near Cheerala itself for construction of a special colony, since the victims were not willing to go to Karamchedu. Further, around 70 people got jobs and 436 houses were constructed, each family got one and half acre of

[244] Opt, cit, Dag Eric Berg. (2011). p.178

land near their houses. The colony was constructed with some facilities as primary school, health centre, Anganwadi, community hall.

The newly constructed colony was named Vijaya Nagara colony to symbolise the victory. The dead bodies were also buried near the colony. The place was named as 'Rudira KShetram'. On every July 17th, residents of the colony organise meetings in memory of Karamchedu martyrs. The colony became a gram panchyat a few years back. Even though the residents have different political affiliations, when it comes to electing and voting, the decisions are taken unanimously. Now in the colony many people are doing job and youth are well educated from LKG to PG (both professional and non-professional). The political awareness and trends have emerged within the Dalit Bahujan discourse in the colony. In 2001, Tella Baskar Rao (BSP) got unanimously elected as MPTC. Later, he became the mandal vice president[245]. One could also see three kinds of political affiliations among colony Madigas. One, majority of the youth affiliated to MRPS. The second committee of MRPS was formed in the colony in 1994. Manda Krishna stayed for some time in the same colony and worked on the Edureeta magazine. Pilli Manikya Rao, the politbureau member of MRPS, who coordinates the state level MRPS activities, belongs to this colony. The second group of individuals, who actively worked in post-Karamchedu agitations under 'Karamchedu Badithula Porata Committee sympathetic, are oriented towards the Dalit Mahasabha activites. And third trend is influenced by Bahujan Kanshiram politics.

According to Jadson, the legal battle of the struggle is an important part in the entire post-Karamchedu agitations. He is a key person who coordinated the legal and court- related matters on behalf of the victims. Immediately after the incident, the police filed the case, which in his view, contained wrong information and facts that would not ensure proper justice to the victims. So, at the suggestion of Dalit leaders, Jadson also filed a private case on the incident. The movement was at its peak, when the ideological and leadership conflicts started between the Dalits and left groups. The left groups, particularly the CPI

[245] Interview with Dudu Baskar Rao, active BSP leader in the colony

(ML) and their sympathisers and frontal organisations, argued that Karamchedu is a class struggle. On the other hand, Jadson and others members argued that if it was a class struggle, why a poor Kamma also attacked the poor Madigas. Moreover, why did the so-called communists from 'Moscow Bazzar' of the village also come to attack the poor Madigas? In this way, in private and public talks, the CPI (ML) groups differed and chose Ambedkar's line of thought and his path of struggle. In this way, both ideologically and in terms of leadership and representation, they asserted the autonomy of the struggle.

In 1994, the additional session's judge, Guntur, gave life imprisonment to the five accused and three years' imprisonment for several others. However, on 24 July 1998, a Division Bench of the AP High Court set aside the conviction, and acquitted the accused[246]. Then, the Kammas appealed to the High Court. As per the work division of the Dalit Mahasabha activists, Tarakam was supposed to file a petition in the High Court against the appeal of the Karamchedu Kammas. As per Jadson, whenever he called and enquired about the Petition, he was informed that the case was yet to come up for trial. So, the Vijaya Nagara colony people have to wait for the High Court judgment. One fine morning, some Telugu dailies carried the news that the no one has a culprit in the Karamchedu incident. Then, Jadson with the help of S.R Shankaran, he started taking up the case. After 23 long years, the Supreme Court delivered its final verdict in the sensational Karamchedu massacre case by announcing life sentence to the main accused and three years of imprisonment to 30 others. The trial court in Ongole had sentenced 159 people to life imprisonment, which was later struck down by the AP High Court. Although a Special Leave Petition was filed in the Supreme Court on 24 October 1998, it was on 19 December 2008 - a clear 10 years later - that a Bench of the Apex Court, consisting of Justice BN Agarwal and Justice GS Singhvi, upheld the conviction order passed by the trial court. However, it sentenced the main accused, Anjaiah, to life term and 29 others to three years of jail in the case. Justice (retd) M.N Rao appeared on behalf of the state of Andhra Pradesh.

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[246] Times of India dated 20th December, 2008.

In Jadson's view, due to rigorous legal battle after the Karamchedu massacre in 1989, the SC, ST Atrocity (Prevention Act) came out as one of the powerful Acts on caste discrimination. It also showed that Dalits could drag the dominant Kammas into courts that ruled the village through Katcheries and punished people as per their whims. But one thing Jadson felt was that after almost 24 years, the Supreme Court delivering a Judgment was very pathetic. The judgement coming too late meant that many atrocities were committed in the surrounding villages of Karamchedu. He also shared his experiences in the Dalit Mahasabha and the Dalit movement. He observed that the Dalit movement after Karamchedu took a historical shape and transformed itself from agitations to a wave of movements. The Dalit Mahasabha formation is an attempt to project the Dalit autonomous movement - both in its ideology and also path of movement. Jadson also expressed his disappointment that the Dalit leadership failed to address the mala-Madiga differences and to build a broader movement since 1995.

Case –II: Chundur

Chundur is a large village, located on the Chennai-Tenali railway line, 15 km from Tenali town. It became a Mandal headquarters following the NTR government reconstituting the Panchayat Raj system in mid-980s. Chundur's population was estimated at 5,800. Reddy's constitute a major community, accounting for half of the village's population. The next biggest community is that of Malas, who accounted for a quarter of the village's population[247]. The Telaga (a BC community), Madiga Yerukala, and Yanadi castes also form significantly large numbers in the village population. Like Karamchedu, Chundur also benefited from the Krishna Canal. The total land under cultivation in Chundur 2,400 acres, half of which has been owned by Reddys, unlike Karamchedu, however, there were no big landlords, but all the rich peasants belong to Reddy community**.** The Telagas, a major BC caste in the village, possessed around 250 acres and Brahmans and Vaisyas owned 100 and 65 acres respectively. The Dalits, as a whole, owned had just 90 acres of land.[248]

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[247] See, Murali, K. (1995) and U.Sa. (2005). *Dalita Rananinadham*. Eddurita Publications, Hyderabad.
[248] See, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). Working Paper-179

What further differentiated Chundur from Karamchedu was relatively high level of literacy and fairly large-scale employment among the Dalits. It was estimated that there were around 200 matriculates and 15 post graduates among the Dalits. Literacy was much higher among the Dalits than Reddys. The railways were the major providers of employment for the Dalit men, many of whom were employed as fitters and gang men. In addition, they are employed in the telephone department and banks. Employment in the public sector gave the Dalits of the village a high sense of security and confidence. The railway connection facilitated mobility of Dalits of Chundur. This seems to have played an important role in increasing bargaining power of the agricultural labourers to demand higher wages, at least during peak agriculture seasons. What was noticeable about the labour was the phenomenon of the gumpu (group) contract labour system, in which the labourers form a group and do agricultural operations on a piece-wise basis.[249]

The Dalits also display a significant presence in the political arena, although both Reddys and Dalits traditionally supported the Congress Party (I), the upper castes did not take kindly to the Dalit political ascendancy on political ladder, such as Mandal Praja Parishad (besides Chundur, four of the MPPs had Dalits presidents), especially the reservations to local bodies. The socio-economic specificity of Chundur rendered Dalits relatively less dependent on Reddys and, therefore, less vulnerable to Reddy domination and manipulation. Due to modern education, public sector employment and easy mobility due to the railway connectivity, the Dalits of Chundur demonstrated a perceptible transformation in their lifestyle and a great sense of awareness of their rights[250]. With all these educational and social mobility, Dalits started asserting their self-respect and dignity. In the initial stages, Dalits started doing what upper caste dislike, like wearing new and good clothes, providing better education to their children, standing in open public places and reading newspapers, installing Ambedkar's statue, asserting political consciousness and avoiding middlemen in their dealings with Government officials.[251]

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[249] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2000). p.40
[250] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2000). p.41
[251] Interview with Jaladi Mojesh on 26th October, 2012. (president of the "Chundur Badithula Porata Committee)

All these activities were disliked by the upper castes who considered these acts as threats to their hegemony over the village and untouchables. There are two statues in the village– those of Potti Sriramulu and Subash Chandra Bose. During the installation of Ambedkar's statue, the upper castes raised objections. Even then, the Dalits succeeded in installing Ambedkar's statue. The second incident, in which the Dalits asserted their identity, occurred during the Dasara festival in 1990. The upper castes of the village had been organising Dasara dramas by spending huge sums of money, just to demonstarate the feudal prestige every year in the village. Dalits, who were normally segregated to one side of audience, tried to break this and mingle with the rest of the audience. Though the upper castes objected to this in initial stage, later they were forced to accept that. It also marked a moral victory for Dalits who are segregated for a long time. This was also not to liking of the upper caste persons of Chundur and other villages like Modukuru, Voliveru in general upper caste of other villages were angry with the Chundur Reddies for not taking the matter seriously.[252]

What initiated a series of events was that a fairly trivial incident that occurred in a cinema hall. A Dalit youth, Ravi, studying in a postgraduate college in Nagpur, went to a cinema in a theater in Chundur rested his foot on a front seat which was occupied by an upper caste boy, Kurri Srinivas Reddy. A minor altercation ensued between Ravi and Srinivas Reddy, when the latter abused the Dalit youth in the name of his father, a school teacher in a neighbouring village. This incident snowballed into harassment of Dalits by Reddys as a measure of retaliation. Fearing further reprisals from the upper castes, neither Ravi nor his father, lodged any complaint with the police[253]. This was resented by Dalits who imposed a fine of Rs 25 for submitting to the upper castes. This brings out fairly high level of awareness and assertion among Dalits of Chundur, who are markedly different from those of other areas in terms of education and employment. This obviously attracted

[252] Interview with Manav Prakash Rao on 25th October, 2012 a direct witness of the incident, his son in law died in the incident, his age is 70.
[253] Interview with Jaladi Mojesh, (president of the Committee), on 26th , October, 2012

a strong response from Reddys and their supporters in the village and even from those of neighbouring villages[254].

On July 9, Reddys and Telagas formed into a committee and decided to enforce a social boycott of the Dalits (Malas). The committee was again headed by the village Sarpanch. Since then, the Dalits were not allowed to work in the fields of upper castes, nor were they permitted to enter the upper caste locality. The social boycott of the Dalits led to tension and at this stage Section 144 of the IPC was promulgated in the village. While the upper caste engaged outside labour to work in their fields, the Dalits left for places like Tenali and Ponnur in search of work. A rural circle inspector was posted in the village since then. It is said that when Reddy's and their caste men from neighbouring villages tried to show their might, the Dalits also showed the will to retaliate. The presence of police prevented a head –on collision. The prohibitory orders were lifted on 29 July. After that, in two incidents that occurred on 4th and 5th August, two Dalits were attacked and injured and 'the same night additional forces were rushed to Chundur even as prohibitory orders were re-imposed in village. The final assault on the Dalits came on the morning of 6 August. The ghastly incident was pre-planned and well-executed by the upper castes with the alleged connivance of the police officials present in the village. One version is that a few Dalit youth attacked and inflicted minor injuries on some Reddys. However, this incident was blown out of proportion by the upper castes that spread the canard that three Reddy men were hacked to death by the Dalits. The upper caste men of nearby Valiveru, Manchala Munangivaripalem and Vellaturu villages got mobilised for an assault on Dalits.[255]

Around 11 am, Sai Babu (the CI of police) and the Vemuru sub-inspector, Sheik Mandarvali, came to Dalits and asked them to flee as CRPF men from Mangaligiri might raid the village to pick them up following a complaint lodged by the upper castes. When the Dalits were hesitant to leave the village, the police virtually chased them away.

[254] See, Murali, K. (1995)
[255] Interview with Jaladi Ravindra Kumar on 26th, October, 2012 (A direct witness to the incident). His father died in the incident.

However, all the Dalits women stayed back. What followed was reminiscent of Karamchedu.[256] The murderers, who came in tractors and scooters were well armed, first caught the fleeing Dalits, beat them up with iron rods and killed them with daggers and axes. They themselves leisurely packed some of the bodies in gunny bags and dumped them in Tungabhadra drain and irrigation canal. Though the a tally of deaths immediately was not possible since most of the bodies were thrown in the canal, it was clear that at least eight Dalits were murdered in the heinous manner and many more injured in the incident which could be described as an unparallel case of brutality. According to Balagopal:

> "One reason why Chundur caught the whole nation's attention was the magnitude of the massacre. Eight dead bodies were fished out of the irrigation canals and the drains of Chundur and the surrounding villages within three days of the gruesome assault of August 6. The whereabouts of another nine men are not known to this day, six weeks after the killing, which means they too were killed and thrown into the canals, but did not float up at the places that were searched. This makes a total of 17 dead. The number could become 18, if one adds Mandru Parishudha Rao who died of shock the day after the carnage after seeing the mutilated dead body of his younger brother, 21 year old, Mandru Ramesh. And it would become 19, if one adds Kommerla Anil Kumar, an articulate young Dalit who survived the massacre of August 6 to give a graphic account of the incident but was shot dead by the police on September 10 in the course of an attempt by the latter to remove a hunger strike camp set up by the Dalits at Chundur".[257]

He adds:

> "One only has to contrast Guntur with the Rayalaseema districts to realise that Chundur happened *not* because Dalits of Guntur are more oppressed than elsewhere, but precisely because they have fought oppression, through Christianity (all the victims of Chundur as of Karamchedu are Christians), through education, through entry to government jobs on reservations, through

[256] Manav Prakash Rao interview 25th October, 2012
[257] K.Balagopal (1991). *Post-Chundur and other Chundurs*. *EPW*, p. 2399

> wage rates commensurate with green revolution productivity, and through thousands of individual acts of mini-rebellion day in and day out, and have put themselves on an unrelenting path of social and economic advancement and political autonomy".[258]

Soon after the incident, all dispersed in different directions, Dalits were gathering in the hospitals in Guntur. The newspapers reported the incident as a minor conflict between the upper castes and Dalits. Katti Padma Rao came and demanded a search for the dead bodies. Thereafter, after searching for the dead bodies and the postmortem, it was decided to bury the bodies in the centre of the village, but the Police did not allow that. According to Manav Prakash Rao (70), the SP, Meena objected to that and behaved autocratically. The then district collector permitted the burial of the dead bodies. Thousands of people from across Andhra Pradesh joined the funeral procession. Around this time, a person, Malla Reddy, died due to his longtime health problems, but the upper castes manipulated it and filed a police case on 13 leaders of Dalit movement.

The victims formed a "Chundur Badithula Porata Committee" under which they themselves participated as per the direction given by Katti Padma Rao. Komrelli Anil Kumar was active in organising people for everyday activities, including a hunger strike, and negotiating with officials and communicating with various people's organisation'. He was also first witness of the incident. The police resorted to unprovoked firing on the the hunger strike camp. Anil Kumar was killed in the firing. The everyday agitations were going on under the aegis of the "Chundur Dalitha Badithula committee" and Dalit Mahasabha. The police filed a case. Later it came to light that that case was improperly filed. The committee demanded a special court for ensuring proper justice and complete rehabilitation. This incident attracted many social groups and drew national attention. Many of the victims reached Delhi and staged a three days dharna and met the prime minister and gave him details about the incident. During these agitations, Gudur

[258] Ibid, p.2400

Leyamma died in a traffic accident and was buried there. For more than five months, all the victims stayed in a Shibiram at RCM Church, Guntur, where common cooking and shelter was provided. As mentioned by Tella Mojesh Christian, the missionaries and people's organizations helped them to survive. After intensive agitations, the government agreed to provide houses, half an acre of land, a compensation of Rs. one lakh and jobs to the family members of the victims. For the education of the children, a hostel was established. The trial in the special court started in 2004.

> "The Dalits struggle against the upper caste domiance after Karamchedu was confined only to Andhra Pradesh. But in case of Chundur, the mature and experienced leadership led the agitation up to Delhi. The victims led by Dalit Mahasabha, met the Prime Minister on their demands. In order to get an effective legal redressel to their problems, the Dalits of Chundur, demanded establishment of a special court in Chundur itself under the Section 14 of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. They also got assurance from him for proper rehabilitation of the victims in Chundur. The Chundur victims met 120 Members of Parliament, belonging to all the political parties and urged them to elect a Dalit as vice-president of the country".[259]

After the Chundur carnage, the upper castes (Brahmins, Rajus, Kammas, Vyashas and Kapus) formed a "Sarvajanbhyudaya Porata Samiti" (Struggle Committee for the Advancement of all People) and organised dharnas, bandhs, processions, and road blocks, spreading rumours that injustice was done to the upper castes. For those who watched the anti-Mandal agitation, it was a revelation to observe the same faces going round in these processions. While commenting on post-Chundur upper caste mobilisation, Balagopal observed:

> "While all those observers accept without much discomfort the argument that the deepening political and economic crisis affecting our society, which makes democratic aspirations from below intolerable for the dominant sections, and the consequent degeneration of our political and social culture, are the principal

[259] Opt, cit, Murali, K. (1995). p.80

> factors underlying the newfound shamelessness of the forward castes, not all of them would feel equally comfortable with the supplementary argument that it was the anti-Mandal agitation and the way it was hailed by the press and the intelligentsia that legitimised this shamelessness. That agitation was the first time after independence that the forward castes organised themselves across the nation in explicitly caste terms without being branded communal, and, on the contrary, being hailed as principled fighters against narrow, casteist, vote-bloc politics. Those chickens have now come home to roost, in the form of the widespread acceptance by the forward castes of slogans like 'long live unity of the forward castes', 'those who beg for every morsel of food should not be arrogant', 'beggars should behave beggar-like', etc., slogans which are the staple of the anti-Dalit mobilisation post-Chundur".[260]

On August 17, the forward castes gave a call for a bandh of Guntur district, and enforced it with considerable rowdyism. They attacked the Andhra Christian College in Guntur town, a college attended by Scheduled Caste Christians in large numbers and burnt books, clothes, and certificates in room after room. The police were present, but almost did nothing to stop the arsonists.[261] There lies a controversy too in the appointment of laywers. After rehabilitation, the court procedures were not started and the Dalit leadership also did not focus much on this issue. Then, with the left activist intervention, through Chundur Dalitha Badithula committee, the victims demanded for the court procedures and suggested the appointment of Chandrashekar (a Brahmin) as the public prosecutor and Shiva Nageshwar Rao (Naidu) as the assistant public prosecutor. As narrated by Jaladi Mojesh, when the victim committee suggested the names of Chandrashekar and Shiva Nageshwar Rao, Dalit leaders and lawyers did not show any interest and, also in the beginning, there was opposition by the police saying that both were affiliated to the People's War Group. The civil rights groups and the Dalit groups also did not protest even though both were from the upper castes. However, after a long

[260] Opt, cit, Balagopal, K. (1999). p. 2401.
[261] Ibid

delay and due to tsustained pressure, the government issued an order. Then, the court procedure started. Meanwhile, the upper castes started to influence and pressurise some of the dalit witnesses by giving bribes and other material benefits. Some witnesses were too scared to give evidence, while some others said that they could not remember what exactly had happened. All these created legal obstacles. To restore the confidence of the Chundur witnesses, the Dalit leaders organised a huge public meeting in memory of the Chundur martyrs.

The Dalits of Chundur firmly rejected all the overtures of the upper castes. Iniitially, the activists of the Dalit Mahasabha and the revolutionary groups spoke harshly to the leaders of the upper castes. Pretty soon, the victims themselves started participating in the protests. Then Dalit organisations and other democratic forces also agitated against the complicity of the police. As reported in the newspapers, the police played a criminal role on the day of the massacre[262]. After Chundur, there was a widespread demand for the setting up of a special court. After some prevarication, the chief minister, Janardhan Reddy, announced setting up of not one special court for each district as stipulated by the Act, but merely one in each of the three regions of the state. The next major demand pertained to the arrest of the main accused in the massacre.

What the Government did was to constitute a judicial enquiry commission with alacrity to go into the massacre, order a departmental enquiry into the "failure" of the police; and announced monetary compensation of Rs I lakh each to the families of the dead. The immediate response of the Dalits was to reject the offer of monetary compensation for the killing. The Dalits, as well as the democratic organisations supporting them, refused to participate in the judicial enquiry and insisted on continuing the agitation in all possible forms till the main demands were met.[263]

[262] Ibid, p.2403
[263] Ibid, p.2403

The district SP imposed unending prohibitory orders in the district, making it impossible for the Dalits and their supporters to organise any public activity like bandhs, dharnas, processions and public meetings. Also, non-residents of Chundur were not allowed to enter the village. The police sought to justify its role by stating that no partiality was being shown to the upper castes. It needs to be understood that the powerful and dominant do not need to organise themselves politically, in defiance of ban orders or otherwise, for they are more structurally organised. On the other hand, it is the oppressed and the weak that need to organise themselves explicitly, to overcome their structural disorganisation[264].On December 1, 2004 the court trial started. On 31-7-2007, the special court delivered its judgment. It emerged that 79 witnesses were interrogated, 7 persons were not arrested and 33 persons died Life imprisonment was imposed on 21 Perons and 35 persons were sentenced to one year imprisonment.

The conditions in Chundur changed immediately after 1992. The area where Malas, some Madigas and Yerukalas were residing named as Ambedkar colony. Around 30-40 families of Madigas are part of Urru (main village), in which the Madigas are numerically in a minority. Gopi, who belongs to the Madiga community, and is an emerging MRPS leader in the village, expressed his disappointment on the response of Malas to Madigas to become a part of the Gram panchyat. Once a Madiga member got an opportunity to become the vice president, he was never invited to participate in the discussion and some time, even without explaining the matter to him, he is asked to sign on important documents. Gopi also mentioned that the government loans, gas connections, construction of roads and drainage system and rationshop dealerships, etc., are all divided between the Malas and Madigas. Gopi also mentioned that since all of them are Christians, the Malas remain aloof from the Madigas. He also pointed out that some of the TDP supporters among the Malas set fire to an effigy of Chandrababu Naidu when he extended his support for SC categorisation, which shows that they have been against to SC categorisation. One of the young Dalit girls working as accountants in the

[264] Ibid, p.2405

SHGs groups said that whenever Malas observe death and birth anniversaries of Dr.Ambedkar, they do not give scope for active involvement of the Madigas.

Rayalaseema Region

Rayalaseema is a backward region with four districts[265]. The region was ruled by many dynasties. Historically, it is also called as "Hiranya Rajam" (Golden kingdom). People believed that this region always had sufficient crops, wealth and health to people of the region[266]. Although five chief ministers and many ministers shared power in running the state government, the region continues to remain drought-prone and backward[267]. The factional groups are very much influential on the lives of the people.[268] The factionalism in Rayalaseema had a historical background during the times of Vizayanagara Empire which lasted from 14 to 16th centuries AD. The kings of Vijaynagara appointed military chieftains in Rayalseema region to undertake the administrative work and collect revenue taxes from landholding farmers. The Vijayanagara Empire declines in the aftermath of the "Battle of Thallikota" in 1565 AD. The united Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly appointed a "House Committee" on 21st August 2001 with 18 members. It analysed the historical factors and political consequence of factionalism. It observed:

> "With the fall of Vijayanagara Empire, the military chieftains felt some psychological freedom, due to non-existence of an effective supreme command at the Centre and styled themselves as "Palegars" and started functioning as separate entities, without any sort of accountability. Thus, due to lack of an effective supreme command, a power vacuum was created among the Palegars without any sort of control; the Palegars declared independence and maintained their own

[265] Rayalaseema consist of four districts; Kurnool, Anantapur, Kadapa and Chittoor
[266] Gangadar, Vempally. (2008). *Hiranya Rajam*. Cuddapa, P.T Veera Reddy foundation, pp. 4-5.
[267] Rayalaseema over a period of time played a crucial role in maintaining the political domination. From this region, five chief ministers came and ruled united Andhra Pradesh, namely, Nelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Damodaram Sanjeevaiah, Kotla Vijay Baskar Reddy, Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Y.S Rajashekar Reddy. They ruled the state for around 25 years. Many ministers, both from TDP and the Congress Party, also influenced the politics, yet the region is backward.
[268] APCLC. (March 12, 2011). *Faction Mafia- a report on faction groups in Rayalaseema*. Pp.4-7. The report consists of four sub reports on each district of Rayalaseema analysing and reporting the many factors realities and stories and origin and dimension of factional groups in the region and how it affect both the civil and human rights of the people.

private armies to collect revenue from the land holders. Hence, with the passage of time, supremacy became the main contention among Palegars and they started settling scores by resorting to violent methods such as brutal killings of their opponents. Thus, the seeds of factionalism were sown in Rayalaseema Region; the feudalism among Palegars gave way to factionalism during the course of time".[269]

Further, the Committee observed:

> "Faction" in the initial stages was confined to area supremacy and used to exist in between selected families and was influenced only by the "Social Factor". Later, like all other things, faction too was prone to the remaining two factors, namely, economic and political. In the later years, it was taken upon as a profession, by some individuals and was effectively used as a means to acquire both wealth and political clout. Once, factionalists started enjoying a fair amount of political clout, they became an inseparable part of political mechanism, with the result from mere factionalists being ostracised by the society, they come to be accepted as Faction Lords"[270]

When the combined British-Nizam-Mahratta armies defeated Tippu finally in the Fourth Mysore War in 1799, Rayalaseema fell to the share of the Nizam. The Nizam could not manage the lawlessness of the local poligars (palegars) and, after less than a year, ceded the region to the British in 1800. Thereafter, the region was called the "Datta Mandal" (Ceded Districts) until the modern period. The name of Rayalaseema became popular only in the 1930s[271]. At the time of the separate Telugu state agitation, the Rayalaseema leaders suspected the solidarity of Coastal Andhra leaders and they demanded the gentleman agreement popularly known as "Sribag Pact" in 1937. With the formation of Andhra Pradesh, it came under the state administrative set-up. The faction leaders penetrated deep into the social fabric of society, acquired wealth and social status and

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[269] Andhra Pradesh Assembly House Committe on Factinalism, p.1
[270] Ibid, pp. 3-4
[271] Goutham Pingle, *Rayalaseema- from Munro to faction politics*, www.etelangana.org/Articles/faction_politics.pdf

even started compelling the lower rungs of administrative to toe their line of thinking. The recent phenomenon is politicisation of factionalism or factionalism making inroads into politics. From being good supporter of politicians, the factionalists rose and then transformed themselves into contestants in elections and even successfully acquired political offices. The result is:

> "Extortions, illegal mining, self-imposed role of arbitrators, forcible capturing of tender works, marketing of illicit liquor, promotion of matka (gambling), hired killings, selling of explosive materials and forcible occupation of immovable properties like land and building were found to be main sources of illegal income to factionalists".[272]

In fact, the lower caste communities, particularly the Dalits, are used by the factional leaders for their group rivalries. Often, these factional groups create animosity against other groups and take revenge on them, Balagopal observed in his writing "Palegala Charitra" in Rayalaseema was led by the dominant land owning and politically most influential persons belonging to the Reddy caste (sometimes the Boya caste). Rival groups encourage lower caste Dalits and other with background individuals into factional group as members. Since these backwond communities' borrow money, depend for work in their field, and for small administrative works in mandal offices, they are forced to obey the upper caste orders. Most of the time, they have nothing to do with upper caste factional rivalry but they involve in the faction conflicts and sometimes they lose their lives for nothing. K. Balagopal observes:

> "Village factions born out of conflict between Reddy landlords (but also a few non-Reddy landlords and elders of close-knit castes as the Boyas, too) over property and power (and sometimes women) have a long history in the Rayalaseema districts. Every slight, imagined or real, had to be avenged as viciously as every substantial challenge to one's power, property or prestige. Assault, murder and burning of houses and cornstacks were the principal means

[272] Andhra Pradesh Legislative House Committee, *Factinalism in Rayalaseema*, p.7

of the assertion of one's strength and 'manhood'. And, of course, each such attack had to be avenged with equal 'manliness' from the other side. This meant the creation of hereditary enmity that went on from generation to generation, often until one family was either exterminated, or driven out of the village. It also meant the creation of loyal gangs from out of proper caste men and lower castes by warring each side, and as the gangs indulged in mutual violence, subsidiary enmity between fresh families lower down the social scale would be created[273]".

Sukmar also argues that the past land, political and personal controversies are grounds for taking revenge. This continuous disturbing environment attracts unemployed youth into faction groups.[274] This kind of violence or factional groups is different from urban mafia on two grounds, one, these are made up not by professional criminals but by peasants, who often get involved in smuggling, illicit activity like growing opium, and making liquor illegally: two, what bind a gang to the master is material benefits and intense feudal loyalty as a matter of traditional dharma to the elder castes of the village, which means either upper caste landlords or hereditary elders of each caste[275]. The Rayalseema politicians and the factional groups are also notorious for booth capturing during elections time. There are villages where people vote unanimously for the powerful groups. Obeying the village factional group's order is a dharma that should not be crossed by anybody.[276]

The 73 and 74 Constitutional Amendments intensified the political faction groups. These Amendments gave some representation to Dalits and other marginal groups which have always been controlled and managed by upper caste factional groups. The village faction groups enter district and state level faction groups and start engaging themselves in politics. The reasons for this factionalism are generally attributed to the craving for domination over the village. The continuing conflict didden situation adversely affects

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[273] Balagopal, K. (1994). Seshan in Kurnool. *EPW*, Vol 29, No: 30 (July 23, 1994), p.1905
[274] See, K.Balagopal's report on faction groups published by APCLC
[275] Opt, cit, Balagopal, K. (1994). P.1905
[276] Ibid

the people's life and human rights. These factions may arise from caste-based factional intra caste faction; inter-village factions, which always construct the conflict around domination, honour, property and hegemony. The faction groups develop and patronise the group of people and use them for securing or protecting their domination over other groups. The factional leaders are from the upper castes, particularly Rayalaseema Reddys, Naidues, sometimes Boya castes. The lower caste people are recruited, or forced, to become the followers of any faction group of the village or region. Most of the Dalits and lower castes people or communities are the worst victims.[277] The continuous factional groups and village "Moottas" never gave scope for resistance against upper caste violence. It has always dragged Dalits into multiple factions, rather than collective resistance against caste oppression. In fact, the caste oppression is always rooted in, or operates though, faction groups. Therefore, understanding the formation of factional groups historically is important to understand caste violence and Dalit articulations in the Rayalaseema region[278]. Most of the time, the state level Dalit assertion influence the educated employees. The literary percentage is also very low; the majority of Dalits are landless. The Dandora movement, through the MRPS, to some extent, was able to mobilise people, especially the Madigas, through mandal and village MRPS committees.[279]But still, it is very minimal. Only few educated youth are now becoming assertive.

Two case studies Vempenta and Phaply have been chosen from among the series of atrocities, attacks, humiliations of Dalits. They bring out complex realities in understanding Dalit assertions and identity formation.[280] As debated in some of the

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[277] Gangadar, Vempally. (2008). *Hiranyarajyam (Rayalaseema Factionism and Historical outline and Development).* Published by Sri. P.T Veerareddy Foundation, Cuddapa, pp.53-54

[278] Interview with Bahadur on 26th October, 2012, who is actively involved in organising Dalits in Vempenta and the surrounding villages. He is also contested for MLA in 2009 Assembly election on a BSP ticket.

[279] Interview with a Church Pastor on 26th, October, 2012, who works in one of the Churches of the Phaply located in Madiga Colony. He is from the Madiga caste who converted to Christianity.

[280] Interview with U.Sambashiva Rao who is a active intallectual and activist worked along with Marooju Veernanna and conttinuing the same line of thinking and pratice in his activiities. I also interviewed Duddu Prabhakar who is a general secretary of KNPS which is a active organization working around Dalit issues

newspapers, they brought out new dimensions to the ongoing debate during the mid-1990s. Since these two incidents attracted a range of diversified groups, it becomes very important to explore the complexities in which the Dalit assertion took place.

Case –V: Vempenta

Vempenta is a major Gram Panchayat located in Pamulapadu Mandal of Kurnool district where the major massacre happened in 1998. The context is complex and was symptomatic of multiple levels of contradictions. The Dalit movement had to negotiate with (CPI (M-L) People's War Group and CPI (M-L) Prathigatana) and Rayalaseema Faction groups and Sub-caste movement question within the Dalit movement[281]. In the village, various castes like Malas, Madigas, Reddys, Yerukalas, and Vadlas live. The Mala and Madiga habitations are separately located. In 1979, the Madigas urged the Government for houses. In 1981, they got patas, beside some government land for house construction. For a long time, the village was influenced by the communist movement, and almost every resident of the village is an active member or sympathizer of one of the communist parties. Bonala Balasadyanna (63) mentioned that during his youth days, Chandra Pulla Reddy and his group activities were vibrant in the district, particularly in the village. Dalits, both Malas and Madigas, and upper caste Reddys were attracted to this movement. Balasandyanna stated that the most of the time, the Reddy lineage worked to give leadership to the Reddys, since they were having money, land and caste privileges in the village. The Communists gave the leadership to Reddy and the Malas and Madigas always worked as cadre and took an active part in staging dramas, singing revolutionary songs and campaigning in the villages. It is said that physical untouchability was not practiced, but the invisible exclusions and upper caste hegemony continued through communist party. Moreover, for more than 30 years, China Venkat Reddy unanimously worked as village Sarpanch with the influence of CPI (ML) party.

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and democratic movements though caste -class perspective, it is said that it is associated with radical movements cpi (ML) Peoples War.

[281] Ajay, Gudavarthy. (2005). Dalits and Naxalite Movements in AP: Solidarity or Hegemony, *EPW*, Vol.XL, No; 51, December 17, pp.5414

Around the mid-1980s, when the activities of Chandra Pulla Reddy's[282] party declined, the People's War Group entered the region. From this village, various castes joined the party. Some of the party sympathisers started mobilising and organising the party. Kadatalesh (Madiga), Deva Bushanam (Mala) actively undertook the party activities, Ganganna Dalam used to resolve the problems in the village. The CPI (ML) People's War Group created a strong base among the Dalits. Since Malas are educated more, and were having some economic mobility they became active in taking the leadership and operation of savarnas. Hence, the leadership slowly passed from Reddys to Malas under the PWG. Later the majority, minority conflict in CPI (ML) people's war affected the leadership in the region of Kurnool district, particularly in Vempenta village. Mukamalla Shivaiah, a supporter of Kondapally Setharamaiah group, withdrew from the activities and surrendered to the police, along with other group members. The supporters of Ganapathi group started to organise people in the village. With this change, the village party leadership has also slowly shifted from Malas to Madigas. This was not tolerated by the Reddys and some of the Malas.[283] This experience is shared by Balasandyanna:

> "Largely, Reddys who worked for Communists party love the revolution only under their leadership. The vibrant party activities under Madigas leadership are largely seen as problematic, since we are lower among the low in social status and landless. For them, revolution is an ideal, but for us, it is a necessity".[284]

The temple lands in the village were occupied by upper caste Reddys and cultivated by them. The landless people are not allowed to desire benefit out of it. Under the "Raithu Cooli Sangam", Dalits and landless people started their struggle to cultivate this land. The Sangam identified the landless people in the village across castes. As there were more

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[282] Chandrapulla Reddy, born on November 9, 1917 and died in 1984, hailed from Velugodu village in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. He become editor of "Janashakti" and took active role in organising armed struggles in Kammam and Warangal under Andhra Pradesh Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries. Due to party internal critics, the party split and led his own wing APCCR as of 1971. In 1975, his group merged with the CPI (ML) Satyanarayana Singh, he broke from it and formed CPI (ML). He died on 9 November 1984 at Calcutta due to heart attack.

[283] Bonala Samel (45) actively worked in the party and closely observed the changes in the leadership and activites.

[284] Bonala Balasandyanna (65) is a sympathiser of communist movements and leader of the Madigas. Interview on 26th October, 2012.

landless families among the Madiga community, more land was distributed to them. But the rumour was spread by the upper caste factional group that injustice was down to the Malas in the land distribution. Later, this created some animosity between the Madigas and the Malas. Since Madigas are more landless, they are actively involved in the struggle for temple land. Land was occupied by the Sangam and distributed among the families and each family got half an acre and they started cultivating the land. When upper caste refused to give pesticides and fertilizers for cultivation, Madigas spent their Kula kattadi (which they collect on each marriage function) money. Whatver crops they produced, they were supposed to sell to the kanta in the village. The already existing kanta was controlled by Reddys. The Sangam asked for the accounts of the kanta money which they collected from farmers. The upper caste refused to show any accounts. They were targeted by this factional group. Matters went to the extent that Malas, along with some upper castes, decided to socially boycott the Madiga community. The village people were ordered not to sell their crops at the "Kata", they should not be called for work, they should not be called for "Dandora Chatinpu", and they should not be given carcasses of the dead cattle. Obviously, this became a question of self-respect for the madigas in the village. This further sharpened the conflict between the landlords, Malas and the OBCs, on the one hand, and PWG and Madigas, on the other[285]. Then, the 'Raithu Cooli Sangam' started another kanta for their crops and publicly announced that whatever money that they got through new kanta they would use that for village development. Two years later, the village Sarpanch, Bomma Shivaiah (BC), Mukamala Shivaiah, Deva Raju and Madaiah (all ex-party sympathisers) started supporting and working under the directions of Budda Vengal Reddy or the faction group. In the third year of the crops, the endowment department called for tenders. By then, this matter had come to the notice of CPI (ML) Peoples' War. Then they called Boma Shivaiah (BC village Sarpanch) and asked him to return the kanta revenue and not to create any obstacles to party activities. He was also asked to withdraw the false police case on the Madigas. He did not pay the fine imposed by the party. Moreover, Bomma Shivaiah, along with the opposite group, CPI (ML) Pratigatana and factionalist leader Buda Vengal Reddy (TDP-MLA, Atmakur),

[285] Opt, cit, Ajay, Gudavarthy. (2005). p.5416

created problems for the party activities and started threatening the party sympathisers. Finally, the People's War Group killed Bomma Shivaiah on July 15, Night, 1998. This incident united all the groups like the factional leader Buda vengal Reddy with his village faction, the Partigatana Group faction and the TDP and Congress leaders. As related by Patnam Prasad (49,) the Malas aligned with Budda Vengal Reddy factions and attacked the Madigapeta. Devamma (40) who belongs to the Mala community played an active role in organising women under "Sri Chaitanya Vedika", which undertook dharnas and agitations against liquor selling in the village[286]. So the people who drank daily became antagonistic to the Madigas and the party. Thus various groups became antagonistic to party activities on the pretext that the party was able to do all these things because of the support of the Madigas. So Madigas were targeted by all the groups. They took revenge by attacking the Madiga colony and burning alive people.

On July 16, since 8 a.m., the followers of the Budda Vengala Reddy and Bomma Shivaiah attacked the Madiaga Peta. They burnt 150 houses. Around 200 families took shelther in Atmakur Chuch. In the incident, 10 persons lost their lives. These included: 6 Madigas, one upper caste (VAO Sambi Reddy (Gandla caste) and Ramakrishna Chari (OBC). They killed by using rods and axes, cut the bodies into pieces and threw them into the fire, thinking that there should not be any evidence during the police investigation[287]. Three or four days later, this incident was reported in the newspapers. Initially, the incident was projected as a conflict between two naxalite groups and a conflict between Malas and Madigas.[288]

After the incident, the Madiga peta families dispersed and fled to other places. All the victims of the families who had fled gathered at Athmakur in the school ground and

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[286] Devamma (40) an illiterate woman belongs to the Mala community married a man belonging to the Reddy community under party banner. She worked as a president of "Sri Chaitanya Vedika" a frontal organisation of CPI (ML) Peoples' War. She protested a lot against liquor selling in the village and land struggle in the village. Interview on 14-11-2012.

[287] Varavara Rao, *What happened in Vempenta and why it happened*, cited in U.Sa (ed, 2005), *Dalita Rananinadam*, Edureeta Publications, Hyderabad, p.204

[288] Ibid, p.205

opened a relief camp, which was run for around 8 months and gave shelter to around 750 persons - majority of them, Madigas. Government, Christian associations and people's organisations helped them to run the camp. Dalits booked cases on 47 culprits, the upper castes also booked cases on Dalits who were active supporters of the People's War Group. After four days of the incident the local people's organizations entered the village and tried to know the reality. Then, they challenged the rumours created by factional groups to escape the wrath of the Budda Vengala Reddy group. All organisations and individuals decided to form a state wide united front.[289] The state wide united front decide to undertake dharnas and protests to demand immediate filing of cases under the SC, ST Atrocities Act and arrest and punishment of the culprits involved in the incident. They also demanded allotting pattas for temple land allotting to the Dalits and compensation to the victims' and rehabilitation[290]. Immediately after incident, around 24 people's organisations formed a "Vempenta Baditula Porata Committee". The Committee elected the convener from among the victims from Vempenta. It demanded: immediate arrest of Budda Vengal Reddy and culprits involved in the attack; the temple land distribution to landless people in the village and compensation and allotment of five acres of land and one job to the family members of the deceased victims familing. They also asked for constructions of schools and providing education to children. The government provided some compensation and housing to some families of victims. For some people, it did not pay on the plea that there were criminal cases on them, so they were not eligible for compensation.

Dalit Bahujan Maha Sabha argued that one of the important dimensions of the incident was the "caste blind politics" of the PW. They could not foresee the possibility of mobilisation on caste lines by the landlords. Not only could the landlords mobilise the

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[289] Japanya (Vempent Victim's Solidarity Committee-Convener), Manda Krishna Madiga (MRPS), R. Krishna (BC Welfare Association), U Sambhashiva Rao (Dalita Maha Sabha), Anasuyamma (BRP), Kancha Ialliah (Dalit Bahujan intellectual), Paranjyothi (Backward Classes Federation), Kannabiran (PUCL), Laxman (APCLC), N. Jagadeesh (PDSU- Vijrumbana), Sandya (POW-Sree Vimukthi), Kodali Rajendra Prasad (Progressive Labour Federation), Pinakapani (Virasam), Bikshamaiah (IFTU), and Ramakrishna (AIPRF)

[290] U.Sa. (Ed), (2005). *Dalita Rananinadam*. Edureeta Publications, Hyderabad, pp.169-70.

Reddy families, but also other OBC and mala communities. The caste differences make collective mobilisation and hatred easy to spread. Some Dalit writers have argued that Vempentta was always a "Communist Village", but the reason behind the absence of such incidents was that the leadership of the communist organizations remained with the "Reddy communists" who, therefore, enjoyed the close patronage of the Reddy landlords. The communist groups and the landlords entered into a conflicting situation, because the leadership shifted into the hands of the Dalits. It is interesting to observe that these leaders of the PW belong to the Madiga community and which could very well be a reason for their having more following among the Madigas [DBMS 1998]. Dalit writers have also recognised that there was a caste contradiction between the SCs and the OBCs.[291]

Soon after the peace talks between government of AP and CPI (ML) people's war and Janasakti failed, on March 1, 2005, the People's War Group killed eight persons who played a crucial role in the Vempenta upper caste attack on Madiga petaThose killed included[292]. The police cases from both side continued up to 2008. In 2008, the upper castes pressurised the other group through the police to withdraw the case. Due to lack of moral and legal support from any organisations, they compromised[293]. In 2009, Bahadur contested the Assembly elections on behalf of the BSP and got around 1300 votes. He lamented that for a long time, Vempenta had been under communist influence. The leadership of both the communist parties, CPI and CPI (ML), has been in the hands of the Reddys. It is believed that Chandra Pulla Reddy was very influential in building the communist movement in the village. Under the influence of CPI (ML) People's War Group, Dalits joined in boycotting the elections in the village at the time when the BSP was actively preparing for the 1994 Assembly elections. Bahadur asserts that the

[291] Opted, cit, Ajay, Gudavarthy. (2005). p.5417
[292] http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/mar022005/n5.asp Nemili Ravi; Rajendhar Goud; Janardan; Murali; Swamidas; Shivaiah and Sham. The legs of Nemili Shiva Reddy and Addala Shankar were hacked off with axes
[293] Bonala Samel (45) who is an active young active member in the long struggles and challenged the upper caste hegemony in the village and was also actively involved in posts Vempenta agitations and legal struggle

communists never allowed Dalits to become an independent political force. They are yet to realise the importance of their political strength and vote value. Further, he adds that the post-Vempenta agitation, for one year or so, helper in improving the level of consciousness, but not for united identity among Dalits in the village.[294]

Presently, the MRPS activities are on the right course. Nukala Samulu (40) general secretary said that after MRPS emeregence, Madigas got consiouness and were able to question the domination of upper caste hegemony and Mala domination. As MRPS activities have emerged in the village, the Malas have also internally started to mobilise themselves against SC categorisation. Samul also lamented that, in term of education and employment, Madigas are relatively more deprevied than the Malas, who are also having considerable land which has made them mobile and advanced. There are Christians among both Malas and Madigas. However, there are separate churches for Malas and Madigas. The influence of Christianity is longer on the Malas than the Madigas. Even though some of them have joined the People's War Group, they do not think there is any contradiction.

Balagopal, in his article, argues that the Rayalaseema factionalist political culture is internalised among the people. This culture takes any small conflict between two groups to win over other by force; often it takes circles of conflicts and killings. Most of the time, Dalits and other backward caste people are the victims. Further, he states that if the CPI (ML) parties don't concentrate in creating and building the culture among people, who can think of conflict based on just-unjust, bad and good, rather than hegemony and domination. That is why Balagopal described the communists and their activities in Rayalseema as "catalyst" that are often trapped into faction culture. Therefore, he suggests that understanding the regional and caste specificities is important.

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[294] Bonala Bahadur (40), who is educated up to graduation, started to be actively involved in the Dalit agitations and in 1994 assembly elections, he contested for MLA ob behalf of the BSP for the Atmakur Assembly Constituency.

Case-VI: Phaply

Phaply is a major Gram Panchayat (mandal) located on the National Highway 7 in Kurnool district. In the village, there are colleges, cinema halls, shopping complex, vegetables transport centres. The estimated population of the village is 19000.Out of this; Malas are 50, Madigas 2050 among the Dalits. Some families have 2-3 acres of land in the village. Most of the Dalits work as daily wage labourers both inside and outside the village. Nagaraju (Mandal Samakya) narrated that after continuous effort by the Dalit families, the government constructed SC corporation complex in 1987, and provided eight places to Dalits to put up small shops. Both Malas and Madigas got the shops. They started shoe shops, stitching, cycle repairing and RMP doctor clinic. Government used to charge a monthly rent of Rs. 200 for each shop. Some of the residents of the village run leather shops and work as tractors drivers and also as hawkers in the village. Around 50 members are educated and 3-4 are government employees. Most of them go to school in the village; there are Brahmins (200) and Vaishyas (1000). Although this caste influence is less in the faction groups, it is strong enough to determine the education, business, and social and spiritual ideologies hegemony. In the village, there are Reddys (1000) Balijas (1000). Most of the lands of the village belong to upper caste landlords who are politically dominant groups. OBCs are around (9350), out of which Boyas are more than 5000. However, only 5% of the OBCs are having land and influence as landlords[295]. Minorities are around 1000; generally they do meat business. It is observed that due to the internal domination that prevails in Muslims, they are also practicing untouchability. Therefore, they do not allow Dalits to participate "in Peerlapanduga". In the village, there are also about 200 Yerukalas and 3000 Lambadas. The Yerukalas also practice untouchability living outside the Urru, were not a part of the incident.[296] As part of the government schemes, the development policies had come into the village with the government constructing schools, community hall, houses, cement roads, and an SC Shopping complex. Since these shops were constructed only for Dalits, this led to

[295] Opt, cit, U.Sa. (Ed.), (2005). p.239
[296] Ibid, p.241

intolerance of upper caste people (OCs, OBCs).[297] In the village, there are 10 Christian's families converted from the Madiga caste. There is a clear-cut division between Urru and Wada in the village. All Dalits and converted Christians live in the wada, and have their own goddess and deities like "Maramma Guddi.[298]" In theUrru, there is a temple dedicated to Lord Venkateshwara which the 'untouchables' are not allowed to enter. Because of such religious discrimination, some of the Dalits converted to Christianity and built a church. They also consturcted a second church, which indicates the active conversion process among Dalits, the RSS and Sangh Pariwar members then started spreading Hindutva activities under the pretext that Christian organisations are influencing Dalits, and may convert the entire Dalit community to Christianity.[299]

The factionalism in this regional is controlled by two groups, one by K.E brothers (K.E Krishnamurthy and K.E Prabhakar, who belong to the Sudra community). The second group is of Kotla Surya Prakash Reddy. The two groups operate their factional activities through, the TDP and Congress Party. The politicisation of factionalism made faction leaders as local political representative's aspiraing for positions like sarpanch and chief minister.[300] In Phaply, during election time, the K.E factional group was intolerant of sees Dalits acting independently. So, the caste conflict comes to the fore in the every day activities of the village and manifestation of caste violence is rooted in the factional conflict.

Bachu Sandyappa[301] (60) narrated that the Dalit situation in the village and mentioned that landless, illiterate Dalits migrate to other places for seasonal works. Most of them work as attached labour or bonded labourers. The upper castes take the Dalits for granted and force them to work on their fields and beat them up for no reason. The entry of

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[297] Ibid, p.239
[298] Guddi is a local term used for temple in Telugu. The term "Devalayam also used for Guddi. Marayamma is a local Goddesses revered by the Dalits.
[299] See, U.Sa. (Ed.), (2005)
[300] See, Balagopal, K. (2004). Andhra Pradesh; Beyond Media Images. *EPW*, Vo-XXXIX, No June 12.
[301] Bachu Sandyappa (age 65) belongs to the Madiga community. For long time, he has been running a chappal shop in the SC Corporation shopping complex. He was the first one to mobilise the Madigas youth and employees under MRPS in this region, interviewed on 13-11-2012.

MRPS into the village changed the scenario. The consciousness levels of the Dalits increased. Whenever upper caste beat them, they started lodging complaints under the SC, ST Attrocity Act in the police stations and sending their children to schools. Sandyappa has been running a chappal shop in the SC Corporation complex. He was the one who mobilised Madigas in this mandal after attending MRPS public meetings in Nellore and Kurnool districts.

Chenchugari Balarangana[302] narrated the entire incident, since he was actively involved in organising the Madigas. He also worked as Mandal MRPS president and district secretary. He said that before 1994, once their elders tried to take out a Ganesh idol procession through the upper caste street, but was beaten up by upper castes. After that, until 2003, they did not keep Ganesh idols in their colony. Since the MRPS movement becomes strong and Phaply becomes a centre of the dandora movement, they got more confidence and some of the madiga families started slowly getting converter to Christianity, and constructed a church in their colony. In Phaply RSS shakhan are run by members of the Balija and Brahmans communities. They started to prevent the conversion among the Madigas. Boya Chennaiah a factional leader in the village was backed by the TDP. He started threatening, and abusing Dalits when they took an independent stance on casting votes. From then onwards, the upper castes were looking for an opportunity to attack Dalits. In the 2001 Sarpanch local elections, Boya Chennaiah lost and Jangam Sushilamma (of the Congress) won. From then onwards, Boya Chennaiah started targeting Dalits for voting for Sushilamma. He and his followers started looking for an opportunity for revenge. In this way, the fact- finding committee led by U.Sambashiva Rao concluded that both Manuvadi ideology and state ideology mutually created the context for the incident.[303] Because of MRPS assertion in the sarpanch election, some of the Dalits acted independently and voted for the Congress candidate which was not tolerated by TDP factions groups. The Congress and TDP factional groups have an undercurrent support of Reddys and Boyas. In the village, the

[302] Chenchugari Balarangana is a young man (40) active under MRPS at the time of Phaply incident. Now he is working as MRPS district secretary, interview taken on 13-11-2012.
[303] Opt, cit, U.Sa. (Ed.), (2005). p.244

RSS and VHP outfits are run by Chandrashekar (Karyakaruni- Brahman), Ramanjanyulu, RSS khanda bouddhic Pramukh.

In 1993, when 10 Madiga families converted to Christianity, these fundamentalist forces tried to attack them. Later they thought that it was better to spread and strengthen the Hindu ideology among the Dalits, rather than attacking. As part of this strategy, they started working with the Dalits. On 31st August, Chandrashekar (of the RSS) came to the wada, along with Jangam Chinnaiah in the evening time. He performed puja to Ganapathi and distributed "Thirthaprasadalu"[304]. In the year 2003, the RSS groups, both Balija and Brahmins, started encouraging Madigas to observe Hindu festivals in their homes and urged them to put Ganesh ideals in their colony. The Madigas decided to take out a public procession on the third day after the Ganesh festival. On the same day, the MRPS mandal general body meeting was held in Phaply itself and representatives came from various villages of the mandal to Phaply. Seeing this gathering, the Boyas and other upper castes got together and planned an attack on the procession. As the Dalits started their Ganesh idol procession in the streets, the avarnas including the upper castes, Shudras, Muslims Yerukala attacked them. This attack was mainly organised under the leadership of Boya landlords, Reddys, and Balijas. In fact, this was not the first incident in the village. In 1993, a Dalit Ganapathi idol procession was stopped by the upper castes. The Justice Punniah commission also mentioned that Phaply village was one of the atrocities-prone areas. Coming to this, when procession entered the OBC Street, all the OBCs and other castes attacked the procession. All Dalits left the tractor and the idol in the street itself and the entire Dalit colony came on to main roads started to do dharna on the guidelines of MRPS leaders who were present in the procession. When the upper castes attacked the entire Dalit colony, all the Dalits fled. Next day morning, they burned all Madiga shops in the SC corporation complex but spared the Malas shops. All the Dalits went to police station fearing that they may be killed. The SI and some police came to see burning shops. The SP and collector visited the village. The upper caste went

[304] Ibid, p. 242

to the extent of attacking the police. The police resorted to laticharge and arrested around 120 persons. After the 3rd day, the MLA and minister came to the village and asked the Dalits to take the Ganesh idol through another route. On the 5th day, Manda Krishna visited the village. Some of the main culprits who were associated with the K.E Prabhkar faction managed to evade the police case. The daily newspapers presented the news as a conflict between OBCs and Dalits and said that the local Dalits, along with people's organisations, entered the village as per the fact-finding report. The Phaply Dalit Badithula Committee for Justice was formed. It demanded: (i) Immediate arrest of the culprits, (ii) Rehabilitation to the victims according to the SC, ST Atrocity Act, 1989, (iii) Land for landless Dalits, (iv) Reconstruction of shops and houses, (v) Schools and hostels for children education. All this happened after sixty days. The culprits secured bail from the court and for another three years the case dragged on. Thereafter, pressure was put on the Dalits for agreeing to a compromise. In 2009, when the Congress Government came to power, a compromise on the case was reached.

R.Sundarayya was working as a pastor for 12 years in the village in 'Yesu Christu Parthana Mandiram' an independent church and he came from a village near the mandal. He stated that the Agravarnas were still practicing discrimination; the two glass system was still in vogue in the hotel, where one glass was for the upper castes and another for Dalits. He also said that after MRPS emergence, the Madigas asserted their self respect and were able to walk confidently wearing dignified dress. According to him, if MRPS had not made its presence felt, it would not have been possible for the Madigas to walk on the street with confidence and self respect. Today, Madigas can negotiate with government officials and ask questions to get their due benefits.

Malas have always maintained a distance from the Madigas. Recently, in MPTC elections, the upper castes set up a Mala candidate and ensured his victory. The increased level of consciousness among Madigas did not get consolidated in political terms. Madigas can be seen in the Congress, the YSRCP and also the TDP. Parties like BSP have not reached the village at all. Even though some of their leaders have expressed the

need to make MRPS into a political force, there are doubts whether MRPS would be capable of sustaining itself as a political party. Recently, one inter caste marriage took place in the village between a Mala girl and a Balija boy. Even though both of them are staying in the village itself, the boy's family has socially boycotted them.[305]

Urru-Wada differences and the attempt of Dalits to enter the Urru have created a conflict situation between the upper castes and Dalits. Traditionally the Urru is inhabited by the upper castes and untouchables live in Wadas. In the local language, they are called as Madiga peta, mala Peta, Pally or Geri, Cheri, etc. These wadas are mostly located away from the Vurru to prevent contact between the upper castes and the Dalits and thereby prevent social amalgamation of the Dalits with the upper castes. As Part of Dalit assertion, some Dalits colonies were named as Ambedkar colonies. The government scheme for house construction sometimes segregated and sometimes enabled Dalits to mingle with other castes. However, the upper castes have generally tended to be prejudiced against the Dalits on the special plea of Dalits bringing in some unnoticed or unfelt impurity. It was such a notion that kept the public plces out of bounds to the Dalits. However, in the aftermath of the Phaply incident, Dalits are walking with a lot of self-confidence and taking Ganesh idol through savarna colony is both a manifestation of their new found self respect and is also challenging the caste hegemony.

The debate over the Dalit Bahujan identity formation and political alliance are being articulated in the intellectual discourse, sometimes in the political domain, but largely at the grassroots level, the social hierarchies and discrimination are getting continued and the atrocities are also manifesting this fact. The desire to cultivate this unity has yet to be transformed from the cultural level. Merely political calculations alone may not ensure substantial solidarities among the historically oppressed and excluded castes. The Phaply incident also indicates how the Dalit conversions to Christianity created conflict and

[305] Nagaraju (age 40) is working as Mandal Convener of the "Dalita Samakya", interviewed on 13-11-2012

made the right wing groups to impose cultural festivals and sancritisation process on the Dalits; encouraging the Dalits to keep Ganesh idol in the colony is one example.

Nagaraju (Mandal convener of Dalit samkya) mentioned that after the incident, more Madigas got converted to Christianity. They felt that as Hindus, they are not allowed to enter temple, they are not touched. Even their celebrating festivals like Ganesha Chaturthi led to conflict. Most of them started going to churches. Currently, there are two churches in the SC colony. He also said that Madigas themselves are divided into various parties like TDP, YSR Congress, and the Congress Party. Although MRPS helped in raising the consciousness of Madigas, this did not get translated into unified votes. He also made a point that whenever there is a post reserved for an SC; the upper castes ensure that a SC of their choice is chosen

Telangana

The Telangana region was part of the Nizam composite Hyderabad state, which comprised of eight Telugu-speaking Telanagna, three Kannada and five Marathi-speaking districts. After the reorganization Telangana with ten districts remained[306]. Telangana was the centre of culture and power in the Deccan for centuries. It has a long and rich history shaped by great empires that rose and fell in its area. When India became independent in 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad did not want to merge with the Indian Union and wanted to remain independent under the special provisions given to princely states. The Government of India annexed Hyderabad state on 17 September 1948, in an operation by the Indian army called "Operation Polo," which the government temed as Police Action. Then, the central government appointed a civil servant, M.R Vellodi, as the first chief minister of Hyderabad state on 26 January, 1950. He administered the state with the help of bureaucrats from Madras state and Bombay state. In 1952, Dr. Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was elected chief minister of Hyderabad state in the first democratic election. Meanwhile, the Telugu speaking areas in the northern Circars and Rayalaseema

[306] 10 Districts namely: Hyderabad, Adilabad, Khammam, Karimnagar, Mahbubnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizambad, Ranga Reddy and Warangal.

regions were carved out of the erstwhile Madras state to create the Andhra state in 1953, with Kurnool as its capital.

The feudal culture is more prevelant in the region. The Zamindars and Zagirdars were the exploiters of people at the grassroots level. Against this oppression during 1940-50, under "Andhra Mahasabha," people organised a movement. The movement was popularly known as the Telangana Armed Struggle. The Communists, particularly the Communist Party of India (CPI) leaders like Puchalapally Sundaraiah, led this movement. From the mid-1960s, the radical movement became very vibrant and mobilised people at the grassroots level, particularly SC, ST, the OBCs as they experienced exploitation and feudal domination. The land ownership pattern was also very low among these groups. So, one could see their active participation in the Telangana movement. The marginalised groups were mobilised under the class movement. Hence, the nature of Dalit assertions was entirely different from those in the Coastal Andhra movement. It was also felt that in Telangana, in the initial stage, they challenged the state, whereas in Coastal Andhra, the Dalits engaged with the state.

There were many gadies in Telangana, controlled by upper castes like Brahmins, Velamas, and Reddies. It is estimated that there are 200-250s Gadies in the Telangana region. These Gadies are indications of the feudal landlordship. In local parlance, these are known as Deshmuks and Zamindars. The Velamas and Reddys often worked as mediators between the Nizam and the people.[307] These landlords were most oppressive and exploitative. In the construction of the Gadi, the entire village, most often the lower caste people, used to work as labourers. The oppression was such that the women in the village have to spend the night with the Dora if he made such a demand. In some cases, after marriage, the bride had to spend her first night with the Dora. The lower castes were mostly the victims of the repressive culture. Most of them used to work as bonded and

[307] See K.V. Narendhar and Sangeveni Ravindhar. (2011). *Telangana Gadilu*. Published by authors themselves, Hydeabad.

attached labour. To fight against this feudalism and to organise the poor labour and agriculture peasants, the Naxalites spring up in this region.[308]

The Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions and the Telangana region historically displayed two different historical trajectories and experience. These got reflected in the the political economy, caste manifestation and political culture[309]. From the creation of the Andhra Pradesh state in 1956, Telangana people have been expressing apprehensions about the possible injustice to them in the future. No wonder, such distrust triggered the demand for a separate state of Telangana. However, as observed by I. Thirumali, upper caste leaders of both regions cooperated and shared state power to rule the people. In the process, Dalits and other marginalised groups were excluded from development and political power. It was clear that in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh, Dalits and lower castes were marginalised even more[310]. The communist justification for a 'Vishalandra' on linguist basis was continuously rejected by the people of Telangana both culturally and politically. Hence, the reasoning of linguistic nationality did not succeed and could not build solidarity both culturally, and psychologically[311]. The following two case studies are under taken to study the caste violence and Dalit assertion in Telanagana region.

Case –I: Jhadimalkapur

Jhadimalkapuram is a major Gram Panchyat with two tribal Thandas (where tribals reside). It is located 15 km from Zhaheerabad[312] in Medak district. This village is one of the border villages to Karnataka where, people of various castes live that include: Malas-

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[308] See Thurumali, I. (1992). Dora and Gadi; Manifestation of Landlord Domination in Telangana. *EPW*, Vol-29, No-9, Febraury, pp.477-482.
[309] See, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). Working Paper
[310] Thirumali, Inukonda. (2013). *Telangana-Andhra: Castes, Regions and Politics in Andhra Pradesh*. Aakar Books, New Delhi, p.20.
[311] Srinivasulu, K. (2011). *Discourse on Telangana and Critique of the Linguistic Nationality Principle*, in Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai. (2011), *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India*. Routledge Publication, New Delhi, pp.181-2.
[312] Zaheerabad is a small town is also an Assembly Constituency. Jhadimalkapuram located around 15 km away. No buses go to this village but there are frequent autos from Zaheerabad. This village is one of the border villages in Medak district to Karnataka state.

40 families, Madigas-60 families, Bichoppolu -8 families, Muslims-8 families, Reddys-200 families, Balijas-40 families, Telugollus-30 families, Sarollus-8 families, Banjas-10 families, Ediga (Tadi Tapars)-5 families and Maskur (Village servants)-4 families[313]. The physical location of the castes within the village is clearly divided. Except Madigas, Malas, Muslims and Buchapollus (those who beg), other caste streets are separately located, particularly road (cement) draw the line, majority of Malas and Madigas reside on the left side of the village. One could also symbolically see them based on their religious and social symbols where Ambedkar status is located near the Mala habitations. Madigas reside near about the church. The Mosque is located near the Muslims houses. The Anjaneya Swamy temple is near the upper caste houses.

Kistappa[314] (60) mentioned that historically the village has been influenced by the rule of the Doras. In terms of landholding pattern the upper castes like Reddys, Sarollu and Balijas are holding more land. The Sudra classes are having both inam land and are small farmers. In the case of Dalits, particularly Malas and Madigas, they hold inam lands and work as agriculture labourers, or daily workers. The literacy among Dalits is slowly increasing and some Dalit students have completed graduation. According to human rights watch (Sakshi)[315] caste violence, social boycotts are reported more in Medak district compared to other districts of Telangana. Acccording to one of the residents, caste hierarchy and feudal domination have been perpetual in the village. These are reflected in the day to day relations of the people here. The 1996 Jatara incident in the village led to a huge conflict between Dalits and upper castes. This conflict was extensively covered in the newspapers and atrracted public attention, in 1996 Jatara incident, the Dalits protested against upper caste hegemony. The upper castes hit them by socially boycotting the

[313] These estimations are approximate. These have been arrived at by interviewing the people and the village Maskur who works in the Gram Panchayat.
[314] Interview with Kistappa
[315]"Human Rights Watch" is a voluntary organisation popularly called "Sakshi" which works on Dalits related issues and concerns. It particularly documents the atrocities and daily caste violence in the three regions of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. It has also published annual reports on the region wide atrocities on Dalits and forms of caste violence. The annual reports of 2003 and 2006 clearly brought out the grassroots realities about the condition of Dalits in the then state of Andhra Pradesh.

Dalits. Soon, it became a state level issue to which both political and civil society responded.

The background to Jatara (local Goddesses festival) conflict

In Jadimalkapur, the feudal domination was an everyday experience of untouchables before 1996. It also broadly reflects the historical experience of the Telangana region. The upper castes like Reddys, Velamas, Balijas and Telagas traditionally exercises power over the untouchable castes in the village. People of the Madiga and Mala communities are generally landless and many of them work as daily labourers in the fields owned by the upper castes. As pointed out by Begari Laxmaiah,[316] most of Malas and Madigas used to be engaged in traditional occupations like digging graves (Malas) and leather work (Madigas). In the village, there were two barber shops, the upper castes never allowed the Dalits to enter these shops. The drinking water wells were 'out of bounds' for the Malas and Madigas. In fact, they attached an electrical wire to the well to prevent Dalit from coming near the well. In the public places also, Dalits were not allowed to sit in front of upper caste persons. It was contemptunous for the upper castes to see a Dalit person wearing a dignified dress. Muslim hotel owners were ordered to maintain two class systems in their hotels-one Glass for caste Hindus and another for the untouchbales. Begari Rangappa[317] (60) mentioned that all Dalits were forced to render "Vetti" (free labour" to the upper castes for a long time. Long time back, the Dora gave 2-4 acres land. Malas, Madigas, Chakalis and Muslims have been tilling this land, over which they have no "Pattas" (legal right over land on which they are cultivating). It is a kind of social understanding that by rendering free service to the landlord, members of these communities would be allowed to use the land, known as "Enam land". Thupper castes have made it clear that as long as these castes serve the village, they can cultivate the land. In a way, they have been forced to do Vetti from generation to generation. There was no opposition to this. This "Vetti," or free labour, aggravated the condition of the Dalits, who were also subjected to daily humiliation, sexual abuse of Dalits women and

[316]Begari Laxmaiah is a 60 years old man from the Mala community and also a singer. He worked as Gram panchayat ward member and actively participated in the post Jatara agitations.
[317] Interview with Begari Rangappa

physical violence when a Dalit tries to sit on par with the upper castes. For every death and marriage or festival, many tasks had to be performed voluntarily by Dalits. It had been a case of moral and social surveillance on the life of Dalits for keeping them in perpetual servitude.

Karamchedu agitation all over the state in 1985 also influenced the Telangana activists and educated employees and youth. Under the aegis of the Dalit Mahasabha, the leaders organised public meetings. As part of this growing consciousness in Jhadimalkapur, some educated youth started to organising the Dalits. According to Yesu Ratnam,[318] they also started "Ambedkar Study Circle" in the village with the help of activists and some college teachers who were working at Zaheerabad. At that time, Zaheerabad was the place for Dalit activism. The active members Ananthaiah (a college lecturer), Narsaiah, Ramchandriah and Bumaiah[319] were in the forefront of Dalit activism. The individuals and their activities influenced the SC (Scheduled Caste) hostel students. Yesu Ratnam and Devadasu were also attracted to these activities. Yesu Ratnam, along with some educated persons, formed the "Ambedkar Study Circle" in the village, based on the Zaheerabad "Ambedkar Study Circle". The youth under the banner of decided to install Ambedkar's statue in the village in the year 9-8-1990. On the day of unveiling of the statue, the upper castes opposed it and did not allow the procession and public meeting at Ambedkar statue. The Dalits lodged a complaint in the police station, but action was not taken against anybody. However, Ambedkar's statue was installed.[320]

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[318] Yesu Ratnam a 45 years old, who belongs to the Madiga caste, is a key person in opposing the "Vetti" and caste domination in Jhadmalkapur. Ratnam studied in the SC hostel and was influenced by Christianity. He was the first person to oppose the cutting of Buffalos in front of the Durgama temple in the Jatara festival. Now he has changed his identity and residence to Zaheerabad and is working as a fulltime Christian messenger.

[319] These are active members in the Zaherabad area, who used to organise protests on Dalit issues and sensitise the youth on Ambedkar's philosophy. During this time, there was big debate on caste-class issues and social movements in the state. There was also strong criticism of left movement on its inadequate understanding of caste issues. At this time, CPI (ML) Janashakthi introduced "DAFODAM" to address the caste, gender and Muslim question within the constitutional means, without losing class orientation.

[320] Interview on 10-7-2012 with Rangappa, (60), he belongs to the Mala caste and was also a victim in the Jatara conflict. The interview was taken on 11-7-2012 with Yesu Ratnam who is a one of the key persons in installing Ambedkar statue. He belongs to the Madiga community.

Yesu Ratnam, along with other youth, opposed the "Jogini system"[321] in the village, wherein, Dalit women, particularly from Madiga community, are dedicated and 'married' to the God. Therafter, they have to satisfy sexually anybody in the village. Also, they have to dance and provide entertainment during every festival and occasions that take place in the village. The two glass system is most humiliating discrimination prevelant in the village, in particular, and the district, in general. The very attempt of the Dalit youth of the village to oppose the traditional customs was not tolerated by the upper caste people. In the village, celebrating a "Durgamma Jatara" is a tradition, which is performed once in three years. In 1996, in between May to June, they were supposed to observe this festival. Before the actual celebration, the community leaders gathered to decide the date and the amount that each family had to contribute for it and also ask all Malas, Madigas and other servicing castes to render their service in the Jatara. Among the Madiga community, Yesu Ratnam's family was asked to butcher around 40-50 buffalos within an hour without interruption in front of Durgamma temple. Ratnam decided it.

Before the Jatara, the mala madigas had to clear all the bushes, and roads around the village temple where the Jatara was to take place. Around 20-30 days prior to the event, one or two persons from each Vetti group within the Madiga community were asked to search and gather the buffalos. They were not paid anything for this task. The dedicated girls (Joginis) have to dance in Jataras, burial grounds and in some festivals for which the

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[321]. The jogini system is a feudal remnant of exploitation of women in the name of religion and custom. Jogini system is predominant in Telangna in district like Nizamabad, Mahaboobnagar and Medak. Joginis are often called as Matangies and Basvis in Coastal and Rayalaseema districts respectively Matammas or Tayammas in Nellore district in the neighbouring states on Maharashtra and Karnataka they are called Muralies, Basivis and Devadasis respectively. The central feature of Jogini system is that young girls are dedicated to the 'service' of the local deity. Majority of Joginies come from Dalit families. The village head goes to bed with her after she attains puberty. She then becomes virtually a prostitute at the beck and call of all and sundry in the village (Vakulabaranam Rama Krishna and K.H.S.S Sundar- pp-134-135). In Nizam's dominions, the anti Jogini organisation started by Bagya Reddy Varma established in 1906 that is 'Jagan Mitra Mandali', it also called for the abolishing of the practice of dedicating girls to deities as Muralies or Jogats. Varmaalso founded an organisation-known as the 'Murali' Nivarana Mandali' (society for prevention of the Murali custom'. The Matangi Mahasabha at Nampally and the Suneetha Bala Samajam founded by Arigay Ramaswamy at Secunderabad worked towards the abolition of the Jogini or Murali system within larger concerns for temperanace, as did the Adi-Dravida sangam founded by Venkat Rao in 1922 at Ghasmundy. (Priyadarshini Vijaisri, PP-406-407)

upper caste never paid anything. The Jatara committee, constituted mostly by the upper caste, tried to put pressure on Ratnam, but he refused to relent. The upper caste people started threatening Ratnam's family members. Ratnam, with the help of Zaherabad Ambedkar Study Circle members, complained against (Shiva Reddy) the Jatara committee members for forcing his family and him to get involved in cutting the buffalos. He complained to the Sarpanch, MDO (Mandal Development officer), SI (sub inspector) and district collector. The Jatara committee decided to go ahead without police and government permission. One day prior to the Durgama "Bali", in the night around 200-300 upper caste people went to the Madiga street and attacked Ratnam's family members, assuming that Ratnam was inside the family. Next day, all upper castes gathered at the village centre and decided to socially boycot Ratnam's family. They passed a resolution that if anybody defied this social boycott, tht person would have to pay a fine of Rs. 5000/- and would be subjected to 25 Chappal beatings. In this way, Ratnam's family was socially alienated and they did not get even their community support.

The daily newspapers carried reports on the conflict. The Vartha one of the newspapers carried headline on 14th May. Immediately, journalists and police personal visited the village, the upper castes attacked the journalists and the police. The RDO (Revenue Development Officer- Karuna) filed a case against 12 upper caste members and the DSP filed a case against 19 members. Within two days, the upper caste members were arrested. The "Kathi" (knife) which was supposed to be used for Jatara purpose was also surrendered in the police station. After that, for three months, the police picketing was arranged in the village. After a few days, the accused secured bail. Four years later a compromise was arrived at on the condition that the caste Hindus will not repeat the incident and impose any Vetti Chakiri (forced labour) in the village.

After the incident, Dalits agitated in front of the collector's office with the help of Dalit associations. The Government sanctioned "Pindi Girini", water tanks and bore wells for drinking water. Some of the daily newspapers tried to project Ratnam's assertion for

environmental protection and animal rights. However, Ratnam clearly said that he was against upper caste feudal domination and the vetti system. The government distributed land to most of those who suffered under the Vetti chakiri system (Mala, Madiga, Muslim, some OBC servicing castes, Chakali, Mangali, etc). Each family got around 3-5 acres land depending on their original Ennam land. Then they were legally entitled to claim ownership of the land. Balappa summarised the entire incident as:[322]

> "The single man (Ratnam) action created confidence and did well to the entire community. Anyway, the Jatara conflict between upper caste and Mala, Madigas made us free from "Vetti chakari" and domination... Now we are free."

According to Ratnam, Christianity helped a lot for their consciousness. He says:

> "Christianity touched ... the untouched people, gave peace and attitude of loving each other and dignity to everyone... and it also provided free education to lower caste people and treated them as human beings"

After the incident, Ratnam became a fulltime active member of missionary work. In 1996, he left the village. He opined that "the journey from Hinduism to Christianity is a journey from slavery to freedom." He also mentioned Ambedkar's contribution to Dalits in raising their consciousness to assert against upper caste domination.[323] Mala youth observe Ambedkar's birth and death anniversaries. They also keep cut outs with photos of youth. They call it as "Ambedkar Youth Association". Even though many Malas celebrate Hindu festivals, they do not see any contradiction in their celebrating Ambedkar's anniversaries and Hindu festivals. The RSS has attempted to attract Malas to make them maintain a distance from converted Christians. So, any attempt to unite these groups will always is spoiled and divide Dalits on political lines. Here, one has to understand the point that Madigas are not part of either the "Ambedkar Youth Association" or the "community hall." Malas hesitate to involve them and also Christian

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[322] Balappa is a 50 years old person. He worked as ward member for SC colony and also actively organises the Madiga Christians. The interview was taken on 11-6-2012.

[323] Raju is a 26 year's old educated Mala student. He is actively involved in the community and general village development activities and leads "Students Ambedkar Association" (Madigas do not actively participate in this organisation) in Jhadmalkapuram village.

Madigas not prefer to be a part of it. The distance continues, the social supremacy of Malas over Madigaas has made them maintain social distance. A majority of the Dalits support the Congress Party. So far, four individuals (all belonging to the Mala community) have been elected as ward members for Gram panchayats.

Case-II: Kalvakol

Kalvakol village is situated in Pedakothapalli mandal of Mahabubnagar District, Andhra Pradesh. In the village, various castes like Malas, Madigas, Reddys, Balijas, Yadavas, Chakali and other servicing castes reside. The land pattern is that the dominant caste Reddys and Balijas hold more land and some of the Dalits are having 1-2 acres of land. The others work as agricultural labourers. The communist support, increasing education, influence of the radical movement and Christianity contributed to the rising Dalit consciousness in the village. During the Nizam period, the village was controlled by Surabhi Raja Venkatlachma Rao, Nizam Nawazwant Bahadur Raja Jatprople. There are memories of the Raja's oppressive pratices on the people, the feudal oppression with caste hierarchies were manifested in Vetti, two glass system, daily humiliation and low wages. The village experienced all the forms of oppression. Dalits who suffered the most came under CPI (Communist Party of India) and started fighting against feudal domination. The communist attracted Malas and Madigas into the party, Malas took active role in leadership since they were educated more than Madigas. The untouchable caste and serving caste got 'Inam land' (donated land or Government land) for their service in the village. Some of the Dalits got Pattas under the party leadership. As part of the struggle, there were attempts for temple entry. In the process, many incidents took place and the upper castes resorted to beating up the Madigas and Malas.[324]

The RSS (Rastiya Swayam Sevak Sangh) enter the village in the mid-1980s. It started mobilising OBCs and upper castes through its "Shaka" (branch) activities. When the RSS created a sufficient ground in the village, the BJP entered the village politics. For a

[324] Interview with K.Kornel, (39) on 6-9-2012. He also worked as reporter for *Vartha* at the time of Namala Balaswamy incident and actively participated in the agitations.

long time, there were two groups. On one side were the communists with the social base of the untouchable caste (in Telangana villages, the communist party is termed as a Mala, Madiga party). On the other side, was the BJP with the social base of OBC and other upper castes? The two groups were always in conflict over village issues. The prevalent forms of caste oppression in the village included segregation of tea stalls and restaurants, prohibition of entry of Dalits into temples, abuse by caste name and physical attacks on the Dalit community. The dominant caste community had been perpetrating these illegal, but common, violations of human rights with impunity since the people in some cases colluded with the perpetrators, and in others, were apathetic toards the protection of Dalits. In 1985, for instance, in a daylight murder, witnessed by many, dominant caste persons beat up and hanged a Dalit man, Buddayya, who they claimed was involved in sorcery but no legal consequences followed[325]. Although some of the OBCs become sympathisers of the communists, the electoral competition was always between the communists and the BJP.

Gradually many Madigas were drawn towards Christianity. Later some Malas and OBCs too were attracted towards that religion and established a tentative church. In 1993, the Kalvari church was constructed in the village. Some Malas constructed the Chenakeshava Swamy temple in which entry was denied to the Madigas. Pullaiah Madiga (38) narrated that during the mid-1980s, some of the Madigas families converted to Christianity. In the mid-1990s, when the Christians took out procession in the village, the RSS people disturbed it and threatened the Dalit families saying that Christianity is a foreign religion, when Dalits convert, they will lose the reservation facility, the missionary work is against Hinduism, etc.[326] With this background, the tension between the communists and the BJP mobilization existed and the growing consciousness of Dalits with communist support and increasing education and Christianity initiations made them assert their rights and question domination by the upper castes in the village. This questioning nature of Dalits

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[325] www.thesouthasian.org/archives/archives/.../CSCCL%20SCST%20Study.do, Human Rights Watch, 2000-2003, Andhra Pradesh Sakshi Report, p.47

[326] K.Pullaiah Madiga (age 37) in the beginning participated in the Christian activities and procession. Now he is working as a reporter for a local newspaper. The interview was taken on 6-9-2012.

subsequently led to a major incident in which Namala Balaswamy was burnt alive by upper castes in the village.

The incident

Balaswamy's (Mala, 30 years old) elderly mother and father are both agricultural labourers, and he himself worked as an agricultural labourer before his death. Balaswami had one sister and two brothers and was a self respecting person. He started to work in CPI. At the time of Balaswamy's death, his sister (Shyamala) and brother (Narasimha) were in the naxalite movement. Many times, the police harassed their family members by asking about whereabouts.[327] Many of the Dalits of Kalvakol are educated, and in recent decades, have begun to question and challenge traditional forms of caste oppression. Balaswami had been in the forefront in many such acts of assertion. He was the first Dalit in Kalwakol to enter the local temple[328]. In 1989, Balaswamy once entered the caste village wearing a red shirt, signifying his identification with the communist party; while the caste Hindus generally opposed the left (the dominant castes in Kalwakol have mostly joined the BJP at that time). As part of BJP political mobilisation drive, the Party started attracting some Mala families and uses them against the communist and particularly Balaswamy family. Balaswamy played an active role in campaigning for CPI in the local election. He refuted the BJP rumors, conspiracies and writing right wing slogans in the Dalit colony. This resistance created a threat to the upper caste domination and they started looking for the opportunity to attack Balaswamy family.

On 23rd July 2001, one abandoned hut and several haystacks belonging to various communities, including Dalits, had been burnt, certain members of the dominant caste community spread the rumour that Balaswamy was guilty, while no one claimed to have seen him setting fire to anything. Even then, he was severely beaten, and before he could approach the police with a complaint, the perpetrators of the assault filed a false case against Balaswamy claiming that he had burnt haystack. The case was dismissed. In fact,

[327] KNPS's state level conference on evolution of struggle and programmes, in which the General secretary submitted a note on organisational programmes and future plan on 11-12-2003, p.3
[328] 2000-2003, Andhra Pradesh Sakshi Report, p.47

burning Dalit haystacks is a common practice of the dominant castes to intimidate and threaten Dalits[329]. According to Kuruvamma (wife of the deceased):

> "On 25th July, around mid-night, a group of people familiar to Balaswami called him out from his house. There was a hostile group of both Dalit and non-Dalit villagers waiting for him. At the instigation of dominant caste men, Itte Naryan Reddy and Badam Srinivasu (MPTC-member of the Mandal Parshad Territorial committee, who belong to the BJP accused Balaswamy of committing arson by setting fire to Dalit haystacks. They then began to beat Balaswami and tied him up in order to take him to the Village Administrative Office (VAO). However, before they could do so, a group of thirty to forty dominant caste men and women seized Balaswami and began beating him again. Rather than taking Balaswami to the VAO, the mob forcibly dragged him to one of the haystacks that was still burning and threw more hay onto it in order to build up a flame. Meanwhile, the mob seized Yaranna, the elderly father of Bala Swami and severely beaten him as well. After some time, the dominant caste mob poured kerosene over Balaswami's body and threw him into the flames. When he attempted to come out from the fire, he was beaten back with a ladder.[330]

After five days, the incident was reported in local daily newspaper. Then, some of the Dalit organisations and activist went there. Under KNPS (Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi) the "United Committee for Struggle Against caste Discrimination" was formed with 15 people's organisations. Also, a fact finding committee on the incident was set up. The fact finding committee demanded that action be taken under the the SC and ST Atrocities Act. However, the SP refused to file a case saying that there were cases against Balaswamy. Under the united committee for struggle, there was a call for "Chello Mahabobnagar" to demand immediate action against the persons involved in the incident. In every Mandal, dharnas and protests were organised against upper caste atrocities and

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[329] Interview with Namala Chennamma (44 Age, sister in law of Balaswamy) on 6-9-2012.

[330] www.thesouthasian.org/archives/archives/.../CSCCL%20SCST%20Study.do, Human Rights Watch, 2000-2003, Andhra Pradesh Sakshi Report, p.47

negligence of the SP in the district. On October 13th, an open public meeting and agitation was organised with 4000 people. The collector responded to this incident and announced compensation according to the SC, ST Atrocities Act. Although there was a conflict between collector and the sub inspector, the district collector visited Kalvakol and announced relief and rehabilitation. The National SC/ST Commission visited the village and recorded the statements of the witnesses. The incident was also reported in the Durban conference. A case was registered under the SC/ST Act 1989. A compensation of Rs. 2, 00,000 was given to the family of Balaswamy. However, one of the main perpetrators of this ghastly crime, Badam Srinivas has not been arrested. In the meanwhile, some of the organisations withdrew from active participation in the united committee struggle.[331] After five years struggle, Balaswamy's wife got a small job in the social welfare hostel as a worker. Government allotted one plot measuring 120 sq yards in Nagarkurnool to Balaswamy's wife. Kuruvamma told that half of the allotted land wass occupied by the Nagarkurnool local mafia. When she reported the matter to the collector and other officials, they did not respond properly. After the incident, some of the Mala sympathizers of BJP supported a Mala candidate as Gram Sarpanch on the BJP platform. After his election, the dominant caste did not allow him to work independently. He always had to depend on the upper castes to do any work in the village. After his term was over, they did not care for him. In 2006, the upper castes forced Balaswamy's family to agree to a compromise on the case. Since they did not get help from any organisation and group, the family had to accept the terms of the compromise.

Since CPI and AISF work in the village, on 1-4-2006 Bhagat Singh's statue was installed in the village. As mentioned by Kornel and Pullaiah, three years earlier Ambedkar's statue was installed. In this function, Malas dominated and expressed their unwillingness to work with Madigas. According to Pulliah, "Although Malas do not invite us; we attend birth and death anniversaries of Ambedkar. We attend the programmes, since we feel that he did so much for the oppressed". He also brought out that in terms of economic and

[331] KNPS's state level conference on evolution of struggle and programmes, in which the General Secretary submitted a note on organisational programmes and he future plans on 11,12, 2003, p.3-4.

education status, tha Madigas are lagging behind the Malas. Pullaiah said that MRPS has been able to bring consciousness and gave confidence to Madigas who one able to question both the Malas and the upper castes. With the MRPS activities and consciousness among Madigas, the Malas started drifting further away from the Madigas and opposed categorization. When it comes to CPI party leadership and party tickets, both of them compete and try to negotiate in the local elections.

The above two cases bring the characteristics of Telangana feudal domination and the changing political consciousness of the Dalits and their assertions against the repression by the state and hegemony of the upper caste. Caste hierarchies and the economic inequalities strengthened the feudal oppression. On the issue of Telangana feudal oppression Thirumali observes:

> "The Deshmukhs in the process practically usurped the authority of the state and kept the whole countryside in their possession to establish their rajyam. Their power and prestige as landlords not only depended upon their past glory as revenue farmers, but also on various factors like their proximity to the local government officials. That is to say, any upper caste person with all the above features could be called a Dora. As such, most of them belonged to upper castes, primarily, Reddies. But some Brahmin, Velama and Muslim deshmukh Doras were also there in some villages. All of them believed that their real strength lay in keeping the people under their foot. The people had to depend upon them for credit, work, land and the enforcement of 'nyayamu' (justice)". The real foundations of their power were people's poverty, dependence and ruthless repression of any sign of dissent. Any sign of independence and well being was not tolerated by landlords. There were even instances of punishment of people who built proper houses and wore shirts. In some Telangna villages, shirts are not worn even to this day".[332]

[332] Opt, cit, Thurumali, I. *EPW*, p.479

Doras established their authority over government property; village resources and peoples activity acquired sufficient strength to become sarkar orders.

> "Their rights of enforcing law and delivering judgments increased their power further. In the settlement of disputes, the Dora's authority was unchallenged. The Dora's power of arbitration extended to land right disputes, caste group disputes or even domestic disputes between wife and husband, parents and major offspring or disputes over property distribution. This was another area of conflict between the people and the dora".[333]
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> "The labouring people were not permitted to wear shirts, chappals, talapaga, (headwear) 'tilak' or dhoti above the knees. They were not allowed to have the modern haircut. They had to shave their heads clean leaving only a tuft and, of course, they never dared to sport prominent moustaches. And every sentence the labourers spoke started with, 'Dora I am your slave, I touch your feet.' this gesture became a part of their cultural practices. The labourers obviously could not afford to break the entire culture based on domination though this should not be taken to mean acceptance or 'internalisation of subordination.' Similarly, the peasants on the basis of their caste and class status had to follow different practices."[334]

The impact of radical politics also shaped people's consciousness. Both the early communist and radical movements created a base among untouchables. This was observed by P.Sundarayya (1967) and N. Venugopal (2012). This development was reflected in the case of Kalvakol Namala Balaswamy who was actively working in the CPI and his brother and sister joined the Naxalite movement. The movement against Vetti is an important people's agenda. For the people, revolution is necessary and for the upper castes, it is an ideal." In a way, the day to day problems of the people become the agenda of the communist movement. However, the economic deterministic understanding of people's relation and class struggle could not focus on the caste question and its

[333] Ibid, p.479
[334] Ibid, p.480

changing manifestation. That is why in most of the communist-dominated villages, there is a strategic change in caste relations. There are intra and inter caste conflicts. In both cases, the RSS started working in the villages. The entry of RSS activities is an indication of the BJP's unfolding. It tries to attract supporters under the leadership of the upper castes. In Telangana, Christianity's influence is less compared to Coastal Andhra, where Malas dominate numerically. In both cases, the two glasses system was still being practiced. In some villages, there are separate colonies for Madigas and Malas.

The contemporary Case -VII: Laxmipeta

Laxmipeta is a small village located in Vangara block in Srikakulam district of Coastal Andhra. The village consists of 85 Thurpu Kappu families, 72 Mala families, 2 Mangali (Barbars), 5 Sally families (Weavers), 5 Chakali (Washerman), 2 Godla (Fisherman) families and 2 Komati (Vaishya) families.[335] Near to the village, some ten years back, water dam was constructed at "Madduvalasa" on "Vamshadara" river for which the Andhra Pradesh Government acquired three thousand acres of land from farmers of the surrounding seven villages. As a compensation, the Government paid Rs 2.50 lakhs per acre to the farmers. The villages; 1. Kottisha, 2. Koppara, 3. Devakyada, 4. Narendrapuram, 5. Gudivada and 6. Laxmipeta were identified as project affected villages, hence the inhabitants were rehabilitated[336]. Bojja Tarakam explains the post-rehabilitation sisutation and the conflicting conditions between Upper caste (Turpu Kappu) and Dalits in Laxmipeta village:

> "Since Laxmipeta is a resettled village and house-sites were provided by the government, the two communities constructed their houses adjacent to each other. They were compelled to stay side by side, with only a small road dividing their houses, in spite of the prevalence of the practice of untouchability. After completion of the irrigation project, about 250 acres of land acquired by the government remained surplus. It was of no use to the project. Since there was no chance of its submergence even with full tank capacity of the reservoir, the

[335] KNPS (Kulanirmulana Porata Samithi) Pamphlet
[336] HRF (Human Rights Forum) Pamphlet

> villagers of Laxmipeta started cultivating this land, which, prior to the acquisition, belonged to them. Legally, it was no longer their land. The Kapus started cultivating about 190 out of the 250 acres. The Dalits joined them and started cultivating the remaining 60 acres. These 60 acres were left by the Kappus because that land was not owned by them earlier. Out of 60 acres, 40 acres belonged to cultivators from Devakavada village and the owners, after receiving compensation, settled far away. The remaining 20 acres belongs to Kapus of Laxmipeta, but these owners too, after receiving the compensation, left the village and settled elsewhere. The 60 acres were thus left fallow, without any erstwhile claimants. The government did not object to the cultivation of this left over land. The Kapus also did not, initially have any objection to Dalits cultivating this land along with them.[337]

The Laxmipeta incident exposed the caste-class contradiction with the Kapus. According to K.Srinivasulu, the Kappu community in Andhra Pradesh did not go through any internal reforms unlike Kammas and Reddies. This is a community having land and claim to be superior to other OBCs.[338] Politically also, it is having more influence in the Congress. Since the formation of the PRP under Chiranjeevi, the political equations in the state and in the political parties have changed. Under PRP, a majority of people thought that the third alternative is coming in the form of Kappu community; the PRP projected it self for social justice; they brought Ambedkar and Phule and other anti caste thinkers into on their banners. It is a fact that most of the Dalit Bahujan communities joined and supported the PRP formation.[339] But later on, the party merged in the Congress at the intervention of Botsa Satyanarayana. Botsa Satayanarayana becoming the PCC president of the Congress gave more confidence to the grassroots level Kappu leaders who started to dominate and attack the Dalits. When the Kappus started to

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[337] Ibid.

[338] U.Sambashiva Rao speech in Vijayawada open public meeting on Laxmipeta in Dalit Camera, available in Youtube

[339] Sambaiah Gundimeda. (2009). Dalits, Praja Rajyam Party and Caste Politics in Andhra Pradesh. *EPW*, Vol-XLIV, No-21, May 23, pp.50-58

becoming the base for the Congress, many Dalits, particularly the Malas, switched their allegiance to the Y.S.R.C.P.[340] so, at the grassroots level, the Kappus felt that they were losing their grip over Dalits. When the Dalits started cultivating 60 acres land, the landless labourers become the cultivators and now they were able to produce paddy and other crops. This gave confidence and a sense of independence among Dalits. But the resettlement created a problem because the traditionally "Uru-wada"[341] distinctions changed". After rehabilitation, Kappus and Dalits were living side by side and Dalits farm labourers became cultivators. This was unbearable for the Kappus.[342]

The incident

On 11th June, 2012, Chithri Gangaiah, the husband of the former Sarpanch, had gone to Rajam for getting his tractor repaired. There, he noticed the Thurpu Kapu community people mobilising in large numbers and discussing some matter. Later, while on his way back, he saw them going to the house of Botcha Vasudeva Naidu at Vangara. On the same night, they all returned to Laxmipet in a tractor and a few autos. On the day of incident, i.e., on 12th June around 6.30 am, Gangaiah noticed them mobilising in more numbers nearer the Dalit colony. He immediately phoned the sub inspector of Vangara. The SI told that they were all on election duty and that he would send someone after informing his superiors. Around 7.30 am, more than 150 members belonging to the Thurpu Kapu community under the leadership of Avu Srinivasa Rao and Kalyani, came with deadly spears and bamboo sticks. They threw country made bombs and attacked the Dalit colony until about 11am. They stabbed Dalits with spears they attacked whoever they came across and brutally murdered 5 men and caused grievous injurious to 20 others. Nineteen members with broken hands, legs and heads have underwent operations and treatment at RIMS, Government hospital in Srikakulam and more than a dozen

[340] YSRCP, Y.S Rajashekar Reddy party was established after the death of YSR by his son Y.S Jagan Mohan Reddy contested in election and won some seats in the state Assembly.
[341] 'Ooru' is the area where Savarnas live and 'wada' is the area where untouchables live. Ooru is a mainstream village while wada is outside village.
[342] Ibid.

women sustained injuries to their private parts[343]. The Dalits Srishakti observed in its fact finding report that:

> "The women belonging to Thurpu Kapu came with Chilli powder, threw it into the eyes of the Dalits whomever they came across. They played a key role in the attack. For instance, one of the deceased Ch. Appadu was taking his last breath, his old mother Muttamma (65) was trying to pour water in his mouth. Kalyani and others abused her in the name of caste and attacked her. In the same manner, many incidents took place and many women were beaten up with bamboo sticks on their private parts. Many youth belonging to the Thurpu kapu community were there in the mob. In between the attack, a police constable came, saw the situation and went away having been frightened. Later, the police came in more number around 11am".[344]

The fact finding report of a group of university researchers pointed out that in Laxmipeta incident, Kappu men, women and children were involved. They also observed: "Even in the notorious Karamchedu or Chundur cases, which were as gruesome and large-scale as the present one, there was no direct involvement of women let alone children. Even more alarming was that despite the active participation of the Turpu Kapu women and children in the attack, no inquiry was done on this aspect. No cases were filed and no one arrested. This is clear evidence of the shabby work done by the investigating agency which points to a delusion of the cases".[345] If we understand the incident keenly, the personnal who are part of the state institutions, particularly the DCP, and SI, belonged to Dalit communities. So, despite being Dalits, they did not show any sympathy. Moreover, whenever Dalits complained against Kappus about their daily humiliation, violence and domination, no cases were filed. Also, there was no initiative to resolve the problem. It clearly shows how the institutions of state function when there are Dalit (powerless) issues and the

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[343] *Dalita Sri Shakthi (DSS)* fact finding report, published in *Bahujana Keratalu*, Telugu monthly magazine special issue on Laxmipeta incident, June, July, 2012, p.46.
[344] Ibid
[345] Hyderabad Political Economy Group. (2012). Laxmipeta Dalits Killings. *EPW*, December, 1, 2012, Volume: XLVI, No: 47AND 48, p.27.

middle class, who are part of the state machinery; do not have any commitment towards people from where they come. It shows the peculiar characteristic of the Dalit educated and employed middle class in maintaining distance from the Dalit community.

A Discourse on Caste or Class

In the Aftermath of the Laxmipeta incident, various people's organisations and individuals expressed solidarity and presented multiple points of view on the reasons for the incident. Broadly, two dominant views were the first was the class approaches most where the left (from radical to parliamentary) intellectuals argued that the struggle for land led to the killings of five Dalits; hence, it is to be understood in the framework of class analysis, the second was Dalit Organisations and Ambedkarites who argued that the Laxmipeta massacre was a result of upper caste or Turpu Kappu castist attack on Dalits assertion. Another set of activists felt that caste and class analysis and framework has to be applied to understand the reasons for Laxmipeta incident and post Laxmipeta Dalit assertions. Dalit feminists, like Jupaka Subadra, argued that upper caste children and women were also involved in the incident which clearly brings out the the hierarchy of patriarchy in which the upper caste women cooperated with upper caste men in attackers Dalits women and men. So often this dimension of casteist attitude of gender is deliberately sidelined in upper caste feminist discourse. She asserted that the so-called feminist groups had not properly responded to the Laxmipeta incident.[346]

State response to Laxmipeta massacre

The government responded to this incident by anticipating predicting that Dalit groups may go for big agitations in the state. The Chief Minister announced compensation of Rs. 2 lakhs to the families of the victims. The Congress Government sent two Dalit ministers, Deputy Chief Minister Raja Narsimha and Geeta Reddy to visit the hospital where the Laxmipeta victims were being treated and handover the compensation cheque. It is said that compensation was not properly distributed and half of the money was not given at

[346] Jupaka Subadra is a writer and Coordinator of the "Mattipuvulu" (A Dalit-Bahujan Women Writers and Intellectual Literary Forum). She published an article in "Bumika"(A Telugu monthly magazine on women issue) on Laxmipeta looking at it through the feminist perspective.

all. The 250 acres of land meant for distribution to the Dalits was far away from the victim's village. Government was able to arrest Botsa Vasudeva Naidu, but did not arrest women who were involved in the killings. After many Dalit agitations, government promised to set a special court for judging the Laxmipeta incident. When the government symbolically makes promises on some of the demands of Dalits groups, the Dalit groups don't have anything to argue, unless they systematically build the movement against state ideological apparatus[347].

The Paradox of Dalit representation

The question of Dalit representation is one of the core agenda of Dalits assertion, both in colonial and post colonial periods. Because of the struggle for inclusion and representation in the government, affirmative actions, or reservations, have been introduced. Ambedkar's struggle was on: a separate electorate for Dalits and an affirmative policy for Dalits. They aim at encouraging Dalit groups to represent their issues and challenge the hegemony of the upper castes. However, demand for separate electoral representation was opposed by Gandhi and Ambedkar was forced to withdraw in response Gandhi's fast unto death. In post-independent India, affirmative policies were introduced in the Constitution for education and employment. In order to understand paradox of Dalit representation, the fact finding observation is worth citing:

> "The Laxmipeta atrocity happened at a time when all the local administrative functionaries in charge of law and order-the Circle inspector (CI), additional super dent of police (DSP), deputy superintendent of police (DSP), and mandal revenue officer (MRO) were SCs. Sensing the gravity of the situation, the ex-Sarpanch's husband, Chittiri Gangulu, informed local police but latter arrived only four hours later. The local member of legislative assembly (MLA), also a member of the state cabinet, Kondru Murali is believed to have suggested to the Dalits to give up their claims over the land and compromise with the Kapus. Also, the fact that he

[347] Bojja Tarakam. (2012). Laxmipeta: Deadly Combination of Caste and Political Power. *EPW,* Vol-XLVII, No: 28, July-14, p.3

did not visit Laxmipeta a village in his constituency, even three months after the atrocity is worth noting".[348]

The above observation makes us to remember two statements made by two important fighters, Ambedkar and Kanshiram. When Ambedkar listened to the complaints of Dalit employees, he expressed his disappointment and said that these people were interested in personal careers. The entire struggle was intended to protect the affirmative actions hoping that these classes help and protect and represent the communities from which they come.[349] However, in the context of Laxmipeta, it is clear that the emerging middle class, or the urbanising Dalit employed groups and individuals take a moral and political lead in questioning and challenging the institutional hegemony on behalf of the marginalised communities. Hence, the real challenge lies in how they could play a critical role in taking the moral lead to deliver justice and transform the state ideological apparatus. This is the challenge before the contemporary struggles of the oppressed classes. It is also the limitation of these individuals and groups who are part of the state instituions and yet they are not able to protect interests of the oppressed. Since these individuals and groups could not do that, one cannot say that the reservations are futile. It is important to include the histroically marginalised groups for more inclusive representation and governance towards realising egarlitarian values.

The second kind of presentation that political representation failed, he, recall Kanshiram's words "Chamcha Age" maintained that because of 1932 Poona Pact compromise, various kinds of Chamchas emerged both in colonial and post-colonial Indian politics from the marginalied groups. It helped the upper caste politics for accommodating and co-opting Dalit representatives and leaders.[350] In the context of Laxmipeta as brought out by the Dalits and the fact-finding reports, one can easily draw

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[348] Opt, Hyderabad Political Economy Groups. (2012). p.27.
[349] Ambedkar on employee's class of untouchable communities, (Gail Omvedt Ambedkar towards Enlightenment, Penguin Books)
[350] See Kanshiram. (1982). *The Chamcha Age*. New Delhi, Kanshiram and editorial of oppressed India.

the conclusion that Dalits representatives not only failed to represent Dalits, but also actively worked as the defenders of the political parties of which they are a part. Further, these leaders also actively worked to contains the Dalit agitations though different means. Thus, Dalits autonomous movement failed in building the sustained struggle against Laxmipeta hegemonic politics.

Laxmipeta's Challenges to Dalit Movement

The challenges that this movement threw to Dalit movement are very important. One could draw broadly the following challenges; (i) The paradox of Dalit representation, (ii) The reactionary urban agitations, (iii) The fragmentary Dalit articulations, (iv) The regional specificity of the state, (v) Internal challenges, or sub-caste challenges, (vi) Building solidarity with other people's movements and (vii) the NGOisation of the Dalit movement.

Among Dalits, there is a feeling that political representation through mainstream political parties from the beginning have failed to represent Dalits. These parties have been using techniques like accommodation, cooption, personality image and popular policies as means to subsume and patronise Dalits. Further, Dalit leaders of these parties stand as a neutral force both idleogically and politically movement and politics thus difuse the autonomus assertions of Dalits.

Because of diversified mobilisation, many competing leaderships emerged and are still emerging. While diversified leadership has produced the demcoratic space, it also works towards image trap and at but as pressure groups on the government merely for immediate benefits. The fragmentary articulations, as seen after Laxmipeta, lead neither to building of the movement, nor stands by the victims against the upper castes. These Dalit leaders, who are a part of mainstream parties, use Dalit whenever they want. The internal challenges of Dalit movement posed by sub-caste articulations also remain big question. This assertion from within the Dalits not only pose new questions and challenges to homogeneous Dalit articulations, but also raise demand for the addressing

internal disparities among Dalits. Because of this, the neglected Dalit groups may not fully commit themselves for the united struggle. It may either take a passive role or symbolic gesture. In order to overcome this structural historical problem, Dalit collective critical consciousness has to take both moral and political lead in recognising the lowest of the low democratic aspirations and initiating redistributing process to last man of the Dalit community. This will greatly facilitate collective consciousness.

In the aftermath of Laxmipeta, various people's organisations, mainly the Ambedkarrite groups and left groups, responded to it. In the process, solidarity was not substantially built between these groups to make it a larger movement. This contradiction is continuing for a long time and whenever there are massacres like Karamchedu, Chundur, Laxmipeta and Vempenta, there is internal competition between these groups both in leadership and path of addressing the problem in developing mutual trust. Each one tried to override the other. This has not created the ground on which they can work collectively for a long-term. Given the effects of liberalisation policies, the increasing caste violence, the anti people policies there is a need to work together and evolve the terms and condition for greater solidarity by respecting each other and creating a common ground. The regional dimension within the state has also been neglected in the analysis of Dalit movement.

After the mid-1990s, the NGOisation of Dalit movement took place. To some extent, they also played crucial role in connecting people and exposing the caste related problems. Most of the NGOs who are working on Dalit question are run by the upper castes; the Dalits joined these organisations for survival. Subsequently, they were portrayed as Dalit representatives in securing funding, image and legitimacy. The online activism, fact findings, may help, but tendency to portray as it is only Dalit movement that would solve the problem, but it may mislead the people.This has happened because of lack of a strong grassroots level sustained Dalit movement. The lobbying and project based activism; selective approach to address the structural problems could not produce long-term solutions and a strong sustained Dalit movement against the idelogical state apparatus and caste Hindu hegemony.

Summary

The Chapter attempted to understand multiple contradictions which operate in everyday relations of the Dalits in the various regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh. It tried to understand the dominant caste power structures and regional specificity in caste hegemony and violence over Dalits. Further, the chapter tries to explore the context in which Dalit assertion took place and the formation of the Dalit identity. It revels that each case raised new questions and reoriented the thinking and political process of Dalit movement. The cases like Vemptenta and Phaply exposed the internal challenges of Dalits. Cases like Karamchedu, Chundur, Jhadimalkapuram and Kalvokol brought out external factors with regional specificity. All these cases show socio-political context and complex realities in which Dalit assertion is taking place. The experience of post incident agitations shows they could not consolidate Dalits. A lack of sustained mobilisation and grassroots organisation failed to create a sustained Dalit movement. The Karamchedu massacre was a conflict between the upper caste domination with the increasing agrarian excess and available state power structures on the onehand and the growing consciousness of Dalits for self respect and equal rights on the other hand. Hence, structurally better organised upper caste violence and atrocities on the unorganised Dalits in the Coastal Andhra region demanded an organised assertion of Dalits against upper caste hegemony. So, formation of Dalit Mahasabha was a historical turning point aimed at uniting victims of caste based oppression.

The two cases, Jhadimalkapur and Kalvokol, draw our attention that caste is manifest through feudal structures which is often present in Vetti Chakiri, Social boycott, Jogini system, patron client relationship, Gadi culture and two glass systems, in the Telangana region. Because of various radical struggles in the Telangana region, the lower castes are better organised and fight against this feudal oppression, which operates by making the subject more dependent and imposing and reimposing hegemony through the local customs and traditional power structures. However, what become puzzling is that the foundations of caste structures are intact and operate in modified versions, even in the areas where the influence of the communist and radical parties are strong.

The Kalvokol experience tells us that for a long time, the village was influenced by both CPI and CPI (ML) Maoist movements. Even then, the caste hierarchies continue to determine the social relations. So, unless a substantial ideological attack on the roots of caste structures launched, it would be difficult to change these hierarchies. In both Kalvokol and Jadimalkapuram, there is a perceptible change among Dalits in terms of education, conversion into Christianity, ability to question and institutional access. However, dependency on the caste Hindus, the disparities among Scheduled Castes and the political dependency have always been obstacles for uniting Dalits. The occasional activities by local Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu and MRPS are tending to work more as reaction than proactive. This is giving scope for upper caste political hegemony in the village.

The common experience of Dalits in the three regions is that though Dalits fight back caste Hindus, the ability to continue the legal struggle is very weak, because of lack of legal illiteracy, financial support and institutional discrimination. The caste manifestation in Coastal Andhra is rooted in the historically developed agrarian relations. The three cases Karamchedu, Chundur and Laxmipeta where Kamma, Reddy and Kappu dominant caste were involved in major massacres clearly indicate the political economy of caste violence and caste hegemony. The Coastal Andhra region has development from which the dominant castes benefited. The excess money was invested in agrarian based industries or other sectors. This also helped them to become powerful through political power. This added more power to their arrogance. Therefore, the more domimance of upper caste the more attenction of the educated Dalits youth for dignified life, this led to conflict situations and resulted in major massacres and the large scale violence. In fact, the three incidents attracted more public and state attention than any incident in Coastal Andhra. The post-Karamchedu Dalit struggle became a landmark event and source for contemporary Dalit assertion. The struggles were successful in bringing culprits into courts and securing some justice. However, Mala-Madiga dormant differences continue to exist in most of the villages. They are also divided on the question of SC sub-categorisation. Even after the big struggles, Dalits are not politically and socially

consolidated; because of Dalit associations, MRPS movement Dalits learnt to how to negotiate with bureaucrat's institutions and political representatives. These cases also bring out that nexus of dominant caste social status; economy and state power are creating the ground for major massacres in Coastal Andhra. Also, the solidarity that the dominant castes get from dominant castes of the other village is also indicative of consensus of hegemony over Dalits.

The caste question in Rayalaseema is either neglected or subsumed in the Coastal Andhra phenomenon. Even if there are vernacular writings, these are analysis within the factional group conflicts. As already mentioned, Rayalseema is a faction-prone region. Where factional groups are traditionally controlled and maintained by the upper castes, Reddys and Kammas, who are economically and politically powerful. The rival groups fight for prestige, property, power and honour constituting core issues for factional conflicts. The dominant caste leaders fight against rival groups to maintain a group of people who often belong to Dalits and other Sudra communities. These people serve them at the expense of their lives.

The factional group rivalry and conflicts undermine the caste question. In fact, caste is embeded in the very function of factional groups. Dalits are forced to be part of one of these groups to be a on the safe side. If they are not a part of any group, their life can be at risk. In the two cases (Vempenta, Phaply); the caste violence was integral to the factional groups operations. It is also evident that faction groups can mobilise Dalits against Dalits. Further, one can also see that any minor conflict can lead to a major incident and a chain of conflicts. In both the cases, Dalits were able to fight against upper castes with the help of state level leadership of Dalit movement. However, they could not sustain the battle in the courts. Apart from MRPS, we hardly find the activitie of any other Dalit associations. Even these minimal and occasional activities for mobilising the Dalit become difficult for challenging factional and political groups within the village. The Dalit dependency on the caste Hindus and faction groups for their livelihood continue to make them vulnerable. Again, the disparities among Scheduled Castes, the

dominant castes accommodation of minority Scheduled Castes against the majority Scheduled Caste always left Scheduled Castes in the political domain divided.

The analysis of above incidents has brought new questions into discussion and created a new discourse on Dalit identity and the path of their emancipation. The identities like Dalits and Dalit Bahujans for that matter Bahujan are all constructed, articulated and imposed over people from above. But at the grassroots level, people do not have familiarity with these identities. These are familiar with employees, educated youth and people who work in movements and organisations. However, the fact is that these identities have created solidarities among marginalised communities and search for their own history, culture and politics through critical consciousness. However, what become important are the multiple identities that Dalits use, depending on the context in which they operate. The experiences of case studies also demand resolution of the immediate internal contradictions by recognising the internal disparities. Further, it is also important to understand that merely a reactive response or agitations does not lead to a sustained movement. Hence, the Dalit assertions and identity formations have to be understood in the complex multiple layers of power structures which operate in the everyday relations of Dalits of a given region.

Chapter -IV

Dalit Autonomy;

Understanding Historical and Contingent Articulations

Chapter – IV

Dalit Autonomy; Understanding Historical and Contingent Articulations

Dalits, as a group of people have been historically excluded, humiliated and exploited. In a way, they have been subjected to caste practices and hegemonic ideology, on the plea that this is legitimised by the Hindu scriptures. This historical exclusion by imposed identities made these communities further submissive. The beliefs, cultures, rituals and occupations not only divided labour, but also the labourers. This process continued with their being deprived of dignity, self-respect and human rights. In India, anti-caste struggle aims at regaining human dignity of Dalits against imposed ideological oppressive socio-political structures. The anti caste struggles also present the alternative philosophical praxis. The struggles from Buddha to Ambedkar present different forms of alternative values and imagination against the Brahminical traditions. This chapter deals with the linkage of these traditions by focusing on Dalit struggles for autonomous articulations in realising their human agency in the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

Broadly, there are two ways one could understand Dalit Autonomy; these are: (i) contingent factors, and (ii) historical factors. These processes are articulated in such a way that they create a critical discourse with the state and civil society. For example, during the colonial period, Ambedkar struggled to categorise all untouchables as minorities, and thereby demanded affirmative action in the Constitution. He also focused on the demand for separate electoral constituency for depressed classes to elect their representatives. The caste/Brahmanical ideology created a system in such a way that different agencies carry forward the Brahminical ideology. Therefore, it is necessary to find out both Brahminical ideology and the agency that carries the ideology. In the caste hierarchy, every caste feels that somebody is above (upper caste) and somebody is below. So, mere caste consciousness is not helpful to challenge the upper caste hegemony. However, realising that somebody is below that caste and recognising their agency become an important aspect of the anti caste struggle. In a hierarchical system, the caste domination is from the top above (Brahmin, Vaishya, Kshatriya, Sudra and Ati-sudra)

and the resistance is from below (Ati-sudra, Sudra, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Brahmin). Since conflict takes place at various levels, so is the resistance at various levels. Therefore, the Dalits' articulation of autonomy helps them to explore their historical past, cultural symbols, beliefs, identities etc. In the process, they reject some, own some and construct and deconstruct some with this world view. This way, they see and make a sense of the larger liberation process. It is understood that the imposed liberative categories, strategies do not sustain for a long time, but the owned one and the self-reflective one are qualitatively different from the others. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to understand the Dalit Autonomy under the following aspects.

1. The formation of Dalit Mahasabha; emergence of Dalit subject and the Dalit Autonomous movement
2. Dalits ideological Approach; initiatives towards caste-class praxis
3. Dalits Politics; Autonomy Vs. Accommodation
4. Dandora Movement and Dalits Autonomy; Fragmentation or solidarity

The formation of Dalit Mahasabha; emergence of Dalit Subject and Dalit Autonomous Movement

The formation of Dalit Mahasabha is a turning point in the history of modern Dalit Movement. As mentioned in the previous chapter, during the mid-1980s, the new political mobilisation started with emergence of TDP. The changing urban and socio-political conditions created some base for the assertion of Dalits. The intensity and brutality of the upper caste in Karamchedu massacre is striking to a learned audience because of wide discussion, particularly in newly launched 'Udayam' daily. The Karamchedu incident in 1985 created a context for the Dalits autonomous thinking and action towards their emancipation. The Karamchedu massacre and the subsequent formation of "Dalit Mahasabha" became an 'event'. This event changed the terms of discourse and created a Dalit subject. This event also becomes a part of Dalit ontology.[351]

[351] Erick Berg, Dag. (2014). Karamchedu and Dalit Subject in Andhra Pradesh. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 48:3, p.397.

Chirala town, where the victims of Karamchedu took shelter, turned into a hub of activity, for the Dalits from different parts of Andhra Pradesh and with different political backgrounds. Many rights organisations were involved in the post-Karamchedu agitations. On 31th August 1986 Dalit Mahasabha was formed with Bojja Tarakam as a president and Katti Padma Rao as general secretary. It was able to attract Dalit employees, youths, political and social activists from diverse backgrounds.[352] The Dalit Mahasabha crafted its movement based on anti caste philosophy. Indeed, Ambedkar and his writings became a moving force among the activists and cadres. Leaders used to refer to incidents of Ambedkar's life and mission in order to make people connect and identify with his struggle. Translations of Ambedkar writings into Telugu also contributed to spreading his ideas.[353] In the process, it attracted leadership from Marxist and atheist backgrounds, which also influenced the manifesto of the organisation. Katti Padma Rao, himself a writer and eloquent public speaker having from atheist movements was able to attract the masses through his in-depth and serious criticism of Brahminism, religion and caste practices. He also continuously used to cite anti caste legacy, the lives, thoughts and struggles of Ambedkar, Buddha and Phule while addressing people in public gatherings. In due course, the movement led to the formation of the "Dalit Mahasabha". The following definition is given to 'Dalit' in the manifesto:

> "Those who have been oppressed historically are all Dalits. Dalits do not belong to any caste or religion. Because they are oppressed, we call them as marginalised. In the slavery system, those who suffer are called slaves. In the feudal system, the people who suffer are peasants, labourers, and farmers. In the capitalist system, the labourers are exploited by capitalists, these are all Dalits. The remaining people, who are victims of the caste system, are all also Dalits.

The aim of the Dalit Mahasabha is to organise Dalits, Girijans who suffered historically. Dalit Mahasabha provides platform to annihilate untouchability and the caste system which have been dividing people and also prepare them to fight for socio-economic

[352] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). p.45.
[353] Erick Berg, Dag. (2011). *Dalits and the constitutional state*. Unpublished PhD thesis to University of Bergen, Bergen, p.402.

equality. The definition of Dalits clearly indicates that mere caste dimension to the Dalit movement is not enough? It was mentioned in the manifesto that the movement should synthesise the caste and class by taking inspiration from world people's struggle adopting the thoughts and philosophies of Phule and Ambedkar.[354] Since the Dalit Panther movement had impact on some of the activists, it influenced the formulation of Dalit Mahasabha. But later on, it was realised that the very definition was ambiguous. Although the Dalit Mahasabha attracted some of the OBC activists and intellectuals (Like Mastan Rao, Kancha Illaiah, U. Sambashiva Rao and B.S Ramulu) into the movement, it could not attract the masses at the grassroots level. It attracted many persons from untouchable communities. Though there was less concentration on land related issues, in the beginning, it did take up some of the land struggles like Thimmasamudram (1986).[355]

The post-Karamchedu struggle made Dalits to critically evaluate contribution of different political parties to Dalits. It questioned the Congress Party and its roots in Gandhi reformist agenda of "Harijan Sevak Sangh". It further extended its criticism that the communist parties which at principle level promised that they work for the liberation of the poor, in practice, they gave leadership to upper castes and made people believe that economic empowerment will liberate the untouchables. Hence, the manifesto of Dalit Mahasabha is an important political, ideological text which critically commented on various issues. It gave the vision and direction to the Dalit movement. Precisely, it focused on: (i) caste question (ii) interpretation on various issues, and (iii) relation with other movements on caste question.

Most of the Dalit Bahujan organisations took some ideological direction from the Dalit Mahasabha manifesto. The manifesto argued that the Dalit movement should fight towards "Boomi Kosam" and "Bhukthi Kosam" (for land and livelihood). It also stated that the Dalit movement should learn from the history of the struggle of the oppressed

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[354] Sambashiva Rao, U. (2005). *Dalita Rannaninadham*. Edureeta Publications, Hyderabad, pp.14-15
[355] See Mastan Rao, Devarapally. (1997). *Dalita Dashabdam*. Guntur, Lokayutha Prachuranalu and *Dalitha Mahasabha, Souvenir on Karamchedu,* Guntur, Lokayutha Prachuranalu.

classes and apply these in the light of the philosophies of Marx, Phule and Ambedkar.[356] These attempts to integrate and emphasise the question of class in the anti-caste perspective was a significant source of tension in the ideological formation of the APDMS. It may be seen that the ideological foundation could not be critically engaged for long time in the organisation. As a result, the organisation neglected the political economy of caste.[357] The following objectives are listed in the manifesto:

1. Annihilation of caste/casteist attitude
2. Removal of untouchability
3. Ending caste contradictions within the oppressed classes.
4. Preparing the oppressed classes for social revolution
5. Making the cultural revolution a success
6. Continuing the struggle until the nationalisation of land and property.
7. Enlightening people about the exploitative policies of the ruling classes so as to advance the peoples' struggle.
8. Making social revolution a success, and
9. Striving for Dalits and human rights

Dalit Mahasabha, in organising and sensitising Dalit at grassroots level, played an important role. It also started developing a counter campaign against Brahminical hegemonic culture. The leaders also organised inter-caste marriages and "self respect marriage".[358] They also started changing names of their colonies to Ambedkar colony, and houses to "Samanthara Nilayam".[359] Distribution of anti-caste thinkers' calendars, booklets, at public meetings which helped in circulation of ideas, literature and growing

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[356] Dalit Mahasabha Manifesto, pp.6-7
[357] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). p.47
[358] Periyar initiated and encouraged the self respect marriage system, where there are no rituals and priesthood. This particular system focused on inter caste marriage, the way marriage has to be happened and the date and time venue all are decided by the groom and bride or family members.
[359] Part of de-Brahminising and De-Hindusiing and most of the cultural experiments have been done at the individual level, most of the people have started to add "Bheem" (which is a representative symbol of Ambedkar), changed their house names "Samatha House" (which is resemblance of Samatha Sainik Dal), changed their colony names to" Ambedkar Nagar or Colony", Katti Padma Rao started "Lokayutha Prachuranalu" (in continuation of Lokayata legacy), "Lumbini Park" is a name of his residence. Most of the Buddhist symbols also started to be used by the Dalits.

consciousness among the Dalits.[360] Dalit Mahasabha decided to fight against atrocities and upper caste hegemony within the democratic and legal system. Here, it maintained distance with the radical movement and its approach of understanding the state. This created a lot of debate among activists and ideologues. The Dalit Mahasabha decided to fight within the legal framework, whereas radical groups opposed this strategy and suspected that it would lead to statist movements, rather than anti-state and anti-capitalist struggle. The radical groups took the path of annihilation of class enemies and killed Chenchu Ramaiah, who was the main accused of Karamchedu massacre.[361] whereas Dalit Mahasabha engaged with state institutions. Mahasabha argued that the constitutional method to get justice was taken from Ambedkar. In an interview, Katti Padma Rao asserted that the All India SC, ST, Atrocities Act 1989 and 1992 Amendment was the product of Dalit Mahasabha struggle[362]. He further stated that the struggle not only challenged upper caste hegemony, it also forced the state to formulate all India level policies, which later became the institutional and constitutional safeguards in protecting Dalits rights and dignity.[363] However radicals had reservations with the Dalits' understanding of the Indian state.

Later on, Dalit leaders realised limitations and the practical problem of the very definition of 'Dalit' that they defined in the manifesto. It was very ambiguous since it clubbed diversified groups into one category which culturally did not constitute homogeneity and was yet to build political solidarity. The Sabha focused only untouched castes (Scheduled Castes). And the leadership came from these communities, although there were members from other backward castes. Katti Padma Rao also agreed that they could not consolidate and strike linkages with other castes other than Scheduled Castes. Later, even within the

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[360] See Sharmila Rege. (August, 20, 2012). *Songsters from the Mudhouse*, Outlook, http://www.outlookindia.com/article/songsters-from-the-mudhouse/281948 and See Badri Narayana. (2011). *The Making of the Dalit Public in North India*, New Delhi, Oxford Press.

[361] Chenchu Ramaiah was a landlord of the Karamchedu belonging to the Kamma caste. He was also a close relative of N.T Rama Rao, who controlled the political power of the region. Ramaiah was one of the prime accused in the Karamchedu massacre.

[362] The discussion between Katti Padma Rao and Gaddar on Karamchedu after 25 years of Karamchedu in TV9. And also see U. Sambashiva Rao's interview on "Majaritike Rajadikaram" in TV1.

[363] Katti Padma Rao interview on 9, June, 2012, Hyderabad.

Scheduled Castes, Madigas felt discriminated and launched Dandora movement. Which happened to even the Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra?[364]

Even prior to the establishment of Dalit Mahasabha, there were organisations working for Scheduled Castes. However, the Dalit Mahasabha was able to attract both state and national media and provided a constructive perspective for the Dalit movement. Katti Padma Rao highlighted the entire Dalit Mahasabha struggle to rebuild the socio, cultural and political economy of Lokayatas, Buddhist and Ambedkar's vision. The Mahasabha organiser inters caste marriages.[365] The "Dalit Kalamandali" also worked in collaboration with Dalit Mahasabha in spreading Ambedkarite legacy. Dalit Mahasabha activities could spread at grassroots level in Coastal Andhra; it has less impact in Telangana and Rayalaseema. The objectives of Mahasabha, in essence, in charge "Annihilation of caste", which was the core formulation of Ambedkar to challenge Hindu Brahminical hierarchy and hegemony. The failure of Dalit Mahasabha to resolve the contradictions within the Dalits resulted in the emergence of Dandora movement in1994.[366]

As part of the cultural transformation and create alternative culture, the Dalit Mahasabha produced literature, created cultural symbols, explored folklore, organised mass conversions into Buddhism, popularized Buddha, Charvaka, Lokayukta, Yekalavya, Shambuka. Although it took up some of the land struggles, it could not be sustained for longtime. The Mahasabha mainly focused on petitions, small dharnas, and press meetings for the distribution of land and permanent pattas for tillers. The struggle for redistribution of land often partly dealt and focused more on the struggle for recognition,

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[364] The definition of Dalit Mahasabha on Dalits included broadly SC, ST, OBC and women, although there were attempts in its political programme and activities, only few intellectuals and artists turned from OBC and upper caste women. Later, many sub-groups within Dalits started to organise themselves for their rights and representation. The same thing happened with the Dalit Panther movement in Maharastra. It got divided into many groups because of its ideological ambiguity and impractical programmes.

[365] See, Srujana, Mahasabha Souvenir. (2011).They also organized "Ambedkar Melas" in Coastal Andhra in which they sold huge literature, calendars, organised cultural programmes and speeches on Dalit history culture and movements (See Padma Rao Katti, (1996). *Journey towards Dalit Dignity*)

[366] Interview with Ganumala Gyaneshwar on 20th October, 2012, who was actively involved in Karamchedu movement along with Boja Tarakam. Now he is working as working editor of "Neeli Janda". (a by monthly Telugu Tabloid)

or self-respect, and dignity. The Mahasabha took the issues of nationalisation of land and property rights from Ambedkar's concept of state socialism and campaigned against anti-people policies of the upper castes. And Dalits human rights made them engage with state institutions and produce critical discourse on state bias in formulating policies.

In many ways, Dalit movement, particularly after the formation of Dalit Mahasabha, asserted its identity, autonomous space and ideology among people and the mainstream society through organisations and literary works and monthly journals. These journals sensitised most of the employees and activists. The journals worked as channels between leaders and people to carry the debate and discussion. Dalits also demonstrated that they could also run the journals on their own. These journals created debates and discussion on historical and contemporary issues. The journals focused on Ambedkar ideology and action to mobilise the people. In the process, different organisations played, and still have been playing, an important role in propagating and spreading and creating the ideological struggle. The appendix-II provides the list of the journals which were started by Dalits and played an important role in Dalit movement.

The first Dalit Mahasabha annual conference was held in Tenali in 1986. It reflected on the issue mentioned in the manifesto and identified 'land and livelihood issues' as the objectives of the movement. Between the first and second annual conferences of the Dalit Mahasabha, the BSP entered the state. It created political aspirations among Dalit leadership. Kanshiram visited the state during 1987-88 to establish contacts. Due to this, development in the second conference of Dalit Mahasabha in 1988, political issues and electoral participation came up for discussion. Although the leadership initially opposed electoral participation, Bojja Tarakam joined the BSP. Later, Katti Padma Rao and others joined the party on the eve of 1994 elections. This move led to division among leadership in the third conference. One group was led by Bojja Tarakam and the second by Katti Padma Rao, but both used the name "Andhra Pradesh Dalit Mahasabha." Katti Padma

Rao held the conference in Vijayawada and Tarakam, in Ongole.[367] Although the factions slowly emerged within the Mahasabha, the Dalit Mahasabha formation and it's functioning inspired people and became a source of inspiration for many organisations. The Table below contains a list of Dalit organisations formed in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh since 1985.

Table 4.1

Dalit Organisations Since 1985

S. No	Name of Organization	Year	Founder of Organization	Caste
1	Andhra Pradesh Dalit Mahasabha (DMS)	July 16, 1985	Bojja Tarakam and Katti Padma Rao	Mala Mala
2	All India Dalit Research wing	1998	Katti Padma Rao	Mala
3	Poor People's Party (PPP)	1986	Katti Padma Rao	Mala
4	Dalit Writers, Artists and Intellectuals Collective	1992	B.S Ramulu	OBC and Others
5	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) United AP wing	1992	Kanshiram	Chamar
6	Marxist Leninist–Research Centre	-	U.Sambashiva Rao and Satyamurthy	Mangali Mala
7	Samatha Voluntary Force	-	Satyamurthy	Mala
8	Bahujan Republican Party	1996	Satyamurthy	Mala
9	Dalita Kala Mandali	-	Masterji	Madiga
10	Praja Kala Mandali	-	Praveen kumar	
11	Suryudu Party	-	Satyamurthy	Mala
12	MRPS (Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti)	1994	Manda Krishna Madiga	Madiga
13	Malamahanadu	-	P.V Rao	Mala
14	Mahajana Socialist Party	2014	Manda Krishna	Madiga

Source: Material on Dalits organisations collected in field work.

The formation of Dalit Mahasabha influenced many organisations throughout the state. Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu is functioning in most of the towns and villages of the state. These organisations have been attracting Dalits youth. In Telangana, Ambedkar Sangalu

[367] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2002). pp.47-48

strove a lot before and after Karamchedu movement. Katti Padma Rao also started an All India Dalit Research Wing, with hope that this wing will help in researching on various movements and create intellectual resources for Dalit movement. After Karamchedu, writers, artists and intellectual collectives sprang up and tried to unite all artists and writers to produce literary works and prepare the next generation of writers as organic intellectuals. Katti Padma Rao launched the Poor People Party with a "Jenda" (flag) designed with "blue colour," with a "Red star" tried to symbolise caste-class approach in organising people at the grassroots through "Poor People's Party".

People like Satyamurthy left the radical party and joined the "Bahujan Republic Party". The "Marxist Leninist Centre" and "Samatha Volunteers Force" also played a significant role in proposing caste-class approach and practice. On the whole, the very formation of Dalit Mahasabha was able to give scope for formation of many organisations. These phenomena helped in creating Dalit public sphere, identity and dialogical progress with civil societal groups. These organisations could influence, but could not influence the masses at the grassroots level and, hence, could not be sustained for a long time. This was because of ideological ambiguities, lack of political programme and limited resources and weak organisational structures. But all these organisations continue to play an important role in sensitising and keeping anti-caste thinking alive.

Dalits ideological approach; initiatives towards Caste-Class Praxis

The ideological domain became an important area to define and draw a line for Dalit emancipation. After formation of Dalit Mahasabha, many streams of thinking took part in discussion. Some groups argued that only anti-caste thinkers like Ambedkar, Phule and Periyar were enough and that one should not mix up with left groups. The other groups argued that Ambedkar was not enough and that Marx is a must for Dalit emancipation. The debate on caste-class praxis is one of the longstanding intellectual discourses in Indian social sciences.[368] The debate has broadly taken place in the context of social

[368] See EPW brought a special issue on caste-class perspectives in 1979 and on August 15-16, national seminar was organised at Madras, by "All India League for Revolutionary Culture Publication" on Caste

movements. In tracing out the roots of this intellectual tradition during colonial period, Ambedkar critically engaged both with the Congress-led nationalist movement and the upper caste-led class (left) movements in representing untouched communities and their rights. Ambedkar himself located his thought and action in the anti-caste intellectual tradition in which he took Buddha and Mahatma Phule as his source of inspiration. Ambedkar constantly criticised the hegemonic politics of the Congress, the inadequate understanding of Indian left of social reality and proposed an alternative historical and theoretical understanding and programme of action in the course of the struggle. During the colonial period, Ambedkar strove with this spirit through various struggles and from socio-political platforms. His formulations on caste as "caste not only division of labour it is also division of labourers", struggle against "Brahminism and capitalism" become core issues of his struggle and politics.[369] This legacy also influenced the post-independence Dalit movement and politics during the 1970s and 1980s. There were debates among activists and intellectuals on caste-class and method of mobilising and organising people for social transformation. Gail Omvedt described the post-Ambedkar Dalit movement in the mid-1970s as a Dalit upsurge, which combined the class-caste approach. According to her:

> "It was a period in which atrocities against Dalits in the villages often of brutal and horrifying forms seemed on the increase. The Dalit Panthers proved to be the spark that set off a wave of organising efforts throughout the country. In Karnataka, a dispute over a cultural issue (a Dalit minister was forced to resign after describing conventional Kannada literature as 'cattle feed') led to widespread clashes throughout the state between Dalits and caste Hindus. The Dalits raised the slogan, "throw the Brahmins into the gutter, along with the Gita" and eventually formed the 'Dalit Sangarsh Samithi', with branches all over the state. In Bihar, a revived Naxalite movement sprang up among the Dalits, with issues of honour or izzat (mainly the protection of Dalit women against molestation by

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and Class in India. The CPI (ML) Janashakti also organised an international seminar on the special futures of Indian Democratic Revolution in India, at Hyderabad. The writings of Gail Omvedt and Sharad Patil, Anand Teltumde also present the caste-class approach for Dalit liberation.

[369] Omvedt, Gail. (2004). *Ambedkar -Towards an Enlightened India*, New Delhi, Penguin, pp.73-91

> landlords) and agricultural wages being central. In Tamil Nadu, Ambedkarite organisations began to be founded in many villages. Other areas were slower to pick up the cue: a Dalit panther unit was formed in Gujarat in 1980 after widespread upper caste rioting in protest against reservations and the Andhra Dalit Mahasabha was formed in 1986 after the brutal massacre of Dalits in the village of Karamchedu. Whatever its form, in each, a new movement was enveloping most of the country, and the question "will the caste war turn into a class war?" almost began to replace the more conventional, "will the Green revolution turn into a red one?".[370]

The Dalit Panther Movement (inspired by the Black Panther Movement of America) really broke the silence among educated Neo-Buddhists towards the new revised Ambedkarite movement in post-independent India. They tried to synthesise caste-class praxis through the philosophy of Ambedkar and Karl Marx, by defining Dalits as "Members of Scheduled Caste and Tribes, Neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion".[371] This initiation created a background and content to have deeper thinking on the caste-class debate in Maharashtra, as well as in other states. After the 1985 Karamchedu massacre in united Andhra Pradesh, the initiation of the Dalit Mahasabha's struggle, as well as its new questions and search for new answers, made Dalit leaders and activist challenge the traditional premises of class movements in India, at large, and the in Andhra Pradesh, in particular. These new questions troubled both class-based political parties and radical movements.[372] The radical movements accused that all Dalits, women movements were identitarian and statist movements. On the other hand, Dalits and women have asserted that class-based movements have failed to understand caste, patriarchy and various structures of

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[370] Omvedt, Gail. (1996). *Dalit Visions*. Hyderabad, Orient Longmans, pp.73-74
[371] See Murugkar, Lata. (1991). *Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra-A sociological Appraisal*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, pp.35-47 and see Gokhale, Jayasree. (1993). *From Concessions to Confrontation*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, pp.264-297
[372] Opt, cit, Erik Berg, Dag. (2014). pp. 383-408

oppression. Further, they argued that class based movements are upper caste male-dominated movements.[373]

The Dalit Mahasabha started raising a series of critical issues and questions on the practices of the ML groups in the state. Immediately after Karamchedu, Kancha Illaiah and U. Sambhashiva Rao wrote a pamphlet, 'Dalithulapy Kamma Buswamula Dhadi' (Kamma landlords attack on Dalits). This pamphlet created a controversy between ML groups and Dalit activists. To counter it, ML groups also released a pamphlet, Harijanulapy Karamchedu Buswamula Dhadi (Karamchedu landlords attack on Harijans).[374] In this connection, Dalit activists started rising series of questions like "who is the landlord? To which caste he/she belongs? If all poor people are equal, how can poor Kamma families attack Dalits in Karamchedu? So Dalits insisted on the caste dimension of the conflict. However, this was objected to by ML groups. The internal and external pressures by Dalits activists forced the ML groups to present their historical understanding on the caste question.[375]

It was suggested that the marginalised community members should be promoted as leaders in the Naxalite movement. However, various ML groups rejected that suggestion on the plea that this tactical approach would lead to fragmentation. They argued that the genuine communist overcome caste, gender class prejudice and commented that the Edureeta magazine is doing reductionism by combining Marxism and Ambedkarism. They also argued that Ambedkar, at worst, was a "petty bourgeois reformer" and, at best, a "radical reformer".[376] The Dalit Mahasabha decided that the upper caste, however, could be sympathisers, poets, singers, intellectuals, but the upper caste leaders should not be allowed to occupy the Shibiram and the platform of the Dalit Mahasabha. It became a serious discussion point among intellectuals and civil societal groups. They started to

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[373] Ajay, Gudavarthy. (2005). Dalit and Naxalite Movements in AP; Solidarity or Hegemony. *EPW* (December17) Vol. XL No.51, pp. 5410-5418

[374] Interview with Kancha Illaiah on 20th August, 2013, Hyderabad and interview with U.Sambashiva Rao on 6th July, 2012, Hyderabad

[375] Opt, cit, Srinivasulu, K. (2002).

[376] Opt, cit, Ajay, Gudavarthy. (2005).

raise questions like what is wrong to be born in the Brahmin family. Can one really choose the family into which one was to be born? Should one be banned from occupying the dais merely because one was born in a particular family? Should an upper caste person's speech become unbearable? The Dalit activists counter this line of reasoning by asking did the Dalits choose their caste to have been born in it. Is it not the very accident of birth in the Dalit families that has kept them untouchables? Why is that communist and revolutionary parties did not take up a campaign against the caste system which was determining the socio-political and economic placements of people? Why platforms were not available to Dalits before they began to raise these questions? If merit of speech making is the criteria, how is it that the Dalits on their independent platform could prove themselves as equally good speakers? How is it that the Dalit movement began to produce good writers, speakers? Is it not a fact that Dalits gained visibility in Andhra Pradesh only after the Dalit Mahasabha established a platform for Dalits?[377] On their own, they began to mobilise, rice, dal, vegetables, money, to support the Chirala Shibiram (where the Karamchedu victims took shelter). They organised dharnas, bandhs, rasta rokhos and massive public meetings that were addressed by Dalit and OBC organic leaders. Of course, Dalit Dalaries were also kept away. For the first time, they saw persons belonging to their wadas as both leaders and cadres. They were not merely flag carriers but, speakers, writers and decision makers. This made all the difference.[378]

Till 1985 for many Dalit Bahujans Ambedkar really remained "undiscovered" and Phule's name was not even known. The post Karamchedu events broke this one-dimensional thinking. Ambedkar enter into a big way into the Dalit Bahujan reading list. The basic text annihilation of caste changed class consciousness into caste-class consciousness. The first booklet, *Kula Nirmulana-Oka Marxist Drukpadham* (Abolition of caste a Marxist view point), written by young organic intellectual, broke the theoretical silence of Marxism on the caste question. [379] This booklet put forth a new argument that caste has basically divided the working class by fragmenting it. Unless Indian Marxism

[377] Interview with Kancha Illaiah on 20th August, 2013, Hyderabad
[378] Ibid
[379] See *Kula Nirmulana- Oka Marxist Drukpadham*. (1987). Nootana Praja Swamya Vedika, Hyderabad.

works out its new strategy of building up anti-caste struggle as a pre condition for forging working class unity, the revolution would not consummate.[380] But to do this, the Indian communist movement must break from its caste blindness and that would become possible only when the organic anti-caste intellectuals take up political ideological and organisational leadership. This booklet also raised the issue of the whole question of base and superstructure and made the first statement by invoking Ambedkar famous statement that 'Caste is not only division of labour, it is the division of labourers' that caste is both the base and the superstructure. Therefore abolition of caste must become a programmatic issue, rather than being a tactical one.[381] The left sympathisers from Dalits also discursively started to be known as 'Dalit Marxist' invoking 'New Dalit Democratic revolution' against the 'New Democratic revolution" of CPI (ML) groups. These groups emphasised on 'Desi Marxism' or Marxism to the specific Indian conditions.[382]

In the background of vibrant intellectual debates and discussion on caste, class, gender, civil society and nature of the state, many formal and informal meetings and conferences took place. In this context, CPI (ML) Janasakti took the initiation to organise the international seminar on "Marxism-Leninism, Mao-Tse Tung Thought and Revolutionary Movements" on 9th-12 March, 1995. It invited various revolutionary and left groups to participate in the discussion. The CPI (ML) Peoples War Group presented a paper as a party stands (COC) on "the Special Features of the Indian Revolution and Marxist Approach towards resolution of those problems", in which it stated:

> "The communist revolutionaries must pay special attention to lead the struggles of the oppressed castes and to make these struggles an integral part of the ongoing new democratic revolution in our country. Such a task can be taken up if, and only if, the CR groups and parties realise that the struggle of the oppressed castes against caste inequalities and discrimination is a democratic struggle and is, in essence, an integral part of the wider class struggle waged by the oppressed

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[380] Ibid
[381] Illaiah Kancha. (June 1995). *Caste or Class or Caste-Class: a study in Dalitbahujan Consciousness and Struggles in Andhra Pradesh in 1980s*. Working paper Submitted to Teenmurthy Bavan Library, p. 36
[382] Interview with U.Sambashiva Rao on 6th July, 2012, Hyderabad

masses to be free from all types of class exploitation. A line of demarcation should be drawn between the organisations/ associations of the Dalits and other oppressed castes formed for the defence of their rights and the upper caste organisations which are formed for the maintaining their age-old caste-class hegemony. In spite of the limitations inherent in the policy of reservations and its reformist nature, we must be in the forefront of the struggles for the implementation of adequate reservations for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and in overthrowing the trio of feudalism, imperialism and the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie which serves as the basis for the continuation of castes inequalities and for the savage attacks against the oppressed castes, religious minorities and the people of various nationalities. Mobilisation of the oppressed castes into revolutionary class struggles in rural Telangana- formerly a region of the most savage for the establishment of people's authority in place of feudal authority - along with other general demands of the peasantry shows the path of solving the problem of caste oppression. But, even in these areas of intense class struggle, there is a need to chalk out a concrete programme to tackle the caste question and to work with special concentration. In regions where we are weak and class struggle is on a low key, we must actively intervene and lead the movements of Dalits and other oppressed castes on their specific demands and gradually broaden these movements to include all the oppressed sections of society."[383]

Broadly, the line of thinking in this understanding comes from the historical understanding of CPI (ML) Peoples War Group from semi-feudal and semi-colonial roots by locating caste, gender, ethnicity, etc., at the superstructure level so mobilising and organising them as an integral part of the class struggle through the non-parliamentary method. Contrary to it, the CPI (ML) Janashakti took the decision that caste is part of the

[383] See the paper presented by CPI (ML) Peoples' War (COC) on behalf of the party and as a party stand entitled, *The Special futures of Indian Revolution and Marxist Approach towards resolution of those problems*, in the international seminar on *Marxism-Leninism, Mao-Tse Tung thought and Revolutionary Movements***,** organised by CPI (ML) Janashakti, held on March 9-12, 1995 in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

base and is inseparable with material conditions. Further, it is also taken into consideration that the anti-caste thinker's philosophy and their struggle as an important aspect of Democratic revolution. In its paper, '*New Democratic Revolution of India and its Unique Features'***,** it stated:

> "Caste and class are real dimensions of India's social formation and they are, by and large, inseparable from each other. Class is not simply a construct or an abstraction. Classes of landowners, landless labourers and traders and money lenders are structural components of India's economic formation. These classes interact with each other and have hierarchy of societal relations. Caste is an infrastructural resource/liability in regards to forces and relations of production."

It further stated:

> "Caste is an inseparable part of the base, in the system of production, as well as the super structure. Caste is rooted in exploitative relations of production and it maintains those relations too. Caste organises production. Caste organises society not only by division of labour, but also by dividing the labour"[384].

To historically understand the Janashakti is to try to attract the Dalits and other marginalised groups. It also started to mobilise these targeted groups through various frontal civil societal organisations. It is also reported that there were a serious conflict between the Peoples War Group and Janashakti. It went to the extent that they killed each other. Dalit groups, on the other hand, raised the point that though ML groups support the Dalit movement being active within movement; it always attempted to merge with class movements and takeover the leadership. Similarly, ML groups also labeled Dalit movement as Revisionist, its leaders as careerist or opportunist stooges of ruling classes and agents of imperialism.[385] However, this reasoning was countered by Dalits leaders and activist that all upper caste leaders occupied the so called revolutionary

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[384] See CPI (ML) Janashakti, presented a paper which represent the understanding of the organisation in international seminar on 9-12, March, 1995, (Hyderabad), title of the paper, New *Democratic Revolution of India and its Unique Features*, presented by Anand.

[385] Gudavarthy, Ajay. (2005*). Dalits and Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh; Solidarity or Hegemony*. In (Ed.) Vikalp Alternative, (August, 2005), Contextualizing Dalit Movement in South India; Self, Culture and Economy, p.38

groups. Therefore, they do not understand the caste problem. The upper caste urban background leadership is controlling the leadership and the organic leadership from Dalits and other marginalised communities is not present there. So, they raise the point that this attitude is reflected in the agenda and functioning of movement.[386] They also showed that T. Nagi Reddy, Com. Pulla Reddy came from landed communities. These questions led to serious debate in newspapers, Magazines, Literary circles, journals like Edureeta and Nalupu. Some of these journals played a crucial role in debating caste, class and gender issues in social movements in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh.

Examining the questions rose in the background of Karamchedu and formation of a Dalit Mahasabha certainly made a qualitative impact on the mind of Dalit intellectuals, particularly from the point of view of Ambedkar's thought. Meanwhile from the mid-1989 onwards, a socio-political journal, Nalupu (Black) a fortnightly was started with Bojja Tarakam as its editor.[387] Though the journal was published for about four years from 1989-93, it carried major ideological debates on caste, class and gender and human rights. Meanwhile, K.G. Satyamurthy and U.Sambasiva Rao formed a revolutionary group, called 'Marxist Leninist Centre'. It opened up a new debate on the Indian democratic revolution. This group tried to argue that, unless Marxism and Ambedkar's anti caste theory are interwoven, democratic revolution cannot be achieved. This group started a journal, called Edureeta (Swimming against tide-1991-1995) that attempted to blend Marxism and Ambedkarism into a new caste-class theory. Adding to the debate, Ranganayakamma wrote a book, *For the Solution of Caste: Ambedkar and Buddha is not Enough, Marx is a Must.* This book created huge debate and controversy among activists. Most of the left groups promoted it and Dalit Bahujan groups treated it as a misleading text. Finally, K. Satyamurthy wrote a rejoinder book, *Ambedkar Suryudu*.[388]

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[386] Ibid, p.39
[387] Ibid, p.37
[388] See Satyamurthy, K.G. (2004). *Ambedkar Suryudu*. Ambedkar Education and Society Publication, Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, the CPI (ML) Janashakti,[389] headed by lower rung OBC K. Rajanna, politically and ideologically took a stand that Phule and Ambedkar could be treated as integral anti–caste social revolutionaries. In this organisation, there was a big debate on caste and Phule and Ambedkar's struggles. In this debate, the points came into discussion were: (i) Introducing the Dalit problem in the class struggle and adding the anti-caste struggle, (ii) In theory, or in action, continuing the caste-class struggle. During 1993-94, BSP was active in election politics and started a campaign to mobilise SCs, STs, OBCs and religious minorities. Also, the Mandal-Masjid debates, and the other agitations also shaped and reshaped public discourse. Left parties, particularly students from University of Hyderabad, the "Dalit Manifesto," collection of poetry and "Chikanavuthuna Pata' also brought class-caste approach into the ongoing debate. Although symbolically the left groups opened their frontal organisations of their parties to address the caste question, it did not become their historical philosophical understanding. Though Dalit Mahasabha incorporated the class approach, it did not take root at the grassroots level. Except Maroju Veerana's initiative for three to four years, all the debates were only limited to intellectual and urban discourse. This influenced all political parties, including the radical parties. That is why both PDSU and Janashakthi started supporting reservation and organise people through DAFODAM.[390] Though another major revolutionary group, CPI (ML) People War group theoretically did not spell out its assessment of Phule and Ambedkar's contribution to the social transformation, its pro-Dalit role after the Karamchedu massacre is important Particularly the killing of Chenchuramaiah, the main accused of Karamchedu, was welcomed by the Dalits of Andhra Pradesh.[391]

During mandal agitations, Veerana, being a PDSU, leader took a decision to demand the inclusion of Ambedkar's writings in the syllabi of schools. To counter the argument of merit, he wrote a song, *Prathiba Yevani Sothura, Prathiba Yekada Putera, Andukora*

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[389] When 7 Radical groups joined together they announced that they are going to include the caste, Gender, ethnicity etc as special groups for democratic revolutions in their agenda and understanding
[390] Maroju, Veerana. (2011). *Indiyalo Emicheyali**?*** (What has to be done in India?), Edureeta Publication, Hyderabad, pp. 2-3.
[391] Ibid, p.39

Gupthanduko Eaa Dongala Tharimethanduku and popularised it.[392] Veerana was influenced by Chandra Pulla Reddy's stream within the radical movement. He joined the CPI (ML) Jhanashakti. Later, Veerana introduced a document and created a debate in the party on caste and Phule and Ambedkar's thoughts and struggles. It created a serious crisis in the party's ideological stands. Later, in 1996, it got divided into two internal parties; (i) CPI (ML-Kura Rajanna), and (ii) CPI (ML-Veerana), Veerana's group came to be known as "May 17th Comrades". To organise Dalits, Muslims and other marginalised groups, Veerana worked under DAFADAM (Democratic Action Forum of Dalits and Muslims). The foreword of the book published by May 17th Comrades clearly stated: "What is to be done in India", as Lenin in 1901-1905 in Russia raised a question "what is to be done in Russia." Ambedkar, in the same way, during 1936, in both "annihilation" of caste and "pre-requisites of communism that is "what then shall we do", and with same spirit the May Seventeenth comrades raised the question "what is to be done in India". But this question was raised from inside the left party. The document that they put for discussion was named as "Communist Annihilation of Caste" in 1998 for discussion. Further, Veerana popularised the document as "Indian Communist Manifesto". May 17th comrades criticised the tactical shift, instead of radical shift. After that, Veerana started the "India Samyuktha Rastala Communist Party" (CPUSI) - later renamed as "Dalit Bahujana Shramika Vimukthi" (DBSV) on December 25, 1998.

Maroju Veerana role in Identity Movements

The MRPS or Dandora (1994) movement started successfully in mobilising and creatively organising Madigas, in the struggle for recognition and redistribution. It influenced many caste groups. Taking inspiration from this movement Maroju Veerana, being a creative leader, started organising each caste with organic leader of their community towards caste-class movement. These organisations started mobilising the caste groups for their problems under the caste association. Interestingly, he gave caste-related names to each organisation, so that this would help them to realise their neglected

[392] Ibid, pp.28-29.

history, culture, dignity of labour. These communities started becoming conscious about the ascribed and stigmatised identities. The following organisations were formed by Moroju Veeranna in order to organise the people:

1. Mala Hakkula Porata Samithi (Mala Guptha Debba)
2. Madiga Hakkula Porata Samithi (Madiga Dandora)
3. Lanbadi Hakkula Porata Samithi (Nangara Beri)
4. Adivasi Hakkula porata samithi (Thudum Debba)
5. Budaga Jangala Hakkula Porata Samithi (Thanbura Kinnera Motha)
6. Chakali Hakkula Porata Samithi (Chakirau Debba)
7. Kumari Hakkula Porata samithi (Salpa Debba)
8. Golla Kuruma Hakkula Porata Samithi (Dollu Debba)
9. Yerukala hakkula Porata Samithi (Kurru)
10. Vadera Hakkula Porata Samithi (Gannu Debba)
11. Pussali Hakkula Porata Samithi (Pusali Keka)
12. Padmashali Hakkula Porata Samithi (Nethametha)
13. Goudajana Hakkula Porata Samithi (Moku Debba)
14. Vishva brahmana hakkula porata samithi (Badisha sameta debba)
15. Masthakarula Hakkula porata samithi (Vala Debba)[393]

Veerana supported the identity movements and coordinated with them in order to create a common platform. He particularly, promoted leadership talent in the youth from each caste. He formed a "Dalitha Bahujana Mahasabha," through which he tried to launch a militant struggle to secure social justice and equal representation. By organising Dalit Bahujans, he started a new trend in radical movements. About 90 percent of the marginalised groups started organising themselves under this organisation to fight for their constitutional rights. Later, he started Bahujana Democratic Student's Federation (BDSF) to organise students to actively participate in mobilising the people at the grassroots and sensitise their communities.'[394] Veerana encouraged and supported the

[393] Malaiah. (2011). *Comrade Veerana*. Anu Publications, Hyderabad, p. 40
[394] Ibid, pp. 45-47

MRPS (Dandora) movement, and clearly stated that the demand for sub-categorisation of SC reservation was a just demand and that the Dandora movement was a democratic assertion, since it would contribute to social transformation. With this understanding, he extended his support to MRPS movement. He also experimented with "Mahajana Front" to unite all the caste organisations and a united fight against Brahminism and capitalism.[395]

The May 17th Comrades, under Maroju Veerana, accorded priority to the anti caste history. For the armed Dalams, he gave names like, Tataki, Narakasura, etc. The very naming indicates how he was orienting and directing the radical movement with historical and future imagination and vision. Veerana also formed a "Telangana Mahasabha" (TMS) through which he started organising people on the issue of regional underdevelopment and state negligence and Coastal Andhra domination and exploitation of the Telangana region. Under this organisation, he gave a slogan *Bougolika Telangalo, Bahujana Rajyam* (Bahujan state in territorial Telangana). On 11 August, 1997, he organised a "Telangana Sadasu." In this public meeting, the organising committee released a document containing various demands. Later, this was called as "Suryapeta Declaration"[396]. However, after Maroju Veerana, his movement faced serious suppression by state and his followers also did not carry the movement forwad. In the backdrop of such vibrant movements towards caste-class approach, the communist parties were forced to launch organisations like "Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi" (KNPS - the committee for Annihilation of Caste) and its "Kulanirmulana" (Annihilation Caste) magazine, by CPI(ML-People war) in 1998, "Kula Vivaksha Vethireka Porata Samithi" by CPI(M), (KVPS- The Committee against the caste Discrimination, 1998), "Dalitha Hakula Porata Samithi" (DHPS- The committee for Dalits Rights, 2006) by CPI. These organisations worked out a tactical approach to address issues like caste and gender. The Dalit Mahasabha and other Dalit organisations failed to focus on the globalisation and market related issues at concrete level. The Dalit agenda was either oriented towards

[395] Ibid, p.46
[396] Ibid, p.46

asserting for reservation agitating against atrocities, or rhetorically articulating the struggle for political power. The following section deals with Dalit politics.

Dalit Politics: Autonomy Vs Accommodation

The Karamchedu incident also brought into focus the question of autonomous politics and criticism of Dalit representatives of various upper castes parties. The historical account of autonomous Dalits politics is rooted into the colonial struggle of Ambedkar and the Poona Pact of 1932. The All India Depressed Class movement started in the beginning of 1920s, as soon as Ambedkar enter the Indian political scene. Thereafter, his leadership formulated the agenda and vision in presenting an alternative perspective of Indian reality against the hegemonic politics of the Congress.[397] Ambedkar alone struggled to represent the untouchable voice both in countering the strategic politics of the Congress and negotiating with the colonial administration. The Ambedkar invocation of untouchables as 'social minority,' along with religious minorities, is an indication in presenting Dalits as a distinct community than Savarnas. The effort was to protect the rights of the Untouchables in the Constitution and create autonomous space for untouchable's in the future legal and political discourse. His alternative vision of is in his constitution documentation 'states and minorities' which maintains the place of independent politics against Brahmanical upper caste hegemony. In this context the announcement of the Communal Award drew strong opposition from Gandhi and his followers. The separate electoral provision for untouchables was taken back in the aftermath of the Poona Pact 1932, when Ambedkar was forced to sign it.[398] Consequently, it forced the lower caste representatives to depend on other political parties and upper caste votes. Ambedkar recovered the consequences of Poona pact and demise of Dalit independent politics in his book, '*What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables'*. It influenced the post-independence Dalit political discourses too.

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[397] Sekher Bandyopadhyay. (2000). Transfer of Power and the Crisis of Dalit Politics in India, 1945-47. *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No 4, (Oct., 2000). pp. 893-942.

[398] The Poona Pact took place between Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi in 1932. Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for untouchable communities. Gandhi went on hunger strike against separate electoral representation for Scheduled Castes, arguing that it is going to divide the Hindus. Finally, Ambedkar accepted the Pact to save Gandhi's life.

However, in the colonial period itself, Ambedkar built the need for independent politics throughout the country. The Scheduled Caste Federation, Independent Labour Party, Republican Party of India is some of the initiatives which contributed to the trajectory of autonomous movement and politics of untouchables.[399] The same legacy also continued with ups and downs in the realm of politics, particularly in electoral politics. To understand the political autonomy of Dalits, we have to understand the Poona Pact, 1932, between Gandhi and Ambedkar. Kanshiram, in his *Chamcha Age*,[400] clearly shows that how the Poona Pact affected post- independence Dalit politics and created the lower caste political representatives, what he calls "Chamchas," to upper caste parties.

In order to mobilise and organise untouchables, Ambedkar started the All India Depressed Classes Congress against the Congress affiliated All India Depressed Classes Association headed by Rao Bahadur, M.C Rajah in Nagpur conference in August 1930. Ambedkar, in his inaugural address, 'took a very clear anti-congress and a mildly anti-British position, thus setting the tone for the future course of history.'[401] Subsequently, the organisation under Ambedkar's leadership demanded separate electorate for untouchables. The same was presented to the Simon Commission and in the Round Table Conference. In 1936, Ambedkar launched the Independent Labour Party to organise untouchables along with other poorer sections. In his party campaigns, he invited whoever agreed with party agenda and vision join the party. In 1937 election, his Party did not achieve much success. After some time, he realised that there was a need to organise untouchables through a specific political platform. He then launched the all India level political platform, called 'Scheduled Caste Federation' (SCF) in 1942. Soon, branches were opened all over India. On the advice of Ambedkar, the state unit of Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) was established in Hyderabad, as well as in Coastal

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[399] Zelliot,Eleanor. (2013). *Ambedkar's World- The Making of Babasaheb and the Dalit Movement*. New Delhi, Navayana Publication, p.175-203.

[400] Kanshiram wrote a book, Chamcha *Age* (the age of stooges). In this, he argued that after Ambedkar's death, all lower caste political representatives become the Chamchas of the Manuvadi (upper caste) political parties.. In his political campaigns, he used to tell the people how the Congress and other parties used Chamchas to claim to represent Dalits and marginal sections and he narrated the story of the Poona Pact and its implications.

[401] Opt, cit, Sekher Bandyopadhyay. (2000). pp.896-897

Andhra. The SCF of Hyderabad state was formed by Dalit leaders who had been active in Dalit movement in Nizam regime. In Coastal Andhra also, the state unit was formed. Ambedkar visited Andhra and Hyderabad in 1944 and addressed public gatherings. The Party participated in the 1952 General Elections and Assembly Elections. It won the Karimnagar Lok Sabha seat and five Assembly seats from Hyderabad. J.H. Subbhaiah was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1952[402]. However, it failed to win any seat in Coastal Andhra. The Congress Party also took up the issues of Dalits through the "Harijan Sevak Sangh". It started organising meetings to create consciousness among Dalits for education, social reform and political participation. The Party also focused on establishment of schools, hostels, scholarships and other schemes for Dalits. In the process both Telangana and Coastal Andhra, many Dalit leaders were accommodated in the Congress Party from 1960s to 1980s.

In the beginning of 1980s, the Bahujan movement started as an important and alternative to the Congress, Hindutva and communist politics at the national level. At this juncture, after the Karamchedu incident, Dalits were massively mobilised under Dalit Mahasabha. The context in which BSP was started is important for understanding the political processes of state's mainstream politics and lower caste political aspirations though Bahujan movement. The BSPs national president, Kanshiram, started the united AP branch on June 5th, 1989, in open public meeting in Nizam College grounds where more than a lakh people gathered from all over the state. During 1989, the Dalit Mahasabha was able to get some grassroots level support through various channels like youth, writers and local cadre. During the same period, the BSP in North India contested and won some seats in Assembly. This became a very important trend and created new hope among Dalits who were waiting for a new kind of politics and strategies. The national media started reporting the activities of Bahujan movement and BSP politics in both print and electronic media. Bojja Tarakam was an important leader of the Dalit Mahasabha along with B.S Swamy, and Nargoni, Sundhar Yadav. They attended the BSP rally in Delhi.

[402] Kshirsagar, R.K. (1994). *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*. MD Publications Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 1994: p.78.

The team met Kanshiram and discussed politics in the state and Dalit assertion and also expressed willingness to organise Bahujan movement in the state.

CH. Visharadhan[403] posits that Kanshiram was a politician who studied four things before launching the BSP in the then Andhra Pradesh. These were; (i) Geography of the state, (ii) People's psychology, (iii) Histories of communities or castes, and (iv) Review of various movements in the state. Kanshiram asked Tarakam to organise a cadre camp with different leaders and activists. Ganumala Gyaneshwar[404] states that the meeting was organised in "Andhra Sarswatha Parishat", Hyderabad with around 500 activists. In the meeting, Kanshiram spoke about the Bahujan movement and politics and narrated the electoral results in North India. After a few days Kanshiram, asked Tarakam to arrange a state level tour to interact with the people and get the overview of the socio-political conditions. Pasham Yadgiri wrote an article on BSP in the Telugu newspaper, *Udayam.* It created some discussions among leaders. The monthly magazine, *Nalupu*, too carried some articles on the BSP. Such media exposure generated a degree of interest among the people. During his state tour, Kanshiram interacted with some of the grassroots level cadre and addressed meeting in a number of cities. His announcement in the Vijayawada meeting that the AP Wing of the BSP would be launched very soon created state level news. Most of the political analysts and leaders started keenly observing Kanshiram's moves in the state politics. He addressed a public meeting in the evening of June 4th 1989. Around one lakh people attended it. During the meeting, Naragoni released a small booklet, *BSP in Andhra Pradesh* and Masterji released a CD containing songs on the Bahujan movement.[405]

Almost immediately after the formation of the AP wing of the BSP, the schedule of the 1989 general elections was announced. The BSP wing of the party decided to contest for both the state Assembly and Parliament. The BSP contested for 124 assembly seats and 26 MP seats. Bojja Tarakam, who contested for Nizamabad constituency against T Bala

[403] Interview with CH.Visharadhan on 28th October, 2012, Hyderabad
[404] Interview with Ganumala Gyaneshwar on 24th October, 2012, Hyderabad
[405] Interview with Masterji on 5th July, 2013, Hyderabad

Goud (Congress), got the highest votes (9000) among the BSP candidates. After elections within the party, it was felt that there should be proper committee for the functioning of the Party. Kanshiram declared Sundaraya Yadav (Doctor, Nellore) as the president, and Bojja Tarakam, (Mala, West Godavari) and B.S Swamy (Goud, East Godavari) as general secretaries. At the same time, the differences between Katti Padma Rao and Tarakam widened. As a result, Padma Rao's group, along with Dalit Mahasabha cadre, did not join the BSP. In fact, it was reported that Padma Rao criticised the BSP politics. However, Tarakam, along with his supporters from Dalit Mahasabha got actively involved in Bahujan politics, consequently, there were claims and counter claims of the "Dalit Mahasabha" and held separate meetings of the Mahasabha. In 1991, August 6, in the aftermath of the Chundur incident, where 10 Dalits were killed, there were big movements. Tarakam invited Kanshiram to visit Chundur in order to create a base for the party among Dalits. However, Kanshiram could not visit Chundur. In 1991, Kolluri Chiranjeevi joined BSP party. Others too were slowly drawn towards the BSP. Meanwhile, internal politics and regional wise divisions took place in the Party. As a result, it became difficult for the Party to build a grassroots base.

In 1993-1994, the BSP and SP formed the government in Uttar Pradesh. This was one of the historical achievements in that state. This created new hope among Dalits and Dalit politics. Kanshiram became an important national-level political leader and his meetings drew lakhs of people. With this image he tried to contact different caste groups and leaders. He urged the Kappu community leader, Mudragada Padma Nabham, to join the BSP and organise the Kappu community. However, when the Congress came to know of this, they encouraged Mudraguda Padma Nabham to start "Kappu Reservation Porata Samithi" and seek reservation for Kappus. The Congress government appointed Mudragada Padma Nabham as Governor of Sikkim. In this way, the efforts of Kanshiram did not succeed to the anticipated degree.[406]

[406] CH.Visharadhan interview on 28th October, 2012, Hyderabad

The Congress, while keenly observing the events through state intelligence and different channels, started organising caste wise meetings. Kotla Vijay Bhaskar Reddy sponsored caste wise meetings and started promising leadership positions to the Dalit leaders. It is reported that around 25-30 caste meetings were organised. In Suryapet, one big public meeting, termed as "Balaheenavargala Meeting" (Weaker section meeting), was organised under the leadership of V. Hanumantha Rao. Further, Koneru Ranga Rao was appointed as deputy chief minister. The Congress also supported one of the public meetings of "Adijambhava Arundatiya Mahasabha" for which Kotla Vijay Bhaskar Reddy was invited. On the other side, NTR also started mobilising various communities. TDP organised a big public meeting, called "Simha Garjana", in Nizam College ground. This meeting was attended by lakhs of people. Since Kanshiram was also in the process of organising people, he announced formation of "Bahujana Sakthi Pradharshana" a meeting at Gymkhana Grounds, Secunderabad on 5th June, 1994. The reception committee consisted of leaders like Kolluri Chiranjeevi, Tarakam, Naragoni, Gouthu Lachanna, Tarakam and B.S Swamy. Lakhs of people attended this meeting. Alarmed at the growing popularity of the BSP, the TDP offered 60 seats to the BSP for 1994 general elections. However, BSP could not proceed further in the matter because of both internal and external factors. The party projected itself as the third alternative to the existing Congress and TDP. However, the party failed to meet the expectations of central leaders and the people of the state. It did not win a single seat in the election. The following table shows the progress of party.

Table 4.2

Performance of BSP and Dalit related parties in State Legislative Assembly from 1978 to 2009

S.No	Year	Party	Seats				Votes Polled	
			Contested	Won	FD	Votes	%	Votes % in seats contested
1	1978	RPI	1	0	1	500	0.00	0.67
		RPK	13	0	11	53497	0.27	6.03
2	1983	ICJ	86	1	85	119372	0.57	1.91
3	1985	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	1989	BSP	82	0	82	63,328	0.22	0.77
		RPI	1	0	1	457	0.00	0.49
		RPK	3	0	3	859	0.00	0.28
5	1994	BSP	235	0	234	4,09,832	1.32	1.65
		RPI	5	0	5	1928	0.01	0.32
		RPI(A)	1	0	1	728	0.00	0.71
		RPI(K)	4	0	4	3930	0.01	0.88
6	1999	BSP	48	0	47	58468	0.18	0.98
		RPI	8	0	8	4874	0.01	0.54
		BJRP	9	0	8	25831	0.08	2.77
		RPI(A)	2	0	2	1755	0.01	0.69
7	2004	BSP	160	1	159	4,40,719	1.23	2.21
		ANC	5	0	5	6573	0.02	1.18
		BJRP	9	0	9	10576	0.03	0.90
		BSP(A)	1	0	1	2339	0.01	1.81
		RPI	3	0	3	1523	0.00	0.44
		RPI(A)	1	0	1	956	0.00	1.06
		RPI(KH)	5	0	1	6031	0.02	0.90
8	2009	BSP	270	0	270	4,41,917	1.05	1.14
		BSP(AP)	12	0	12	8104	0.02	0.49
		RPI	5	0	5	4926	0.01	0.75
		RPI(A)	11	0	11	6630	0.02	0.43
		RPI(KH)	2	0	2	670	0.00	0.23

Source: State Election Commission Handbook

Note: 1. FD- Forfeited deposit 2. BSP-Bahujan Samaj Party 3. RPI-Republican Party of India **4**. RPI(K)-Republican Party of India (Khobragade) 5. BSP (AP) - Bahujan Samaj Party (Ambedkar-Phule) 6. ANC-Ambedkar National Congress 7. BJRP-Bahujan Republic Party 8. BCM-Backward Classes Mahasabha.

The BSP's presence in north and South India is one of the important dimensions to explore. Both during colonial and post colonial periods, there were anti caste movements in north and south or in major states, but the nature and character and mobilisation patterns of the Dalit politics were not uniform. These movements mostly depended on the socio, economic and political conditions of a particular state. Bahujan politics, after the emergence of BSP as an important national political party representing marginal caste' political aspiration, the Indian electoral politics qualitatively changed. The historical factors of every caste determined the level of political consciousness of Dalits. Kanshiram as a leader and politician invested his time and energy in Uttar Pradesh, given the numerical strength of SC, ST in UP. He was able to mobilise them within the support of the emerging middle class of the Dalit communities. For the expansion of the party at all India level, he opened party branches in south India. In 1989, in Andhra Pradesh, he opened party branch, followed by Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Naidu. Over a period of time, the BSP was able to strengthen its roots in north India particularly in UP and also Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, etc. However, in the south, it could not expand much. The reasons have to be explored as far as the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh is concerned. The Karamchedu movement was not translated into political language and political movement. The Dalit Mahasabha manifesto was not oriented towards capturing political power. The leaders of this organisation conducted open public meetings and were able to attract writers, employees, educated individuals and activists actively engaged in left parties. The divisional and local level cadres of the Dalit Mahasabha could not orient themselves to contest elections and impact the electoral politics. However, they succeeded in mobilising and organising the masses against discrimination, atrocities and asserting for constitutional rights, and so on.

The Dalit Mahasabha leader, Katti Padma Rao, also started the *Dalita Rajyam* magazine to sensitise the public and succeeded to some extent. Later, he started the "Poor People Party" with the aim of organising SCs, STs, OBCs and other minorities and the upper caste poor. The flag of the party is blue and red with red stars, which symbolises the caste-class approach to Indian politics. He organised public meetings with women in

coastal Andhra. However, he could not succesed for a long time. He himself joined the BSP, worked as a general secretary and also actively participated in 1994 Assembly elections. Although he was able to gain more votes than the candidates who contested on BSP banner, nobody won a single assembly seat. One more leader, Boja Tarakam, worked as a president of the BSP. Later on, he left the party and joined the RPI which already existed in an almost insignificant way. The RPI also kept contesting in elections, but did not have a grassroots cadre. Tarakam started a monthly magazine, *Neeli Janda* (blue flag), which highlights RPI activities and Dalit related issues. However, the party activities were only visible in urban area with a few old Ambedkarites. To some extent, it became a letter pad movement mostly with Malas.[407]

Satya Murthy, one of the founder members of the CPI (ML) Peoples War, left the party after the Karamchedu incident. He actively participated in Dalit movements and launched the "Samatha Sainik Dal" to protect the interests of the Dalits.[408] His initiative of "Marxist-Leninist Centre" contributed to raise some of the historical questions on overall left movements and their limitations and strength relevance of Phule-Ambedkar theory and politics. He joined BSP, but left the party and started a new party, "Bahujan Republican Party." He adopted two concepts - one from Kanshiram "Bahujan" (majority oppressed), and the other, the "Republican" from Ambedkar. He was able to organise some agitations, but was not very successful. Later, he also started a new political party, "Suryudu Party" taking inspiration from "Rising Sun" for the light. This Party too had a very short lifespan[409].

In the wake of identity movements initiated by Maroju Veerana, the Dalit politics took a new shape. Maroju Veerana was the one who brought the caste question on left parties' agenda. Later, he formed a new political party, the "United States of India Communist

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[407] Interview with Ganumala Gyaneshwar on 24th October, 2012, Hyderabad
[408] Satyamurthy interview by Karthik Navayan on trajectory of his movement life and struggle http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5043:there-will-never-be-another-man-like-him&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132
[409] See Bahujana Keratalu special issue on "K.G Satyamurthy" on May 2012. And BASA magazine special issue on *Viplavamurthy Satyamurthy*, in 2012.

Party" (DBSU) "Dalit Bhujan Shramic Union) in 1999. Veerana followed two strategies", armed struggle and political participation in the electoral process[410]. Since Veerana was engaged in organising every community through their community organisations and its leaders with the formulation of "Identity+ alliance",[411] encouraged the leaders who already had a public image and commitment. MRPS was one of the strong movements led by Manda Krishna Madiga for the SC categorization. With this background and keeping the ensuing 1999 Assembly elections in mind, the issue SC reservation classification was also resolved by passing of the resolution in the state Assembly under TDP Govt. Veerana, along with U. Sambashiva Rao and Manda Krishna, formed a new organisation, "Mahajana Sangarshana Samithi" . This aimed at uniting SCs, STs, OBCs and religious minorities to capture political power. The organisation chose the "Bus Symbol" and also prepared the party manifesto for public circulation. For this organisation, Manda Krishna was elected as president (Madiga), and J. Goutham (mala) and U Sambashiva Rao (OBC-Mangali) as general secretaries. The Party contested the election and got 1.5 vote percentages of total polled votes in the state Assembly elections in 1999[412]. However, this experiment could not sustain for long.

Since BSP did not spell out its support to the SC reservation categorization, a majority of the Madigas maintained distance from this Party. Malas traditionally are more with the Congress. The regional dimension is also a crucial factor. According to the census figures, more Malas are found in Coastal Andhra and more Madigas are present in the Telangana region. When BSP adopted "Sarvajan" concept in united A.P, it also tried its level best to accommodate the upper caste poor and other communities in party positions and in elections. Since BSP did not get the strong social/political base of any major Scheduled Caste, it could not attract more communities into the party structure, whereas in UP, they have the Chamar political base. In Andhra Pradesh, BAMCEF activities and

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[410] Opt, cit, Mallaiah. (2011).
[411] See Maroju, Veerana. (2011).
[412] Mahajana party manifesto. (1999). and interview with U. Sambashiva Rao on 6th July, 2012 on the formation of Mahajana Sangharshana Samithi and the context in which it was emerged.

its cadre camps are not vibrant, when compared to Uttar Pradesh. It seems that within the BAMCEF (party affiliated), there are internal groups.

The MRPS movement is largely mobilised on caste identity which consolidated the Madiga caste, in particular, and its sub-castes, in general. Except the "Mahajana Samithi" experiment, this movement, from the beginning, lacked the political direction. However, it does not mean that MRPS is not political. In fact, due to the Dandora movement the Madigas are more politicised and socially consolidated. When Dalit Mahasabha activities are slowing down in the state, the MRPS grassroots level committees have reached remote areas and have been able to build a strong organisational structure, but because it does not have goal to capture political power in the state, the MRPS activities have been largely focused on SC reservation classification and for the Madiga community empowerment. The political cadre is not consolidated though the MRPS is active whenever elections comes and aligns with either the TDP or Congress, depending on the local dynamics and state level political move of the MRPS committee. This was proved when MRPS itself contested, after failing to get share in "Mahakutami" of TDP, CPI (M), and CPI in 2009. The MRPS president Manda Krishna himself could not win the election; even in the constituency where there is a sizeable Madiga population. However at local level the 73rd and, 74th Constitutional Amendments, provided an opportunity to Dalits to participate and be represented in local bodies. They have been contesting in the reserved constituencies from the different parties. They are dependent on the support of non-Dalit voters for winning the elections. Their dependence on non-Dalit voters forces them to be loyal to their respective parties. They have to represent both the Dalits and non-Dalits in the legislative bodies. It is the choice of the party for nominating the Dalit candidates in the elections. The loyal and less assertive are generally given tickets during the elections. They win the elections not based on their support among the voters, but on the party and government performance. Dalit leaders are not equal partners, but junior partners to the dominant leaders in the parties and governments. It was argued that they represent the parties to their community, rather than representing their community to the party and government. The middle class emerged from Dalits as a product of reservations

in education and employment. These elites started the SC welfare organisations after experiencing with discrimination, humiliation and punishment in their place of work. In order to protect their respect and constitutional rights in the area of promotion, transfer and appointment of their kin, these groups formed Ambedkar organisations to seek support of the local Dalits. These Ambedkar organisations and SC employees' organisations at the district level helped them to form a network of Dalits in the state which led to putting certain demands before the Government for scholarships, opening up of new residential schools, and so on. Government fulfilled the demands by allocating funds to the social welfare departments.[413] However, SC organisations failed to prepare the Dalits for availing the job opportunities and power in urban areas and fight against discrimination and exclusion. These organisations try to perpetuate and bargain policies and power for a few families that they represent.[414]

Both Congress and TDP have been able to accommodate and co-opt Dalit leaders into the party and government. The leaders from Dalit community are encouraged to compete among themselves for these positions. Welfare and populist policies have also contributed for widening of their support base to both these parties. Divisions within the Dalits blocked consolidation. As a result, the attempts to consolidate Dalits horizontally by the Dalit parties have failed. Though Madigas in the state were mobilised by their community leader during 1990s for sub-categorisation of SC reservations, it was not translated into a political movement. In fact, the movement benefited TDP to secure the support of Madigas due to implementation of its promise made to them. On the other hand, the movement also created reaction among Malas and they rallied behind the Congress party to oppose sub-categorisation of SCs. The BSP representing Dalits was not able to establish itself as a viable party to Dalits - either Madigas or Malas[415]. Hence the autonomous politics of Dalits and their efforts are subsumed.

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[413] Opt, cit, Vikalpa alternative. (2005). pp.5-6
[414] Ibid, pp.8-9
[415]Discussion with K. Laxman (Ph.D scholar) and Venkatesh Naik (Assistant Professor), D .Harikrishna (Grassroots activist in Bahujan Movement, Telangana)

Dandora Movement and Dalit Autonomy; Fragmentation or Solidarity

After one decade of Karamchedu Dalit movement, the Dandora movement started as a 'New Dalit Movement'. There have been a series of democratic movements within Dalits for greater recognition and redistribution from the mid1990s in India. These movements critically interrogated the Dalit category, in particular, and Dalit movement, in general. Although Scheduled Caste (SC) and Dalit (oppressed) categories are to some extent able to homogenize and consolidate their experience and politics in challenging the hegemonic power structures, in practice, these categories are increasingly showing limitations to address the diversities and differences of various castes within the Dalits. Hence, the critical interrogation of these categories is an important intellectual discourse in contemporary Dalit movement and politics. In this direction, the Dandora movement by Madigas and its satellite castes was started on July 7, 1994 in Edumudi village (Prakasham district) under the leadership of Manda Krishna Madiga for dignified identity and categorisation of SC reservation; this soon created a nation-wide debate and raised many questions for public discussion. The issues include: (i) Is the SC category divisible? (ii) Can the Dalit category accommodate the differences and diversities among Dalits? (iii) Can the struggles for recognition and redistribution of the lowest Dalits divide the Dalit unity? These questions have come up for a wider discussion in public. The demand for SC categorisation by MRPS got more support across the various sections of society. However, Malamahanadu emerged to oppose SC categorisation.[416]

The protests against positive discrimination have been frequent occurrences since implementation of the reservation policy in India. The demand for further inclusion of castes into reserved categories by some castes is not uncommon either. However, the phenomenon of caste groups in reserved categories complaining about the preponderance of some other castes in the same categories and, consequently, demanding some kind of rearrangement of reservation policies; to be more specific, the classification of caste into separate enclosures, with each group entitled to a fixed percentage of quotas within the

[416] Muthaiah, P. (2000). *Dandora: the Madiga Movement for Equal Identity and Social Justice in A.P*. Working paper, submitted to Anveshi, Hyderabad, p.2.

broader category is unique and a relatively new one for Dalit and Adivasi activists.[417] On the SC reservation categorization issue, there are contested views among scholars and activists who work on Dalits question. Some argue that struggles for recognition and redistribution by the lowest of the low within Dalits have greater ability to deepen Dalit movement and politics. So, it is suggested that the unity of the Dalits has to be built by recognising the lowest among the low and their just demands.[418] The other group argues that this kind of move and demand for categorisation would lead to division of Dalits and political manipulation by mainstream political parties.[419] However, there is a need to deeply engage and explore the complexity of the problem, its historical roots and its implications.

The contemporary Dalit movement is in an ambiguous stage, both at the moral and political levels, to address the emerging internal problems of this kind which has an all India nature. The struggles for recognition and redistribution of the Arundhatiya movement in Tamil Naidu, Madigas movement in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, Valmikis movement in Haryana, Punjab and Mangs' movement in Maharashtra, and Maha Dalit in Bihar are cases in point.[420] As already mentioned, the Dandora or MRPS movement, spread all over the state within a short period of time has been able to bring together the employees, students and masses from the Madiga community. Lakhs of people attended a number of dharnas, rastarokos, public meetings, Padayatras.[421] The movement explored multiple marginalisation processes of Madiga subgroups within

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[417] See Shekar K and V.Sremanarayana Murthy. (2012). *The 'Drum Beat' heralds Schism in Dalit Movement*. In Brij Raj Chauhan and A.Satyanarayana. (Ed), (2012). *Changing Village India*. Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

[418] See Muthaiah, P. (2004). Dandora: The Madiga Movement for Equal Identity and Social Justice in AP. *Social Action*, Vo-54, and April-June.pp.184-209. And See Balagopal, K. (2000). A Tangled Web; Subdivision of SC Reservations in Andhra Pradesh**.** *EPW,* Vo-XXXV, No-13, March 25.

[419] See Gopal Guru. (2010). *Social Justice*. In Niraja Gopal Jayal and Pratap Bhanu Mehta. (2010). *The Oxford Companion to Politics in India*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. And see Gopal Guru. (2010). *Struggle for the Margin or from the Margin*. In Gurpreet Mahajan and Surinder S. Jodhka, (Ed.), (2010), *Religion, Community and Development*. New Delhi, Routledge Publications.

[420] See Yaganti, Chinna Rao. (Ed.), (2009). *Dividing Dalits*. New Delhi, Rawat Publications

[421] See Gundimeda, Sambaiah. (2000). *The Emergence of Sub-Caste Identity and Consciousness among the Dalits in Andhra Pradesh; A case study of the Madigas*. Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad.

Dalits and outside Dalits. With strong organisational structure and continuous activities, it is able to get support and sympathy from all section of society, particularly progressive writers, and activists. It has succeeded in convincing the political parties to include the demand in their manifestos. To counter the classification movement, Malas and sub groups have consolidated themselves under the "Malamahanadu" (The great congregation of Malas) which brought the rhetorical argument of merit against the demand which is often put forth by the upper castes whenever there is a debate on reservation. Further, it is argued that the classification would divide Dalits.[422] In the early days of Dandora movement, a majority of Mala leaders, writers and activists did not respond positively to the categorisation demand. In this context, Madigas also started raising some socio, cultural questions on issues like: hierarchy of untouchability, cultural differences, occupational differences and historical experience of Madigas from their social location.[423] The consistent and continuous mobilisation of Madiga sub-groups made them a powerful negotiating force - both in politics and civil society.

Although the demand for SC reservation categorisation movement took a militant form in the mid-1990s, the demand was there much before MRPS, but in a different form. A Telugu Madiga, L.C Guruswamy, established the "Arundathiya Mahasabha" in 1920 in the Madras Presidency to initiate struggle for identity and social justice to Madigas. To counter the partisan attitude of Bagya Reddy Varma towards Malas, the excommunicated leader established "Arundhateeya Mahasabha in 1931 for Madigas in Hyderabad. Later on, 'Adijambava Arundhatiya Bandhuseva Mandali' was established in 1981 by first generation Madiga employees under the presidentship of Kishan Lal. For the first time, Madhava Rao who was a former president of Bandu Seva Mandali used Madiga as a suffix and was the only activist known as Madava Rao Madiga[424]. In 1982, the Mandali published a document of socio, economic and representational status of Arunthatiyas in

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[422] Jangam Chinnaiah. (2009)**.** *Sub-Caste Consciousness; Challenges before Dalit Intellectuals*. pp.100-105, in Yaganti China Rao. (Ed.), (2009). Dividing Dalits, New Delhi, Rawat Publication.
[423] Illaiah,Kancha. (2009). *Post-Hindu India: a discourse on Dalit Bahujan, socio-spiritual and scientific revolution*. Sage publications, New Delhi and Darla Venkateswara Rao. (2008). *Dalitha Sahityam: Madiga Drukpadtham* (Essays on literary criticism). Society & Education Trust, Hyderabad, India.
[424] Opt, cit, Muthaiah, P. (2000). pp.5-6.

united Andhra Pradesh with detailed statistics. Through this document, the Mandali demanded SC categorisation into A, B, C, and D, according to population proportion of each caste. In the 1982 Assembly elections, the TDP promised categorization.[425] After that, employees and some civil society organisations started to agitate through 'Andhra Pradesh Madiga Sangam', which was the first Dalit association established with Madiga sub-caste name. In the year 1982, the Sangam activists enter the Assembly while Assembly was in session and threw pamphlets, titled "separate reservation for Madigas," from the visitor's gallery. Consequently, twelve activists of Madiga Sangam were convicted by the state Assembly for violating the rules. After that, the Karamchedu massacre took place in 1985. The post-Karamchedu agitations changed the terms of discourse among activists and social movements and the autonomous Dalit movement began until 1994, the categorisation issue was neglected, or deliberately excluded. On 2nd May 1994, in Nizam College ground in Hyderabad, the Congress Party and government encouraged caste wise public meetings. After this meeting, the Madiga, Koneru Ranga Rao, was appointed as deputy Chief Minister of A.P. with the purpose of consolidating Madigas. Whoever attended the meeting was disappointed with the Madiga leaders for their failure to assert the SC reservation categorisation issue. It was in this context MRPS grew under Manda Krishna Madiga.[426] He contacted Madiga employees in the regions where he was working, got basic information on the issue and discussed with many people. Then, he published a pamphlet with statistics in order to sensitise Madigas with Edumudi Madiga youth since they were active the Dalits movement. Then onwards, the struggle for categorisation and mobilisation was growing among employees and youths, especially in Coastal Andhra. According to P. Muthaiah, the MRPS movement used three identities: (i) Arundhatiya, Jambavantha, (ii) Madiga, and (iii) Dandora to mobilise people to struggle for a respectable identity and to demand SC categorisation. The leader took a pledge to make the derogatory term 'Madiga' as a respectable identity. For this,

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[425] TDP newly emerged under the leadership of N.T Rama Rao thought that Malas were with the Congress, in order to attract Madigas into TDP, he focused the ABCD issue, people also say that Sada Laxmi also had more influential on the issue.

[426] Manda Krishna Madiga interview open heart with R.K in ABN news channel, *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZp09seXnBs*

they propagated etymological meaning of Madigas. The Madiga means Maha (very) + Adi (from the beginning) +ga (moving). That means original inhabitants of India moving and living on earth from very beginning[427]. K.Balagopal observes:

> "The movement took the state by storm in a matter of months. The first and most audacious thing the Madigas did was to suffix the caste tag to their names. Krishna became Krishna Madiga, Krupakar became a Krupakar Madiga, and so on down the line. In a society that addresses any number of Krishna shastries and Krishna Reddys respectfully, the discomfort this caused was most amusing to watch. As "Madiga" has served as term of abuse, whether directed against a Madiga or otherwise, it was most discomforting to be confronted by someone who wanted you to address him as "Krishna Madiga" and when people confessed to themselves that they found it embarrassingly absurd to think of someone as Krishna Shastri, Krishna Reddy or Krishna Naidu. Since true victory over an oppressor lies not in putting a bullet through his head but in making him turn a self-critical eye towards his own pretensions to superiority, it must be said that this deliberately chosen tactic of the Madiga was done to puncture upper caste arrogance".[428]

With this cultural and historical background, the M.R.P.S leaders and activist started to mobilise and sensitise Madigas and its sub-castes under the Dandora banner. Madigas started to form the district, mandal and village committees. They also used Ambedkar, Mother Teresa and Babu Jagjeevan Ram on their banners and pamphlets as their inspirations. They asserted that social justice means equal distribution and used white cloth flag with the symbol of man beating a drum in the middle of flag with in blue colour. Soon, it became a people's movement. In every corner of the villages, Madigas started to see the differences and hegemony within Dalits. They critically started to interrogate Dalit, and Scheduled Caste categories. After many long hunger strikes, marches, public meetings, the then TDP government under Chandrababu government

[427] Opt, cit, Muthaiah, P. (2000). p.4.
[428] Balagopal, K. (2010). *Reservations: A Socio-Legal Perspective*. New Delhi, Critical Quest, p. 36.

appointed Justice Ramachandra Raju Commission to study the disparities among the Scheduled Castes examines demand for categorisation and some remedies. After six months of the Commission's appointment, Madigas felt that the categorisation was getting delayed intentionally. Then Dandora activists decided to pressurise the government and took a course of action to mobilise people on the delay. As part of that, hundreds of meetings, dharnas, rasta rokos, and protests were organised at various levels. There were separate demonstrations in order to attract more Madigas and make them to be involved in the movement particularly, Madiga children, (Bala Dandora), Madiga women (Madiga Mahila Dandora), Madiga Employees (Madiga employees Dandora) and Madiga students and youth Dandora were organised to show the strength. In this vibrant movement, one boy committed suicide, leaving the suicide note stating "SC categorization is the last wish', two more Madigas got killed in the conflict with Malas[429]. In order to put pressure on the government, Madiga Dandora members decided to launch a Mahapadayatra to mount pressure on the government. It began on 14th April in Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's village "Naravarepally" in Chittoor district by presenting their demands to the Chief Minister's mother. The grand mobilisation and impact of the Padayatra was reported in the English daily The Hindu (May 7, 1997) as:

> "On Sunday, a group of youths wearing the anklets of dancers and beating drums started the walk, announcing the 'waging war against the government's indifference to the Madigas' problem'. This proclamation is the "Dandora', the traditional form of announcement in the villages, and the movement has to be called the 'Madiga Dandora'. The group holds wayside meetings at the Madiga hamlets situated on the outskirts of every village early in the day. The network of Madiga Yuva (youth) Sena is so extensive that they work as the courier system conveying the information about where the group would stop for lunch or halt for the night. The host villagers organise lunch and dinner.... about 500 people march together but about 300 of them are people of one village, who escort the group to the next village, when people of the next village take over.... their legs have swollen and have blisters. Yet, they walk with determination, about 20 to 30

[429] Ibid

> kilometres a day, in order to awaken the Madigas. A jeep with their clothes and foodstuffs and trailer carrying a drum of drinking water follows them. M. Manda Krishna, who has taken the suffix "Madiga', leads this group on a journey by foot from Naaravaripalle, the native place of the Chief Minister Mr. N Chandrababu Naidu, in Chittoor district to his official residence in Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad".[430]

The Padayatra was depicted as equivalent to Dandi March of Gandhi and Mao's long march, for social justice to Madigas[431]. The movement began with some advantages like Malas; the Madigas are spread across the state. If not every village, certainly every second or third village in every corner of the state would have at least a few Madiga families. Secondly, though the reality of hierarchy within the outcastes and unequal access to reservations was known, felt and even mildly articulated for a long time, it was being expressed as a mass upsurge for the first time. It is a matter of common experience that a mass expression of a genuine public grievance for the first time attracts the most innocent and also disinterested from rest of the society. It is in course of second and third round that the expression and the sympathy are contaminated by what passes in the meantime and by self–serving afterthoughts. Thirdly, the demand Madigas raised was plain, simple and easily understood: "divide the SC reservation quota and give us our due". It was felt to be unproblematic since backward class reservation in the state have long been subdivided into four subgroups, which subdivision has been upheld by the Supreme Court. Fourthly, former Madigas found a dynamic and charismatic leader in Manda Krishna. However, Malamahanadu brought the problematic arguments against the rationalisation of SC reservation, broadly the arguments were:

- SC (Scheduled Caste) or Dalits are homogeneous. Hence, there should not be any division among them
- Rationalisation of SC reservation is unconstitutional, it divides Dalits.

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[430] Daily English new paper 'The Hindu' on May 7, 1997
[431] Akhileshwari, Sunday Spotlight, Deccan Herald, on 8-6-1997

- Instead of SC categorisation, Madigas' should fight for SC reservations in the private sector.
- Those who have merit among Dalits will get the opportunity, so, Madigas lack merit.
- Madigas have caste occupation, whereas Malas don't have the caste occupation. So Malas got early education and employment through Christian missionaries enabiling social mobility
- If Madigas are backward, they may get some special package- not SC reservation categorisation.
- By demanding SC categorisation, they are fighting against Ambedkar spirit and by using Madiga as suffix promoting casteist ideology and humiliating entire Dalit community.

The Malamahahanadu was started by P.V Rao, a Govt. employee who resigned his job and started mobilising Malas, particularly employees and youth. It organised many public meetings against the categorisation movement. Leaders like Jupudi Prabhakar, Karem Shivaji and others organised Malas under various Malamahanadu factions. Interestingly, they organised meetings under Malamahanadu and invoked Dalit identity. Some of them went to the extent of saying that Ambedkar was born in a Mahar family and that Mahar is equivalent to Mala. It was also said that Mala bureaucrats lobby worked at various levels in approaching courts and stopping the GO in the Supreme Court. Organisations like 'Rajyanga Parirakshana Committee' headed by Malas 'Bahujana Vigyana Vedika' public meetings and published small booklets. Hence, most of the time, Malamahanadu activities were reactive to the MRPS activities. K. Balagopal, in his article, observes:

> "In any case, the Mahanadu plea is the kind of argument made first by the Brahmins and later by the other upper castes against reservations as such; give them help for economic uplift meant and we too will learn to honour the dignity of labour, but do not branch our preserve of expanding knowledge and the status and opportunities it carries. The argument, as well as the answer to it, will become

clearer if one goes below the Madigas to castes such as the Rellies, who have as their exclusive vocation scavenging in which they face no threat of competition. Nor do the Rellies have any scope for advancement, if they remain scavengers. It was also argued that, instead of fighting among themselves for sub-dividing their common quota, Dalits should jointly fight for increasing the SC quota, commensurate with the proportionate increase in Dalit population and for a proper implementation of reservations, including the backlog of unfilled vacancies. There is no reason, however, why the desire for justice inter se should wait upon the later task or tasks. The desire and the tasks can proceed together, provided both sides -particularly the more privileged side- makes sure that the struggle for subdivision and the response to it do not vitiate the atmosphere to the extent of making the united struggle for the common goals impossible. In any case, this is again no different in principle from the argument offered by the upper caste anti-reservationists; let us fight not over division of the existing job opportunities, but for the creation of more, the two struggles can well go together and the onus of making this possible lies on the more privileged and not the less privileged. To ask the disadvantaged to give up their just demand of equal opportunity in order to pave the way for the unity required for a common fight for greater opportunities is plainly unethical".[432]

Here, K. Balagopal raised the ethical dimension of the just demand of Madigas and the unethical attitude of the Malas who oppose the rationalisation of SC reservation in the name of "Dalit unity". The Dalit leadership and organisation also did not initiate any method and negotiation to address the problem. So, it is argued that most of the so-called Dalits leaders belonged to the Mala community. This also made Madiga youth and employees lose their trust in Dalit leadership. According to Muthaiah (2000), Malas and Madigas historically are not united culturally and there are practical and ritualistic differences among these communities. There are 59 castes, among which Mala and

[432] Opt, cit, Balagopal, K. (2010). p.41

Madigas are two numerically major castes. The social anthropological study conducted by T.R Singh and Muthaiah clearly shows the cultural world of these castes.

> "It can be seen that the Mitha Ayyalwar caste is at the top of Dalit hierarchy, while Dakkal at the bottom. The superiority in Dalit hierarchy flows from upward to downwards, while inferiority from downwards to upwards. In the Mala hierarchy, Mitha Ayyalwar is considered to be superior, standing at the top of the ladder. Mala Jangam and Mala Dasaries come from the priestly class and function as spiritual advisors to Mala satellite castes; they are also called Mala gurus. They consider Malas and Madigas inferior to them. In the Mala satellite castes, Mala Jangam/Dasaries (in some cases) is at the top of the Mala hierarchy. Next to them are Malas, Pambala, Masti and Gurram Malas in the descending order in the hierarchy? Syed Sirjul recorded that "Gurram Malas are regarded as the lowest of all the Mala sub castes. It is considered to be a degraded branch of Mala satellite castes.
>
> Madiga rank next to Malas in the Dalit hierarchy. In the Madiga satellite castes, the superiority flows from the Madiga guru, the Sangari to Dakkal and inferiority from Dakkal to Sangari. In the hierarchy of Madigas satellite castes, the Sangarie's position is the highest. All satellite castes, except Sangari, are inferior to Madigas. In the Madiga hierarchy, T.R Singh states that, in some villages, however, the Bindla and Verpula not only claimed, but also maintained, superiority over the Madigas. It is seen in villages, the Madiga, Bindla Mastu and Dakkal are inferior to Sangari in a descending order. All the castes, including the Madigas, treat a Dakkal as untouchable. Here, it is pertinent to mention that the Brahmanic innovation of superiority, inferiority and untouchable has percolated down to the Dakkal, the last man in homo hierarchy are the untouchables of the untouchables.[433]

[433] Muthaiah, P. (2006). *Sub Caste Conflict and Dalit Movement in Andhra Pradesh*. Working Paper, submitted to Anveshi, Hyderabad, p.4

In the hierarchy of untouchability one has to see critically in order to understand the everyday relations among the Scheduled Castes. In the layer of social status, Malas feel superior to other castes, therefore Malas also practice some sort of untouchability and discrimination on Madigas. Inter-caste marriages hardly taken place between them, even if this takes place, most of the time, these have led to conflict as it happen with upper caste people. Therefore, the cultural differences and historical roots of inequality indicate that the myth of Mala-Madiga unity did not exist even before emergence of the Dandora movement. However, both castes suffer untouchability; carry common experience of suffering. For the upper castes, both castes are untouchable. These historical visible inequalities made Madigas mobilise on large scale. After continuous struggles and agitations, Justice Ramachandra Raju Commission recommended SC categorisation in 1997. The government passed a resolution on rationalisation of SC reservation 2000. From 2000 to 2004, the SC categorization policy was implemented. Manda Krishna[434] claims that during this period, the Madiga got more than 20,000 jobs. However in 2004, the Supreme Court set aside categorisations GO in the case of petitioner E.V Chinnaiah vs Andhra Pradesh Govt[435], and suggested Constitutional Amendment for SC reservations categorization. After the Supreme Court judgment, on three occasions, all political parties unanimously passed a resolution for amendment of SC categorization in the State Assembly, under Chief Minister Rajashekar Reddy all party delegation also the Prime Minister. After delegation and agitation, the then UPA Govt. appointed a single person commission, Justice Usha Mehra Commission. This Commission visited the three regions of the then Andhra Pradesh, consulted many organisations and individuals and finally recommended SC categorisation. However, the state and central Governments are yet to initiate the Constitutional Amendment.

After the TDP Government passed a resolution to bring rationalisation of SC reservation Act, 2000, the MRPS' attention changed from reservation to greater alliance of the oppressed communities for political power. With more than 20 social organisations with

[434] Manda Krishna Madiga interview 25th February, 2015, Hyderabad
[435] The Supreme Court judgment on 5th November 2004, Bench comprised of: N.Santosh Hegde, S.N Variava, B.P Singh, H.R Sema, and S.B Sinha.

the encouragement of Maroju Veerana with the slogan of "Anagarina Kulala Ikya Dandora," the Mahajana Sangharshana Samithi" was formed under Manda Krishna Madiga's leadership. Under this banner, many activities were undertaken against violence on minorities, struggle for reservations in the private sector and agitation for land reforms. Although the Samithi contested in the election, it could not succeed. The MRPS succeeded in getting scholarship amounts increased and organised many conferences and protests for their rights through "Vikalangula Hakula Porata Samithi", child heart patients issue and was able to get public attention. The strong protests against the government influenced policy initiatives like "Arogya Sri," which benefitted many families across caste and religion. Most of the time, in academics works, it is theorised that the Dalits communities build movements around their identity, but MRPS creatively took issues and organised movements going beyond its community. Further it took up the differently abled, old age people, widows and 'Samajika Telangana' etc issues which expanded the MRPS horizons, both in theory and practice.[436]

Summary

This chapter aimed at exploring aspects of Dalit Autonomous articulations in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. In order to understand articulations, it focused on four aspects within the Dalit movement, namely, (i) The formation of Dalit Mahasabha and emergence of Dalit subject, (ii) Dalits' ideological caste-class praxis, (iii) Dalit politics; Autonomy vs. Accommodation, and (iv) Dandora Movement and Dalit Autonomy; Fragmentation or solidarity. The formation of Dalit Mahasabha played a historic role in reshaping Dalit consciousness after the Karamchedu massacre (1985). It transformed post-Karamchedu agitations into organisational activities. If there was no Dalit Mahasabha, the Karamchedu incident could have ended up with coverage in a few newspapers and some agitations. So, Dalit Mahasabha gave birth to a new Dalit subject

[436] Manda Krishna Madiga interview in 2014 general election, when Manda Krishna Madiga contested in Wardhanapeta for MLA constituency, he got merely 20,000 votes out of more than 2 lakhs votes. In the campaign, he focused on the issues related to differently able, the aged and widows' issues. Before election, he started MSP (Mahajana Socialist Party) on Louie Braille's birthday anniversary in the Differently-Able People State Level Convention at Hyderabad.

by drawing a line from the previous Dalit assertions to autonomous Dalit struggles. The Dalit Mahasabha's efforts created philosophical praxis for Dalit emancipation. Its constant campaign produced writers, singers, cadres, leaders and intellectuals who themselves took voluntary responsibilities in spreading anti-caste ideology and Dalit Mahasabha activities throughout the state. Mahasabha also inspired Telugu Dalit journalism that many individuals started Telugu magazines for Dalits to spread anti-caste ideology and Dalit related issues. Many Dalit-related organisations also sprang up. All these contributed to shaping and reshaping of Dalit consciousness and politics. The historic role of Dalit Mahasabha broadly emphasised on autonomous Dalit movement for Dalit emancipation with philosophical praxis of Ambedkar and anti-caste thinkers. The Dalit Mahasabha strongly criticised the inadequate understanding of the left on the caste question. Its programme of action brought the discussion into the public domain. It also questioned the Congress and other upper caste political parties for their accommodative and co-optive politics of Dalit leadership. These questions/discussions had a great impact on subsequent left practice and growth of Dalit consciousness. Although these questions remain relevant today, the Dalit Mahasabha lost its capacity to consolidate Dalits as a united force.

The Dalit Mahasabhas serious criticism of the practice of both parliamentary and radical left in India led to debate and discussion on the caste-class praxis among activists and scholarly circles. Many conferences and meetings took place throughout the state. Among the left groups there was a debate on the nature and path of revolution. Both radical left and parliamentary Left were forced to take positions on caste and gender issues. Subsequently, the left groups opened up frontal organisations to focus on these issues to organise Dalits, women and minorities. Given the multiple layers of contradictions within the oppressed, the alliance within the cultural and political domain becomes an emerging contemporary challenge that is yet to be negotiated properly.

The post-Karamchedu agitations and Dalit Mahasabha activities changed the terms of politics. The ideological campaign of Dalit Mahasbha gave a critical ideological

orientation for youth and cadres to critical look at Poona Pact and upper caste accommodative and co-optive politics. However, the Dalit Mahsabha failed to translate Dalit force into electoral outcomes. In the background of Karamchedu mobilisation, BSP with its UP result entered the state and opened its wing in 1989. Although in 1994 elections it projected itself as an alternative to upper caste parties, it could not win a single seat. Broadly, the party lacked the grassroots level party structure and cadre and the sustained activities and charismatic leadership. The non-party roots like BAMCEF mobilisation was very weak and not having any clear-cut policy on issues like SC reservation categorisation also become big obstacles for its inability to succeed in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. Apart from this, various individuals started small parties and organisations that could not be sustained. Because of the Poona Pact, Dalit representatives of various parties tended to represent the party to the people, than Dalit problems to their parties. The accommodative, co-optive, patronising attitude and populist promises always subsumed Dalit autonomous politics.

After one decade of Karamchedu Dalit movement, the Dandora or MRPS movement emerged for the equitable distribution of SC reservation benefits to all Scheduled Castes. The Dandora Movement is a result of the failure of Dalit movement's leadership in addressing internal contradictions and Dalits' issues and concerns. The Dandora movement questioned the hegemonic attitude of Malas over the Dalit movement and disproportionate representation in employment and education compared to other Scheduled Castes. Further, the movement also brought out the hierarchy of untouchability among Dalits and cultural specificities in their everyday life. The Dandora movement as a 'New Dalit Movement' argued that deepening of anti-caste spirit lies in the very recognition of the lowest of the low and their recognition and redistribution questions. The sooner the Dalit movement resolves these internal problems, the better will be the future of Dalit autonomous movement and politics.

Chapter–V

Dalit Literature;

Understanding Consciousness and Identity

Chapter - V

Dalit Literature; Understanding Consciousness and Identity

Dalit Movement and Dalit Literature

The relations between Dalit literary writings and movements are closely interlinked and mutually influenced in challenging the hegemonic power structures. It is argued that the vibrant movement may create the context and content and influence the writers and artists to produce literary writings in documenting the movements, forms of assertion and people's imagination and aspirations. Therefore, every literary production or writing takes its birth and shape in a given particular socio, political context, space and time. So, the context of a particular period has become a source to understand and interpret the literary texts for social science researcher.[437] In this chapter, it is not intended to see the evolutions of particular genre and its aesthetic characteristics, but to see the ability of literary writings to influence social relations, visualise an alternative society and challenging nature of hegemonic forces creating counter hegemonic ideology among Dalits.

In the beginning of Dalit literary production, many questions rose that what Dalit literature is all about? Do Dalit need a separate literature? Who is eligible to write Dalit literature? Is Dalit Literature homogeneous? How are experiences and life world matters for producing a literary text? How can poems, personal narratives and autobiographies articulate universal concern and connect with broader emancipatory movements, and so on. These are some of the questions which came up during the mid-1990s. Hence, one has to address these questions while talking about relation between Dalit literature, Dalit identity and consciousness.[438] The historical roots of anti-caste literature have been influenced by Phule, Ambedkar movements. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule,[439] being a critic

[437]. One could also broadly see the literature following the movement While he was explaining, he referred to the emergence of revolutionary literature after the emergence of the Naxalite movement in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh, Dalit literature after the Karamchedu incident, Madiga literature after the emergence of Dandora or MRPS movement and Telangana literature after 2009 - a vibrant Telangana movement.

[438] Satyanarayana, S.V. (2004). *Dalita Vada Vivadalu*. Vishalandra Publishing House, Hyderabad, p.44

[439] Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule was an anti caste revolutionary thinker and fighter who challenged the sacredness of Hindu texts and their myths. In his writings (Gulamgiri), he criticised all mythological stories

of the Brahmanical system, commented on Brahmanical literary texts. In one of his letters which he wrote to upper caste literary group in response to an invitation by upper caste literary conference:

> "Please note that there are some people who do not think dispassionately about the problem of Human Rights of all human beings and who are unwilling to grant them those rights openly and voluntarily,…… (Please note that) the societies established by us and the books published by us are diametrically opposed to the societies founded by the above-mentioned (retrograde) people and contents of the books published by them. They have designedly and wickedly suppressed (omitted) from their spurious sacred books the shameful episode (event) of how their ancestors subjected us (the Shudras and Atishudras) and converted us into serfs, to wreck their vengeance on us (vindictively). Their ancient and mischievous scriptures bear ample testimony to this charge. The Brahmin authors who are hopelessly out of touch with grim reality on the ground (who dwell in ivory towers, who are visionaries, who are just wiseacres), and the Brahmin orators who was eloquent at their coteries and public meetings, are surely ignorant of the harrowing hardships which the Shudras and Atisudras have had to undergo all these years. The founder of the Sarvajanik Sabha (public social organisation founded in Poona in 1870) knows all about this sorry state of affairs".[440]

In this letter, Phule argued that the organisations and literary writings of caste Hindus are not aimed at questioning the sacredness, hegemony and exploitation and discrimination of the caste system. Critical thinking was lacking in the upper caste writings, so he exposed the hypocrisy of the so-called upper caste literary writers and their neutrality. Further, he remarked that there human being human rights were some people who did not think equally about of all. He also pointed out that the people who wanted to write on others did not have experience of any problem nor they try to understand the problem in a proper way. The importance of literature for Dalit liberation movement was clearly

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in Sudra and Atisudra perspective. He, along with Savitribai Phule, established schools for women and untouchables in Maharashtra. Later, through the Satyashodak Samaj which was the first organisation against caste system, they challenged the Brahmanical hegemony.

[440] Mahatma, Jyothi Rao Phule. (1991). *Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule*. Volume-II, published by Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, Mantralaya, Bombay, pp.109-110.

perceived by Ambedkar in the years before his conversion and death (1956). A movement cannot become strong and last till it has not generated its own literary tradition[441]. Ambedkar saw as a deficiency of his movement the fact that in 1950s Dalit movement had not yet paid attention to literature and built up its own literary assets. While addressing the Vidarbha Literary Conference on May 2 1954, Ambedkar gave a call to Dalit writers:

> "We are ignoring our life, duties and culture. A little introspection will make us visualise a terrible picture of how our life and cultural values are being corrupted. Whatever may be the reasons, it will be observed that we are treading on the path of moral degradation and regression. So the litterateurs immediately needed to become vigilant to cherish our values of life and cultural values of life. These values should be strengthened, made radiant and enhanced. Sita, in your stories and novels is crossing Lakshmanrekha and Dushyanta does not recognise Shakuntala. She is in banishment. So I want to tell emphatically all writers to express lofty values of life and cultural values through their work. Do not let your attention be parochial or restricted. Make it broad. Don't restrict your speech to the four walls. Let it spread. Don't let your pen be restricted to your questions. Let its radiance dispel the darkness in villages. Don't forget that in our country there is a huge world of the marginalised Dalits. Understand well their agony and pain. Strive through your literature to enrich their life. In it rests real humanity.[442]

In the above extract of the address which Ambedkar delivered in the conference focusing on the aim and vision of the writers and their literary writings, he suggested that the literary writings should help in lofty values of human civilization and culture which cherish egalitarian values. He also insisting that writer and his writings should challenge and deconstruct the sacred texts and its stories when he says in your (lower caste) writing "Sita crossing Lakshmanarekha", "Dushanta does not recognise Shakuntala, she is in banishment" he further suggest that the writer that "Do not let your attention be parochial

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[441] See Guy Poitevin. (2002). *Dalit Autobiographical Narratives figures of Subaltern Consciousness. Assertion and Identity*, http://ccrss.org/dalitautobio.htm

[442] Delivered a speech on May 2, 1954, Vidarbha Sahitya Sangh, Nagpur, quoted in Prof. Waman Nimbalkar. (2006). *Dalit Literature: Nature and Role*. Prabodhan Prakashan Publication, Nagpur, p.32.

or restricted", it means that the literary writers should aim at understanding larger human liberation, hence literature should address lowest of the low and their suffering, struggle and agony and their imagination in the society. In a way, he set an agenda and direction to the all marginalised literary writings. With this spirit the Dalit literary movement started in the modern India, especially after Ambedkar's demise.

In India, although there were literary writings during Ambedkar and post-independent India, the vibrant and influential phase in Dalit literature started with the emergence of Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra during 1970s. This movement was initiated by the Neo-Buddhist[443] youth, inspired by the Black Panther movement in America and took the ideological and philosophical path of Marx and Ambedkar. This synthesis of both Marxist and Ambedkarite praxis inspired many young writers and artists to produce powerful poetry, songs, novels, autobiographies, etc.[444] Later on, it spread to other states like the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (After the Dalit Sangharshana Samithi started). According to K. Satyanarayana:

> "The emergence of Dalit literary movement in Telugu is closely linked with the rise of Dalit Movement in Andhra Pradesh. The phenomenon of mass killings of Dalits in Andhra Pradesh began with the Karamchedu massacre (1985). Later, Neerukonda, Thimma Samudram, Chundur, Vempenta, Y. Cherlopally and several other ghastly atrocities took place in the 1980s and 1990s. These atrocities gave rise to a debate on caste and caste-related violence in the public sphere. The Backward Caste reservation movement in 1986 and the pro-Mandal agitation in 1990 provided a context for a wider debate on contemporary forms of caste at the national level".

He further asserts:

> "The establishment of Dalit Mahasabha, an organisation for the protection of the rights of Dalit communities, in 1985 is an important historical event in the politics of Andhra Pradesh. The Karamchedu Massacre and the formation of Dalit

[443] The ex-untouchables of Maharashtra those who converted into Navayana Buddhism or Ambedkar version of Buddhism called Neo-Buddhists. One can find more Buddhists in Maharashtra because of Ambedkar influence.

[444] Limbale, Sharan Kumar. (2007). *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations*, (translated from Marathi by Alok Mukherjee). Orient Longmans, Hyderabad. Pp.48-51

> Mahasabha consolidated different sections of Dalit communities. A wide variety of organisations were established to defend and fight for the rights of the Dalits. The establishment of Dalit Journals such as Nalupu, Edureetha, Ekalavya, and Gabbilam in 1980s and in 1990s in Telugu provided a space for Dalit scholars to articulate their views on several issues. In an attempt to produce alternative culture, a Dalit artist, Masterjee, formed the Dalit Kalamandali in 1985. In another significant move, Dalit artists, writers and intellectuals formed the Dalita Kalakarula Medhavula Ikyavedhika (united forum of Dalit artists, writers, and intellectuals) in the state. Dalit and Backward Caste scholars formed a research centre, "Satya Sodhak," to encourage social science research on the caste question. All these initiatives provided an alternative public domain for the emergence of Dalit writing."[445]

After the Karamchedu incident, the Dalit movement emerged as a powerful assertion and organised and sensitised people through the Dalit Mahasabha.[446] The post Karamchedu phase drew Dalit activists and writers into the movement. This created the context and content and inspired many young writers, artists and activists. Dalit writers asserted that the Dalit literature is literature written by Dalits against upper caste literary values and trace out their past culture and suffering of Dalits in order to create alternative egalitarian cultural values in the society. The fact of being born a Dalit alone is not enough to write Dalit poetry. Dalit consciousness is a critical factor in Dalit writing. Writing by Dalit based on Dalit consciousness reflects the painful lived experiences of Dalit people. The question of whether non-Dalits can write Dalit poetry has also come up for debate from time to time. Writings by upper castes, that express Dalit reality in terms of similarity with that by Dalit writers, can be called sympathetic poetry. There is a unanimous view that only those who suffer oppression can adequately represent their experience, culture

[445] Satyanarayana, K. *The Discovery of Jashuva: The Shaping of Dalit literary tradition in Telugu*, Source: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7018/is_1_33/ai_n28438647/?tag=content;col1

[446] Krishnaiah, B. (2011). *Ambedkar Anantara Dalit Udyamalu; Sahityam, Savalu*. Published by Society and Education, Hyderabad, p.IX

and real life world.[447] G.Lakshmi Narasaiah, who is a writer and studied the Dalit poetry, commented on the nature and scope, aim of the Dalit literature that:

> "Dalit literature is radically opposed to any concept of the writer that alienates him from his community. Dalit literature is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Dalit power concept. As such, it envisions art that speaks directly to the needs and literary movement proposes a radical re-ordering of the Hindu upper caste cultural aesthetic. It proposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology. Dalit literature exposes Brahminism, praises Dalits and supports the lower caste revolution".[448]

Further, he posits:

> "It is true that Dalit literature owes its origin to a revolutionary philosophy which is the outcome of the great struggle of lower caste people throughout Indian history for the annihilation of the caste system and Brahminical ideology. So it is naturally characterised by the so-called Ambedkarism. That is why Dalit literature is to be studied and understood in the light of Ambedkarism".[449]

Dalit organic intellectuals have collectively committed or reconstructed counter-hegemonic ideology through their literary and artistic creations consisting of poems, songs, essays, speeches, novels, short stories, plays, autobiographical notes and literary criticism. Dalit art represents the Dalit community; both in its purpose and its justification. The relationship of representation in this regard has three distinct aspects. It expresses the ideas and the themes of Dalit literature. Its contents bring out the real issues which concern the life of the Dalit community, issues of food, water untouchability, humiliation, life and death, etc. These issues have not been addressed or have been unsuccessfully handled by political organisations. Hence, Dalit literature is bringing back into the political discourse questions which never should have left it; it is performing a

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[447]Swaroopa Rani, Challapally. (1998). Dalit Women Writings in Telugu. *EPW,* Vol-XXXIII, No-17, April 25, p.21

[448]Lakshmi Narasaiah. G. (1999)**.** *The Essence of Dalit Poetry-a Socio-Philosophic Study of Telugu Dalit Poetry*. Dalit Sana Publication, Hyderabad, p.6

[449] Ibid, p.7

vital political function for the community.[450] It also brings concern of relation between Dalit writer and his/her community.

Harish Narang argued that defining the discourse of any life world experience of individuals or group of individuals of creative act would build the complex relationships of the subject and object or being. In the constituting of a discourse, a certain universe of significance is created which is not a simple reporting, or even an analytical presentation of a given empirical reality. It is an assertion to reverse the roles, like symbols, language, genres the medium of articulation, the instrument of passing judgment, the logos of power and authority. So, the European discourse of the coloniser treated blacks as subjects and in the same way upper caste imposed caste hierarchy, purity and impurity values to internalise the Dalits. When blacks and Dalits assert their respectable identities, dignity and equality, they reverse the order of this universe of reflection. When those who were objects for centuries refused to be subjected to the others and began to constitute their own world view, the oppressed (Dalits) started asserting and producing literary writings, the characters in his/her writing is not just his/her puppets but which are well grounded in the socio-political and historical contexts. It is true that there are ideological contexts for every literary text, but one has to see the values, the vision of the literary imagination and context of the text in transforming or influencing the human relations towards a more humane society which can make qualitative difference. For example, the importance of the struggle of the Vietnamese was not only fighting for Vietnamese struggle, it was a struggle for freedom of all humanity. So, the Dalit struggle for equality, dignity and justice is not only a Dalit discourse, but is a discourse of all human existence[451]. Taking this broader understanding of Dalit literary production, Dalit women also produced the literary writings which critically interrogated the savarna women and Dalit male writings.

[450]Gokhale, Jayasree. (1993). *From Concessions to Confrontation; The Politics of Indian untouchables*. Popular Prakashan, Bombay, p.325

[451] Harish Narang. (2002). *Writing Black Writing Dalit*. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, pp.1-4

Dalit women writers producing their own creative writings in various genres like poetry, songs, plays, short stories and novels. These attempts created greater consciousness on 'Dalit feminist discourse'. The burden, as Dalit and women, as Jyothi Lanjewar rightly observes Dalithood and womanhood themselves are the very basis of Dalit women's social position. One could draw an analogy between black feminist and Dalits feminists. In short, the black women in America were made victims of triple jeopardy: racism, sexism and classism, the Dalit women's predicament is exactly the same with that of black women.[452] Chalapally Swaroopa Rani, in one of her articles asserts:

> "The poetry by Dalit women, written from Dalit women's perspective and based on their experiences as Dalit women, is far more powerful and has a far greater impact than the poetry of Dalit male poets, or upper caste women poets. Dalit women's issues have less in common with Dalit men's issues than with those of the upper caste women. If there is any soul in this country who is subjected to all kinds of oppression and exploitation, it is the Dalit woman. On one side, she is oppressed by the caste system; on the other, she is subjected to gender oppression and class exploitation. She is a Dalit among Dalits. It is from this angle that we need to understand Dalit feminist poetry and its specificity."[453]

With the emergence of sub-caste literature (literature of the lowest of the low), new questions are raised, Madiga writers criticise hegemony of some dominant castes within Dalits. The powerful literary production by Madiga writers explored various dimensions of historical cultural life and questioned both external (upper caste hegemony) and internal domination (Malas). It deepened the movement and enriched Dalit literary writings. Dalits searched for their own autonomous articulation by exploring the anti-caste legacy. Scholars and leader like Kati Padma Rao argued that Dalit movement and literature is rooted in the historical legacy of anti-caste thinking and literary sources.[454] So, the formation of Dalit identity and consciousness should be understood in the trajectory of anti-caste literary discourse. In Andhra Pradesh, one can broadly find the

[452] Opt, cit, Laxmi Narasaiah, G. (1999). p.53.
[453] Opt, cit, Swaroopa Rani, Chellapally. (1998). pp.21-22.
[454] See Padma Rao, Katti. (2013). *Sangika Viplava Rachahitalu; Dalit literary Critique*. Lokayata Publication, Hyderabad.

following phases depending on the nature and contents of the anti-caste counter hegemonic literary writings:

1) Non-Brahmin literature
2) Dalit literature
3) Dandora literature

Non-Brahman Literature: Based on the nature of literature, one can divide it into two parts one non-Brahmins writings against the Varna system and religious hegemony of upper castes and two Writings on Dalits (untouchables) by non-Brahmins, both are more reformistic in nature.

Non-Brahmin literary writings against the Varna system or Brahmanical hegemony: The literary writings produced by non-Brahmins challenged the hierarchy and hegemony of Brahmins - not caste prejudice at the foundational level. All the writings sought to reform Hinduism and further the struggle for upward mobility. In Telugu literary writings, perhaps 12th century AD was an important period because during this period, Veerashivism became popular. The Saivite poets opposed the influence of the Vedic religion and propagated Veera Saivism. A few poets among those who worked for the Veerashaivism were: Palkuri Somana, Panditharadhyudu, Sreepahthi Pandithudu and Nananyacholudu. Saivism strongly rejected Varna Vyavastha (the Varna system) and untouchability. Arudra, in his work[455] states that Saivism rejected the economic and racial inequalities, a majority of lower caste people converted to Veera Saivism. Particularly, Basaveshvarudu encouraged the inter-caste marriage between a Brahman girl and an untouchable[456], Palakuriki Somana, in his Basava Puranam, wrote the stories of Dalits in the last part of the epic.[457] *The Sudra poetess, Molla, daughter of a potter, wrote "Molla Ramayanam*" in simple Telugu to make it accessible to common people. Unlike the present times, when even the Kumaries (potters) are getting into patriarchal mode, Molla wrote the Ramayanam in a mixed form of poetry and prose. It was the first feminist text

[455] The complete Andhra literature, Volume No: 1 (Page, 286)
[456] A Cobbler boy on 12th February, 1196 AD in the 13th century
[457] Bharathi, Thumapudi. (2009). *A History of Telugu Dalit Literature*. Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi, p.35

by women negating the Brahmanical patriarchal hegemony.[458] Sri Krishna Devaraya (16th Century) the Vijayanagara emperor was not only a connoisseur of fine arts, but also a poet. Through his magnum opus, Amuktyamalyada, he introduced Dalit character called Maladasari-a devotee of Vishnu.[459] The most powerful literary voice in modern Andhradesha against upper caste hegemony was that of Vemana,[460] a Sudra poet. Vemana chose the literary path to fight social evils. He criticised all the evils and superstitions in the society. He also questioned the caste system and untouchability. He wrote his poetry under Vemana Satakam, in an easy language which is understandable to everyone[461]. He mixed with the masses and collected the productive people's knowledge against the temple-centered Vaishna Brahmanism.[462]

Pothuluri (17th Century) Veerabrahma's teachings also became a historical inspiration for the present Dalit organic intellectuals. He argued against the caste differences in the society. He was a poet and prophet. In the Telugu country, he created an autonomous religious spirituality by synthesising productive linguistic and cultural aspirations of ironsmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters weavers and tailors, by constructing a text of "Kalagnanam" (knowledge of time) philosophy.[463] The Christians literature society in Andhra also published considerable literature in both English and Telugu for the benefit of the newly converted lower castes. Among the books were: *Enlightened Teachings from the Books of Truth* (1947), *Way to Heaven (1946), Wisdom Principles (1947) and Book of the Law* (1818).[464]

Swami Muddu Narsimham's first secular prose text was *Hita Suchini*. Narsimham lived between 1800 and 1858 at Rajahmundry and created this text, in what he called grama

[458] Illaiah, Kancha. (2010). *The Weapon of the Other: Dalit Bahujan Writings and the Remaking of Indian Nationalist Thought.* Pearson, Delhi, p.112.
[459] Ibid, p.37
[460] Vemana, 17th Century, Vema Reddy a progeny of Reddy kings of Konda Veedu. Vemana was a very popular among people; his writings are known as Vemana Shathakam. Mostly gramina rural society it become a part of people's folklore. C.P Brown collected his writings and some, he translated into English. Some are yet to be found.
[461] Opt, cit, Bharathi, Thumapudi. (2009). p.37
[462] Opt, cit, Kancha Illaiah. (2010). p.116
[463] Ibid, p.120
[464] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.145.

bhasha (village language) as against the Brahmanical writing of Grandha Bhasha (Teluguised Sanskrit, mostly poetry). He himself gave an English title to the book, Moral Instructor in prose. Narsimham was born in a Kapu family and with great difficulty acquired an English education and became a second–class mansab in Rajahmundry court. *Hita Suchini* was written around 1850 and was printed in 1862 by his son Ranga Prasad Naidu[465]. Gurajada Apparao (1862-1915), in his writings, condemned Varna Vyvastha, and social evils and favored social reforms. In his "Mutyala Saralu" (1910), he suggested the first step towards reformation and arrangement of community lunches. He also proposed in this poem that inters caste marriages were the solution for a casteless society. In *Lavana Raju Kala* (the dream of Lavana Raju), published in 1911, he portrayed the marriage between a tribal women, Maletha and king, Lavana. Through this story, the poet contended that in the process of reformation, there should be progress.[466]

Non-Brahmans literary writings on Dalits*:* The non-Brahmin writers and artists also contributed to Dalit consciousness through their literary writings in which they included Dalit characters, subjects and issues related to Dalit life. Tallapragada Suryanrayan Rao's *Helavati* was the first Telugu Dalit novel written by a non-Dalit in 1913. Helavati, the character of the novel was the daughter of Veerabaludu an untouchable as a socially alienated family. They lived in penury and collected grains from the porridge given to persons of their caste. Helavati blames the caste-ridden society for their miserable lives. Venkata Parwatishara Kavulu's novel *Matru Mandiram* (1919) also had some critique on the caste system. Unnava Laxminarayana's *Mala Palli* (Mala hamlet) (1922) and N.G Ranga's *Harijana Nayakudu* (Harijan leader, 1933) projected the Dalit problem from the point of view of the peasantry and agricultural labour. Adavi Bapiraju's *Narudu* (1946) depicted the problem of caste prejudice, oppression and Dalit protest at all levels. Another novel of note was *Adarsham* (1946) by Anantati Narasimham. Mangipudi Venkata Sharma's *Nirudda Baratam* (1915) was the first anthology of poems on Dalits by non-Dalits. The first part of the anthology was devoted to the socio-economic conditions of Dalits and appealed to the upper castes to treat the Dalits as human beings.

[465] Ibid, p.125
[466] Opt, cit, Bharathi, Thumapudi. (2008). p. 37

The second part appealed to the Panchamas to realise their sufferings which were brought about by the caste system, rather than by mysterious fate. One play that effectively contrasted the hegemonic upper caste ideology with the Dalit Bahujan point of view was Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary's (1887-1943) *Shambuka Vadha* (1922). He was a father figure of the non-Brahman movement and a literary doyen from the Sudra community. Gudapalli Rama Brahma's film *Mala Pilla* (Mala girl) also depicted Dalit problems. A.V. Neelakanta Sastri's play *Harijanudu* (1935) was another non-Dalit contribution to Dalit consciousness.[467]

In the post independence period, some of the notable non-Dalit writings on the theme were; Illandula Ranganayakulu's *Mallika* (1950), Vattikota Alwar Swamy's *Prajala Manishi* (1950), Mupala Ranganayakama's *Balipeetam* (1962), Kakipatnam Rama Rao's *Yagnam* (1964), Mahendra Ramamohan Rao's *Kollaigattienemi* (1965), Malladi Vasunda's *Trivarna Patakam* (1965), Vachaspathi's *Antakhalahalu* (1965), Desharathi Rangacharya's *Chillara Devundlu* (incredible Goddess,1970) and Shiva Reddy's three novels *Antarani Janta* (1973), *Banisalu* (1971) and *Swashanam Dunneru* (1974), Ellandu Saraswathi Devi's *Neebanchan Kalmokkuta* (1977), Tenenti Hemalathas's *Miss Kokila* (1978), Yerramchetti Sai's *Akari Mzili* (1978), Kethu Vishwanatha Reddy's *Verlu* (1978), Vani's *Mahanagar* (1979), K. Ramalaxmi's *Kotigadu* (1980), Dasharathi's *Cheekati Bedirindi*, J.Ramalaxmi's *Tapobangam*, A. Kutimba Rao's *Swarajam* (1984), N.R Naidi's *Nymisharanyam* (1984), Bhupathi Rama Rao's *Kulakarya* and Dadala Chantabhai's *Antuleni Amavasya*.[468] Alok Mukherjee asserted, in her introduction to Sharan Kumar Limbale, The Upper Caste Writings on Dalits and their Sympathetic Compassion**,** sees Dalits as objects - not as subjects. Generally this kind is categorised under the "discourse of pity".[469]

Mainstream Telugu literature witnessed another literary trend during 1940s. This was known as Abyudaya Sahityam or progressive literature in protest against the prevalent romanticism, idealism and traditional individualism. The writings of this school also

[467] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.151
[468] Ibid, p.152
[469] Opt, cit, Sharan Kumar, Limbale. (2004). p.VIII.

reflected on global problems of economic depression in Europe. The idealised communism propagated the communist utopia of world revolution. The writers of this school formed an organisation called "Abyudaya Rachayitala Sangam," or Progressive Writers Association (PWA). The pioneer of this organisation was Sri Sri.[470] An offshoot of progressive writer's school was the "Digambara Kavulu" (Naked poets). 'Diganbara Kavitwam' or nude poetry sneered at the established literary traditions and advocated writing in a crude form. Charabandaraju and Nagnamuni took up issues like state violence, communalism, poverty, and imperialism[471]. Their contribution lies in re-linking literature to society. The first of their anthologies was released in 1965 at a street-corner meeting by Nampalli Pandu, a rickshaw puller, and the second in 1966, by Jangala Chitti, a hotel worker. Their third anthology was dedicated in 1968 to an untouchable from Krishna district, Kanchikacherla Kotesh (1968) who was killed by the upper castes on an accusation of theft. Thus, they anticipated the modern social discourses which were to assume forms of Dalit, feminist, Adivasi and other subaltern movements in the later time[472]. The outbreak of Naxalbari and Srikakulam movements witnessed the emergence of the most powerful revolutionary literary movements in Telugu, called "Viplava Sahityam," or revolutionary poetry. This movement was known by its organisation, called "Viplava Rachayitala Sangham," or Revolutionary Writers Association (RWA). Other cultural-cum-literary organisations like "Jana Natya Mandali" (JNM), "Arunodaya[473], "Navodaya" and "Janasahiti" and "Praja Natya Mandali" journals like "Aruna Tara" (Monthly magazine), "Abyudaya" and "Srujana" played an important role in propagating pro-Dalit literature.[474] The main criticism about non-Dalit writings on the Dalits plight has been the aspirational and emotional feelings of Dalit masses were not adequately taken cognizance of by the middle class intellectuals, who were predominantly drawn from the upper castes. Then they started their own literary movement and explorative literary legacy of past.

[470] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.153
[471] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.153.
[472] Purushotham, K. (2010). Evolution of Telugu Dalit literature. *EPW*, Vol-XLV, No-22, May-29, p.56
[473] Arunodaya Kalamandali is a cultural organisation which works towards progressive culture, through songs, dramas, plays, by publishing songs books and CDs on various social issues. Presently it is led by Vimala.
[474] Opt, cit, Ratnam,K.Y. (1997). p.154

Dalit literature; Consciousness and Counter hegemonic ideology

In Andhra Pradesh, Dalit literature[475] emerged at multiple levels and Dalit organic intellectuals in A.P have evolved broadly in five phases, as under:

a) In the first phase, Ambedkar's anti-caste thought/ ideology was not fully developed in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Dalit organic intellectuals were then in a stage of making appeals, but they differed from non-Dalit writers who advocated integration. They had developed a critical view about Hindu social hierarchy and asserted against inhuman practices.
b) In the second phase, as observed by K.Y Ratnam, Ambedkarism got incorporated into Dalit literary writings. Their argument centered on uncritical acceptance of Ambedkar's philosophy as the base for counter-hegemonic ideology and alternative culture and path of emancipation.
c) In the third phase, some Dalit intellectuals and writers invoked Marxist perspective, analysing the Hindu/Indian society on the basis of historical materialism along with Ambedkar's caste Annihilation theory, this new synthesis of Marxism-Ambedkarism was aimed at successful accomplishment of a new democratic revolution in India.
d) In the fourth phase, Dalits attempted to create a broader alliance under the Dalit Bahujan discourse where they started exploring historical common legacy and suffering of Sudra-Atisudras and their struggle against upper caste hegemony by invoking thoughts and philosophies of Buddha, Mahatma Phule, Periyar and Ambedkar in their writings.
e) The fifth phase was Dandora movement which led to multiple caste articulations within Dalits, both at political and social levels that got reflected in Madiga literature popularly known as Dandora literature.

During the Nationalist Movement, Dalits started writing under the influence of Gandhi. They confined their concerns, by and large, to the problem of untouchability, continuing

[475] Marati Dalit writers like Sharan Kumar Limbale and Vaman Nimbalkar and scholars like Eleanor Zelloit also defined and advanced the Dalit literature legacy and its transformative role in Dalit emancipation.

the Dalit tradition set by writers such as Jala Rangaswamy, Kusuma Dharmanna Kavi, Premaiah and Boyi Bhimanna among others.[476] The elements of subjectivity, revivalism and de-linking of social life from literature were questioned by Gurram Jashuva (1895-1971), the first modern Telugu Dalit poet known for his outstanding work, *Gabbilam*.[477] Jashuva's Bat magnetopause rocked the whole Telugu literary world when it was published in two parts one in 1941 and the other in 1946. *Gabbilam* was the first poem in Telugu portraying the untouchable as a protagonist. It is a critic of Hindu tradition and its caste system. Jashuva questioned the tenets of established literary aesthetics, and created Dalit poetry in the classical form.[478] His was the first compelling organic Dalit voice in Telugu literature. Jashuva also recognised the autonomous struggle waged by Ambedkar for the emancipation of Dalits. He asked his messenger, the Bat, whether he had got Ambedkar's blessings. Ambedkar, my brother, is there who suffered, was victimized immensely, but secured highest position as great as that of the Viceroy. Does he welcome you with bouquets? His blessings are a must for your victory. He heckles the caste Hindus and their religious philosophy when he writes:

Their faith promises rewards in the next life
For good and kind things done in this life
They feed milk to venomous snakes
Yet, even the Goodness of justice of this faith
Shudders at the very sight of this untouchable.[479]

In the above poem the poet is saying that the caste Hindus use theory of Karma to justify caste system and practice of untouchability. They present themselves as kind and pious people, by feeding snakes and ants. The inhuman nature of the caste Hindus, Jashuva tell us is revealed in their attitude towards the untouchables. K.Satyanarayana observes that Jashuva raises several new issues in *Gabbilam*. Firstly, Jashuva is critical of classical

[476] Opted, cit, Purushotham, K. (2010). p.55
[477] The Gabilam (Bat) in upper caste literary writings used as negative purpose. In *Gabilam*, Jashuva used as a protest against upper caste literature and made it for symbol of Dalits. So, later phase Dalit poets are experimented with many symbols like Buffalo in the place of Cow, Cackoo is replaced by Kaki crow)
[478] Opt, cit, Purushotham, K. (2010). p.56
[479] Satyanarayana, K. *The Discovery of Jashuva: the Shaping of Dalit Literary Tradition in Telugu*, Source: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7018/is_1_33/ai_n28438647/?tag=content;col1

literary tradition. Second, he criticises Hindu culture as inhuman culture and attackes its representatives, the Brahmins. Thirdly, he portrays the poor and hungry untouchable as protagonist in Telugu poetry for the first time and also raised the issue of caste discrimination in the Telugu literary public sphere.[480]

The early Dalit literature mainly addressed the themes of equal treatment, self respect and dignified living. While exposing caste exploitation and discrimination, they asserted their identity as "Panchamas" and "Adi-Hindu." Their consciousness got reflected in pleading for recognition of nature of their existence. Nakka China Venkaiah, Natakka and Abraham were some other organic intellectuals who exposed caste discrimination and its dominance. Jala Ranga Swamy wrote the first Dalit novel *Rytu Pilla* (farmer's Daughters, 1938). The heroine, Sita, daughter of Vetanna, an upper caste farmer, is progressive in her understanding of social relations, revolts against traditions and boldly comes forward to marry Sri Ramudu, an untouchable farm servant at her father's house. In his long poem, *Who are the Untouchables* (1930), Rangaswamy questioned the upper caste hegemony. In *Melukolupu* (Awakening, 1930) and *Mala Sudhi* (cleansing Malas, 1930), he criticised all hypocritical, Gandhian upper caste activists who worked for the upliftment of untouchables. In his writings, Dalit identity was symbolised as the Panchamas. He projected the Dalit historical figures of Arundhati, Mathangi, and Sabri as Dalit women against the Aryans.[481] Kusuma Dharmana, while organising Dalits for the national movement, also asked the Dalits to prepare for their own liberation struggle from the native hegemonic upper caste rulers. He started a propaganda–cum-literary magazine, called *Jaya Bheri*. Dharmanna wrote a controversial song *Maakodee Nalla Doratanam* (We don't want this black landlordism) as a counter to the song *Maakoddee Tella Doratanam* (We don't want this white rule) by Garimela Satyanarayana an upper caste nationalist leader. In his long poem, "We don't want black landlordism," Dharmanna clearly exposed the myth of freedom fighters' honesty with towards the lower caste

[480] Ibid
[481] Satyanarayana, A. (1995). Dalit Protest Literature in Telugu -A Historical Perspective. *EPW*, Vol-XXX, No-3, January 21, p.161

problem and questioning the internal problems of Indian society.[482] The following lines are taken from Kusuma Dharmana's long poem:

We don't want black landlordism

In the name of freedom, they (Caste-Hindus)
Fight with the government
Demand independence, but
(They) don't give us freedom,
(They) don't allow us into temples,
Don't permit us to stay in Choultries,
Prevent us from drawing water from wells,
They say no rights to malas (Dalits), if our rights are denied,
How will you achieve freedom? [483]

Nakka Chinna Venkaiah, in his *Harijana Kirtanalu* (Harijana Hymans, 1935), pleaded with the upper castes to forgo caste distinctions. Boyee Bheemana (1911) reached the highest pinnacle of Telugu literature. He wrote nearly sixty plays, stories, novels and essays which reflect on the socio-economic, historical and cultural aspect of Dalits. Two of Bheemanas's plays, *Coolie Raja* (labourer king, 1942) and *Paleru* (Farm Servant, 1946), mirrored the problems closely affecting Dalits. *Coolie Raja* was about the struggle of Dalits for economic justice. Paleru projected the problem of Dalit bonded labourers[484]. Rauvri Ekabaram was another poet and organiser who moved along with Ambedkar in Andhra and together with him, addressed many public meetings. Ekambaram's anthology of poems on Ambedkar, *Ambedkara Samara Simha* (Ambedkar the warrior lion) created tremendous consciousness in Andhra about Ambedkar's personality and his revolutionary ideas. His *Ambedkar Ramayanamu*, *Ambedkar Bharatam* and anthology of poems are

[482] Dharmana, Kusuma. (2003). *Makodi Nala Dorathanam* (We don't want black landlordism), Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad, pp.3-12.
[483] Opt, cit, China Rao, Yaganti. (2003). p. 214
[484] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.164.

still the most popular songs on Ambedkar.[485] Endluri Chinnaia's *Ambedkar Jivitha Charitra* (Ambedkar's life history) has been the most powerfully and highly influential political biography on Ambedkar in Telugu. Vizaya Bharati[486], daughter of Boyee Bheemana, who was the first Dalit woman to get a doctorate in A.P, translated many of Ambedkar's works into Telugu. Modukuri Johnson's play *Nichenana Metlu* (lader) also played a significant role in building an alternative hegemonic ideology[487]. Saik Nazer (1920-97), an OBC Muslim, adopted and enriched a folk form of storytelling, called "Burrakatha for his mass communication. Burrakatha is simple and colloquial and totally different both in form and content from the highly Sankritised "Harikatha" which is mainly used by the upper castes. Suddala Hanumanthu was another singer and lyricist whose poems on "Vetti" and on heroic role of Telangana movement is a significant work. Both Nazar and Hanumanthu played a significant role during the Telangana struggle[488].

Unlike Marathi Dalit writers, Andhra Dalit organic intellectuals were profoundly influenced by various streams of thought, which included the Ambedkarite Movement, Marxist Leninist Movement, Naxalbari and Srikakulam uprising and Dalit Panther's Movement in Maharashtra. This change may be noticed in Dalit literature from the seventies onwards. K.G Satyamurthy, popularly known by his pen name "Shiv Sagar," is a rebel and a leader of peasants and the proletariat. Some of his poems were *Gang Bell* (1969), *Narudo! Bhaskaruda*! (1970), Udyamam Nelabaludu (1971) and Chelli Chandramma (1971) which influenced both Naxalbari and Dalit Movements. C. Varahala Rao, or CV as he is known in the literary world, became the starting point for the present generation of Dalit poets. His poems *Satyakama Jabhali*, *Narabali* (Human Sacrifice), *Samskruthika Punarjeevanam* (Cultural Renaissance) and *Varnavyavastha* (Varna System) have been masterpieces of Dalit poetry. They played a significant role in the production of a counter-hegemonic ideology. In addition, they reflected the agony and anguish of Dalits. In his poem, *Paris Commune*, CV suggested an Indianised Marxism

[485] Ibid, p.165
[486] Vijaya Bharati is a well known translator and writer who translated Phule's and Ambedkar's biographies from English to Telugu and wrote many small critical booklets on Puranas, Ramanayana, etc., published by the Hyderabad Book Trust. Hyderabad Book Trust also played an important role in translating progressive literature and in publishing Dalit literature.
[487] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.165.
[488] Ibid, p.166

with class/caste approach. His poems gave the earliest direction for the synthesisation of Marxism and Ambedkarism[489]. During 1960s to late 1980s, the class mobilisation was very intense and to some extent, Dalits were mobilised on these lines. In some of the Telangana areas, "Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu" worked in coordination with the radical organisations. The "Dalit phase" in modern literature and politics began late Andhra Pradesh as compared, say, to Maharashtra. In Andhra Pradesh, as in Tamil Naidu, the Dalit discourse gained currency in the 1980s[490]. The Karamchedu incident in 1985 turned the debate from class to caste. In this same year, K.G Satyamurthy, a member of CPI (ML), challenged the leadership of the party on account of what he termed caste-based discrimination within its hierarchy. Having walked out of the party in 1985, Satyamurthy formed a few socio-political groups, pioneered Dalit poetry and became a staunch follower of Babasaheb Ambedkar.[491] Besides atrocities, the pro- and anti-reservation agitations, the backward class reservation agitation of 1986 in Andhra Pradesh and other backward classes (OBC) (Mandal reservation) of 1990 helped Dalits to garner support and solidarity for their agitations[492]. With this background, Dalit literature created its own impact on the social relations and ongoing movements. The "Dalit Manifesto,"[493] was published by Keshav Kumar and K.Satyanarayana, in the context where caste and class been thoroughly debated among civil societal groups. An anthology of poetry was published in 1995, by "Vispotana" publication.[494] In this, Salandra wrote a very powerful poem:

Mine
You asked me not to enter into temple
Well, anyhow

[489] Ibid, p.168.
[490] Opt, cit, Purushotham, K. (2010). p.56.
[491] Ibid, p.56.
[492] Ibid, p.56.
[493] This anthology was published by writers as active students in Progressive Students Forum (PSF), University of Hyderabad. The context in which this anthology came is very vibrant intellectual debate was happening in both the University and outside the University on Caste-Class Movements. In response to this anthology, two poetry anthologies came out *Gunde Dappu* (from within the university) and *Padunekina Pata* (from outside the university. Both proposed that Ambedkarism is relevant to Dalit emancipation.
[494] See Kumar, Keshav and Satya Narayana. (Ed.), (1995). *Dalit Manifesto: Anthology of Poetry*. Vispotanam Publication, Hyderabad.

I am happy being an atheist
Mine
Prescribes not to study
If I study ordered to cut the tongue
Well, anyhow,
I comprehend how gullible you are
How prodigious you are

One uttered me
As an "untouchable"
Another affirmed
As "Harijan"
Some rogue judged me
As a "wretched"
What is it for me?
Whosoever, whatever manner calls
When I myself am a "Naxalite"
Having on their values
Becoming a blubbering burp
Or a camel's eye
Conjuring up there principles
In my trauma
Yes
What is it for me?
Whosoever calls, whatsoever manner.[495]

The above poem forcefully challenges different identities which are stigmatised, given and rooted in the religious structures. The poet challenges and questions these by owning the revolutionary identity called "Naxalite." This clearly indicate two things; one, it rejects the very idea of "reforming" the Hindu religion where the poet is maintaining that

[495] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997). p.171.

not being allowed entry into the temple itself is good because it helped him to become an atheist. By invoking the identity of an atheist permanently, he is rejecting the God, religion, beliefs and there is no way one can reform him. The second aspect of the poet's articulation owned the Naxalite identity. It clearly shows the path of armed struggle against the hegemony of Brahmanical ideology and system. It also shows the impact of radical movement on Dalits. Guda Anjaiah is a well known singer and writer who weaved many songs against landlordism, caste and exploitation. The following lines are extracts from Anjaiah's song:

Village is ours! This street is ours!
Hamlet is ours! We are for every work!
Hammer is ours! Knife is ours!
Crowbar is ours! Spade is ours.
Cart is ours! Bullock is ours!
Who is lord and why lordship? [496]

The above song depicts anger against the hegemony on different spheres of the dominant caste and claims that Dalits and oppressed communities have rights over their village, production, and its tools. The moral claim of people over their resources and productive forces and tools is an indication. Here, the productive communities actively participated and produced, they don't have controlling power. Moreover, but are alienated from the production due to caste and class structure. This poem, *I am still a prohibited Human being* by Yendluri Sudhkar vividly presents this oppression:

I am still a prohibited human being
Mine is an expelled breath
Trying a barb tree leaf to my Quist
And a tiny spittoon to my mouth
Manu made me a wretched human animal among others
The moment he left a mark of prohibition on my face

[496] Ibid

My race was gradually murdered
History pinched my thumb
Present is asking all the fingers
Now, we want a voice of our own[497]

In the above poem, the poet asserts that still the change has not reached the people, and that the untouchables are treated as prohibited human beings. He also brings out that *Manusmuthi* codes are still being practiced in modern times. *Manusmuthi* made these untouchables are wretched human beings. This community gradually destroyed its values and egalitarian traditions. Further, he is emphasising that, today, these untouchables are questioning these practices and demanding their own space in which they can represent themselves.

Shiva Sagar is a well known leader and writer who worked in People's War Group for a long time. After Karamchedu, the radical movement in the context of internal debates on the question of caste. After Karamchedu incident, he got actively involved in organising and taking inspiration from Marx, Mao, Ambedkar and Phule towards synthesising caste-class approach through civil societal organisations. His poetry inspired thousands of people both in radical and Dalit movements. Especially in Dalit literature, he becomes a trendsetter to young upcoming writers. A majority of his poems one published under the title of *Shiva Sagar Kavithvam* (Shiva Sagar's poetry, 1968-2008)[498]. He also wrote *Ambedkar Suryudu* (2004) rejoinder to misinterpretation of Ranganayakamma's *Dalita Samayasku, Ambedkar, Buddhudu, Chaladu Marx's Tappanisari*. The following lines are extract from one of his poems.

Sambuka with a smile on his lips
Is executing Rama

[497] Keshav Kumar, P. (2011). *Canon and Contest: Telugu Dalit literature*. In Krishnaiah, B. (Ed), (2011). *Dalit Movements and literature-Emerging Issues and Challenges*. Prestige Books International Publication, New Delhi, p.172

[498] Shiva Sagar. (2008). *Shiva Sagar Kavithvam: 1968-2008*. Kammam, Swesha Prachuranalu. This compiled book consists of the already published small poems: *Gerrila Viplava Geethalu* (1972); *Janam Uppiritho* (1974); *Padi Vasathalu* (1983); *Nelavanka* (1988); *Nadusthuna Charithra* (2004) and *Udda Chandrudu.*

Ekalavya is chopping off Drona's thumb
With an axe
Bali with his tiny feet is trampling
Vamana into the netherworld
Manu with needles poked in his eyes
His tongue cut
Molten lead in his ears
Is rolling in the graveyard
On the cruel sword of time stands
The roaring Chandala
Inciting
Four hounds into Sankara
That's it!
The ongoing history
Is a very Chandala history.[499]

In the above lines, Satyamurthy is recreating and announcing that this contemporary history is the history of the Chandala. Historically, it is told through mythological stories and folklore that "Sambuka" was killed by Rama, because Sambuka is a Sudra that too he is teaching and learning in other stories. It is also said that Dhronacharya asked Ekalavya's thumb as a Guru Dakshina. The poet has reversed it and, instead, Ekalavya in his poem is cutting Dronacharya thumb in his poem. It is mentioned in *Manusmruthi* that if untouchables tries to listen to Vedas pour glass into their ears. Now, the poet is reversing that and imagines Manu's tongue being cut. Brahmins are also claimed that it is a "Vedabhoomi" and "Akhanda Bharat" now finally the poet is arguing that it is a Chandala history that the untouchables are rewriting today. This suggests that history has to be rewritten from below and as productive communities become reference points. Kalyan Rao is a well known revolutionary Dalit writer. In his writing, he also argued that educated Brahmins were able to misrepresent the entire history. In his words:

[499]Satyamurthy, K.G, *Ongoing History*, translated by Archana Chouhan, Indian literature, Volume XLV, 6, November–December, cited in Thumapudi Bharathi. (2008). *A history of Telugu Dalit Literature*, p.108.

What my father has narrated
His father had written
Narration has become untouchable
The Writing had established as a Royal King[500]

The above four stanzas depicts that the oral history of the oppressed or Dalits become untouchable and the written history becomes hegemonic over the people's history. This hegemonical historiography of Brahmanical writings has been questioned. As argued by Kancha Illaiah, Braj Ranjan Mani history has to be "de-Brahmanised" in order to explore the shramanic tradition of the egalitarian values and productive relations and human values[501]. The same is also articulated by Shambuka (pen name) in his poem *Poyeddeni Lenollam* (We have nothing to lose) exposes the real picture of caste hypocrisy and its roots in radical movements:

If Madiga wear Khadi
He is a hopeless fool
If Kamma wears it
He is simple ideals satyagrahi
Ah! Caste
How cruel you are.
If Brahmin says there is no caste
He is a great reformer
If Mala propagates the same
He is a dangerous casteist
Oh! Caste
How brutal you are
In Nagi Reddy, Pulla Reddy
You don't find caste

[500] G.Kalyan Rao, Telugu Revolutionary Dalit writer.
[501] See Mani, Braj Ranjan. (2005). *De-Brahmanising History*. Manohar Publication, New Delhi.

But in Satya Murthy, Padma Rao
Caste smell is guising out
Oh! Caste
How funny you are.[502]

In the general public discourse, some of the Dalits groups are asking why majority of Brahmins occupy the leadership positions in the "communists groups" and why all right is run by Brahmins. Some of the activists also raised the argument that if a Brahman talks about Dalits rights, those become human rights. When Dalits talk about their rights, these are labeled as Dalits rights. Often, in the public domain, the upper castes say that they don't believe in caste, they don't think still the system persist. All these Dalit writers and their writings inspired and motivated in organising a national level conference at Hyderabad under the leadership of Tarakam is a lawyer by training and a leader and writer. Under his supervision, the first All India Dalit Writers Conference was organised on 8,9,10 October, 1987 in Hyderabad. The proceedings were published in 1994. In this, he wrote a poem which clearly draws similarities between blacks in America and Dalits in India.[503]

They called you "Negro"
They called you "Negro"
They called me "Untouchable"
They called your residence "Ghetto"
They called mine untouchable Cheri
They despise you and me
We remain to live in dirt.
These whites kept both of us
In dark dungeons
Trampling us under still

[502] Opt, cit, Ratnam, K.Y. (1997).
[503] Some of the scholars always inspired and tried to connect themselves with global movements that are Blacks. During the 1970s, the Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra, Phule and Ambedkar tried to connect with blacks movements.

Darker regions
Away from towns and Bungalows.
We are sinking and
Sinking in deep darkness.
Several years ago they came
Purchased and took you away
Several years ago they came
Into place and drove us away
They made both of us slaves
Except for work they made us useless.[504]

In this particular poem, the poet tried to bring similarities between America's Negros and Dalits in India. In this poem one could see the influence of world level oppressed people struggles which also inspired the movements like Dalits Panthers in Maharashtra and the leaders in Andhra Pradesh, which also helped at broader level to connect their movements with larger world civil societal groups and build world-level solidarity in fighting against caste at the global level. The poet also pointed out how stigmatised identities are imposed and forced them to be internalised among Dalits. The author also pointed out that the residential areas where these people live are segregated and ghettoised. In a way author argues that these peoples' life is colonised by oppressor. Their hegemonic daily practices forced Dalits to become serfs rather than active agents. Master Ji (Praja Vageyakarudu) is a well known singer and writer who played a crucial role in propagating and organising artists and writers towards Ambedkar's ideology, particularly "Mulnivasi" movements, through which he propagated that all untouchables, both Shudras and Ati-Shudras are inhabitants of the great Naga culture of shramanic tradition and the Aryans or Brahmins had come from other lands. He himself proposed and propagated the concept in the state and scripted many songs which he carried among the people. In 1978, he established "Dalita Kala Mandali" which played historical role in the modern history of Dalit movement. He also published books like *Mulnivasi Patalu*,

[504] Tarakam, Bojja. (1994). *they called you Negro*, in Souvenir of first all India Dalit writers, held on 8,9,10 October, 19987 in Hyderabad, p.71.

and *Venala Ganam.* His audio cassettes have been well received by people[505]. He wrote many songs and also poetry[506] among them the following stanza represents the essence of his artistic movement:

Adi-Hindus-nations nudes
Real Indians are –Adi Indians
Aryans invaded-fought
Weaponless-Dravidians were
Defeated and–made slaves
Today they are the Dalits.

The poet asserts that Aryans came and invaded the land of the Dalits. The weaponless Dravidians (Dalits) were defeated and enslaved. This Mula-Nivasi movement is also being propagated by BAMCEF which is also trying to unite SC, ST, OBC and religious minorities. His poem *Neel Lal* (blue and red) seeks a synthesis of Ambedkarism and Marxism:

Under blue red flag, "O sister"
You and me are equal, "O sister"
Be ready for the struggle, "O sister"
Then only
Oppressed would get emancipation, "O sister"
To dismantle the oppressors rule, "O sister"
To accomplish the Dalit rule, "O sister"

The above songs explored the history of untouchables against the Aryans. The poet is convinced that the Aryan invaders made inhabitants of India slaves, or untouchables. The second song also tries to talk about red and blue color together, in order to challenge the domination by the upper castes and to liberate the untouched or oppressed people of the

[505] Ibid,
[506] See Masterji. (2008). *Masterji Mulavasula Patalu*. Bhagyanagar Book Trust, Hyderabad

Indian society. One more singer called Bheema Sena is a well known singer who wrote many songs and published books and brought out cassettes. One of the songs has become a Prayer song for any public meeting of Dalit Bahujans. This is: *Dandamo Ma Deena Baduvulaku, Mahaneeyulara, Andukondi Pedola Dandalu Mahaneeyular*.[507] The balladeer Gaddar has become a legend in the cultural movement in Andhra Pradesh. He wrote many songs for which he extensively used the local people's folklore and cultural mores. In a way, he has been the trend setter for many young singers and artists. His songs: *Jananatya Mandali* on "Coolies" (Labour), *Class struggle,* and those on the armed struggle, against state violence inspired thousands of people. Particularly after Karamchedu, he composed songs on the themes of untouchability, gender, caste humiliation, caste violence, etc. On the Karamchedu incident, he wrote an inspiring song which became a landmark in Dalit movement.[508] These include: *Dalita Pululamma, Karamchedu Buswamulathoni, Kalabadi Nilabadi Poruchesina* and, *Dalita Pululamma*", Jairaj is also one of the established writers and singers. He wrote many songs on caste, village life, Telangana, discrimination and social issues, which influenced the people a lot. He himself narrated that he was inspired by Ambedkar and his philosophy.[509] Gorenti Venkana, Vangapandu, Darvu Yellana, Eannar, also released songs, books and audio cassettes. The *Dalita Bahujan Shramic Union Rasta Kalamandali* (DBSU) published many songs through books and audio cassettes on various issues through Ambedkar perspective. Various organisations like "Jananatya Mandali", "Praja Natya Mandali", "Dalita Bahujana Chaitnaya Mandali" and "Arunodaya" also played a role in raising consiouness among Dalits. In the literary field, women also raised serious questions and started articulating multiple marginalities and advancing Dalit literature. Although there have been very few Dalit women writers, there is considerable literature by them. Yet, there is a need to encourage new Dalit women writers and activists. Writers certainly created their own literary trend in the history of Telugu literature. Among Dalit women writers wrote with reformist thinking, while some wrote with Dalit feminist consciousness. However, one could clearly see the life world of many dimensions of

[507] See Bheema Sena's songs, books and audio Cassettes.
[508] Kumar, Keshav. (2010). Popular Culture and Ideology; the Phenomenon of Gaddar. *EPW*, February, 13, Volume-XLV, N0-7, P.64
[509] See Jayaraju, *Vasantha Geetaham-Jayaraju Patalu* (songs), Jayaraju Himself, Kammam.

Dalit women. For example, as Dalit women, Dalit Christian women, Madiga women and Dalit women in regional dimension, one could see and understand the Dalit women writings and impact on social consciousness and multiple identities in challenging three dimensional power structures - caste, class and gender, both within and outside the Dalit communities.

While Dalit poets have been writing on all aspects of the caste system, it is only after the Dalit women began to write, that the genre of Dalit poetry became complete. Contemporary writers include: Challapally Swaroopa Rani, Jupaka Subadra, Gogushamala, Thumapudi Bharathi, Jajula Gowri, G. Vijayalaxmi, Nakka Bijayabharathi, Vinodini, Rani Kolakuluri Maddhu Jyothi, Madduri Vijay Sri, Darisi Sasinirmala and Mahalaxmi etc. Dalit women face multiple oppressions being untouchables, being a women and Dalit women. The first two poems by Dalit women were published in *Gunde Dappu*. After that, *Padunekina Pata, Chelapathi Vardanam, Meme* carried Dalit women writings further. Some poems like *Ame* and *Akale Migilindi* (only hunger remains) were published in a collection of *Neeli Megalu*, an anthology of women poetry in united Andhra Pradesh. Dalit male writers also attempted to develop Dalit women perspective through their poetry and short stories. In this sequence, one could see Madduri Nageshbabu's *Devuni Pellam*, Satish Chander's *Arachethi Randralu*,Vemula Yellayya's *Etti Thali*, Durga Prasad's *Deva Dasi*, Yendluri Sudhakars's *Aido Vachanam,* and *Dakkali Pilla* and Nagappa Sundhar Raju's *Peddinti Pilla*. However, Challapally Swaroopa Rani asserts that Dalit women writings, based on their subjective experience as Dalit women, are far more powerful and have a greater ability to capture the suffering of subjects than Dalit male and upper caste women writers.[510] Hence, the subjective experience and question of representation become important themes of literary writings in order to understand the complexities of social relation, historical suffering and organic representation. Swaroopa Rani, in her anthology of poetry, explains the multiple oppressions. She implicitly raises a question that gender

[510] Opt, cit, Swaroopa Rani, Chellapally. (1998). p.21

discrimination starts within the family, whereas caste discrimination starts outside the family. The following lines are extracting from her poetry:

When has my life been truly mine?
In the home male arrogance
Sets my cheek stinging
While in the street, caste arrogance
Splits the other cheek open.[511]

In the above lines, the poet argues within the home there is discrimination and humiliation in the name of gender, and outside caste discrimination. Here, one if deeply observe the relation between caste and Brahmanical patriarchy as noted by Uma Chakravarthy, it is quite often that gender discrimination starts within the family itself, but caste discrimination starts always outside the family. The Dalit women also raised issue of upper caste women having a casteist attitude towards lower caste women and their humiliation and discrimination at various work places and public sphere. Further, they exposed the inability of upper caste women to question their own husbands when they oppress lower caste women.

Why speak of the other?
Another woman wants to buy me
She wants me as the gold lace
To her upper caste new sari.
She wants me as the crimson
On her lips

Do you remember?
Your words when
Your husband plucked me
Like a chicken'?

[511] Ibid, p.22

Do you know how often?
I was cheap at your hands
In your house[512]

The above lines clearly show that there is discrimination against Dalit women by upper caste women for perpetuating caste prejudice. It took a fairly long time for the Telugu Dalit novel to evolve to its present form. As in the case of poetry, the nationalist struggle influenced the Telugu Dalit novel; the most important of which was Unnava Laxminarayana's Malapalli (A Mala Hamlet) in 1922, followed by N.G Ranga's *Harijana Naayakudu* (Harijana Leader) and Dasarathi Rangacharya's *Chillaradevullu,* translated into English as the *Lesser Deities*. The other noteworthy names in this lineage are: Muppala Ranganayakamma, known for her *Bali-Peetham,* Keshava Reddy, popular for his *Athadu Adavini Jayinchadu* (translated as *He Conquered the Jungle*); and Aruna, who wrote *Elli* and *Nelli,* that deal with the Erukalas, the Pig-rearing community. But what is noteworthy about evolution of the Dalit novel is that while post-1985 period - a period of Dalit awareness produced vibrant Dalit poetry - the same was not true of the Dalit novel. G. Rama Mohan Rao's (*Spartacus) Kakibatukulu* (1982), Chilukuri Devaputra's *Panchamam* (1998), Boya Jangaiah's *Jatara* (1997) and *Maromaarpu* (2002) are some of the novels that came out during the period. The Dalit novel came of age decisively with the publication of Vemula Yellaiah's *Kakka* (2004) and *Siddi* (2006) and G. Kalyanarao's *Antaraani Vasantham* (untouchable spring), a revolutionary novel that seeks to find a solution in armed struggle.[513]

Dandora literature; the literature from below

As mentioned in the above section, the hegemonic casteist power structures are being challenged at multiple levels. During mid-1995, the Dandora movement, popularly known as MRPS (Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi), came forcefully and demanded the SC reservation into A, B, C, D; so, that everybody will get equal benefit out of the

[512]Ibid, pp.23-24.

[513] Opt, cit, Purushotham, K. (2010). P.56.

Constitutionally stipulated 15 percent reservation for the Dalits. The "Malamahanadu"[514] opposed it arguing that it is a political conspiracy to divide the Dalits. This controversy created the social and political context for the emergence of Madiga Dandora literature[515]. Some of the Madiga writers (they already engaged with Dalit movement) responded to this Dandora question. Consequently, it helped Madiga writers to trace the trajectory of their own literature and produce literary writings on Madiga life, culture and movement. Darla Venkateshwarlu, in His book on '*Dalit literature, Madiga Perspective*', tried to trace out literary production on Madigas. In this, he pointed out that the legendary play *Raga Vashitha* written by Boyi Bheemana, narrates a love story of Vasitha and Arunthati Devi (a Madiga Woman). Next, Mamalakanti Jaganatham wrote a booklet titled *Arundhati Devi Charitramu* (1968) (History of Arundhati Devi). Prof. Kolakaluri Enoch wrote a play, *Tiruppan Alwar*, which portrays life and devotion of Madigas. In his book, *Kathamanjari* (1992) B.V.S Murthy wrote stories of Madigas and other untouchables. The book delineates not only the story of a devotee called Lashmamma belonging to the Mathangi caste, but also about *Arundatidevi Charitra* (1992:111-18). In the story *Jambavanta and Mad Uncle,* Yendluri writes that the trinity treated Jambavamuni as a low caste. From *Aaranjyothi,* it is understood that Brahmins considered Arundhati as a low caste women and killed her out of conspiracy. To hide their crime, they set her on fire. Yendluri is of the view that the story of Arundhati lies behind this custom. The Hindu newly married couple made to view at Arundhati star on a Pont of marriage ritual. It is a kind of sacredness attached to Arundhati. Kancha Illaiah wrote a booklet on Madiga life in a social and economic perspective called *Madiga Thatvam* linking their culture, skill, art and aesthetics in Shramanic tradition.[516] *Parama Padam* (the journey to heaven) a social play, written by K.S.T Sai also reflects the same

[514] Malamahanadu is an organisation formed by Malas to oppose SC categorisation and for the welfare of the Malas. The different fractions of Malamahanadu claim to be representing the interest of Mala sub-castes.

[515] In literature, Madigas can be identified to the maximum extent based on their cultural characteristics in the light of the calcification of the other dependent sub-caste such as Bindlas and Chindus, Tradionally, Madigas have been involved in skinning the cattle, eating beef, making leather shoes, making drums and beating these on specific occasions for generations (Prof. Kancha Illaiah-2010, *Post Hindu India*). Though in classical and traditional literary writing, poets did not mention Madigas in their writings, one can find the references as they have been described as Jambavas, Arundhateeyas, Gosangas, Chandalas, Bindlas, Kommulas, Mathangas, and Phambalas, etc. (Darla Venkateshwar-2). Moreover, Malas and Madigas are used synonymously in traditional literature.

[516] See Kancha Illaiah, *Madiga Thatvam*, Yekalavya Publication

theme. Kolakaluri Enoch's play *Munivahanudu*, the story of Thiruppan who makes a successful attempt into the Sriranganatha temple portrays Madigas life. God would not reject entry and worship by a Madiga, but the objection is from the priest. Kolakaluri Enoch, in another play *Nirbhaya* (fearless), depicts the caste-based humiliations to a Madiga student from his fellow students in the college. *Ratnagarbhalo Nithya Daridrudu* (a pauper on the rich land), a play written by M.Kanna Babu, which depicts a story of Madiga who pursues his caste-based occupation. In the play, *Harijanodharanam* (Upliftment of Harijans) Maganti Paarthasarathi describes the love marriages between Madiga-Brahman Varnas, caste norms and social conflicts arising out of these. Patibandla Ananda Rao's play *Nishiddaksharam* (the banned letter) describes how Madigas were denied education for generations. However, majority of plays were written by non-Madigas. Bonigala Rama Rao, in his *Aadiguru Aacharya Chandala* (2005), also understood a "Chandala" as a Madiga from his conversation with Adishankaracharya. However the 'Madiga Sahitya Vedika' played historical role in shaping the Madiga literature.

The formation of 'Madiga Sahitya Vedika' (MSV) in 1996 by Nagappagari Sundar Raju radically changed the character of Madiga literary production, in particular, and Dalit literature, in general. Through this platform, Madigas produced very powerful literary writings. Why this platform emerged in the University of Hyderabad is a question? It is said that the already existing organisation "Dalit Sahitya Vedika' (DSV) was dominated by Malas under Ambedkar Students Association (ASA)[517]. When the "Dandora movement started the organisation opposed categorisation of Dalits, since it was dominated by Malas. Then Madiga students of University of Hyderabad formed "Madiga Sahitya Vedika" affiliated to Dalit Students' Union (DSU). A research scholar, Nagappagari Sundar Raju, organised many literary conferences and book reviews by connecting with Madiga artists, writers and intellectuals.[518] In fact, one can see a clear cut influence of the Dandora movement on Madiga writers. In this way, Madiga life and

[517]Sundhar Raju, Nagapagari. (1997). *Madiga Chaitanyam*. Madiga Sahitya Vedika (MSV), Hyderabad, A.P, P.11-14

[518] Venkateshwar Rao, Darla. (2007). *Uka Madiga Smuthi-Nagapa Sundar Raju Parichayam*. Telugu Sahitya Vedika, Hyderaabd, p.17-29

movement became a source of Madiga literary writings.[519] Through their literary works, these writers started challenging both upper caste and Mala-dominated hegemonic literary writings and explored their history, cultural life and aesthetics. Historically tracing Madiga literary roots, Darla Venkateshwar Rao maintained that "Discrimination" and exploitation in the society are reasons for the emergence of both the Madiga movement and Madiga literature. Initially, Madiga literature started with pamphlets, songs. Later on, it deeply explored Madiga and the sub-communities of the Madigas life world. The content of the Madiga literature in the beginning took up reservation issue and domination by Malas. In the second phase, it started to symbolise cultural symbols like drums, shoes, landha and exposed internal hierarchy, discriminatory practices and untouchability within the Dalits.[520]

One of the interesting things in Madiga movement was that the Madigas started to use their stigmatised "Madiga" nomenclature as their suffix/prefix to their name. This created a lot of debate in intellectual and literary circles.[521] Many wondered how that could help in challenging the caste system with the caste names. But Madigas brought various anthologies on this name and used the stigmatised tool to challenge the caste superiority.[522] Madiga writers and leaders brought the argument that in the name of unity of 'Dalit' and 'Dalit movement', Malas were dominating other castes within Dalits. So, Madigas preferred to call themselves as Madigas rather than Dalits. In this connection, one could witness the politics between the projection of Jashuva and Boyee Bheemana. Madigas owned Jashuva and Malas owned Kusuma Dharmana and Boyi Bheemana.

Nagappagari Sundhar Raju invested his time and energy to develop the Madiga literature, within the Dalit literary domain. He brought out the *Chandala Chatimpu*, an anthology of poetry in 1996 from University of Hyderabad. After that, Sundar Raju brought out

[519] Discussion with Chittibabu Padavala (Journalist and Dalit Activist)
[520]Venkateshwarlu Rao, Darla. (2008). *Dalita Saityam-Madiga Drukpadam*. Hyderabad, Society and Education Trust, pp.39-48
[521] See Balagopal, K. (2000). A Tangled Web. *EPW*, Vol-XXXV, No-13, March 25.
[522] There are poems and short stories anthologies in the name "Madiga" and also leaders and educated people among the Madigas also started to use this Suffix. For example, Manda Krishna Madiga and Merry Madiga.

Madiga Chaitanyam (Madiga Consciousness). The specialty of this anthology of poetry is that all writers belong to Madiga community. *Madigodu* is an anthology of short stories on Madiga, life, culture and struggle. Darla Venkateshwarlu, in his foreword to the book, reviewed all the stories and pointed out that all stories dealt with the social life of Madiga community. He depicted various dimensions of struggles and sufferings of Madigas. In all, he tried to establish his community's (Madiga) life experience and life world. Therefore, it created a new trend to take consideration of life experience as a theme of stories to present a perspective from his/her social location. In the story, *Bodedulakatha*, he picked up habits, culture, skills, and occupations as integral parts of the story and implicitly used all these to assert their identity and challenge the hegemony of upper caste. In the remaining stories, like *Maddikeramarthama*, he described how the upper caste communities raped and killed Dalit women at the village level. In *Joresahukatha*, he clearly described the psychological, sociological, emotional feelings among students at the school level on caste, religion and conditions which forcefully to internalised those hierarchical practices.[523] Nagapagari Sundar Raju wrote very powerful poetry in exposing discriminatory practices between Malas and Madigas. The following lines are extracting from one of his poem:

I felt so much saddened
Did not think that it would happen in this manner
All belonged to bigger community
I only stood at the lower ring
……
Whoever gets matured?
Call me for singing
When I get matured, nobody has turned up
At last "Malaravana's daughter
Even Malas are greater
Community than us

[523] See Sundar Raju, Nagapagari. (1997). *Madigodu: Anthology of Short Stories*. Madiga Sahitya Vedika, Hyderabad

Nobody has come to Madiga lane
Everybody used me
When I get maturity
No one has turn up[524]
……

In the above long poem, titled *Peddintipilla***,** Sundhar Raju narrates a Madiga girl's feeling how she was humiliated in the festival of the community. The poem describes that Madiga girls are invited to sing whenever a girl attains puberty. However, the singers have to sing from the outside only. When a Madiga girl attains puberty, nobody comes. Here, poet points that everybody uses Madigas for their benefits. Even the Malas show discrimination by not going to Madiga homes when Madiga girls attain puberty. It clearly brings out the daily exclusion and discrimination of Madigas both by upper castes and Malas within the Dalits. Precisely on these themes, Sundhar Raju wrote extensively by exploring Madiga cultural and social life worlds and multiple marginalities. With Yendluri Sudhakar's writings, Madiga literature becomes more politically influenced. He wrote two strong long poems: *Vargikaraniyam* (Categorisation) and *Kothagabilam* (New Bat). In the first one, he questioned silence of Dalit intellectuals and writers on the question of Madiga reservation and discrimination within Dalits. One of the articles written by Jilukara Srinivas and Chittibabu Padavala also argued that silence of Malas negatively affected the spirit of Dalit literature. Further, they coined this silence or the attitude of Malas as 'Malatva'.

> "Malatva is not just a mode of thought. It is also a mode of living. To use an old idiom, it is an articulated reality, which has connection with both the base and the superstructure. As Hindutva is not Hinduism, we need not imagine that all Malas would have and accept qualities of Malatva". Further, they extend their argument that:

[524] Sundhar Raju, Nagapagari *Peddintipilla*, cited in Krupakar Madiga and Jupaka Subadra. (Ed.), (2008). *Kaithunakala Dandam*, Dandora Prachuranalu, Hyderabad. p. 22-24

> "They don't have courage like these classes who fight for their property when on the verge of danger….like the classes, which are being exploited. This class does not have impetus /source material for revolution/change. The groups, which do not get an opportunity to labour, would get agitated but would not get angry which has lost part in the process of production, can only have pseudo creativity. Like parasite classes they would not have …… tactics and groupisim. This group would not exploit nor, they would get the opportunity of being exploited. Begging in front of court and not sharing the fruits with weaker sections among them are their characteristics. They believe that they can get rights by begging. Still, what keeps them in the orbit of progressive ideology is habit only. It does not have real/ physical base even now. They were able to garner enough cultural capital, they would have been able to express their existential crisis in the universal language of common goals. They can fight but cannot struggle, they cannot argue. "Their crisis reflects failure to a large extent, but not entry point for revolution/change we can call this group's way of thinking and way of living as "Malathva." We find/see these traces and symptoms in the literature that is being produced by this group.[525]

He tried to expose the politics of silence of Dalit intelligence. Guttam Swamy wrote a long poem, *Ikeekaraneeyam* (Unification) to counter Yendluri Sudhakar's text, *Vargeekaraneeyam* (Dividing). The following lines are the translated extracts from his long poem.

Can you deny that classification is a ploy for votes?
By cunning politicians
Can you deny that this is a result of?
Lobbying by leaders belonged to "b" category
Please explain sir…!

Still did not you realise that?

[525]Srinivas Jilukara and Chittibabu Padavala. (2005). *Dalit Sahityamchesina Vishaprayogam* (Negative Effects of Dalit Literature), Andhra Jyothi, July 24, 2005.

Classification did

Harm rather than good?

Are you not getting the

Fruits of remaining

Seventeen castes that are

In "B" Category

Now tell me, who are exploiting whom?

Do not try to collect crumbs of "ABCD".

But try to get power over state

As it is being taught by our brother "Madduri"

Have you forgotten his words?[526]

In the above poem, the poet is accusing the movement for categorisation of SC reservation and blaming that it is politically motivated and instigated by upper caste politicians and political parties which helped Madigas to lobby with the government. Further, he says that still Madigas could not realise that categorisation harmed Dalits. Here, the poet is not showing any substantial evidence in support of his own argument in what way it harmed Madigas. Contrary to this P. Muthaiah and John Victor, in their research papers, showed post-categorisation benefits to lower castes in positive light. Further, the poet is raising a logical question by asserting that Madigas are exploiting the other remaining castes in the "B" category. On the contrary, Manda Krishna has posited that if Madigas are exploiting the others, certainly there will be opposition to Madigas, but nobody is opposing the Madigas. In fact, they are supporting and actively participating in the categorisation movement.[527] Finally, the poet suggests to Madigas to struggle to capture political power for solution of internal problems of Dalits. In the poem, *Neelipathaka* also, it has been suggested that Dalits should aim to capture political power, instead of being content with internal reservation. In response to this, Yendluri

[526] See Guttam, Swamy. (2005). *Yekeekaraniyam* (Unification). Rajamandry, Gutam Swamy.
[527] Manda Krishna Madiga interview 25th February, 2015, Hyderabad.

Sudhkar wrote Neeli *Nakka*. In this, he wondered how political power alone solves the questions like social, cultural, political and equal resource distribution that Dandora movement raised. Further, he extends his argument by asking who is stopping Dalits from capturing political power after internal categorisation. Nagappa Sundhar Raju has criticised the practice of hiding the names of the Madiga writers in the *Dalita Rajyam* Magazine, because the writers in the Press Club meeting expressed support to Madiga Dandora movement. Sudaiah exposed Mala domination in the poem that *Makodi Mala Dorathanam* (We don't Want Mala Landlordism). The following lines are translated from the original text:

We don't want this Maladorathanam-Babu
We don't want this Dalit Doras' domination
Deva (God), it became clear to us
Our brothers' nature

They want us to move together
But, when we want for our share
They come for fight

They would not let us eat our food
And, Let us to express our anguish

They changed the meaning of Ambedkar's teachings
They did not want to face facts, but idiosyncrasies
They cannot bear the development[528].

In the same way the poet exposes attitude of Malas towards the lowest of the lower caste - the Madigas. These lines draw attention to two concepts: (i) misinterpretation of the spirit of Ambedkar's anti-caste movement, and (ii) The internal discrimination between

[528] Sudaiah. (June-2007). *Makodi Mala Dorathanam.* (We don't want this mala landlordism)-Dandora Songs, Guntur District, pp.1-2. He wrote these songs in the context of Manda Krishna's 40 days bicycle rally from Ananthapuram to Hyderabad for the SC reservation categorisation on 11-6-2007.

Malas and Madigas in sharing resources and recognising the lowest of the low. The author uses the term "Doras," since he feels that this characterises the attitude of the Malas towards other Dalits. The fact that this domination is questioned by the lower community is an indication of challenging the exploitation at multiple levels and producing an internal critique. This critical context is demanding the "critical caste consciousness of Dalits". Responding to such critical questions, the *'Bahujan Keratalu'* magazine published a special issue on the Dandora movement under the caption, *Unity among Dalits only Possible through SC Categorisation*, (July-2007). Challapali Swarupa Rani, Keshav Kumar, J. Goutham, G.S Rammohan Durgam Subba Rao, Bathula Kanthaiah, Kalekuri Prasad and Sadu Maladri wrote essays for this issue. C.R Shekar wrote a book in opposition to SC reservation categorization. In response to this, Gundimeda Sambaiah wrote a book, *Brahmanthva Malathvama, Ambedkaaravtha Manavathvama* in 2007 in which he tried to clear all doubts about the unity of Dalits and its myth. Dara Sambaiah and Gaddar tried to intervene in the Dalit internal problem, but these efforts did not succeed.

There are other writings include: *Madigodu* (1997), *Malle Mogala Godugu* (*Madiga Athma Kathalu*-1999*), Nallaregadi Sallu", (Gogushamala*, Subadra-2006) and *Kakka* (Vemula Yallaih's-2000 novel) and also writers like Parimal, Inala Saidulu, Pasunuri Ravindar Kadire Krishna, Jajula Gouri[529]. Madiga life is also reflected in some of the novels. They Mala-Madiga as synonymous, particularly Chilukuri Devaputras's *Panchamam* (1998) Vemula Yellaiah's *Kakka* (2000) and *Siddi* (2006). Goparaju Nageshwar Rao's *Dandemmeedi Chilukalu* (2001), Boyi Jangaiah's *Jatara* (1997) portrays Dalit consciousness, in general, and Madigas, in particular. Vemula Yellaiah's *Kakka* presents how the upper caste landlords create problems for Madigas. The novel deals with multiple identities, given the socio-economic conditions of Madiga people at the grassroots level in the Telangana region. In Chilukuri Devaputra's novel *Panchamam* (the fifth caste), the protagonist, Shivaiah belongs to Madiga community. His father is a drummer. Shivaiah acquires higher education with the encouragement of an upper caste man and becomes a district officer. The dominant upper castes become ministers. They

[529] The above information is from Darla Venkateshwar Rao blogspot.com

want to see that the land reforms are not implemented by Shivaiah who is working in the revenue department. When Shivaiah does not cooperate with the ministers, they get him suspended on charge of accepting a bribe. Even the deputy chief minister, belonging to Madiga caste, is unable to protect Shivaiah. In the novel, the fifty years of Dalit life is portrayed. The novel also discusses classification of Malas and Madigas.[530]

Panthukala Srinivas made a documentary, *Dandora*, in which he presented Dandora movement history and their demand and the political and social complexes and diverse opinions on the SC reservation categorisation[531]. One more documentary, *Mahadiga* also presented the cultural life of Madigas. It shows different skills of Madigas like drum beating, skin removing, shoe making and drum making. This documentary was produced by Lele Suresh, (Chindu Kalamandali). Songs also played a crucial role in the Dandora movement. There are a few CDs and songs on Madigas. The *Madigodu* CD by Yerra Uppali consist of five songs depicting Madiga life and challenging the caste system and also the internal domination of Dalits.

With the emergence of the Madiga Dandora movement, Madiga poetry reached its zenith and Madigas started writing poetry claiming their rights. Gyara Yadaiah discusses the significance of Madiga culture in his anthologies of poetry, *Gutam Debba* and *Erkosi.* Ravinuthala Prem Kishore wrote a long poem, *Gunde Daruvu* (2000). Gunde Dappu Kanakaiah edited an anthology, *Gunde Dappu*, in which most of the Madiga writers touched upon various socio, political cultural issues of Madigas and powrfully asserted their rights, equal representation, and self-respect and against discriminatory practices within untouchables. Madiga poetry ensures respect for traditional occupation and protects its cultural nobility. It has incorporated its terminology into literature and also added new words to the Telugu language. Krupakar Madiga and Jupaka Subadra's anthology, Kaithunakala *Dandyam (Madiga Kavithvam)* made a historic contribution to the existing Madiga literature. It also covered a range of issues like SC categorisation and the sub-groups cultural life worlds of the Madigas. Kavulu Mallaiah, in his *Agnigundum*

[530] See Devaputra, Chilukuri. (2009). *Panchamam.* (Novel), Hyderabad, Hyderabad Book Trust.
[531] See Panthukala Srinivas, *Dandora*, and a Documentary on Movement on SC reservation Categorization.

(1991) (the well of fire), describes that Madigas are serving the society by drumming for the village events. But they are not recognised. Shanti Narayana, in his *Ukkupaadam* (Iron Foot), describes how a minister, belonging to the Madiga community, is unable to use his power because of the upper caste domination. The office without economic power is nominal and it is of no use. The story proves that, without social equality, reservations alone would not benefit Madigas.

Kolakaluri Enoch wrote Madiga stories from Ambedkar perspective. In his stories, Madiga life is reflected from many angles. Among other stories, *Urabavi, Thakattu (mortgage) and Kulaurthi* are worth mention. In the story *Godla Donga* (the thief of cattle), Nagadu by name living on butchery is suspected to be responsible for the theft of cattle in the village. Nagadu himself keeps a vigil throughout the night to catch the thief. He finds that it is the village upper caste head (Dora) who resorts to the theft of the cattle. Though he catches the Dora red-handed and hands him over to the villagers, he is sure that he (Dora) will be let off. So he kills him and throws the body into a gorge. After that, the theft of the cattle stops. Kolakaluri Enoch depicts how Doras (the village upper caste head) brand Madigas as cattle thieves. *Pattapegulibbandigodu* portrays that Dora grabs the land of the Madigas taking advantage of their innocence. A Madiga youth kills Dora to get back the land. *Kulavruthi* (Caste Based Occupation-2006) demands respect for the traditional occupation of Madigas like other occupations in society.[532]

In the light of categorisation of reservation, many writers wrote stories about the contradictions among the Mala-Madigas. Tholeti Jaganmohan Rao's *Varnakramalu*, Paidi Terish Babu's *Anubanda Prashna* (the question of affiliation), Sannapu Reddy Venkata Reddy's *Antu* (Pollution) and Madduri Nagesh Babus *Doma Tera* (the mosquito net), are some of the stories based on classification problem of Malas and Madigas. Yendluri Sudhakar wrote *Mallemoggala Godugu Madiga Kathalu* (1999) signifying the Madiga life and ennobling the Madiga occupation, culture and language.[533] The writers declare that shoes are the goddesses for Madigas. They depict the innate talent of

[532] See Enock, Kolukaluri. (2013). *Dandora*. Hyderabad, Jyothi Grantamala.
[533]See Sudhakar, Yendluri. (1999). *Mallemoggala Godugu Madiga Kathalu*. Hyderabad, Dandora Prachuranalu.

Madigas. Some of the stories focus on Christianity. He holds that though in the beginning Christianity took care of Madigas, in the later period, caste discrimination and exploitation were raised even in that religion. Some stories depict that liberation is possible only through Ambedkarism. On the whole, many writers wrote stories depicting the Madiga life with varied themes. The stories written by the non-Madigas depict untouchability, temple entry and inter caste marriages. The stories were written mostly out of sympathy but they don't reflect the conflict of Madigas life.

Summary

For both Dalit and Dandora literary writings, the respective movements created a context and conditions for writers, singers, artists and intellectuals to respond to movement through their organic literary writings on various aspects of Dalit life and their assertions. Although there were/are writings on Dalits by caste Hindus and non-Brahmins, in essence, these writings focused on the reformist agenda and touched upon untouchability and backwardness, sati, etc, rather than questioning the foundations of the caste hierarchy and Brahmanical hegemony. Hence, one could put these non-Brahman writings under the category "discourse of pity" which seems to be only interested in sympathetic thinking and action. The literary and cultural domain of upper caste and its power structures were challenged only with the emergence of Dalit organic intellectuals and writers through their subjective literary production. This critical engagement demanded the new cultural symbols, new communicative language and aesthetics values helped capture the suffering, humiliation and caste discrimination, on one side, and recognising the skills, humane relations, artistic abilities and cultural ethos and productive relations of Dalit life, on the other.

The analysis highlight the organic writers, both male and female, articulated their thoughts through literary genres like song, poetry, novel, poem, short stories and plays. For all writers in all genres, the object reality of their life experience and everyday practices become constant source and site of critical enquiry for their writings, rather than some utopian imagination. The first generation of Dalit writers like Kusuma Dharmana, Jala Rangaswamy, Guram Jashuva and Boyee Bheemana initiated and wrote Dalit

literature on various socio, cultural issues. These literary writings are considered as Protest literature against upper caste discrimination and prejudiced attitude. Through these writings, the authors invoked and asserted many non-Aryan identities like Adi-Hindu (Bagya Reddy Varma), Adi-Andhra and Adi-Dravida. And also due to Gandhi and Harijan Sevak Sangh influence, the ascribed identities like 'Harijan' were also reflected in their literary writings. However, writers like Kusuma Dharmanna critically examined the nationalist movement and wrote *Makodi Nala Dorathanam* (We don't want black man's rule) and questioned the homogenisation of the nationalist discourse and their patronising attitude towards untouchable communities. Later on, Gurram Jashuva laid the foundations for Dalit literature. He challenged the upper caste dominant aesthetics and symbols, which is reflected in his famous work *Gabbilam* (Bat).

During 1960-1980, since the powerful Dalit movement presence was very minimal, the left movements were very vibrant which took some of the Dalit concerns in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Particularly the *Digambara Kavithvam* (Naked Poetry) reoriented the Telugu literary orientation towards grassroots problems like feudal oppression, class exploitation and social discrimination. These powerful writers focused on the people's day-to-day problems. In a way, they radicalised the Telugu literary field. In the continuation of this literature, the *Viplava Rachayeethala Sangam (Virasam)* played a crucial role and shaped progressive consciousness among the people in the state. The authors got the writings released by rickshaw puller and hotel worker in order to focus literature on grassroots problems and dedicated one anthology to Kanchikacherla Kotesh (a Dalit) who was killed by upper caste in Kanchikacharla, Krishna district.

This vibrant literary movement produced writers, singers, artists and intellectuals who worked as organic intellectuals and challenged the left negligence of caste question and caste Hindus Brahmanical hegemony in the literary field. Writers like Madduri Nagesh Babu, Yendluri Sudhkar, Kalekuri Prasad, Katti Padma Rao and Kolukaluri Enock wrote powerful poetry on various issues of Dalit life, with new symbols like Gabbilam, shoes and drums and made these symbols of self-respect, which are stigmatised in upper caste writings. These educated assertive mobile individuals represent the aspirations of their

communities through their writings and are creating a Dalit counter hegemonic literature. In essence, they have set the agenda that literary production should be socially relevant and carry the transformative vision and critical role in making the human values and relations towards much more egalitarian.

The formation of 'Darakam' and first All India Dalit Writers' conference motivated Dalit writers to form various organisations in the state. The formation of "Dalita Kala Mandali", "Praja Kala Mandali" by Masterji and Praveen Kumar and 'Bheema Sena' have played an important role in sensitising the people and enabling them to write many songs, publish books and releasing audio cassettes which have inspired and sensitised people at the grassroots level. Gaddar's song, *Dalita Pululamma* created confidence among Dalit youth and gave them strength. Gorenti Venkanna, Jayaraju also wrote many songs on social issues which reflect rural Dalit life and their suffering. Novels like *Panchamam*, *Antarani Vasantham* and *Kaki Bathukulu* enormously contributed to strengthening the consciousness among educated youth and employees. Plays like *Padamati Gali*, *Rajagruha Pravesham* and Nishidakshari by Patibandla Ananda Rao and *Jathi Pitha Ambedkar Varna Nirmulana*, *Mahatma Jyothi Rao Phule* and *Veeranari Jalukari Bai* by Souda Aruna helped to sensitise both urban and rural people. On the Dalit Bahujan unity and solidarity, a number of writers produced anthologies of poetry and songs. B.S Ramulu, Laxmi Narasaiah and Laxmi Narayana also become active in organising literary meetings. Anthologies like *Me Me*, *Bahuvachanam*, *Poyedemilenolam* and *Padunekina Pata* are some of the writings which reflect the solidarity and intellectual collectiveness of Dalit Bahujan anti caste thinking. But later on, it could not take the sustained literary movement because of complex socio, political conditions and contradictions among writers.

Among Dalit writers, Dalit women's voice also rose by exposing the patriarchy within Dalits and producing constructive critiques on upper caste homogenisation of women problems or the gender question. In this connection, Chalapally Swaroopa Rani's *Mankena Poolu*, Jalli Indira's works, Jupaka Subadra, Jajula Gouri and Gogu Shamala's *Nala Podu* (anthology of Dalit women writings) have brought out Dalit women issues

and concerns into the literary field and established that Dalit women are suffering from "Multiple oppression." These writers are also challenging the internal Dalit male patriarchy. However, organisational efforts to produce and train the new generation of writers was not sustained for a long time, except 'Matti Pullu', an organisation for Dalit Bahujan and minority community women writers front at the minimal level. The organisation efforts are hardly initiated and moreover not sustained. Hence, individuals are writing and publishing by themselves.

The last part of the chapter dealt with Dandora literature. The Dandora (MRPS) movement (1994) created a context for the Dandora literature. The Dandora literature is produced by Madigas in support of MRPS movement which is fighting for categorisation of SC reservations into ABCD and asserting for self-respect in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Although the Dalit literature was at its peak in the mid-1990s, a majority of Mala writers and leaders felt that MRPS was dividing/deviating from the Dalit unity in the state. Hence, most of the Mala writers and leaders failed to support Dandora demand and produce literature in support of it. Hence, Madiga writers like Nagapagari Sundhar Raju, Yendluri Sudhakar, Vemula Yellaiah, Kakani Sudhakar, Muthaiah, Gundimeda Sambaiah and Darla Venkateshvarlu are questioned the 'Dalit unity', 'Dalit identity' and its homogenisation character. Madiga writers owned Madiga identity, rather than Dalit identity and they propagated Madiga as suffix or prefix to their names. The formation of 'Madiga Sahitya Vedika' (1996) is played a historical role in developing the Dandora literature and Madiga perspective on Dalit literature. Madiga writers argued that Mala writers in the name of "Dalit literature" hegemonised and produced only Mala life in Dalit literature. In fact, it is argued that they have usurped all other communities' cultural symbols for their writings. The Madiga literary writings were able to establish that there are multiple levels of exploitation, discrimination and hierarchy of untouchability within Dalits. Hence, multiple identities need to he proved to comprehend specificities of lower Dalits. A majority Mala writers and leaders remained silent on Dandora demand. However, after 20 years of Dandora movement, the Madiga writers keep writing and publishing on the Madigas, in particular, and Dalits, in general. However, Mala writers failed to produce literary works on Malas as much as the Madigas produced. Rather

Malas are willing to write on Dalit identity. It seems that Malas see writing on Mala communities and writing on Dalits as contradictory, in fact they are complimentary. So, in essence, the Dandora 'new Dalit writings' deepen the horizons of the Dalit literary field and Dalit aesthetics and explored new ways of countering the Brahmanical hegemony.

Chapter-VI

Conclusion

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Conclusion

India is perhaps one of the few countries in the world where, even today, a person's social status is determined by the caste/community into which he or she is born. The social status carries a lot of disadvantages especially for those belonging to the so-called lower castes. These include: social exclusion, being discriminated against, economic exploitation and political alienation. Throughout Indian history, there have been many struggles against this oppressive caste and Brahmanical order. These struggles questioned and challenged the ideological state apparatus and the legitimacy of shatras and agencies which reproduce the caste ideologies. The domain of anti-caste thinking and struggles contributed immensely to reshaping the oppressed consciousness and democratic values in Indian society. As victims of the caste system, Dalits have become the key agents in advancing the democratic revolution against the caste order in India. Hence, the study aimed at exploring this historical trajectory and Dalit liberative struggles in undivided Andhra Pradesh by engaging and exploring the post-Karamchedu Dalits autonomous and identity articulations.

Historically, both Telangana and Andhra regions were influenced by the various socio-religious reform movements like Buddhism. In the medieval period, the religious sects like Veerashaivism of Basaveshwara had a vast impact in many South Indian states. The Veerashaiva movement attracted many lower strata people into its fold. However, later, it was subsumed and its followers became one of the dominant castes in Karnataka. Sects like those led by Nasaraiah and Pothuluri VeeraBrahmam and Vemana drew many lower strata people in the Telugu-speaking regions. Historically the Dalit struggles in the context of undivided Andhra Pradesh present diverse articulations during colonial period. Key players like the religious sects, reformist traditions, Christian missionaries and the colonial state (particularly its initiatives towards empowering and organising Dalits for proselytisation process and governance) impacted the mobility, mobilisation and assertion of untouchables. This process led to diversified articulations throughout India. In the case of coastal Andhra, the Christian missionary works, modern education and

state institutional access created a kind of mobility among untouchables, whereas in Telangana, under Nizam rule, there was an absence of institutional access and modernisation process. In Rayalaseema, with specific factional group culture and geographical backwardness, Dalits were unwittingly drawn into factional group antagonism and conflicts. However, in all these regions, various Dalit assertions and articulations surfaced during the colonial period itself. The nationalist movement against the British government under the leadership of the Congress Party and Gandhiji and the Hindu reformist traditions like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Parthana Samaj helped in stemming the large scale exodus of many Dalits from Hindu fold. The study brought out the autonomous Dalit assertions as visible in all the three regions of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. The Dalit leaders started questioning the hegemonic agendas of Hindus and Congress and asserted non-Aryan identities and anti caste visions.

During 1900-1950, the Hyderabad state under Nizam rule witnessed Adi-Hindu movement under the leadership of Bagya Reddy Varma. The Andhra region witnessed Adi-Andhra movement spearheaded by Kusuma Dharmana, Vemula Kurmaiah, Vundru Subbaiah, Bojja Appalaswamy, etc. In the Hyderabad state, in addition to Bagya Reddy Varma, B.S Venkat Rao, Arigay Ramaswamy, P.R Venkat Swamy, M.L Adaiah, and Bathula Shamsundhar worked towards building an autonomous Dalit movement. While Bagya Reddy Varma was associated with the Adi-Hindu movement in North India, leaders like B.S Venkat Rao were involved in Ambedkarite activities and Shamsundhar propagated Dalit-Muslim unity for 'Moolbharati' movement across India. Such a wide range of ideas and activities under different leaders led to the establishment of various organisations invoking different identities, like Adi-Hindu, Adi-Dravida, Depressed Classes, Arundatiya, Scheduled Caste, Mool Bharat which negated the Hindu identities and helped in organising the Dalits. However, the activism of Dalit leaders in Hyderabad was limited to urban areas like Hyderabad and Secundrabad which did not percolate down to the grassroots level. Moreover, almost all leaders who claimed to represent the Dalits belonged to the Mala sub-caste. This resulted in neglecting the other Scheduled Castes like Madigas. Because of ideological ambiguity among leaders and competing leadership within Dalits, the Hyderabad Dalit movement in the late 1940s came under the

Congress nationalist fold, communist class mobilisation process or the Muslim fold. By 1950s, it had lost its autonomous spirit. Coastal Andhra also witnessed the Dalit movement because of the relatively higher literacy levels in the region, institutional access, and the fact that untouchables were organised through the Adi-Andhra identity beyond the urban centres. The series of Adi-Andhra Mahasabhalu, the various credit societies and educational and hostel facilities initiated by Dalit leaders enabled them to organise themselves and assert their rights. However, the Harijan movement under Gandhiji, and the influence of the Brahma Samaj attracted many leaders and common people into the nationalist fold. Thus, to a large extent, in the Madras presidency, the autonomous Dalit movement got subsumed into the Congress party.

The entry of Dr.Ambedkar into the Indian political scene was a historical departure from the earlier untouchable movements. Ambedkar, being educated and a statesman, synthesised the anti caste legacy and proposed a new democratic alternative praxis. His bitter criticism of the caste system, Congress, Gandhian Hindu Swaraj and nationalist project and his engagement with British Govt. policy level initiatives created some scope and an opportunity to bring some policies for the empowerment of untouchables. The question of citizenship, representation, social justice, democracy become enabling factors for Dr. Ambedkar for building the argument for securing socio-political rights for the Dalits. Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates, settlements for untouchables, the constitutional provisions all contributed to the emergence of "Dalit political subject". Ambedkar's attempts to build a national level movement through the Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF), and Republican Party of India (RPI) had a great impact across India and on various Dalit leaders in both colonial and post-colonial Dalit movement and politics.

For building a national level movement for Dalits, Dr. Ambedkar, visited both Telangana and Coastal Andhra and established the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF). His effort to consolidate leaders of the Dalits and masses under one banner had a limited impact. After his death, his organisation lost much of its steam and most of the leaders were accommodated in the Congress Party structure and Government through populist welfare

policies and offer of political positions. Hence, from 1950s until the Karamchedu massacre (1985), the efforts of the Dalits to reorganise themselves through RPI factions, Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu, could not make a big impact. Consequently, the Dalits were mobilised and organised through three processes: 1) Dalit accommodation under Congress hegemonic politics, 2) Communism oriented stream through the class perspective - RSU (Radical Students' Union), Raitu-Cooli Sangam, and so on, and 3) The Dalit independent attempts through RPI groups, Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu and employees associations. The Congress policy initiations after independence to address inequality resulted in creating a new landlords class in Telangana which exploited the marginalised groups and perpetuated the feudal caste-class relations - pushing Dalits into Vetti, indebtedness, low wages and everyday violence.

This created the background for the radical left to mobilise and organise Dalits. People, particularly the Dalits, who saw new hope and immediate relief joined and turned sympathisers of radical movement throughout Telangana and other regions. The vibrant struggles like Peddapaly, Jagityala and strong grassroots organisation challenged the feudal order and Gadi based power relations. The brutal state suppression mostly through fake encounters led to a large scale custodial deaths and loss of lives in police firings. The radical left qualitatively changed people's consciousness against the oppressive system. Although the left addressed people's problem through the class perspective, most of the problems that they took up provided a measure of immediate relief to the Dalits. However, in essence, the caste-based discrimination largely remained unresolved. Scholars started to argue that class conflicts was more in Telangana and caste question and everyday caste violence remained unexplored in both Telangana and Rayalaseema regions. The coastal Andhra underwent enormous changes in agricultural production in the aftermath of the green revolution. Unfortunately, the benefits were mostly enjoyed by the dominant castes like Kammas, Reddys and Kappus. The surplus income enabled many enterprising Kammas to diversify into both agriculture-based business and non-agriculture business. This caste based market expansion and service sector also motivated them to aspire for political power to control the state institutions. This background subsequently made them to form TDP under the leadership of the popular film star N.T

Rama Rao. The castes (Kamma) who claimed to be the forerunners of non-Brahman movements in the Madras Presidency become killers and perpetrators of caste. With this backdrop of the changing nature of socio, political and economic dynamics, the major massacre in Karamchedu (1985) took place. This incident gave birth to contemporary modern Dalit movement in undivided Andhra Pradesh. In order to consolidate the post-Karamchedu agitations and struggles, the Dalit Mahasabha was formed. This played a historic role in organising and mobilising Dalits in the state. The Karamchedu Massacre and its subsequent struggles in Alian Badious' framework become 'events' which changed the terms of Dalit agenda and direction. The historical contribution of Dalit Mahasabha and its role in reshaping the Dalit consciousness, in particular and social movements in general, are important aspect to be analysed.

a) The formation of Dalit Mahasabha imparted a sense direction to the autonomous Dalit struggle both in defining and directing the movement in the light of anti caste legacy. A number of anti caste thinkers, particularly Phule and Ambedkar, came to be cited in the public discourse. Ambedkar, as a synthesiser of the legacy, become part of cognitive Dalit subjective assertion. The intensity of the massacre and the apathy of the left groups and political parties made the Dalit leaders and victims to build the autonomous organisation in the form of Dalit Mahasabha. The effort of this organisation gave scope to critically engage and explicate the Ambedkarite stand point on various social movements (Radical left, feminists and rights movements).

b) The Karamchedu autonomous Dalit struggles has began to evaluate and judge both the class-based struggles and the hegemony of the upper caste and the Congress party and the other political parties from their subjective location (life world) and historical anti caste struggles. The Dalit Mahasabha attempted to draw a line between supporters and antagonists of the Dalit movement. The attempt certainly demanded urgent need of addressing the caste question by the left parties and questioned the accommodative strategies of the caste Hindu parties and token Dalit representation in their respective parties.

c) The post Karamchedu agitations created serious interrogation of left theoretical understanding and practice. The series of questions and the long term experience of individuals and groups, both from Dalit and left streams, created a discursive space for the group of people and individuals to talk about caste-class praxis through the lens of Marxism and Ambedkarism. These debates forced the left groups and sympathizers to start the Marxist-Leninist Centre, Nalupu and Edureeta magazines which played an important role. Subsequently, the CPI (ML) Janashakti (Maroju Veerana) experiment advanced the debate on caste-class praxis.

d) The Dalit Mahasabha struggle produced organic leaders, writers, artists, singers, and analysts who played a critical role in the communication between Dalit Mahasabha activities and people at the grassroots level. These organic intellectuals produced a large volume of literature which played significant role in creating in Gramcian terms, counter hegemonic ideology and challenging the 'dominant common sense'. Further, literary writings, symbols, anti caste memorials, statues all contributed to democratizing the Telugu public sphere. The activities of organic intellectuals brought the life world of Dalits into the public domain; hence, deconstructing the Brahmanical world view and constructing the anti caste and Phule-Ambedkarite transformative world view and Dalit publics.

e) The Dalit Mahasabha gave an organisation shape to the Dalit anger and vision. It attracted diverse Dalit groups like youth, women, employees, and writers into Dalit Mahasabha organisation structure and motivated them to get involved in the activities. Until the Chundur massacre (1991), the Mahasabha had an image of a vanguard organisation in building the Dalit movement. Notwithstanding, these positive gains, there were structural limitations to this struggle.

a) The post Karamchedu agitations were a spontaneous sporadic response to do something for the victims of the massacre. Hence, the manifesto of the Dalits Mahasabha is ambiguous; the vaguely defined Dalit category did not attract diverse social communities and could not visualise a sustained Dalit movement. It merely attracted a

few intellectuals and writers from each category, but not the masses at the grassroots level. It remained confined to SCs, in general, and Malas, in particular. The Dalit Mahasabha could not expand its organisational activities beyond Coastal Andhra and a few cities in other regions. Its top-down approach, through meetings and speeches, and unveiling of statues of anti caste thinkers could not create a substantial cadre base at the grassroots level.

b) The leadership was largely confined to Coastal Andhra and Mala caste. However, due to the rivalry between the two Mala community leaders, Katti Padma Rao and Bojja Tarakam weakened the Dalit Movement to a large extent. By the early 1990s, the Movement lost it ground both as a force and spirit.

c) Although Dalit Mahasabha defined Dalits in an ambiguous term including SC, ST, OBC and religious minorities, women and poor of the upper caste, it could attract only a few intellectuals from other castes. It did not invest much effort towards Sudra or OBCs. However, a few intellectuals and writers from the other castes became sympathisers.

d) The Mahasabha's incidents based agitations failed to get transformed into long terms sustained organised struggle. Hence, it ended up with state negotiating for immediate needs and seeking justice to victims through legal means. The occasional meetings, pamphlets and literature circulation were mostly confined to the employees, writers and a few urban centers. Although it talked about legal means of justice, it could not put in sustained efforts even in getting the legal justice.

e) The Dalit Mahasabha failed to bring the consensus and any resolution within the organisation both in recognising the SC reservation categorisation issue and addressing the emerging contradictions within the Dalits. This unwillingness, or deliberate negligence, to pursue the emerging issues of Dalits restricted the organisation to the single community called Mala, with only a symbolic representation of others. Hence, in the process, both in its understanding and practice, it failed to advance the Ambedkarite philosophical praxis.

Although the Dalit Mahasabha created a top down Dalit assertion the manifestation of Dalit identity and autonomy articulated and negotiated in the given socioeconomic dynamics and everyday relations of the Dalits. As it is clearly said that during colonial period Dalit leaders articulated their identity and autonomous space in both Coastal Andhra and Telangana region which is also reflected in the post-Karamchedu Dalit assertions. The historical regional specificity of three regions of undivided Andhra Pradesh continues to reproduce the strong caste relations notwithstanding the new capital formation of the regions. Scholars who studied Dalit movement confined to Telangana or Coastal Andhra and largely neglected Rayalaseema, or subsumed it under Coastal Andhra. Coming to Telangana region, Velamas and Reddies have been the dominant castes, controlling the economy and politics. On the other hand, in the capitalist agriculturally advanced Coastal Andhra region Kammas, Reddies and Kapus are the dominant castes. In Rayalasema, Kammas and Reddys have a strong hold on politics and economy through factionalist socio-political culture. The changing nature of economy and power structure of dominant caste and the Dalit mobility and assertion are all largely shaped the caste conflict, and further it influenced the Dalit identity formation and method of negotiating the Dalit autonomous space at grassroots level. From the case studies, it can be observed that while the Dalit identity construction is taking place from above, the existing and emerging issues are indicating the multiple contradictions which need to be addressed. This is elaborated in the case of Vempenta and other cases, where there is Dalit identity articulation at the state level, the conflict among Mala and Madiga and between Dalits and Sudra (OBC) is visible at the grassroots level.

In Coastal Andhra, the advanced agrarian production relations, social reforms and non-Brahmin movement enabled dominant caste to capture the politics and state institutions and the markets (film, media, health and education). The work of the missionaries, a degree of access to education and employment also helped many Dalits to become more mobile and assertive. These two opposite processes are manifest in the manner in which Dalits challenged the attempts of the dominant castes to capture political power merely by virtue of their economic social supremacy and aggressive caste violence on Dalits.

This led to major massacres like Karamchedu, Chundur and Laxmipeta. It is also evident from the case studies (Karamchedu, Chundur and Laxmipeta) that Dalits are attacked by dominant Kammas in Karamchedu, Reddies in Chundur and Kapus in Lxmipeta in the changing nature of power structures and nexus between dominant caste and state ideological apparatus in the region. From the post incident experience it is clear that Dalits are more likely to engage with state institutions to get justice in Coastal Andhra, whereas both in Telangana and Rayalaseema, there is lesser institutional access and engagement. It is noticeable that through social boycotts, witchcraft, in the name of theft the dominant caste can selectively either isolate or attack the person or family or entire community by projecting them as enemies of the village, Thereby perpetuating visible and invisible feudal violence on Dalits.

In social science research the Rayalseema region has been largely neglected in analyzing caste function and Dalit assertion. On many occasions, scholars who studied Dalit assertion subsumed Rayalseema under Coastal Andhra. The case studies from Rayalseema in chapter three clearly bring out that the caste conflict is rooted in factional groups. These faction groups are formed and operated by upper castes. Dalits, often due to dependency, illiteracy, lack of security are all forced to be with one of the faction groups. This situation seldom allows them to question caste and faction group hegemony over the Dalits, as they are entangled with the factional groups operation and its everyday dynamics. Any attempt of exercising their agency against faction groups and dominant caste leads to violence in which Dalit are worst victims. The lack of illiteracy, unemployment, economic dependency becomes obstacles for their social mobility thereby undergoing everyday humiliation.

Telangana region historically reflects the feudal structures where Vetti (free labour) two glass system, Devadasi system and patron client relationship condition the life of Dalits who become the worst victims of this system. The two case studies (Kalvakol and Jhadimalkapur) from Telangana bring out the fact that although various left groups fought against feudal oppression; caste still is the determining factor of everyday social and political relation. The caste operation where the radical left is strong clearly indicates

lack of ideological, cultural attack on caste structures and its modern forms. As long as the radical groups are present and influential, the external factors become force both in protecting Dalits and threatening oppressor. But the fact is any external force on the caste perpetuators may not leads to fundamental change in ideological apparatus of caste. Hence the reemergence of feudal forces in the absence of Radical dalams and groups are seen in the Telangana region.

The entry and perpetuation of right wing communal forces is clearly visible more in Telangana and Rayalaseema comparatively in Coastal Andhra, precisely it is because of the backwardness and the feudal conditions in this regions. In all the cases, the common factor seems to be that the Sudra caste, legally known as OBCs, were directly involved in attacking the Dalits, or allied with the upper caste. These Sudra castes, because of the Brahmanisation process, are often used by the upper castes to perpetrate violence on the Dalits. These case studies highlight contradiction, both at cultural and political levels between Dalits and the Sudra castes. Further, in all the cases, the protest movements could not be sustained with the same zeal for a long time. Also, the legal battles become challenging issues for the victims. Seeking justice through constitutional means from state institutions is generally as a part of the state's caste ideological apparatus. Dalit institutional engagement and level of consciousness is also determined by social, political trajectories of Dalit education and social mobility. In the study, the Coastal Andhra Dalits seem to be more proactive in negotiating and engaging with state institutions and legal procedures, whereas in Telangana and Rayalseema, there is a tendency to approach mediators or the dominant local power structures to get institutional accesses. This again depends on the nature of issue. This dependency on third person has serious implications for procedural justice. However the post Karamchedu Dalit mobilisation has created aspirations of political power among Dalit leaders under the influence of Bahujan movement and politics at national level.

The Struggle for Dalits Autonomous Politics; the emerging challenges

The implications of 1932 Poona Pact are clearly visible in the paradox of contemporary Dalit politics and political representation. In the case of undivided Andhra Pradesh, there

were many attempts, failures and limited success in creating independent Dalits politics. The post-Ambedkar Dalit politics started with the formation and activities of RPI which was largely controlled by Maharashtra Mahars. So the divisions within RPI at national level also directly led to divisions in undivided Andhra Pradesh as the RPI party was largely confined to Scheduled Castes (SC) in general, and Malas, in particular. In fact, the available data shows that the RPI party leadership largely comes from the Mala caste. This might be due to Mahar and Mala lineage. The frequent divisions in RPI and top-down leadership agenda could not create a grassroots cadre base in the party. So, except in some constituencies, the Party did not have an effective influence.

On the political front, the BSP entered in 1989 in the backdrop of post Karamchedu mobilisation and the victory of the BSP-SP alliance in Uttar Pradesh. These popular appeals and meetings did not transform into a vote base among Dalits. In the 1994 General Elections, it did not secure the much-anticipated results. BSP in the state depended on the leaders who were not produced by its movement. Rather, it tried to bring the leaders from other movements. So, when these leaders did not see positive results in party performance, they left the party: every time there was lack of effective leadership. Further the party entered without its front organisations like BAMCEF and DS4 (Dalit Soshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti) did. Therefore, there was a lack of substantial base for BSP's success. BSP strategy to draw leadership either from Madiga or Mala to address the internal problems of Dalits, without stating the Party's stands on 'SC reservation categorization, BSP's failure to address the immediate problems at the grassroots, top down decisions, and lack of sustained organizational work failed to make a dent in electoral politics.

Dandora (MRPS); The 'New Dalit Movement'

After one decade of Dalit Mahasabha movement, particularly from the mid 1990s, the Dandora movement emerged as a 'new Dalit movement' for securing a respectable identity and equal redistribution of SC reservation benefits within Dalits. The movement critically interrogated the Dalit and Dalit Bahujan categories and contradictions within Dalits. The MRPS, popularly known as 'Dandora,' was launched on July 7, 1994 by

Madiga and its satellite castes for the categorisation of SC reservations. The movement maintained that that there were many untouchable castes under SC list, each caste has been uniquely exploited and discriminated against. When the Dalit refers to untouchables as a 'homogeneous' category, it implicitly make either lowest of the low secondary or equalise them with other superior caste within the untouchables. While it is true that this category is the product of Dalit historical struggles, it also represents some reality, hence it is necessary both in political and intellectual's domain. The emerging movements by the lowest of the low within Dalits are the result of the deep rooted inequalities among Dalits. The practice of 'Hierarchy of untouchability', the attached privileges with the category to structurally located privileged Dalits, carries the hegemonic attitude in the very invocation of this Dalit category. The Dandora movement also explicitly argued that Dalit identity as a homogeneous category was constructed from above and remained available to the mobile Scheduled Caste like Malas in Andhra Pradesh, Chamars in UP, Mahars in Maharashtra, Pallar and Parayas in Tamil Nadu, Volayas in Karntaka, and Pullayas in Kerala, etc. This homogenisation process implicitly takes place through the language of unity, fighting against common enemy and struggle for political power, etc., while these are important for Dalit emancipation, these are all employed to subsume the internal contradictions. The twenty years grassroots level Dandora movement clearly questions the legitimacy of Dalit Mahasabha to represent all Scheduled Castes and indicates the urgent need of addressing these multiple contradictions.

The Dandora movement inspired other new Dalit movements, movements by Arundatiyars in Tamil Nadu, Madigas in Karnataka, Mangs in Maharashtra, Valmikies in Delhi and Punjab for their recognition and redistribution. These movements implicitly indicate the evaluation of Dalit movement through the principle of equal 'justice' and 'recognition', and representation rather than mere 'unity' alone. Hence the selective silence and negligence and hegemony of the mobile Scheduled Caste and leadership on the lower numerically minority Scheduled Caste have serious consequences on Dalit movements and politics.

The Dandora, or new Dalit movement, has expanded and deepened the scope and content of Dalit agenda though it may not produce immediate electoral results. The emerging antagonism from mobile scheduled castes and the intellectuals and political silence over it shows failure of the Dalit movement and leadership in understanding the contradiction within Dalit Bahujans and its resolving mechanism. Dandora or new movement of lower Dalits also brought up new issues, symbols, literary writings and leadership, different dimension of historical suffering and complexity of hierarchy of untouchability, etc., for deeper discussion. Although there are deviations and the element of ideological diversion, the emerging 'new Dalit movements' carry greater ability to democratise the Dalit moral and political discourse.

The Dandora movement also creatively expanded the scope and nature of Dalit movements. For example, although it started Madiga-centric struggle, in course of time it went beyond Madiga and encompassed issues like: a) differently abled b) widows, the aged and c) Child heart patients across caste and religion built movement around those concerns. This move created new way of engaging with larger issues in a creative way for handling the binary thinking of universal vs. particular and beyond 'identitarian frame work in the people's struggle. However, for almost 20 years, the MRPS failed to inject the vote value, the spirit of autonomous political agenda. The result is dependency on the caste Hindu parties for solving the problem. Even after 20 years, it does not have a single elected representative. This should be considered as a structural limitations and lack of political vision on the part of the top leadership. However in the wake of Dalit Mahasabha and Dandora movement the discourse on caste-class praxis, alliance and solidarity between Dalits and left parties attracted more attention.

Dalit and left Movements; the intricacies of alliance

The Dalit Mahasabha's criticism of the practice of both parliamentary and radical left in India led to debate and discussion on the caste-class praxis and Dalit relative autonomous space among activists and intellectual circles. Magazines like *Nalupu* (edited by Bojja Tharakam), Edureeta (edited by U Sambashiva Rao) and Marxist-Leninist Centre (led by Satyamurthy and U.Sambashiva Rao), and discussion within the civil liberties groups all

contributed to a vibrant debate on caste-class praxis. Many conferences and meetings took place throughout the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh among left groups on the nature and path of the revolution.

The debate within the CPI (ML) Janashakti created a degree of seriousness on anti caste legacy within the left circles. The CPI (ML) Janashakti Maroju Veerana's two fold path (armed and parliamentary) struggle under 'identity and alliance' with a theoretical understanding among oppressed through caste-class approach, in the light of Marx, Mao, Phule-Ambedkar legacy, had a great impact on the emergence of various 'Kula Sangalu' (Caste Associations). His creative way of introducing anti-caste cultural symbols to his Dalams (groups) like Narakasura, Thataki, etc., shows his alternative cultural imagination within the radical left. Maroju Veerana's emphasis on the anti caste cultural symbols and attacking the roots of Brahmanical hegemony is an acknowledgement of the historical specificities of each caste, this carried great capacity to improve the alliance and solidarity among the oppressed and progressive groups and movements. However, the alliance and solidarity among oppressed castes and movements has to be cultivated and should emerge from the everyday relations of people in politics and the cultural domain from the bottom. The experience of 'Malamahanadu' and Madiga Dandora movements clearly bring out the broader categories like Dalits, Dalit-Bahujan and Bahujan which are important in themselves are often hegemonised by a few mobile castes within these categories; thereby undermining the emergence of democratic principle based and mutual recognising solidarities and alliances. Hence, the alliance and solidarity among the oppressed lies in the very recognition of the just demands of the lowest through inter-subjectivity in both the cultural and political domains.

Often it is visible both in left and Dalit movement that the personality-centric leadership in the Dalit movement and the upper caste party hegemonic leadership in left movement have to be democratized towards more inclusion and internal democratic mechanism. The left inadequate understanding of layers of exploitation and suffering of human beings makes the left to term the Dalit movements as sectarian or identitarian, without taking into consideration of the historical contribution of anti caste thinkers and their struggles.

The left rhetoric on religion and its historical understanding of super structure does not provide adequate framework to address the deep rooted religious, caste power structures which determine historical material inequalities and its modern reproduction. It is also clear from the case studies (Kalvakol and Jadimalkapur and others) that the 'people are united and divided other than class', hence caste and religion continue to be strong among people where both parliamentary and radical left partie's influence and presence is wider. In the backdrop of discussions towards caste-class approach, the communist parties were forced to launch their front organisations like "Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi" (KNPS-A Committee for Annihilation of Caste) and its "Kulanirmulana" (Annihilation of Caste) magazine, by CPI(ML)-People's War in 1998, "Kula Vivaksha Vethireka Porata Samithi" (KVPS- A Committee against the Caste Discrimination) by CPI(M) in 1998, "Dalitha Hakula Porata Samithi" (DHPS- A Committee for Dalits Rights) by CPI in 2006. These organisations worked out a tactical approach to address issues like caste and gender. This failure of left party to understand and make caste, gender etc issues as a part of their historical and philosophical praxis instead of tactical approach tend to accuse the Dalits movements as sectarian and statist movements.

Although the Dalit Mahasabha asserted the autonomous space and struggle from left parties, it has failed to focus on the globalisation and market related issues at concrete level and develop the holistic perspective for Dalit emancipation. The Dalit agenda broadly was either oriented towards asserting for reservation, agitating against atrocities, or rhetorically articulating the struggle for political power. It is also clear from the study that while the majority of the Dalit groups aspire for securing state power or engaging with the state institutions to realise their fullest citizenship, how can the radical left which is negating the state power, can make these very oppressive groups as their social base for their revolution outside the governance framework? In the same way, how can the Dalit realise the goal of 'annihilation of caste' without developing the historical understanding of the emerging material disparities within the oppressed in the process of globalising market economy. Therefore, what become important are not the Red verses Blue, or Ambedkar verses Marx, but recognising the historical contribution of anti caste thinkers and developing the holistic caste-class praxis. It is also important to understand and

address some of the emerging paradoxes (for further study) within Dalit discourse in order to analyse its implications on Dalit identity and autonomy in the context of changing nature of Indian state.

The ever changing nature of Indian state and market functioning have had a great influence on shaping of the Dalit movements and politics. The recent attempts and establishment of DICCI is an indication of campaigning and searching for Dalit entrepreneurs in the market economy. While there will not be any objection to Dalit entrepreneurship and their development, the projection of 'Dalit Capitalism' and 'Dalit enterprising' as the only path of Dalit emancipation can have serious consequences for Dalit agenda. These entrepreneurs may not symoblise the Dalit ability to run the business, but they often fall into the tendency to get legitimacy of the state for their enterprises, while the same state would push a large number of Dalits into vulnerable conditions at the grassroots.

The long standing demand of Dalit movement is the question of 'representation' in education, employment and politics. The representation is a historical primary requirement in state institutions and politics of inclusive governance. If the Dalit representatives failed to question the ideological state apparatus and deliver the spirit of the representation within the state institutions and outside, how does one make sense of the representation? And what is the moral and political mechanism of addressing these structural problems has to be clear and practical.

While the LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) process is drastically effecting the traditional livelihood options, employment opportunities of Dalits, the state is withdrawing welfare schemes and funds. The other side globalization process gave some scope to internationalise the caste issue at the global stage through global solidarity networks, non-governmental organisations, Dalit Diaspora. The whole process should be critically understood since the caste takes new forms and operate in the changing market economy in which Dalits are becoming more vulnerable. Hence, while there should be no

objection to the NGOs working for Dalit emancipation, the project based Dalit NGO struggles and their projection can have serious implications for the Dalit agenda.

The continuous, consistent nexus between the global imperial forces and the caste Hindu capitalist forces together continue to determine the agenda and control functioning of the state and market. This implicit convergence of the state and market agenda will perpetuate inequalities both in institutions and outside institutions, Dalit and Adivasis are first victims of this larger process. Therefore, it is important to recognise the layers of caste, class, gender inequalities and discrimination in order to build the broader emancipatory movements for realisation of a more humane society. The analysis in this study clearly brings out that after post-Karamchedu, the Dalit movement through Dalit Mahasabha was strongly articulated for its identity and autonomous space both from mainstream political parties and left parties in defining and directing the Dalit movement for alternative emancipatory struggle and politics in the light of anti caste and Ambedkar legacy. However the emerging contradictions both from external and internal throwing challenge to be addressed structurally to realise the ability of this very struggle to envisage the alternative holistic caste-class praxis. Hence, sooner the Dalit movement responds to these challenges the better the future and vision of the movement.

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- https://www.youtube.com/user/kadhirnilavan

Appendix–I

Organisations Established by Dalit Leaders from 1906 to 1947 in Hyderabad State under Nizam Rule

Sl. No	Organisation	Founded by	Caste	Year	Objectives of the Organisation
1	Sanghabhiwrudhi Samajamu	Sri. Madari Audaiah	Mala	-	a) Conducting Weekly Bhajans and awakening the 'untouchables'. b) To resist exploitation and caste discrimination and alcoholism. c) Encouraging Education among the SCs.
2	Jaganmitra Mandali	Bagya Reddy Varma	Mala	1906	a) Awakening the social consciousness of the ex-untouchables. b) Conducting Bhajans c) Mobilising the 'untouchables' to fight against discrimination.
3	Manya Sangam	Bagya Reddy Varma	Mala	1911	a) Encouraging social activities among the 'untouchables'. b) Enlightening the masses through Harikatha Kalashepams, lectures and publication of literature. c) Campaigning against the Devadasi system and child marriages.
4	Adi-Hindu Social Service League	Bagya Reddy Varma	Mala	1921	a) Organising builders, contractors, bakers, gardeners and masons belonging to the Mala community

					b) Conducting Bhajans c) Celebrating the birth anniversaries of the Buddha d) Distributing literature. e) Working for the Scheduled Castes
5	Suneetha Bala Samajamu	Arigay Ramaswamy	Mala	1912	a) Encouraging temperance b) Campaigning on social problems c) Fighting against social evils
6	Bhoomananda Swami Gurumandali	-	-	-	a) Working for providing proper drinking water in 'untouchable' habitations b) Campaigning for abolition of the Devadasi system.
7	Adi-Hindu Jatiyonnati Sabha	Arigay Ramaswamy	Mala	-	a) To fight against the autocracy of the land-owning classes. b) To render service to the needy and poor people.
8	Adi-Hindu Mahasabha	Arigay Ramaswamy	Mala	1927	A) To fight for the rights of Adi-Hindus b) To spread and strengthen the Adi-Hindu identity and culture.
9	Arundatiya Mahasabha	Arigay Ramaswamy	Mala	1931	a) To mobilise the Madigas b) To build unity in the Mala and Madiga communities c) To work for the welfare of both the communities
10	Adi-Dravida Education League	Ahmad Sayeedi (Khadiyani Sect of the Muslim Community)	Muslim	1932	a) To spread education among the depressed classes b) To convert members of the depressed classes to Islam
11	Adi-Dravida	S.R Babaiah	Madiga	1932	a) To serve both Malas and

	Mahajan Association				Madigas b) To fight against the domination by the land-owning classes. c) To deal with Panchayat activities of the Depressed Classes
12	Youth League of Ambedkarities	B.S Venkat Rao and P. R. Venkatswamy	Both Malas	1934	a) To organise the so-called Depressed Classes youth into one united body. b) To support Dr. Ambedkar in his mission to lead the community out of the Hindu fold c) To enlighten the 'depressed classes about the evils prevalent in Hinduism. d) To urge the depressed classes not to embrace any religion at present. d) To strive their utmost to find a new democratic religion. e) To obliterate existing caste differences among the depressed classes f) To start a vigorous campaign to ameliorate the social and economic disabilities of the depressed classes.

13	The Hyderabad Depressed Classes Association	B.S Venkat Rao	Mala	1938	a) To organise the so-called depressed classes into one united body b) To foster the spirit of brother hood and to obliterate the existing caste differences among the depressed classes. c) To educate the depressed classes to sever their connection with the Hindu fold to form a separate body. d) To launch a vigorous campaign against the missionary propaganda in depressed classes. e) To secure the political rights of the Dalits by adequate representation in various organs of the government. f) To effect the removal of the social and civic disabilities of the Dalits.
14	The Hyderabad State Adi-Hindu Mahasabha	P.R. Venkatswamy, J.H Subhaiah and Arigay Ramaswamy	All Malas	1941	a) To revive and develop the ancient culture of the Adi-Hindus b) To develop the spirit of brotherhood among the people c) To unite the depressed people d) To achieve economic, educational political legitimate rights of the Dalits
15	The Hyderabad Scheduled	J. H. Subaiah (first president)	Mala	1942	a) Working for special educational scheme, fellowships b) Construction of depressed

	Caste Federation				classes housing colonies c) Abolition of Bagayla system. d) Allotment of cultivating lands. e) The removal of Beggary system (forced labour).
16	Independent Scheduled Castes Federation	Arigay Ramaswamy Shamsundhar	Mala Mala	1945, 23 June	a) To organise all depressed classes under one banner. b) To attain political rights of depressed classes c) Submitting memoranda on behalf of the Depresses Classes.
17	Arundatiya Matanga Mahasabha	Arigay Ramaswamy (Mudigonda Laxmaiah Madiga)	Mala	1946	a) To organise artisan, service communities, along with Malas and Madigas. b) To mobilise the Madigas. c) To capture the political power at various levels.
18	Dalit Jatiya Sangh	-	-	-	(The members who came from DCA) joined the organisation probably run by Gandhian-Congress)
19	Hyderabad Depressed Classes League	Arigay Ramaswamy	Mala		a) To unite the Depressed Classes b) To fight for socio-political rights of the Depressed Classes
20	United Scheduled Caste Federation	P.V. Manohar Yemula Yadgiri Rao	-	-	A) To unite the Scheduled Castes b) To work for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes.

Source: Shymal H, Swapna. (2004). *Dalit Movement in South India*, New Delhi, Serial Publication and Keshisagar, R.K. (1997). *Dalit Movement and its Leaders in India*, New Delhi, MD Publications, Pvt. LTD and Venkatswamy, P.R. (1955). *Our Struggle for Emancipation, Vol, I, II*, Secundrabad, India, Universal Art Printers.

Appendix–II

Some Major incidents of atrocities on Dalits in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh since 1983

Place of occurrence	**Date of occurrence**	**Nature of the incident**
Padirikuppam (Chittoor)	5 January, 1983	Four *Dalit*s killed and 80 families rendered homeless following an attack by upper caste TDP supporters
Karamchedu (Prakasham)	17 July, 1985	Six *Dalit*s killed and three *Dalit* women raped in a mass assault by hundreds of men of the Kamma caste.
Hasnapur (Adilabad)	13 June, 1985 8 July, 1985	Reddy landlords closely related to the MLA, Adilabad, killed two youth of the dhobi (washerman) and barber castes on these two days for refusing to procure a prostitute for the landlords.
Avdhapur (Medak)	17 January, 1986	Landlords belonging to the TDP set fire to 30 houses of *Dalit*s
Neerukonda (Guntur)	15 July, 1987	One elderly *Dalit* murdered in a mob attack by men of the Kamma Community.
Gudiada (Vizianagaram)	15 July, 1987	One *Dalit* labourer killed in a dispute over a small patch of tank bed land by a mob of backward caste farmers led by a forward Caste (Raju) Congress Party leader.
Dontali (Nellore)	27 August, 1987	One person of belonging to a backward caste killed in an assault by a gang of forward caste men.
Chirala (Prakasham)	13 August, 1987	A principal witness in the Karamchedu murder case done to death.
Bandilapalli	27 November, 1987	Four *Dalit*s beaten and stabbed to death in an assault by a group of forward caste men.
Kodavatikallu	2 February, 1988	*A Dalit* labourer murdered by a landlord
Beernakallu	19 January,	A *Dalit Upasarpanch* of the village killed by

(Nellore)	1989	the TDP landlord
Gokarajupalli	16 January, 1989	A *Dalit* labourer killed by landlords.
Tangutur (Prakasham)	3 March, 1989	A *Dalit* woman raped and burnt to death by a forward caste TDP strong man.
Jabbargudem (Ranga Reddy)	27 April, 1989	One *Dalit* killed in a mass assault by the henchmen of a TDP Landlord.
Pippara (West Godavari)	4 June, 1989	One *Dalit* killed in a mass assault by forward caste men led by the Village *Upasarpanch*.
Chinakada (Vizianagram)	31 July, 1989	Four tribal of one family killed by henchmen of a liquor contractor.
Pulivendula (Cuddapah)	16 February, 1990	More than 150 houses of an ST person set on fire and destroyed by a mob led by the Congress Party (I) *Sarpanch*
Kanchikacherla (Krishna)	19 March, 1990	*A Dalit* farm servant killed by youth of a landlord's family
Jeerupalem (Srikakulam)	21 May, 1990	About 180 houses of fishing community people set on fire at the behest of the Congress Party (I) landlord.
Gutlapadu (West Godavari	19 May, 1990	Two *Dalit*s killed in a mass assault by forward caste men
Reddypalli (Rangareddy)	12 February, 1990	A tribal peasant burnt alive by men of a landlord close to the local M.L.A.
Kothapulavandla Palli (Ananthapur)	6 June, 1990	A *Dalit* burnt alive by forward caste men
Kaspa Gadabavalasa (Vizianagaram)	22 November, 1990	Four tribes and a Harijan killed in a mass assault by forward caste men.
Chillakallu (Krishna)	28 November, 1990	A *Dalit* SI of police shot himself dead due to casteist harassment by the CI.
Moodurallapalli (Kurnool)	18 March, 1991	A *Dalit* labourer beaten and stabbed to death by a mob of forward caste men.

Timmasamudram (Prakasam**)**	January, 1991	*Dalit*s driven out of the village by an attack of forward caste men owing allegiance to a TDP leader.
Chundur (Guntur)	6 August, 1991	At least 8 *Dalit*s killed in a mass assault by forward caste men of six villages.
Gokarajupalli (Krishna)	3 August, 1991	*A Dalit* labourer killed by forward castes.
Jadhimalkapur (Medak)	31May,1996	A Dalit youth was ordered to perform animal sacrifice. When he refused to do that, his family was threatened and socially boycotted.
Vempenta (Kurnool)	16 July, 1998	Four Dalits Killed by members of an upper caste
Kalvakol (Mahaboobnagar)	23 July, 2001	A Dalit youth alive burned and his family members threatened
Phaply (Kurnool)	16 August, 2003	Upper Caste attacked the Dalits, many injured
Laxmipeta (Prakasham)	12 June, 2012	Turpu Kapus attacked the Mala colony and killed five persons. Many Malas injured

***Source*:** Balagopal, K. (1991). Chundur and Other Chundurs. *EPW*, October 19, pp.2399-2405, Srinivasulu,K. (2002)**.** *Caste, Class and Social Articulation in Andhra Pradesh; Mapping Differential Regional Trajectories*. Working Papaer-179, Overseas Development Institute, London,UK and Sakshi Human Rights Reports.

Note: The highlighted incidents have taken as case studies in the thesis.

Appendix-III

Dalit Journals and Magazines

S. No	Name of the Journal	Editor	Year of Started	Nature of the Journal	Place of Publication
1	Harijana	Undru Subba Rao	1933	Monthly	Ponnamanda (East Godavari)
2	Bagyanagar	Govada Neerikhana Rao	1956	Monthly	Machilipatnam
3	Jay bheem	B.V. Ramanaiah	1975	Monthly	Kulsupuram (Hyderabad)
4	Pidithajana	Shetti Kannama Raja	1983	Weekly	Guntur
5	Prajabandhu	Dr.Yendluri Chinnaiah	1984	Monthly	Nellore
6	Janamithra	Ponugumutla vishnumuthi	1985	Weekly	Yanam
7	Beet-Root	V.Vamanadas	1985	Monthly	Vijayawada
8	Bheem Beri	Kothapally Sarala	1989	Monthly	Vishakhapatnam
9	Sangamitra	Ambedkar Educational Society Members	1989	Monthly	Vishakhapatnam
10	Nalupu	Bojja Tarakam	1989	Monthly	Hyderabad
11	Dalita Rajam	Katti Padma Rao	1994	Monthly	Guntur
12	Bahujana Samaj	V.T Rajashekar	1995	Monthly	Vijayawada
13	Dalit voice	V.T. Rajashekar	1995	Monthly	Hyderabad
14	Enati Ikalavya	K.G Satyamurthy	1996	Monthly	Ramnagar (Hyderabad)
15	Manavani	S. Raghupathi Rao	1998	Monthly	Tirupati
16	Kulanirmulana	Duddu Prabhkar	2007	Monthly	Ghatkesar (Ranga Reddy)
17	Dalitashankaravam	Yamala Sudharshan	2001	Monthly	Madanapally

18	Nigha	Kalekuri Prasad	2002	Monthly	Hyderabad
19	Bahujana Keratalu	Buddakoti	2005	Monthly	Ongole
20	Dalita Bahujana Sramika Vimukthi	Satyanandam	2001	Monthly	Vidyanagar (Hyderabad)
21	Sakshi	Sakshi Human Rights Watch, A.P	2003	Monthly	West Maredpally Secunderabad
22	Dalit Commando	Pilla Davidkumar	2003	Monthly	Nidadhavolu (West Godavari)
23	Ambedkar Mission	Ambedkar mission members	2004	Monthly	Hyderabad
24	Dalita	Grace Nirmala	2005	Once in three months	Musirabad
25	Arundathi	Ippa Madhukar	2005	Weekly	Neredumetta X road Ranga Reddy district.
26	Ushodayam	Nelli Nageshwar Rao	2006	Weekly	Ambajipeta (East Godavari)
27	Dammaprabha	Sarella Venkat Ratnam	2006	Monthly	Amalapuram
28	Samajika Nayam	M.F Gopinath	2006	Monthly	Karimnagar
29	Idureeta	U.Sambashiva Rao	1990	Monthly	Hyderabad
30	Samantara	Vandan Kumar	2007	Monthly	Hyderabad
31	Neeli Zenda	Bojja Tarakam	2008	Once 15 Days	Hyderabad

Source: Konky, Gourishwar Rao. (2007). *Dalit newspapers in Telugu-Evolution.* Unpublished M. Phil dissertation, Department of Telugu, University of Hyderabad.

Summary of the PhD thesis

Dalit Movements in Undivided Andhra Pradesh
A Study of Identity and Autonomy

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Introduction

In India, it is often believed that people born in a particular community or caste in which his/her destiny and social status is determined. This status also determines the traditional duties which are abiding: they are prohibited from doing any other work based on the hierarchy that each caste is placed in the Hindu social structure. Thus predetermination of people's life is directed, constructed, controlled and conditioned in a given caste hierarchical or graded unequal relations which are legitimized by Hindu scriptures[1]. Thus the caste system is rooted in Hindu mythology. According to Purushsukta in Rugveda it proclaims that there are four Varnas: Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vyshas and Shudras which come from different parts of body of creator Brahma. The Brahmans come from his mouth, the Kshatriya from his shoulders, the Vyshas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet to perform different social functions. The Varna and caste system over a period of time is perpetuated and got divided into many castes. Ati-Shudras are outside the Varna system and are considered to be untouchables or Avarnas now they are popularly called as 'Dalits'. The graded inequality is the constant source of hierarchical relations and exclusion and discrimination [2] . This caste ridden social relations lead to exclusion, social suppression, discrimination, economic exploitation and political alienation of Dalits, women and Shudras etc. These inhuman practices are continued even after sixty seven years of independent India[3].

In any society, the dominant ideologies subvert their subordinates by denying the critical understanding or any ideology of protest that can change their submission into

[1] Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). Dr. *Babasaheb Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches.* Bombay, Published by Education Department of Maharastra, Volume 3, P.100.

[2] Dumont, Louis. (2008). *Homo Hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, p.72.

[3] See Shah, Ghansham, Harsh Mander, SukhadeoThorat, Satish Deshpandy and Amita Baviskar. (2006). *Untouchability in Rural India*. New Delhi, Sage Publication. This book documents the various forms of the caste discrimination within civil society and institutions.

a transforming force that would reconstruct the world and make it more egalitarian. It perpetuates ignorance, disunity, slavery among the suppressed. Hence the Brahmanical hegemony has colonized the productive communities of Dalitbahujans which historically normalised the oppressed castes experience of discrimination, exploitation and humiliation through state and civil societal organisations. In Gramscian terms this phenomenon of hegemony governs the everyday relations of people and become a source of functioning of institutions. This process of hegemonisation of oppressed life world produces the docile subject, who is alienated from the material and cultural capital in their survival. In Louis Althusser expression the state repressive and ideological apparatus continue to exclude and discriminate the oppressed[4]. The materiality of caste lies as it is a division of laborers' as Ambedkar put it. So, unless one addresses the caste problem at its roots one can't talk about substantial change in socio, economic relations of people. The numerous studies[5] enable us to critically understand the changing roots and forms of caste manifestation even in the changing globalizing market economy.

The continuous atrocities, violence, exclusion and humiliation endanger the human agency of oppressed (Dalits) and negate their freedom, equality, dignity and self respect[6]. Against this oppressive caste and Brahmanical order there are many struggles throughout Indian history. In Ambedkar's view Indian history has been a conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism, Brahmanism representing the counter revolution while Buddhism a revolution. Buddhism was a first revolutionary struggle against Karma and God centric interpretation of social relations which had great

[4] See Althusser, Louis. (2012). *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. New Delhi, Critical Quest

[5] See for economic discrimination in globalised economy and Indian market system Sukhdeo Thorat, Katherines, (2010), "Blocked by Caste; economic Discrimination and Social Exclusion in Modern India", New Delhi, Oxford University Press. See for caste violence on Dalit Narula, Smita . (1999). Broken *People; Caste Violence against India's Untouchables*. Human rights watch, see for caste violence and discrimination on Dalit women Aloysius Irudayam, S.J Jayshree, P Kangubhai and Joel G Lee. (2011). *Dalit Women Speak out; Caste, Class and Gender Violence in India*. New Delhi, Zoobhan Publication.

[6] Guru, Gopal. (Eds), (2009). *Humiliation: Claims and Context.* New Delhi, Oxford University Press, Pp. 210-215.

impact on the legacy of anti caste thinking[7]. The early material philosophy of Shramanic tradition negated the Brahmanic world view. Subsequently there was Bakti movement which challenged the Brahmanical hegemony. Although Bakti movement focused on the direct relation between individual and God during medieval period, in many ways it was protested against Brahmanical hegemony and gave a sense of spiritual democracy to lower caste.

Given the historical legacy the imperative for the Dalit deconstruction and construction of history is increasingly being felt by their organic intellectuals emphasising the need for the oppressed to construct their own self, identity, autonomy, narratives and texts. It is widely felt that the contribution of Dalitbahujans has been denied by the dominant caste for centuries. The dominant national leadership not only hegemonised the leadership but also revalorized and imposed the Hindu Varnashrama dharma ethos on nationalist struggle claiming that these struggles are fighting against colonial power and for Hindu Swaraj. Thus Ambedkar, Gandhi debate assumes historical importance to understand the colonial and post colonial socio, political struggles by Dalits. The two contrasting perspectives of Ambedkar for annihilation of caste and Social Democracy and Gandhi for Varnashrama dharma, Hindu Swaraj or Rama Rajya continue to influence the post colonial movements and politics[8].

Immediately after independence the constitution makers formally formulated and elaborated vision and objectives of the constitution towards inclusive democracy and anticipating equality among people, the Indian constitution's vision stands for a republic, democratic, secular and socialist society. Hence it made everyone a citizen eligible for basic rights. It was formally announced that untouchability practice is legally punishable and the affirmative action in terms of reservation quotas is constitutionally promised for Dalit and Adivasis in education, employment and political representation. The development and change was promised. The adoption of

[7] Ambedkar, B.R. (*1987). Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*. In Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writings, and Speeches, Volume 3, Bombay, Government of Maharastra, P. 275.

[8] See Nagarju, D. (2010). *The flaming Feet and other Essays*. Permanent black, New Delhi. Suhas Palshikar. (1996). Gandhi-Ambedkar interface; when shall the twain meet? *EPW,* August 3, 2070-2072.

five year planning system, agricultural and industrial development promised and equal distribution of resources and opportunities. The green revolution technology and instruments in agricultural production accentuated modernization process towards social change. But the initial policy level changes broadly benefited the land owning castes at local level holding the power positions and structures at various levels. Thus the promise of redistribution of resources, the partial implementation of reservation policy and increasing inequalities and the hegemonic power politics all resulted in people's assertions at grass root level. In the united Andhra Pradesh those who got some institutional access also came forward in mobilising and organising the Dalits for their due share. The large mass who has not got anything from state also actively took part in the ongoing agitations. Thus Dalit as historically marginalised communities emerged as new change agents towards 'New Democratic Revolution'. The Dalit assertion after post independence took various forms and levels. The present study aims at capturing the Dalits assertions and its implications to their autonomous politics and identity formation in united Andhra Pradesh.

Understanding 'Dalit' Category

The word 'Dalit' is often comes into public discourse and most of the people use it in their writings, speeches, debates, discussions and analysis. Etymologically, the Dalit, (depressed or broken people), the root word of this is *"Dal";* the adjective of "Dal" is *"Dalit"*[9]. The term Dalit in Sanskrit is both noun and adjective. It may be used for all three genders, masculine, feminine and neutral. The meaning given to *`Dal'* in the dictionary is: crack, open, and split and so on. When it is used as a noun and adjective it means burst, split, scattered, dispersed, broken, torn as under, destroyed, crushed[10]. This identity has been popularized with the emergence of Dalit panther movement in Maharasta during mid 1970s. It advocated that Dalits to be proud of the Dalit culture and history[11]. The earlier nomenclatures of Dalits, vies, Untouchables, Outcaste, Panchamas, Atisudras, Avarnas, Antyajas, Namasudras, Chandalas, Pariahs –basically as un-seeable, and unapproachable, Chandalas were in use during different phases of

[9] It is found on page 471 of the Oxford Sanskrit English Dictionary, new edition, 1964, edited by Sanskrit scholar, Sir Monier Williams. And also it found in Dravidian and many other languages.

[10] Messey, James. (1995). *Dalits in India*. New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, P.15.

[11] Louis, Prakash. (2003). *Political Sociology of Dalit Assertion.* New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, P. 145.

Indian history and in different parts of the country. The British used the terms 'Depressed Classes' and Exterior class to notify Dalits, meaning they were kept away from Hindu society[12] Gandhi preferred to call them *"Harijan"* which he borrowed from a Gujarati Brahmin Narasinha Mehta. Ambedkar had objections against calling them *"Harijans"* because they found it derogatory, insulting to be called fatherless[13].

Gopal Guru argues that the category "Dalit" is not a metaphysical construction. It derives its epistemic and political strength from the material and social experience of the community. The category Dalit takes ideological assistance from Buddha, Marx, Phule and Ambedkar and in the process becomes man-centered rather than God centered unlike the Gandhian connotation of Harijan does[14]. He further elaborated that the category Dalit chose to radically distance itself from the state constituted categories like the Scheduled Castes, (SC) Scheduled Tribes (ST), other backward castes (OBCs)[15]. However in practice the identity 'Dalit Bahujan' is also widely used in scholarly writings and public discourse, in which Dalit is referred as Scheduled Caste and Bahujan referred as Shudras or other backward classes[16]. Although these categories appeal for some unity and work towards some political goals, the existing historical and socio-economic disparities and heterogeneity always put limitations in realizing the identity in everyday relations of people's life. In order to recognize the lowest of the low within Dalit and taking their deprivation into consideration Bihar Government created a category called 'Mahadalit'[17] for whom government creates special provisions. Scholars have also called the lowest of the low as 'Ati-Dalit'[18] by differentiating lower invisible SC minority caste from numerically dominant caste.

There are many smaller castes within the Dalit like Madiga, Mala, Adi-Andhra in (A.P), Adi-Kanada, Holayas (Karnataka), Palars, Parayas (Tamil Naidu) Chamars (UP, Bihar), Mahars, Mathangus (Maharastra) Valmikis (Punjab) and so on. These

[12] Louis, Prakash. (2003). *Political Sociology of Dalit Assertion,* New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, P. 135.

[13] Ibid, p.140.

[14] Gopal, Guru. (Ed), (2005). *Atrophy in Dalit Politics.* Mumbai, Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, pp. 69-71.

[15] Ibid, p.72

[16] See Illaiah, Kancha. (1996), *Why I am not a Hindu*. Samya Publication, Kolkatha.

[17] Kunath, George. (2013). Compliance or Defiance? The case of Dalits and Mahadalits. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 5(1): 36-59.

[18] See Narayan, Badri. (2015). Democracy and Identity Politics in India: Is it a Snake or a Rope. *EPW,* Vol-no16, April 18,

identities too exist at grass root level and represent different degree of socio, economic inequalities. The assertion of those identities can challenge the hierarchy and democratize the social relations at various levels[19]. It is articulated at various levels among the Dalit. This existence of multiple identities, both the individual and the collective, certainly questions validity of the artificial imposition of the categories. Thus; we have different categories representing multiple identities within the Dalit situation.

The contemporary SC sub categorization movements by Madigas in Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, Arundatiyars in Tamil Nadu, Mangs in Maharastra, and Valmikis in Panjab raised the historical challenges to Dalit movement. Hence these movements argue that different heterogeneous castes legally clubbed into SC category for administration purpose is oblivious to sub-categories. The category 'Scheduled Caste' (SC) is used by Government for all welfare schemes and implementation of reservations benefits. In practice this category is available to some section of dominant, educationally mobile caste within Dalits. So they demand the SC categorisation to benefit the lowest among low. Further they argue that how can a Scheduled Caste be homogonous when there are heterogeneous castes with specific socio, economic condition. And also they argue that the Dalit category may outwardly represent some commonality historically important in political domain. But its problematic has to be addressed; the mobile and beneficiary castes for within the Dalits like Mala, Mahar and Chamars tend to hegemonise the Dalit identity but diversified socio cultural aspects of other Dalit groups below them are never focused. If untouchability is one of an important demarcation to distinguish Savarnas and avarnas (Dalits), the 'hierarchy of untouchability' within the untouched (Dalit) makes Dalit category more ambiguous. Therefore one has to understand the Dalit category in its multiple senses and in ever changing conditions. The ability to stimulate transformative politics of Dalits depends on the recognition of lowest of the low among Dalits and willingness to address recognition and redistribution question from

[19] See Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). *The Dalit Movement and Democratisation in Andhra Pradesh.* No.13, East-West Center Washington Working Papers, Washington.

its roots in order to consolidate untouchables-oppressed to fight against caste class oppressions.

Contextualising the Identity and Autonomy

Autonomy

Etymologically the English word Autonomy is compound of two Greek words that is *Autos* meaning "self" or "ours" and *nomos* meaning "law". Hence originally in Greek Autonomy carries the meaning of oneself, one's laws, self rule etc[20]. To be autonomous requires, first of all, that one have a developed self, to which one's actions can be ascribed. This in turn requires consciousness of oneself as being who acts for reasons, whose behaviour can be explained by reference to one's own goals and purposes. The other dimension of autonomy requires freedom from external constraints. An autonomous person is not someone who is manipulated by others, or who is forced to carry their will. An autonomous person has a will of her or his own, and is able to act in pursuit of self-chosen goals[21].

In contemporary moral and political philosophy autonomy is an important concept at least in the sense that Autonomy is a basic feature of human dignity, this property or capacity of human beings that makes human worthy and potential bearers of rights. It also allows assigning the responsibilities, duties and obligations to persons as moral agents. Greeks understood Autonomy as communal or collective autonomy. It is understood that society is governed, reproduced by historically contingent, continuously changing man made laws rather than extra social laws given by God or nature. To be more clearly the self conscious people participate and deliberate in deciding the nature of good and justice within the political process. Therefore Greeks saw individuals fundamentally as political or social beings, standing in relation to others from birth to death and incapable of realising their freedom outside polis. Thus Greeks understood Autonomy essentially communal and historically situated

[20]Bevir, Mark. (Ed), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume I, New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp.101-104

[21] Ibid, P.6.

contingent and required socialization to make citizens more capable agents to participate in political system[22].

Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy attracted more attention in understanding the human agency and Autonomy in the context when the Government and the state institutional mechanism fail to govern and deliver the justice and basic human values. Kant argues that 1) Autonomy is an innate capacity which is shared universally by all rational human beings. This capacity is available to all on introspection. 2) Kant conceived Autonomy as acting from a self given law conforming to the practical reason (freedom) 3) Kant contrasted autonomous action determined by causes outside the individual will 4) Finally Kant perceived that Autonomy as an innate capacity of individuals, which could ultimately be exercised irrespective of prevailing social, economic or political conditions[23].

The liberal discourse also uses the concept of autonomy widely; in fact it is one of the core values of this philosophy. The autonomous person plays various roles in liberalism in constructing liberal principles. It serves individual as a citizen and bearer of rights, liberties, primary goods etc in flourishing the moral and political commitments. Further it ascribes autonomy to persons to critique the oppressive conditions in which liberation is considered fundamental justice.

Generally Autonomy is understood as individual autonomy and not a group property. The communitarians like Michal Sandel[24] and Charles Taylor argue that how can anyone pre choose autonomy without their community values and cultural life. Thus these critiques also focus on the way the liberal conception of individual autonomy deeply undermine the constituted identities like caste, class, gender, race and ethnicity etc. The contemporary traditions like communitarians and Marxist reject the idea of personal autonomy which liberals defend. These traditions believe that the realization of personal autonomy is depending on the social, political relations in which individuals live.

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[22] Bevir, Mark. (Ed), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume I, New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp.101-104

[23] Ibid

[24] See Walzer, Michael. (1983). *Spheres of Justice; A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York, Basic Book.

Taking clue from communitarian and Marxist insights into consideration, Dalit autonomy can be explained in complex relations. The construction and formation of Dalit identity and autonomy could be understood with group character. Because, given the caste system the identity and social status of individual depends on his/her caste not on his/her capacity, intellect and economic position. So, the construction of "Dalit Self" does not merely depend on defining the "other", rather it depends on its own historical, cultural and material experience. Hence the autonomy articulations of Dalits historically rooted with anti caste philosophy and epistemological tradition in reclaiming its agency. The process in which it engages with the anti caste legacy to reclaim its agency in order to challenge the layers of caste power structures. This can be understood on the crucial conditions of circumstances that create the political subject who forms the self through political practices and whose hermeneutics can be understood only in the context of collective actions and contentious politics[25]. It is different from freedom, because freedom is essentially a value, while autonomy is essentially a category of power. It is different from self-government because, while understanding the contradictory history of autonomous practices in politics there also lay the essence of understanding its significance as a principle of politics.

Dalit autonomy has to be understood in the collective politics of the untouchable both in reclaiming their agency and building the struggle against Brahmanical hegemony and caste power structures. However since the Dalit identity is politically constructed with the demarcation of untouchability between untouchables and Savarnas and there are also less important issue addressing smaller castes within Dalits; hence any assertion from the lowest will add the value dimension to the Dalit autonomy in creating the moral universe against Brahmanical world view.

Identity

Etymologically the term identity has a long history- deriving from *Latin* root *idem* implying sameness and continuity [26] . Identity is the fundamental defining characteristic of an individual or group where on the one hand it is a concept which

[25] See Samadar, Ranadhir, (2005), *The Politics of Autonomy; Indian Experiences,* New Delhi, Sage Publication

[26] Scott, John and Gordon, Mapshall. (2009). *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford University Press, pp. 330

embodies our sense of uniqueness as individual beings and as members of groups sharing values and beliefs and on the other it is an intensely political field in which the expansion of critical theory has allowed the emergence of competing voices demanding space for recognition of often unspoken subjectivities.

Identity is in part a uniquely personal, internal sense of self, but at the same time it relates to that person's place in society and how they are categorized, and the flow of dominant cultural meanings and the power relations contingent on it. The political ideologies produce highly inflectional discourses which construct very different views of individual and collective identity. Identity is a work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others; constantly being re-appraised and very much linked to the circulation of cultural meanings in a society. Social identity is not only important in understanding the complex nature of the individual, but the assumptions made concerning social identity are of central importance in the way we think socially and politically and in the organization and construction of the socio, economic, ideological and political system. Furthermore, there are constant efforts to escape, fix or perpetuate images and meanings of others.

These non-class ideologies recognize that class has importance in shaping our social identities but claim that class should not be seen as the sole or even the overarching influence. It is argued that we are united but divided by things other than class and those national characteristics where we are historically suppressed and have socially constructed barriers like gender, caste, race and ethnicity etc among our relationships. The hierarchical caste system determines the individual identity and social status by birth itself in India in particular and south Asia in general. Ambedkar argues that

> "The four classes are … (n) not only different but unequal in status, one standing above the other. In the scheme of Manu, the Brahmin is placed at the first in rank. Below him is the Kshatriya. Below the Kshatriya is the Vaishya. Below Vaishya is the Shudra and the below Shudra is the Ati-Shudra or the untouchable. This order of precedence among the classes is not merely

conventional. It is spiritual, moral and legal. There is no sphere of life which is not regulated by this principle of graded inequality"[27].

The principle of graded inequality he argued has been carried into the economic field too. It does not recognize equal need, equal work or equal ability as the basis of reward for labour. Its motto is that in regard to the distribution of the good things of life, those who are reckoned as the highest must get the most and the best and those who are classified as the lowest must accept the least and the worst[28]. In Ambedkar and Phule's view caste is core of Hindu social order, and caste is legitimized and given a divine basis and religious sanction through the sastras. It is based on the doctrine that men are created from different parts of divinity. Such doctrine has generated the belief that it must be divine will that remain separate and distinct.[29] Given the above observations on caste system, the identities which emerged in this can characterize the one hierarchical two fixed before birth three historically imposed fourth legitimized through Hindu scriptures fifth degraded with purity and pollution six it is not person oriented (not depend on his/her capabilities) but caste (group) oriented (caste duty) seven Untouchability. Therefore the Dalit identity formation would form or emerge as an anti caste identity (subject) and function as an ideological, social, and political identity to challenge the hegemonic caste hierarchy. It generates the sense of assertion and articulation to deconstruct the Hindu social order and reconstruct the voice of undermined, unspoken subjects (identities) which are historically anti caste. The Dalit identity here is used in the context of understanding the identity emerge in the praxis of recognition (cultural) and redistribution (material) against the hegemonic power structures in realization of freedom, rights, justice, equality of individuals and groups. Dalit identity is not a metaphysical construction. It derives its epistemic and political strength from the material and social experience of the community. It is this social construction of "Dalit hood" which makes it authentic and dynamic rather than passive and rigid. It is also understood in its multiplicity in the context of emerging lower Dalit assertions.

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[27] Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). *Who are the Shudras.* Ambedkar Writing and Speeches, Bombay, Published by Education Department Government of India, Volume 3, p.107.

[28] Ibid, P.111

[29] Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). *Annihilation of Caste (1936),* Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Bombay, Published by Education Department Government of India. Volume: 1, p.100.

Understanding the Dalit Movement

Liberal Perspective

Liberalism is a label for a diverse political family of ideas and positions, political values, state and its mechanism. Gradually this approach got more attention in social and political theory[30]. The gradual differentiation of state and civil society contributed to the development of liberalism. The liberalism emerged broadly against state absolutism, religious and feudal suppression[31] and focused on individualist outlook. In core the liberalism emphases on these principles one natural rights of individuals two separation of powers three rulers constrained by rule of law fourth the state must respect certain kind of rights five the authority of rulers rests ultimately on the consent of the ruled. The theory of liberal constitutionalism is the first and most basic model of a liberal political regime[32].

Often some scholars consider Dr.Ambedkar as constitutionalist liberal thinker and located Dalit movement within new social movements frame work or a movement for some policy level benefits within the liberal constitutional methods. The Indian liberal sociologists studied the Dalit movement through various models like one the theory of relative deprivation or reference group two the structural strain /stress theory. M.S.A Rao a sociologist applied the relative deprivation theory to study the Dalit and backward class struggles. According to this theory the relative deprivation between caste and group is primary cause for emergence of struggle[33]. But this theory is critiqued by Gopal Guru, who argues that relative deprivation theory not only prevents Dalit critical consciousness to challenge the broader oppressive structures but also reduces the Dalit movement as a struggle which seeks some instrumental change within the existing system. It tends to develop the zealous about people within their social category or social position. The state and political parties employ various strategies to politicize the relative deprivation to defuse the emerging consciousness

[30] Bevir, Mark. (Ed), (2010). *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*. Volume Two, New Delhi, Sage Publication, p. 795.

[31] Ibid, p.796.

[32] Ibid, p.797.

[33] Rao, M.S.A. (Ed), (2008), *Social Movements in India*. New Delhi, Manohar Publications. Pp. 191-216

of Dalits. Moreover it does not help us understand the conversion movements of Dalits into Buddhism and Christianity[34].

The structural strain/stress theory focuses on the disequilibrium in the socio-political system and dysfunctional nature of state institutions. The paradox of modernization and industrial development, all these accumulated problems led to tensions between the power holding ruling elite and people's assertion for justice at grass root level. Rajini Kothari in his work argued that the congress system, social disorder, the dysfunctions of state institutions led to the various gross root movements. Kothari further argues that there has been a disjunction between state and society in India which resulted in class movements against upper class/caste, women movements for gender equality, tribal movements for autonomy, regional movements for regional identity and autonomy[35]. He argues that the growing assertion of Dalits can help to critically interrogate the secular forces. The state is expected to play crucial role in ensuring the basic rights and development to this marginal groups. Earlier the grass root movements could not provide the transformative results and the left parties both parliamentary and radicals failed to represent and give due share to these groups in the organisational structure. So the Dalit movement is not about scheduled caste, it is about transformation of the oppressive structures. So, it goes beyond new social movement framework[36].

Marxism and New Left Perspective

The term Marxism is a philosophical and theoretical world view as a scientific method of understanding human society rather than utopian socialism[37]. The traditional Marxist philosophical and theoretical understanding of social movements is in essence through historical materialism and class struggle. In this approach the history of people is history of class struggle. So, the conflict is the source of

[34] Guru, Gopal (1993), *Dalit Movement in Mainstream Sociology*, *EPW*, Vol-28, No-14, April 3, pp-570-573.

[35] Kothari, Rajini, (1994), *Rise of the Dalits and the Renewed Debate on Caste*, *EPW*, June 25, pp-1589-1594.

[36] Ibid

[37] Ritzer, George. (Ed), (2005). *Encyclopedia of Social theory*. Volume-1, New Delhi, Sage Publication, p.478.

dominance and resistance between haves and have nots. The power of dominance lies in the private property (economic), often it is in Marxist philosophy considered as a base which determines the production and human relations in unjust and unequal way. Therefore, Marx, Engels, argued that the inequality perpetuates into political and social life[38].

In India the growing Marxist, nationalist and orthodox Marxist interpretation of history and society, foreign trained historians broadly social sciences scholars called themselves as subaltern scholars attempted to address the south Asian specificities beyond the orthodox economic determinism, by taking Gramscian ideas into application[39]. They claimed that their intention is to write history from below. Understanding collective action in terms of other than grand narratives of nationalist or class struggle is a move that illuminates the meaning and experience of resistance in the context of domination, enabling an appreciation of the contradictions that are intrinsic to subaltern consciousness and collective action[40]. However there are critiques on the subaltern studies Kancha illaiah observe that the subaltern scholars focused on the grand narratives of nationalist thought and peasant struggles and neglected the contribution of gender, caste, anti caste struggles towards subaltern consciousness. However Illaiah's emphasis marks specificities of DalitBahujans. It is argued that they are sub-subalterns.

In the wake up of various local struggles with radical approach like Dalit panther movement in Maharasta and Dalit Sagharshan Samiti leaders attempted to synthesize the Ambedkar and Marxist philosophical approach. The scholars like Gail Omvedt and Sharat Patil also rigorously explored and interpreted Dalit and other oppressed struggles beyond Marxist economic determination through their writings and sympathise anti caste struggles and Marxist thinking.

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[38]Bevir, Mark. (Ed), (2010). *Encyclopedia of political theory*. Volume2, New Delhi, Sage Publication, PP. 863-870.

[39] Guha, Ranajit. (2011). *Gramsci in India: homage to a teacher*. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 16 (2), 288-295.

[40] See Guha, Ranajit. (Ed), (2008). *Subaltern Studies*. Voume-1, New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

An Ambedkarite Perspective

Dr.Ambedkar being a synthesizer of the anti caste legacy and thought in India becomes a guiding force for various colonial and post colonial anti caste movements and politics. His entry into Indian political scene radically changed the terms of political discourse which subsequently resulted in asserting the subjugated voice of the former untouchables. Ambedkar through his philosophical enquiry about human nature, the historical process of dominance and resistance, the development of human consciousness and his liberative political practice has radically differed from the existing models of emancipation of oppressed be it from Hindu reformers, communists and liberals in India. He built up the alternative liberative struggles against the existing models. Here Ambedkarite perspective is considered as the core ideas of Ambedkar in particular anti caste thinking in general which produced a coherent new knowledge system and became a historical guiding force for consciousness of the oppressed particularly Dalits. The contemporary Dalit movement takes Dr. Ambedkar's ideas in its understanding and action in particular and anti caste thinking in general. The debate between Gandhi-Ambedkar since its inception had influenced on the Dalit politics and movement. Still the debate is gaining momentum. It is considered not merely a debate between two personalities; it is a debate between two conflicting worldviews of Indian civilization and history, where Gandhi represents Hindu Varnashrama dharma tradition and Ambedkar the Buddhist human philosophy. Ambedkar in his scholarly work traced out the genealogy of untouchables and the roots of conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In his scholarly work 'revolution and counter revolution' he interpreted that the Indian history is nothing but conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism against the conventional understanding of Marxist that Indian history is class struggles, in one of the public gathering of railway workers at Mahad, Dr.Ambedkar emphasized on two fold problem which oppressed have to address;

> "There are in my view two enemies which the workers of this country have to deal with. The two enemies are Brahmanism and capitalism... by Brahmanism I do not mean the power, privileges and interests of Brahmins as a community. By Brahmanism I mean the negation of the spirit of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In that sense it is rampant in all classes and is not confined to the

> Brahmans alone though they have been the originators of it "(Reported in the Times of India, 14 February, 1938)[41]

Ambedkar views the conflict in the form of folds in Brahmanism (Ideology) and capitalism (Material conditions). Ambedkar's systematic investigation into ideological roots of caste system and Hindu scriptures motivated him to understand human suffering beyond material conditions. Hence his implicit emphasis on human consciousness and counter ideological struggle and caste-class praxis are key elements of his emancipatory politics. It is also evident that in his life time he attempted to address these two problems through struggles and political initiations. Ambedkar work in one his 'States and Minorities' presented some remedies to address above mentioned problems. His proposition of 'state socialism' in which land, industries should be under state control are of great worth to explore the relevance. While he is suggesting solution in Buddhism for the fundamental problems of human kind, Ambedkar gave a new and modernistic interpretation to Buddhism in his work of 'Buddha and his Dhamma', Dhukka interpreted as equal to exploitation/suffering. So, in his essay 'Buddha or Marx' he argues that

> "Society has been aiming to lay a new foundation as was summarized by the French revolution in three words, fraternity, liberty and equality. The French revolution was welcomed because of this slogan. It failed to produce equality. We welcomed the Russian revolution because it aims to produce equality, Society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can coexist only if one follows the way of the Buddha. Communism can give one but not all"[42].

Dr. Ambedkar's visionary warning to the people of India is more relevant today than ever before. As long as inequalities continue, the 'one man, one vote-one value' principle which gave the citizens to participate in the democratic process and elect representatives part become a ruling class. This has created a great change among untouchables. His emphasis on 'social democracy' and 'state socialism' has greater

[41] See Omvedt, Gail. (2002). *Ambedkar and after: the Dalit Movement in India*. In Ghanshyam Shah (Ed), (2002). *Social Movements and the State*. New Delhi, Sage Publications.

[42] Ambedkar, B.R. (2008). *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol 3, Dr. Ambedkar Resource Material, Mumbai, Publishing Committee, Government of Maharastra, Pp.444-462

relevance to today. While submitting the constitution in Constituent Assembly Dr.Ambedkar gave a historic speech on Indian contradictions.

> "On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up"[43].

Dr. Ambedkar's belief in constitutional Democracy is an indication of his strong belief that this can make untouchables and oppressed as equal citizens and bearers of rights against caste hierarchy and make them capable to participate in political process and becomes a ruling class and therefore it is an important aspect of his struggle and politics. His constant political experiment through Independent labor Party, Scheduled Caste Federation and Republican Party towards building autonomous politics for oppressed is case in point. Dr.Ambedkar's ideas also give philosophical underpinnings and reflection of Antonia Gramsci, George Lucks, Louis Althusser, Jone Deway frame works. Broadly reflects the neo Marxist and critical theory of understanding and thinking. The anti caste movements gave birth to new ideas, symbols, methods and philosophical and ontological tools for new knowledge production which has greater ability to challenge the caste system. Phule, Dr.Ambedkar's comparison of Dalits with blacks and beyond also indicate the necessity of the solidarity across to fight oppression and exploitation. Gail Omvedt, in her "Dalits and Democratic Revolution" argues that the anti caste Dalit movement can be classified as "anti systemic movements" because these movements are historically struggling to change the foundations of hierarchical structure of Indian society. In a

[43] Ambedkar delivered a speech while addressing the Constituent Assembly on 25th, 1949.

way these are "value oriented movements as opposed to "norm oriented movements" replacing caste, social oppression, economic exploitation and political domination by egalitarian principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity[44].

Dalits: A Socio, Economic Profile

The united Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 and got divided on June 2, 2014 into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Since the study is covering united Andhra Pradesh, a brief socioeconomic profile is presented for broader understanding of Dalits status. The state comprised three distinctive regions namely Costal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalseema. Historically, in terms of development, culture and natural resources these three regions present divergent trajectories. Coastal Andhra consist nine districts Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Vishakapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore. Rayalaseema consist of four districts namely Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Kurnool. And Telangana, consisting ten districts Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda.[45] These regions present vast regional variations in socio-economic and cultural spheres. Historically Telangana was a part of princely Hyderabad state under Nizam rule and Coastal Andhra under Madras presidency. Even in terms of social movements and civil society articulations, these regions present contrasting trajectories. While the 'backward' Telangana region has seen mobilization of rural poor and youth by the communists and radical left on the basis of class struggle along with presence of Dalit movement[46]. The coastal Andhra witnessed agriculture development, emergence of Dalit consciousness and major massacres on Dalits[47]. Rayalaseema is a faction prone region where marginalized communities like SCs, STs and OBCs are divided and fragmented into factional groups under dominant caste (Reddies, Kammas etc) leaders. Therefore,

[44] Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*. New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp.10.

[45] See Suri, K.C. (2002). *Democratic Process and Electoral Politics in Andhra Pradesh. India*, Working Ppaer-180, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK.

[46] See Srinivasulu, K. (2002). *Caste, Class and Social Articulation in Andhra Pradesh: Mapping Differential Regional Trajectories*. Working paper - 179, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK.

[47] See Ratnam, K.Y. (2008). *The Dalit Movement and Democratisation in Andhra Pradesh*. No 13, East-West Center, Washington Working Papers. Washington.

these groups never allowed space of caste and class consciousness even though people experienced exploitation and discrimination. Due to the influence of state level Dalit and radical movements there were some attempts and initiatives. The exploited and the discriminated groups started their assertion against dominant castes[48]. The following table indicates the regional distribution of Scheduled Castes.

Table-1

Regional Distribution of Scheduled Caste Groups in united Andhra Pradesh

Caste	Andhra Pradesh	Telangana (inc, HYD)	Costal Andhra	Rayalaseema
Mala and Adi- Andhra	42.8	29.4	57.7	38.0
Madigas	49.2	61.3	36.6	51.9
Relli	1	0.1	3.4	0.0
Others	7	9.3	2.3	10.1

Source: B.N Krishna Committee, 2010, pp-369[49]

There are around 62 Scheduled Castes recognized by the state. The numerically dominant castes are Mala and Madiga. These two castes are spread across the three regions (Telangana, Rayalaseema and Costal Andhra). There are small sub castes or satellite castes affiliated to both Mala and Madiga. In terms of social hierarchy Malas claim to occupy superior position than Madigas, Rellies and Dakkali occupy lowest than Madiga. The recent Sri Krishna committee appointed by the Government, found above statistical trends of Dalits in united Andhra Pradesh in three region of the state. These sixty two castes are spread into three regions. Among them some of the satellite castes like Dakkali, Chindu, Netakani are visible in Telangana but not in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema, whereas Adi-Andhra, Relli, Godari are not present in Telangana. So, now some of the Dalit organisations are demanding that since the state is divided and the Scheduled Caste list has to be changed to take any further action on SC categorization or for any policy formulation.

[48] In Rayalseema region Communists are mobilized particularly radical left also had influence in some part of Anatapur, Chittoor etc. But the increasing factional leader's entry into politics created the Factionalisation and criminalization of politics in the region. Often the political parties also encouraged this process for vote bank politics.

[49] Opt, Krishna, B.N. (December 30, 2010), p. 369

Problem of the Study / Statement of the Problem

Dalit movement in India emerged as an alternative democratic struggle against caste-class oppression and Brahmanical hegemony. The presence and articulation of untouchable struggles vary from region to region and time to time[50]. In north India Adi-dharm and Adi-Hindu movement by Mangooram and Swami Achutananda, Kabeer Path and Santu Ravidas Panth have great influence on people's life. In South India movements like Adi-dravida, Adi-Andhra, Adi-Kannada, Basaveshwara's Veerashivisam took place and asserted their identity and challenged the caste Hindu hegemony[51]. The increasing consciousness among untouchables made them search for new identities and claims for socio-economic and political rights. The dismal life conditions of these communities fortified various identities which gave them positive hope and relief from the oppressive and stigmatized identities. However Ambedkar's entry into Indian political scene qualitatively changed the terms of depressed classes agenda and struggles. Ambedkar being a well educated and a statesman started to consolidating untouchables by building all India level movement. The struggle and debate between Gandhi and Ambedkar became not merely a contestation between two personalities but it is a fight between contrasting vision and understanding of Indian history, caste system and untouchable emancipation etc.

Dr. Ambedkar during colonial period particularly during freedom struggle questioned Gandhi, Congress hegemonic politics, Brahma, Arya Samajist tendency of homogenizing untouchables within Hindu fold without addressing the caste hierarchy and untouchability. Further he also questioned the communist orthodox interpretation of Indian state and society without taking caste and Brahmanical hegemony into consideration. Hence Ambedkar searched for autonomous struggles and politics led by oppressed particularly Dalits. In order to build this movement he connected and consolidated Dalit assertion. Both Telangana under Nizam rule, Andhra under Madras presidency were influenced by Ambedkar movement. Dr. Ambedkar's visit to both

[50] See Kshirsagar, R.K. (1994). *Dalit Movement in India and its leaders*. New Delhi, M.D Publication Pvt Ltd. documented the various organisations and contributed leaders their struggles against caste discrimination and exclusion across states during 1857-1956.

[51] Sugarswan, Reform movements in north India, and Samel, H, Swapna, (2004), *Dalit Movement in South India*", New Delhi, Serial Publication has documented the Dalit movement in South India covering Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka from 1857 to 1950.

the regions helped to organise various Dalit leaders under Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF), which had considerable influence on both regions. Hence apart from the regional Dalit articulations in both the regions Dr. Ambedkar's initiatives attempted to consolidate the scattered groups. Hence it become an important aspect in locating contemporary Dalit movement in its historical roots to understand Dalit claims for socio, political rights, the strategies of resistance and strategising their political programme. After Ambedkar particularly after formation of Andhra Pradesh, the Dalit activities were on decline. The RPI and other Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangalu, employees associations could not make big difference and could not politically consolidate Dalits. The scholarly research work on Dalit movement shows the gap in exploring the Dalit politics and mobilization between 1950 until 1985; hence it is also an important aspect in understanding and exploring reasons why Dalit politics were not vocal in this period. And why a majority of Dalits at grass roots level were attracted to radical left movement. This present study is an attempt to enquire into some of these motions.

Although there are a few studies exploring diversified Dalit mobilization in both Telangana and Coastal Andhra regions, there is a need to deeply comprehend these diverse forms of Dalit assertions and its specificities in the context of growing regional assertions and changing nature of caste manifestation. Hence it become an important area of exploration to study deeply how feudal nature of Telangana manifest in the caste, how advanced agrarian Costal Andhra mediate the caste relations and Rayalseema factional group rivalries hold the caste power and its implications on Dalit assertions in its concrete terms.

In the mid 1980s qualitative change has taken place in Andhra politics in terms of change in the government from the long ruling congress national party to regional TDP Government. The formation of TDP within short time has consolidated the hold of Kamma dominant caste. And it is also period where the left movement engaged at grass root mobilization. The political consolidation of Kamma caste strengthened caste arrogance that led to brutal attacks on Dalits in Coastal Andhra. The Dalit massacre in Karamchedu in 1985 changed the caste discourse. It is argued that the post-Karamchedu Dalit assertions have consolidated Dalits and their identity formation. However after thirty years of experience of Dalit movement and its

numerous fractions and fragmentations force us to see the identity formation in its concrete terms and in the emerging complex multiple contradictions and power relations. Hence the following questions demand more scholarly attention in that how the dominant caste nature and regional specificity determine the form of caste manifestation? How does Dalit movement address and addressing multiple contradictions within Dalit movement? Also to know whether Dalit identity got consolidated, if it is so what is its form of formation. What are the emerging challenges to Dalit identity formation and its sustainability? These are some of the questions which are important for research. After emergence of Dalit Mahasabha a debate was initiated on caste-class approach and Dalit and communists movements and their understanding and programme. This debate greatly influenced the Dalits, women, communists and rights organisations. Subsequently from both the Dalits and communists some attempts were made to build the movement with caste-class praxis. The study aims at understanding and exploring lessons from these experiences.

After one decade of Dalit Mahasabha movement and its influence on social movements, the mid 1990s brought radical departure in Dalit movement in terms of sub caste movements and mobilization. The emergence of MRPS (1994) popularly known as Dandora posed serious questions to Dalit movement and its leaders. The failure of Dalit movement to address the Dandora questions led to intense mobilization by Madigas for their own identity and redistribution of SC reservation to lowest among low. This struggle for classification of Scheduled Caste (SC) reservation into ABCD categories in united Andhra Pradesh has generated a nationwide debate and added a new dimension to Dalit discourse[52]. Although many untouchable castes are constitutionally clubbed under the category of SCs and Dalits in socio, political realm these categories constitute many castes which are historically carrying the specific conditions and culturally diversified experience, hence these categories are heterogeneous. These differences manifested in emerging articulations and struggles within Dalits in various states. There are contested views, arguments and mobilization and counter mobilizations around the issue. The movement has

[52] See Muthaiah, P. (2004). Dandora: The Madiga Movement for Equal Identity and Social Justice in A.P. *Social Action*, April-June, 2004. Vol. 54. 185-209.

created ground a greater debate around the questions, they one Can SC (Scheduled Caste) be a divisible category into A, B, C and D in order to benefit the lowest among low? Second Can Dalit category represent the diversity of the different caste groups within Dalits? Three can the struggles for recognition and redistribution within Dalits leads to division of Dalits? The contemporary Dalit movement is on an ambiguous state and not being able to address the emerging internal problems of this kind which also has as all India nature.

The above analysis and questions show the need of research on Dalit movement, its changing nature of identity formation and autonomous politics within the regional specificity. Further, failures and achievements of Dalit politics and the emerging internal challenges to the Dalit movement is also an important aspect of contemporary Dalit movement across the state. The present study aims at addressing some of these problems.

Objectives and Scope of the study

The present study is entitled "*Dalit Movements in undivided Andhra Pradesh: A Study of Identity and Autonomy"* critically evaluates various phases of Dalit movement. It analyses the post independence Dalit assertion and consciousness within the caste-class social relations. The study broadly focuses on the following objectives;

- To study the post Karamchedu (1985) Dalit movement and its impact on Dalit consciousness.
- To study role of Dalit literary production in shaping the Dalit consciousness and identity.
- To explore and analyze regional specificity of caste violence and Dalit assertion.
- To critically analyze Dalits initiatives and attempts towards caste-class praxis.
- To study and analyze the context of Madigas' (MRPS) SC reservation categorization movement (1994) and its implications to Dalit movement.

In order to provide better perspective and analysis of the Dalit movement the study covers the three geographical regions (Rayalaseema, Telangana and Coastal Andhra) of united Andhra Pradesh. Understanding both nature and scope, to capture the

complexity it also took into consideration of the contemporary developments of other part of India and tries to see Dalit movement in the holistic perspective.

Hypothesis

The study formulates the following working hypothesis.

- The series of major vibrant incidents after Karamchedu massacre (1985) brought out the multiple contradictions and shaped the Dalit consciousness.
- The regional historical specificities or the nature of sociopolitical culture of the regions influence the pattern of caste violence and the nature of Dalit assertions
- The Dalit attempts and initiatives towards autonomous movement and politics suffered from the internal contradictions and external hegemonic politics.
- The assertion of lowest among Dalits is the result of deep rooted inequalities both within Dalits and outside!

Methodology of the Study

The material for the present study gathered from secondary as well as primary sources. The secondary sources include Census, government reports, mainly reports of commissions on Scheduled Castes and the state assembly debates, the parliamentary debates and commission reports on reservations in general and SC reservation categorization in particular. Further it covers books and published articles, online resources and publicity material (Pamphlets, manifestos, recorded songs, and literary writings) issued by Dalit organisations, civil society groups and movements in the state.

For deeper exploration of Dalit assertion in its concrete terms two incidents each from three regions, Telangana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema has taken. To understand contemporary Dalit response to caste violence the Laxmipeta incident (2012) is also covered. In the study each incident is considered a specific case. A pilot study was conducted before actual field work to get basic information and to test the Schedule in the field. Part of the field work, researcher visited and stayed in the case study villages (Karamchedu, Chundur, Vempenta, Papili, Jadimalkapuram, Kalvakol) and the village where MRPS emerged as a force in the history of Dalit movement. The

Schedule is prepared to elicit three kinds of information 1) the context of incident, the reasons for incident, and the socio, economic and political conditions of the village 2) the post incident strategies (organizations, networks), and forms through which Dalits and various caste groups articulated and asserted. 3) It also focused on the changing nature of external and internal factors of Dalit movement particularly Dandora movement.

The study adopted qualitative research method too. A part of this method was used in collecting primary data through taking extensive face to face personal interviews. A tape recorder and field notes were other tools. The interviews were held in Telugu with semi structured schedule with open ended questions. The schedule elicited information from one Academicians; doing research and writing on Dalits, two Movement Leaders: heading different caste groups and organizations, three Activists: who are working and organizing Dalits at various levels (in Local, Urban and institutions), four Grass root level members working in organizations and movements, five Poets, writers and cultural artist: producing creative literature on Dalits and affiliated caste life, culture and ideology six Dalit politicians elected for different political positions through various political parties. The respondents have been selected through snow ball method from three regions (Telangana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema). The gender proportion also was taken into consideration. The exploratory method has been used for analysis of field data, incidents and the processes of Dalit Identity formation and the Dalit autonomous articulation and the changing nature of Dalit consciousness.

Chapterisation

The work is organised as follows.

Chapter-I ***Introduction:*** the chapter deals with introduction to the study which includes broadly understating the category 'Dalit', contextualizing the Dalit identity and Autonomy, the perspectives of Dalit movement, the profile of socioeconomic conditions of Dalits. Further the chapter also delineates the objectives, hypothesis and methodology of the study.

Chapter-II ***The Historical Roots of Dalit Movement*****:** the chapter traces out the historical roots and trajectories of Dalit movements in both Telangana and Coastal

Andhra. It outlines influence of the ancient Buddhist and medieval Bakhti protest movements on Dalit assertion. It also covers the non Brahman movement in Madras presidency and its impact in stimulating the non-Brahman consciousness against the Brahmanic hegemony. While focusing on the Dalit mobilization in colonial period and their political claims, the chapter attempts to understand the leading leaders who represented diverse approaches under various organisations, activities and ideologies for Dalit emancipation. In order to understand the post independent or post Ambedkar Dalit mobilization, it focused on three streams of political processes between 1956-1985 via a) Congress hegemonic politics and Dalit accommodation b) Communist mobilisation and c) Independent Dalit mobilization.

Chapter-III ***Dalit Identity; Caste, Region and Dalit Assertion:*** The chapter aims at exploring the Dalit identity articulations in the complex historical regional specificity of Telangana, Costal Andhra and Rayalseema by engaging and explaining two major episodes from each region. Here each one considered as case and seven case studies (including contemporary Laxmipeta, 2012) in-depth are included. All these incidents have taken place after Karamchedu incident (1985). The intention behind taking these case studies is to see and understand layers in and nature of caste conflict in which Dalit assertion takes place and challenge the caste power structures. The case studies also helped to understand the changing nature of Dalit identity formation in post-Karamchedu Dalit Mahasabha movement. However, the analysis of these case studies clearly brings out multiple contradictions rooted the political economy and culture of the specific regions. It also dealt with the dominant caste power operation and ideological state apparatus which charaterises the nature of caste violence and multiple contradictions.

Chapter-IV ***Dalit Autonomy; Understanding Historical and Contingent Articulations:*** the chapter focuses on the initiatives and attempts of Dalits towards autonomous articulations and politics. While dealing with historical and contingent factors of Dalit autonomous activities, it also deals with the context in which formation of Dalit Mahasabha and its impact on Dalit consciousness. It presents a detailed account of Mahasabha activities, nature of mobilisation and overall experience of Mahasabha. The chapter also explores Dalit and left parties' attempts and initiatives towards caste-class praxis. It analyses the dynamics of independent

Dalit politics and Dalit political mobilization after Karamchedu with some historical milieu; it also attempts to comprehend the electoral performance of Dalit parties. It further analyses the launching of BSP, its strategies, mobilization patterns, the electoral performance and emerging challenges. In order to understand the changing nature of 'Dalit' identity the chapter explores historical roots of MRPS (1994) or 'New Dalit Movement' demand for rationalization of SC reservation and its implication on Dalit movements and politics.

Chapter-V ***Dalit Literature; Understanding Consciousness and Identity:*** this chapter deals with Dalit literary works and their role in shaping Dalit Consciousness in challenging Brahmanic hegemonic cultural practice and ideology which colonized the productive Dalit life world. The new consciousness questioned and challenged the Brahmanical cultural ideology and aesthetics. The gamut of Dalit literary writings creatively engaged in producing counter hegemonic ideology. The chapter delineates the way the organic intellectuals, activists, writers, artists and singers articulated their experience through various genres like poetry, songs, plays, art forms, novels etc in creating the Dalit public sphere. It presents relation between Dalit movement and Dalit literary writings. It traces out roots of non Brahman and non Dalits writings on Dalit life and analyzes the radical break in the very nature, articulation and content of the Dalit literary discourse and the formation of Dalit identity in the post-Karamchedu movement. The literary movement over a period of time played crucial role in the formation of Dalit self, identity and deeply engaged in creating alternative symbols, cultural practices. Finally the chapter presents analysis of emergence of Dandora literature in the context of SC reservation categorization movement from below. This phase shows the lowest among low within Dalits started producing literature and raised many historical questions. The writers involved in this production argue that Dandora literary production deepen the democratic spirit of Dalit literature and expanded Dalit literary horizon.

Chapter-VI ***Conclusion:*** this chapter carries the conclusions emanating from thesis enquiry. In brief the Dalit Mahasabha which emerged in 1985 in the aftermath of Karamchedu created a 'Dalit political subject' which was qualitatively different from the earlier identities that untouchables were articulating and asserting in undivided Andhra Pradesh. The new consciousness and mobilisation created a Dalit identity

formation among Dalit leaders, activists, employees, youth, writers, artists and political representatives who are emerged as organic intellectuals' in the light of anti caste legacy. These new forms of mobilisation and intelligence challenged Brahmnical Telugu public sphere and asserted autonomous space from mainstream and left parties. However Dalit Mahasabha failed to build the broader movement and address internal contradictions within Dalits. Further, it is reduced to Coastal Andhra, Mala leadership by doing urban centric activities.

After one decade of Dalit Mahasabha movement, particularly from the mid 1990s, the Dandora movement emerged as a 'new Dalit movement' for securing a respectable identity and equal redistribution of SC reservation benefits within Dalits. The movement critically interrogated the Dalit and Dalit Bahujan categories and contradictions within Dalits. The Dandora, or new Dalit movement, has expanded and deepened the scope and content of Dalit agenda though it may not produce immediate electoral results. The emerging antagonism from mobile scheduled castes and the intellectuals and political silence over it shows failure of the Dalit movement and leadership in understanding the contradiction within Dalit Bahujans and its resolving mechanism. Dandora or new Dalit movement of lower Dalits also brought up new issues, symbols, literary writings and leadership, different dimension of historical suffering and complexity of hierarchy of untouchability, etc., for deeper discussion. Although there are deviations and the element of ideological diversion, the emerging 'new Dalit movements' carry greater ability to democratise the Dalit moral and political discourse.

Although the Dalit Mahasabha created a top down Dalit assertion after Karamchedu massacre the manifestation of Dalit identity and autonomy articulated and negotiated in the given socioeconomic dynamics and everyday relations of the Dalits. As it is clearly said that during colonial period Dalit leaders articulated their identity and autonomous space in both Coastal Andhra and Telangana region which is also reflected in the post-Karamchedu Dalit assertions. The historical regional specificity of three regions of undivided Andhra Pradesh continues to reproduce the strong caste relations notwithstanding the new capital formation of the regions. Scholars who studied Dalit movement confined to Telangana or Coastal Andhra and largely neglected Rayalaseema, or subsumed it under Coastal Andhra. Coming to Telangana

region, Velamas and Reddies have been the dominant castes, controlling the economy and politics. On the other hand, in the capitalist agriculturally advanced Coastal Andhra region Kammas, Reddies and Kapus are the dominant castes. In Rayalasema, Kammas and Reddys have a strong hold on politics and economy through factionalist socio-political culture. The changing nature of economy and power structure of dominant caste and the Dalit mobility and assertion are all largely shaped the caste conflict, and further it influenced the Dalit identity formation and method of negotiating the Dalit autonomous space at grassroots level. From the case studies, it can be observed that while the Dalit identity construction is taking place from above, the existing and emerging issues are indicating the multiple contradictions which need to be addressed. This is elaborated in the case of Vempenta and other cases, where there is Dalit identity articulation at the state level, the conflict among Mala and Madiga and between Dalits and Sudra (OBC) is visible at the grassroots level. In 1989 BSP entered in backdrop of Karamchedu movement into state, its attempts to transform Dalit mobilisation into electoral result failed. The BSP attempts to build autonomous Dalit politics suffered from structural challenges.

The Dalit Mahasabha's criticism of the practice of both parliamentary and radical left in India led to debate and discussion on the caste-class praxis and Dalit relative autonomous space among activists and intellectual circles. Often it is visible both in left and Dalit movement that the personality-centric leadership in the Dalit movement and the upper caste party hegemonic leadership in left movement have to be democratized towards more inclusion and internal democratic mechanism. The left inadequate understanding of layers of exploitation and suffering of human beings makes the left to term the Dalit movements as sectarian or identitarian, without taking into consideration of the historical contribution of anti caste thinkers and their struggles. In the backdrop of discussions towards caste-class approach, the communist parties were forced to launch their front organisations like "Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi" (KNPS - A Committee for Annihilation of Caste) and its "Kulanirmulana" (Annihilation of Caste) magazine, by CPI(ML)-People's War in 1998, "Kula Vivaksha Vethireka Porata Samithi" (KVPS - A Committee against the Caste Discrimination) by CPI(M) in 1998, "Dalitha Hakula Porata Samithi" (DHPS - A Committee for Dalits Rights) by CPI in 2006. These organisations worked out a tactical approach to address issues like caste and gender. The left rhetoric on religion

and its historical understanding of super structure does not provide adequate framework to address the deep rooted religious, caste power structures which determine historical material inequalities and its modern reproduction.

The continuous, consistent nexus between the global imperial forces and the caste Hindu capitalist forces together continue to determine the agenda and control functioning of the state and market. This implicit convergence of the state and market agenda will perpetuate inequalities both in institutions and outside institutions, Dalit and Adivasis are first victims of this larger process. Therefore, it is important to recognise the layers of caste, class, gender inequalities and discrimination in order to build the broader emancipatory movements for realisation of a more humane society. The analysis in this study clearly brings out that after post-Karamchedu, the Dalit movement through Dalit Mahasabha was strongly articulated for its identity and autonomous space both from mainstream political parties and left parties in defining and directing the Dalit movement for alternative emancipatory struggle and politics in the light of anti caste and Ambedkar legacy. However the emerging contradictions both from external and internal throwing challenge to be addressed structurally to realise the ability of this very struggle to envisage the alternative holistic caste-class praxis. Hence, sooner the Dalit movement responds to these challenges the better the future and vision of the movement.