

**Mapping the Political Consciousness among Dalits: A Study of Jalaun  
and Etawah Districts, Uttar Pradesh 1990-2012**

**Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
for the award of the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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Date: 19/12/2019


**DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis entitled “Mapping the Political Consciousness among Dalits: A Study of Jalaun and Etawah Districts, Uttar Pradesh 1990-2012” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

  
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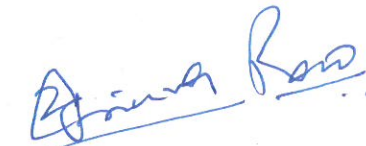
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We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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*Dedicated*  
*to my respected*  
*Mother and Mama*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AISCF	All India Scheduled Caste Federation
AVP	Ambedkar Village Programme
BAMCEF	All India Backward (SC/ST/BC) and Minority Communities Employees Federation
BCs	Backward Castes
BJP	Bharatiya Samaj Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
BSI	Buddhist Society of India
CM	Chief Minister
CPI	Communist Party of India
DMS	Dalit Maha Sabha
DP	Dalit Panther
DS-4	Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samithi (Struggle Committee of the Oppressed Dalit Society)
ERDL	Explosive Research and Development Laboratory
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
NIC	National Indian Congress
OBCs	Other Backward Castes
RPI	Republican Party of India
SC	Scheduled Castes
SCF	Scheduled Castes Federation
SP	Samajwadi Party
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPSCF	United Provinces Scheduled Castes Federation

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Achhut	outcaste or untouchable
Ad Dharm (Adi Dharam)	the original religion
Adi	original
Adi-Dravida	the original people among the Dravidians of South India, used as self-identification by some of the Dalits in Tamil Nadu
Adivasi	aboriginal tribe
Baba Saheb	honorific term devised for B.R. Ambedkar
Backward Castes	the Shudra castes, which are immediately above Dalits in the ritual hierarchy
Bhakti	a medieval and later revivalist movement of Hindu worship, which stressed devotion rather than learning
Bhangi	sweeper caste within the Dalit category
Brahmin	The caste of the highest rank in the four-fold <i>varna</i> order
Brahminwadi	derogatory term used by the followers of Kanshiram and Mayawati to identify attitudes or behavior claimed to embody Brahmanical prejudice against Dalits
Chamar	One of the Dalit caste in northern and western India with a traditional occupation connected to leatherwork
Dalit	a Marathi word for 'untouchables', sometimes used for oppressed in general, but now used to identify the Scheduled Castes.
Dalit Maha Sabha	a sociopolitical organization of Dalits in AP
Dharma	duty/religion/law
Dharna	sit-in as a form of protest
Dhobi	caste of washer-folk, Dalits in northern and western India
Gram Panchayat	village Panchayat; the third tier of the <i>panchayat raj system</i>
Harijan	people of God used to identify Dalits by Gandhi and his followers

Harijan Sevak Sangh	welfare organization established by Gandhi to persuade caste Hindus to abolish untouchability
Jagirdar	holder of a land grant given for services rendered to the Nizam
Jagirdari System	a type of land revenue system in Mughal India, and later, in the Nizam's Hyderabad State, in which the Jagirdar was technically the holder of an assignment of revenue
Jajmani	system of reciprocity of services and goods by different castes
Jatav	a segment of Chamars located in western UP
Jati	one of the constituents of 'caste', also used for nation
Kabir Panth	sect that follows the teachings of the <i>bhakta</i> Kabir
Kamma	a dominant peasant caste in AP
Karma	a tenet of mainstream Hindu philosophy whereby one's deeds/ condition (including caste) will determine lives yet-to-be lived
Kayastha	one of the upper castes in northern India, it is a highly educated caste
Khatik	one of the Dalit castes in northern India; they are shepherds as well as butchers
Kisan	cultivator
Koiri	one of the peasant castes in the northern region
Kshatriya	the second highest caste within the four-fold varna order, their traditional occupation was to protect state and society by fighting in wartime and governing in peacetime
Lok Sabha	lower house of parliament
Mahatma	literally, 'great soul', a term of honor for M.K. Gandhi
Manusmriti	the laws according to Manu
Manuwadi	derogatory term used by the members of the Bahujan Samaj Party to identify behavior claimed to embody upper-caste prejudice against Dalits and other lower castes

Mehtar	another word for <i>Bhangi</i>
Panchama	Sanskrit term suggesting that the Dalits are in the ‘fifth’ category of the varna order
Panchayati raj	system of rural local government with three ascending tiers, namely, <i>gram Panchayat</i> , <i>Mandal or Panchayat Samithi</i> and <i>Zilla Parishad</i>
Pundit	traditionally refers to a scholar from Brahmin castes, now an expert in a particular subject or field who is frequently called upon to give their opinions to the public
Pradhan	the head of a panchayat or council
Rajya Sabha	the upper house of the Indian Parliament
Scheduled Castes	the official name for the Dalits
Shudras	the lowest of the four categories of the varna order, their traditional occupation being to ‘serve’ in a wide variety of manual tasks
Samaj	community
Sarpanch	head of Panchayat
Sweepers	occupational term for a number of Dalit castes whose traditional job is to sweep public spaces and collect night-soil and garbage
Varna	the four categories (literally, colors) into which classical Hindu text divide society
Vedas	ancient Hindu texts
Vyshyas (Vaishyas)	the third category of the Hindu <i>varna</i> order, their traditional occupation was that of trade and commerce
Zamindar	revenue intermediaries and landlords under the British
Zilla	district
Zilla Parishad	top-tier corresponding to the district in the three-tier <i>Panchayat Raj system</i>



Map of India

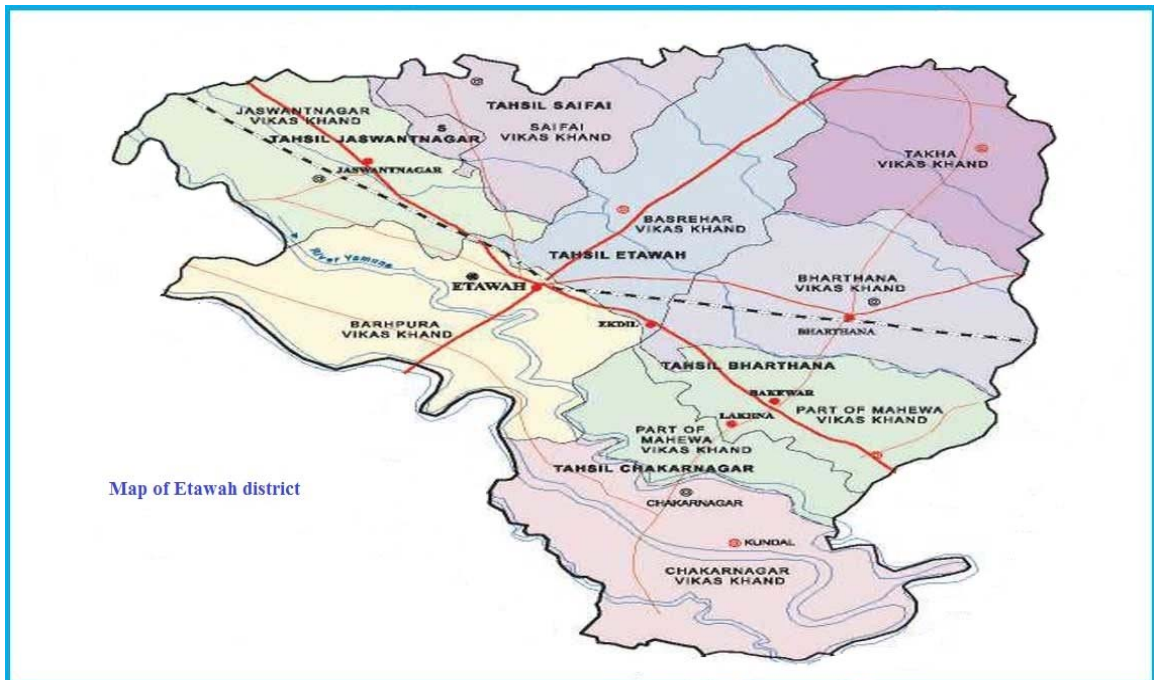




Map of Uttar Pradesh



Map of Jalaun District



Map of Etawah District

## INTRODUCTION

The Dalit<sup>1</sup> communities have been marginalised socially, economically as well as politically through a highly discriminatory and rigid social order of the Hindu society of India.<sup>2</sup> Historically, the social discrimination experienced by the Dalit communities for thousands of years has repressed them and their political aspirations for over seven decades in independent India.<sup>3</sup> The visionary leader Dr B. R. Ambedkar<sup>4</sup> fought for the emancipation of the Dalit community from social discrimination that has happened in the Hindu social order of the Indian society. Over the years, the struggle of Dr Ambedkar not only ensured the Dalit communities to lead a dignified life but also his visionary efforts made the Dalits' participation in the political institutions of the country. It is a fact that the contradictions of socio-economic order in India remain almost the same even after 70 years of independence. Half a century is a considerable period for any society, state and

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<sup>1</sup> The term Dalit refers to the oppressed and exploited social groups. While the term itself is caste neutral, in writing and in common parlance it has come to be used to refer only to members of the Scheduled Caste (SC). The term Dalit is used generically to refer to all members of the backward classes. The term 'SCs' is synonymous (and therefore used here interchangeably) with other terms used in the past to refer to them such as 'Untouchables', 'Depressed Classes (DSs) and 'Harijans'.

<sup>2</sup> S. Kethineni, and G.D. Humiston, (2010). "Dalits, The Oppressed People of India: How are Their Social, Economic and Human Rights Abused?" in *War Crimes, Genocide and Crime Against Humanity*, Vol.-4, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Bina B. Hanchinamani, (2001). "Human Rights of Dalits in India" *Human Rights Brief*, Vol.8, Issue 2, p.18. also see, Bina B. Hanchinamani, (2001). "Human Rights Abuses of Dalits in India" *Human Rights Brief*, 8(2), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 of Mahar Hindu Untouchable. Parents, Ramji Maloji Sankpal (father) and Bimabai (mother). His father was a military subedar and was a kabirpanthi devotee. In 1932 he was the most qualified man in India having acquired the degrees of M.A, Ph. D, M. Sc, D. Sc and Barrister at law from the university of America and Englanad. He was member of the Joint parliamentary Committee on constitutional reforms during 1931-34. On October 13, 1935, He made an announcement in a public meeting at Yeola, in Nasik, he said, 'I was born to Hinduism but I will not die as a Hindu.' (Keer-1977, p.263) In November, 1946, the Constituent Assembly of India was formed. Dr. Ambedkar was elected to the Assembly from the Bengal province. He was made Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitutional of free India. He was also chosen as the Law Minister in Nehru's Cabinet but Dr. Ambedkar resigned in 1951 from Nehru's Cabinet accusing the Government of apathy towards the SC, expressing his differences with the Cabinet on the Kashmir issue, India's Foreign Policy and blaming Nehru's attitude towards the Hindu Code Bill. He embraced Buddhism at Nagpur in a Historic ceremony on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1956. He died on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1956. His book Buddha and His Dhamma was published in 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Ghanshyam Shah, (2001), "Dalit Identity and Politics", in Gail Omvedt, (ed.) *Ambedkar and after: The Dalit Movement in India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 144.

nation to realise its mistakes and imbalances. But even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century neither the civil society nor the state in India has been able to resolve its contradictions. Despite the Constitutional commitment of the post-colonial state towards the goal of equality, liberty, and justice, the age-old structure of inequality has not dismantled.<sup>5</sup> Social and economic disparities still occupy the centre stage of Indian reality. The ideals of social democracy and distributive justice, in their essence, remain elusive.

The emergence of the Dalit movement in the politics of the country has spanned over a hundred years. The British rule in India had brought a possibility of involvement in the decision-making process by different sections of society as well as the Dalits of the country. The very emergence of Dr B. R. Ambedkar in the Indian political arena sparked a new beginning by creating a platform for the Dalits to enter into the political and social life of the country in the era marked by social and political upheaval.<sup>6</sup> He was one of the first persons who advocated for equal opportunities for every section of the society, not only in social and economic life but also for the political empowerment. The political journey of Dr Ambedkar started by formulating a political party known as the Independent Labor Party in 1936.<sup>7</sup> Ambedkar provided the political movement with a focus of emancipation of Dalits in social, economic and political realms of the country. The establishing of a political party was necessary for the political development in the country because the existing political parties were being dominated primarily by upper castes, and not represent the interests of SCs. Ambedkar intends to champion the cause of the workers and to advance the welfare of depressed classes. In 1942, Dr Ambedkar founded the All India Scheduled Caste Federation,<sup>8</sup> a political organisation for the Dalits. He reformulated his political plans. He formed a new political party, the 'All India Scheduled Caste Federation', and limited it to the untouchables in the hope of uniting all the untouchables in a new battle for political power. By organizing all the oppressed the

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<sup>5</sup> Rajkishor, (2006), *Dalit Rajniti Ki Samsyayen*, New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, p.139

<sup>6</sup> Ghanshyam shah, (2001), *Dalit Identity and Politics*, in Gail Omvedt, *Ambedkar and after: The Dalit Movement in India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 144.

<sup>7</sup> Kanhaiyalal Chancharik (2003), *Aadhunik Bharat Ka Dalit Andolan*, New Delhi: University Publication, pp.188-189

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p.188

party fought against the atrocities committed by upper caste communities on Dalits and further, for them to participate in the electoral process of the country.<sup>9</sup>

Although Dr Ambedkar's political movement was the movement for Dalit emancipation from the political marginalisation in the country,<sup>10</sup> still a vast majority of Dalit communities continue being deprived socially, economically and politically. The social status and economic opportunities are still confined to the privileged sections of society. The deprived and disadvantaged groups are again exposed to the experiences of inequality.

Similarly, accessing political rights has become a big challenge for Dalits; and many Dalit leaders are being controlled by the upper caste leaders even after seven decades of independence of the country.<sup>11</sup> The Dalits are still rated at the underside of the socio-economic and political structure of the country. The historical, political journey of the post-Ambedkar phase was vigorously initiated in the early 1970s Kanshi Ram emerged as a dynamic leader after B.R. Ambedkar, who gained all India significance by establishing Dalit organisations. With a handful of educated employees from Pune and Delhi, he set up the All India Backward and Minority Community Employees Federation (BAMCEF)<sup>12</sup> in 1973 and aspired to give it an all India dimension in the next five years. Having gained political experience and using the BAMCEF as a base organisation, Kanshi Ram decided to lay the foundation of a political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on April 14, 1984, on the birth anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar to fulfil the political aspirations of the Dalit people. The party adopted Ambedkar's ideology and soon became the political voice of Dalits in India.

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<sup>9</sup> Aswini K. Ray, (1986), "Civil Rights Movements and Social Struggle in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXI, No. 28, July 12, p. 1203

<sup>10</sup> Pravesh Kumar, (2011), *Dalit Asmita ki Rajniti*, Delhi: Manak Publication, pp.71-73

<sup>11</sup> K. C. Dheer, (2009), *Bahujan Virodhi Bhartiya Rajniti Ka Kala Itihas*, New Delhi: Samyak Prakashan, p.71

<sup>12</sup> Rajkishor, (2006), *Dalit Rajniti Ki Samsyayen*, (Hindi) New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, pp. 16-17, and see also S. L. Viridi (2000), *Punjab Da Dalit Itihas (in Punjabi)*, Phagwara Punjab: Dalit Sahit Academy, p. 137.

BSP gave new hope to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in creating a secure platform in Indian politics under the leadership of their community leader's.<sup>13</sup> While the Republican Party of India (RPI)<sup>14</sup> never managed to emerge as the political representative of the Dalit, the Bahujan Samaj Party gained momentum on this powerful platform in the 1990s. The founder of the BSP, Kanshi Ram, a disciple of Ambedkar, drew his inspiration from his mentor's reading of Dalit identity. In 1995, Mayawati, a Dalit woman leader who was a confidant of Kanshi Ram, succeeded him and became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. For the first time, the largest state of India was governed by a Dalit woman C.M. She immediately became a source of pride for this community.<sup>15</sup> Although the BSP was formed to bring change in Dalit society by empowering Dalits in socio-economic and political spheres, and through which it has got its success in politics, but the progress has not been maintained in the later stage of its political movement. There are some instances which demonstrate that even after implementation of various policies by BSP government in Uttar Pradesh for Dalits, it has not gained in the election held in 2012.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, it has failed to achieve even a single seat in a general election held in 2014<sup>17</sup> out of 80 seats contested in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>18</sup> It is essential here to understand the political objectives of BSP- whether it is present in the political movement only to gain political power or to implement policies for Dalits which have not been able to address the needs of this community meaningfully so far.

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<sup>13</sup> Sudha Pai, (2002), *Dalit Assertion and The Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, New Delhi : Sage Publication, p.85.

<sup>14</sup> V. D. Chadanshive, (2005), *Kanshi Ram, The Crusader, A Golden Phase in Post- Ambedkarite Movement*, Nanded: Blue Dawn Books, pp.51-52.

<sup>15</sup> Mayawati's installation as first Dalit CM of Uttar Pradesh likely to trigger off realignment of caste equations in all political parties, Accessed on 10 April, 2016, Issue June 30, 1995, <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19950630-mayawatis-installation-as-first-dalit-cm-of-uttar-pradesh-likely-to-trigger-off-realignment-of-caste-equations-808382-1995-06-30>

<sup>16</sup> Statistical Reports of the Election Commission of India 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Statistical Reports of the Election Commission of India 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Rahul Verma and Sanjay Kumar, (2014), "The Arithmetic and Implications of the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections", *Research Journal Soicial Sciences*, Vol 22, No. 2, pp.1-2.

## Defining the term ‘Dalit’

Dalits literally meaning “Ground” or “Broken” or reduced to pieces generally,<sup>19</sup> in Hindi are the lowest member of the Hindu caste system in India. The caste system is a Hindu hierarchical class structure with roots in India for thousands of years. In descending order, the caste system is considered of Brahmins (priests), Kshyatriyas (Warriors), Vaisya (Farmers), Shudras (laborer-artisans), and the Dalits, who are considered so polluted they are beyond caste. Traditionally caste, determined by birth, defined whom one could marry the occupation one could pursue.<sup>20</sup> Dalit is known by different names. Mahatma Gandhi called them *Harijan*, the children of God. Religious books of the Hindu called them Sudras; Ambedkar called them “depressed classes”.<sup>21</sup>

However, since 1970, the term ‘Dalit’ has been widely used.<sup>22</sup> Dalit is a Marathi word first used by Mahatma Jotiba Phule, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century social reformer who led a movement for the upliftment of untouchables which means “broken people”.<sup>23</sup> The Government of India officially calls them “Scheduled Castes”. ‘Scheduled’ means they are on a government scheduled that entitles them to certain protections and affirmative action.<sup>24</sup> In Indian languages, the term ‘Dalit’ literally means ‘downtrodden’ and conveys the sense of an oppressed people. The Dalit Panthers, a radical group that emerged in western India, used the term to assert their identity as part of their struggle for rights and dignity. Over time it has emerged as a political category associated with an ideology that advocates social transformation in the direction of an egalitarian just and humane social order. It is an ideology advocating fundamental change in the social structures and

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<sup>19</sup> Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, 1975 reprint of 1831 edition.

<sup>20</sup> Bina B. Hanchinamani, (2001), “Human Rights of Dalits in India” *Human Rights Brief*, Vol.8, Issue 2, p.18.

<sup>21</sup> B. R. Ambedkar, (1945), *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to The Untouchables*, Reprint of the Edition of 1945 by the Government of Maharashtra. Vasant Moon, (ed.), (1991), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol.9, First Edition by Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra: 26 January, Re-printed by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation: January 2014, New Delhi, p.vi.

<sup>22</sup> Eleanor Zelliot, (2005), *Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, pP. 267

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 271

<sup>24</sup> V. Prasad, (2001), *Cataract of Silence: Race on the edge of Indian Thought*, paper presented for the United Nations Research Institute for social Development (UNRISD) Conference on Racism and Public Policy, Durban, South Africa

relationships among individuals.<sup>25</sup> Dalit writer Patawane (1974), “Dalit is not a caste. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution. A Dalit believes in humanism. He rejects the existence of God, rebirth, soul, sacred books that teach discrimination, faith, and heaven because these have made him a slave. He represents the exploited man in his country.”<sup>26</sup> Guru (2001), the term does not merely express identity a sense of who the Dalits are but is also conveys their aspirations and struggle for ‘change and revolution’.<sup>27</sup>

In social science discourse, the term Dalit has been used in a different context over its historical evidence. Here the name Dalit has been clearly defined. The Dalits were being addressed with different nomenclatures like – *Chandalas, Avarnas, Achhuts, Namashudra, Parihas, Adi-Dravida, Ad-Dharmis, Depressed Classes, Oppressed Hindus, Harijans*, etc. to varying points in time<sup>28</sup> but especially after the emergence of the Dalit Panthers movement in the 1970s in Maharashtra they preferred to be called Dalits.<sup>29</sup> The definition of Dalits, as propounded by Dalit Panthers, was a class definition as they included members of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who were exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion.<sup>30</sup> Here a point should be noted that it was a political compulsion of the Panthers that forced them to propound such a definition of a group, which never

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<sup>25</sup> Ghanashyam Shah, (ed.), (2006), *Untouchability in Rural India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p.22.

<sup>26</sup> Gangadhar Patawane, (1974), “Mulyavedh (Perception of values)” cited in Ghanashyam Shah et al. (2006) *Untouchability in Rural India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p.22.

<sup>27</sup> Gopal Guru, (2001). “The Language of Dalit-Bahujan Political Discourse”, in Ghanashyam (ed.), *Dalit Identity and Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

<sup>28</sup> Eleanor Zelliott, (2005), *Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, p. 267. “Downtrodden” is a fairly accurate translation of Dalit, but “downtrodden Panthers” and “downtrodden literature” seem ridiculous in English and carry none of the dignity and pride of the Marathi Word.

<sup>29</sup> The dispute over the interpretation of the term ‘Dalit’ has created factions and splintered the movement. Initially, a great controversy was raised over the term, between the two leaders like Namdeo Dhasal and Raja Dhale. The former was a communist and a neo-Buddhist and the later was not merely a non-revolutionary and non-communist but also Buddhist. Dhasal used the term ‘Dalit’ for neo-Buddhists, the downtrodden and oppressed whereas Dhale used the term very orthodoxically limiting it only to Buddhists. He thought that an inclusive category of Dalits would be humiliating and extremely detrimental to them. Also see Lata Murugkar, (1991), *Dalit Panthers Movement in Maharashtra: A Sociological Appraisal*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, pp.52-71.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 237.



existed before, as they wanted to ally with these groups mentioned above so that they can get maximum support from these groups. But sociologically this definition cannot be sustained, as each group that is Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, landless, poor peasants and women are different from the other.

The term has both negative and positive connotations. Some Dalits associate themselves with a negative and more objective situation of the Dalits that is, of an exploited and excluded community. On the other hand, many Dalits have asserted that the term Dalit is a symbol of assertion and 'Dalitness' is a source of confrontation.<sup>31</sup> It was used in the new context in Marathi by New Buddhist activists, the followers of B.R. Ambedkar in the early 1970s.<sup>32</sup> Dalit refers to those who have been broken, ground down by those above them in a deliberate way; there is, in the word itself, an internal denial-pollution, Karma and justified caste hierarchy.<sup>33</sup> It was seemingly first used in the context of caste oppression by the time nineteenth-century reformer Joytiba Phule.

Interestingly, the category Dalit was used by Ambedkar himself in his fortnightly *Bahiskruit Bharat*.<sup>34</sup> He defines it comprehensively as Dalithood is a kind of life condition which characterises the exploitation, suppression, and marginalisation of Dalits by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper caste Brahminical order.<sup>35</sup> He, however, did not use this category often, preferring to deploy different terms depending upon changing context. For example, when dealing with the imperial state he handled the group of depressed classes and when addressing high caste Hindus he used the category *Bahiskruit* meaning outcaste. Therefore, the word Dalit has been strictly used for ex-untouchables of Indian society who have occupied a unique structural location in it. Thus, the anatomical position Dalits held and still holds in the Indian culture, which in turn resulted in their social exclusion. In this context, the term 'social exclusion' can be defined as a multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Eleanor Zelliot, (2005), *Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, p. 267.

<sup>34</sup> Ghanshyam Shah (ed.), (2001), Dalit Identity and Politics, in Gopal Guru, *The Language of Dalit-Bahujan Political Discourse*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p. 101.

<sup>35</sup> Raosabeb Kasbe, (1985), *Ambedkar and Marx (Marathi)*, Pune: Sugawa publication, p.99.

exclusion are no access to combined participation in decision-making and political processes, no access to employment and material resources, and the scant possibility of integration into the collective cultural processes. When combined, they create a different form of exclusion that finds a spatial manifestation in a particular neighbourhood.<sup>36</sup> The structural location of the Dalits and the process of their social exclusion, as discussed above, results in the construction of a unique consciousness of Dalits. This consciousness cuts across the boundaries of different castes found among the Dalits and hence unites them in spite of their regional and language differences.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, sociologically, the Dalits can be defined by three social characteristics: (1) Their structural location in Indian society (2) Social exclusion they suffer in society (3) Their unique construction of consciousness, which is anchored in their structural position and social exclusion.<sup>38</sup> Based on the above elements of structural location, social exclusion and creation of knowledge we can argue that the Dalits are different from Scheduled Tribes (STs),<sup>39</sup> women and poor persons belonging to caste Hindus that were included in the definition of the Dalits given by the Dalit Panthers. Hence, it can argue that a poor person may be economically or politically deprived or maybe both, but he is never excluded from the social and cultural spheres. But an ex-untouchable is deprived in all the three social, economic and political realms.<sup>40</sup>

### **Defining the term 'Bahujan'**

For Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram, the idea of Dalit-Bahujan<sup>41</sup> is intended for the same cause that is to destroy the roots of Brahmanism and to free the people from the hands of

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<sup>36</sup> A. Madanipour, (1998), 'Social Exclusion and Space' in A. Madanipour, G. Cars and J. Allens (eds.), *Social Exclusion in European Cities*, London: Jessica Kingsley, p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2009), "Locating Dalit Women in the Indian caste system, media and women's movement", *Social Change: March: Volume. 39, No.1.* p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> The term Dalit-Bahujan has been used an equivalent for the critique of the Shudras and Other Backward Caste. Literally, 'the many', or 'majority of people' means the masses 'who have been devoid of humanity for centuries' in contrast to 'a handful who take their pleasure for granted, call themselves superior and live at the cost of the masses'. The term arose in 1906 in the context of

minority Brahmins. Both the words Dalit and Bahujan hold the same meaning, but in one sense, it is dividing people. The tragic condition is that people are using the word Dalit for SCs only, and Bahujan word is meant for OBCs. Both the groups are producing separate existence by the words Dalit and Bahujan. These great ideal persons didn't use the word Dalit in their writings and speeches, in spite of that Kanshi Ram used the word Bahujan<sup>42</sup> for SCs, STs, OBCs, and Converted Minorities. Kanshi Ram's intentions would not have been possible unless ideological divisions among these suppressed groups. While the oppression is not the same for all the groups but the problem of caste is the same. Because all castes enjoy superiority over some other caste, this becomes the reason for SC, ST, and OBC to be unequal in regular life. But there is a need to unite for self-ruling. In one way the idea of Kanshi Ram is acceptable, but according to Ambedkar, it is wrong. Ambedkar always used the words "depressed classes, oppressed classes, Shudras, or SC, ST, OBC" and also, Ambedkar started "scheduled caste federation" but not Bahujan or Dalit Federation, even as a disciple of Buddha while Buddha had given a slogan like "Bahujan Hitaya, Bahujan Sukaya". Also though we hope that both Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram worked for the Mulnivasis<sup>43</sup> in India, the working styles are different from each other.<sup>44</sup>

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Satya Shodhak movement in Maharashtra. Excluded from Bahujans are 'not merely the Brahmins, but also the educationally advanced castes as well as the marchant castes'. The concept has a class content as it 'tends to exclude the aristocratic and wealthy among non-Brahmins', though if the upper class come from a primarily peasant or poor non-Brahmin castes they may identify themselves 'in terms of their social roots and culture of sentiments as part of the Bahujan Samaj. See also Gail Omvedt, (1976), *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahmin Movement in Western India: 1873-1930*, Bombay: Scientific Social list Educational Trust, p.4. See also *Dalit Voice: The Voice of the Persecuted Nationalities Denied Human Rights*. A fortnightly magazine, published from Bangalore and New Delhi since 1981. <http://www.dalitvoice.org>

<sup>42</sup> The origin of 'bahujan' goes back to Gautam Buddha, who is credited with the aphorism. *Bahujan hitaya, bahujan sukhaya* (the welfare of the majority, the happiness of the majority), and in modern times to Jotirao Phule. As a conscious political strategy, the origin of 'bahujan' should be ascribed to the late Kanshi Ram, for whom it comprised of Dalits, backward castes and religious minorities. Kancha Ilaiah, (1996), *Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy*, Calcutta: Samaya publication.

<sup>43</sup> Very recently BAMCEF has started propagating Moolnivasi as the other identity for the Dalits and other backward castes. They argue that all the Bahujans are the original inhabitants of this land and Aryans have come from outside and subjugated them. See also, Vivek Kumar (2006), *India's Roaring Revolution: Dalit Assertion and New Horizon*, Delhi: Gagandeep Publication, p.66.

<sup>44</sup> Badri Narayan, (2009), Ambedkar and Kanshiram: similar, yet different. *Live mint*, 14 Oct. (<https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/hXyHXD1PKogjgSs6hI3VxH/Ambedkar-and-Kanshi-Ram-similar-yet-different.html>)

## Review of literature

R. K Kshirsagar (1994),<sup>45</sup> has discussed the practice of untouchability in the Indian society and the struggle for the emancipation of Dalit communities from the social discrimination was the decisive step in the country. The also discusses the Dalit liberation movement got an impetus during the British period. The author further stated that the basic idea involved in this process was of reconstruction of the society based on new values. Dalit liberation movement is, of course, an integral part of the politico-cultural history of India. Dalit liberation movement had continued simultaneously with the practice of untouchability. The Dalit consciousness towards their identity and political empowerment, in particular, are the values of liberty, equality, justice, and fraternity. It is this new awareness, which has been referred to as Dalit consciousness. It is a fact that the evil practices of untouchability have amply proved to be the most dangerous to the so-called untouchables in particular and literature in general: Therefore, the struggle for the emancipation of the depressed classes from the slavery of untouchability and Castes has been in continuation for a pretty long time. It is but natural that no community would be willing to remain under cruel subjugation forever and no society would sustain the shock of inequality and disunity. Several saints, social reformers and political leader from both the Dalits and non-Dalit had tried their best for the eradication of untouchability from the social fabric. However, the Dalit liberation movement got an impetus during the British period; liberation movement got an incentive during the British period. With the dawn of democratic institutions in India, the Dalit liberation steadily became more vocal, assertive and active. After independence, untouchability had been legally abolished under article 17 of the constitution of India, which state: untouchability shall be an offence punishable following the law. In consonance with this provision the parliament.

Gail Omvedt (1994),<sup>46</sup> in her study the Dalit Movement in Colonial India, these critical dimensions drop the past of the Dalit movement form its pedigrees to the death of

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<sup>45</sup> R. K Kshirsagar, (1994), *Dalit Movement and Its Leaders 1857-1956*, New Delhi: M.D. Publishers.

<sup>46</sup> Gail Omvedt, (1994), *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

its most famous leader, Ambedkar in 1956. Focusing on three states like Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra, the author competently analyses the philosophy and establishment of the movement and its communication both with sovereignty struggle and the class struggles of the workers and peasants.

Gail Omvedt (1995),<sup>47</sup> in her study *Dalit visualisations*, discovers and assessments the responsiveness which associates Indian institution with Hinduism and Hinduism through Brahmanism which deliberates the Vedas as the introductory texts of Indian philosophy. It shows that even secular minds remain imprisoned within this Brahminical vision and the language of secular discourse is often steeped in a Hindu ethos. The area looks at other civilisations encouraged in the interior Dalit movements which have examined this way of observing at Indian the social order and its history. Despite the fact in search of to understand the varied Dalit apparitions that have required to modify the terms of the influential order, this tract encourages us to reexamine our ideas pay attention to those power of speech which we frequently garbage to hear and be familiar with the apparitions which seek out to modification the world in which Dalits conscious.

John Dryzek (1996) *Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratisation*,<sup>48</sup> discusses in the study that once universal adult citizenship rights have been secured in a society, democratisation is mostly a matter of the more authentic political inclusion of different groups and categories, for which formal political equality can bide continued exclusion or oppression. It is essential, however, to distinguish between inclusion in the state and inclusion in the polity more generally. Democratic theorists who advocate a strategy of progressive integration of as many groups as possible in the state have failed to recognise that the conditions for authentic, as opposed to symbolic inclusion, are quite demanding. History shows that good inclusion in the state is possible only when (a) a group's defining concern can be assimilated into an established or emerging state imperative and (b) civil society is not unduly depleted by the group's entry into the state. In the absence of such conditions, positional civil society may be a better focus for democratisation than the state. A flourishing oppositional sphere and therefore, the

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<sup>47</sup> Gail Omvedt, (1995), *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

<sup>48</sup> John S. Dryzek, (1996), "Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratization", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3, Sep., pp.475-487.

requirements for democratisation itself may be facilitated by a passive exclusive state, the leading contemporary form of which is corporatism. Good inclusion in the state can sometimes occur, but any such move should also produce exclusions that both facilitate future democratisation and guard against any reversal of democratic commitment in state and society. These considerations have substantial implications for the strategic choices of social movements.

Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany (1998),<sup>49</sup> in their study on subtle and fascinating account of the lives of persons at the identical lowest of Indian civilisation, the creation of the untouchables as a community and political classification, the chronological contextual that led to such a characterisation and their location in India these days. The authors dispute that, notwithstanding hard work to enhance their disorder on the part of the state, a significant organisation of discrimination continues based on an institution of ritual relegation. Even now, consequently, it still makes sense to classifications these societies as Untouchables. The considerable influence to the social and economic discussions on deficiency, while its broad extending viewpoints will safeguard an interdisciplinary circulation from historians of South Asia to students of political affairs, money matters, faith, and sociology.

S. M. Michael (1999),<sup>50</sup> author familiarise the widespread practice of Dalit deliverance fight and contemporary a persistent assessment of theoretical dissertation on the subtleties of caste in Indian society. Circumstance studies accompaniment these influences underlining the liabilities and problems that Dalits face in a contemporary environment of communal politics and marketplace reorganisations.

Vivek Kumar (2000),<sup>51</sup> in his study, attempts to understand the Dalit leadership in India and related issues: the origin, growth and development, nature and dynamics, strategy for mobilisation and empowerment of Dalit masses and Dalit assertion as a socio-political reality. Well researched and lucidly presented of academic and political significance, the study discusses the establishment of a political party by B.R. Ambedkar

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<sup>49</sup> Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany, (1998), *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>50</sup> S. M. Michael, (1999), *Untouchable Dalits in Modern India*, New Delhi: Sage Publication.

<sup>51</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2002), *Dalit Leadership in India*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication.

in 1936. Ambedkar gave the political movement with the focus of emancipation of Dalit in social, economic and political realms of the country. The developing of the political party was necessary for the political development in the country because the existing political parties were being dominated primarily by upper castes, were capable neither of representing the interests of the Scheduled Castes nor fighting for their cause. And to champion the purpose of the workers and to advance the welfare of depressed classes. The objective of the party was to organise the oppressed and to fight against the atrocities committed on the Dalits and to get their marginalisation removed.

Nandini Gooptu, (2001),<sup>52</sup> in her study book is even more ambitious in attempting to survey the broad spectrum of political the working class without remaining restricted to it. The study of the Indian working class in the colonial period has received a fillip in the recent past, especially since they have moved beyond the earlier obsession with chronicling collective actions such as strikes, to take on questions relating to the meaning of caste, nation, gender and ethnicity within and beyond the work-place. The scope of enquiry is more limited than title suggest. It covers the lower social strata in four United Provinces towns like Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahabad and Benares Uttar Pradesh have been chosen for this study of the interwar period. She was identifying the ‘urban poor’ as a subject in the full sense the field of social and labour history, which is rooted in a politics of liberation. A preoccupation with failure has frequently led the historian away from politics in the narrow sense and on to other explanatory factors such as culture. Under the influence of Althusserian ideology and later, Foucauldian power-knowledge the perceived nature of the proletarian struggle has changed from the fight for political and economic rights to the ability to preserve an ‘authentic’ subaltern culture against the ideologies or discourses of the ruling classes.

One conclusion that could be drawn from the evidence one which, She supports herself is that the political articulation of the urban poor could not develop independently from the framework prescribed by elite politics. The prevalence of religious or caste identities it is argued convincingly had a lot to do with the fact that the politics of class was directed against concrete oppressors, not oppression in general and that the specific

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<sup>52</sup> Nandini Gooptu, (2001), *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

structure of the urban economy pitted Hindus against Muslims and untouchables against high caste Hindu. Furthermore, the presence of elite based religious revival efforts coincided with a fragmentation of the labour market and all these factors taken together led to a strengthening of a communal political culture. At the same time essential similarities appeared in all forms of lower-class political mobilization and emphasis on self-improvement the construction of new historical narratives that redefined deprivation in the present as something virtuous but simultaneously demanded the creation of a golden age of power and prosperity in the future an emphasis on physical fitness and martiality and an increasing willingness to stage collective demonstrations in the public sphere.

She assumes that the well-attested interrelated nature of popular and elite political cultures is somehow politically incorrect and that the 'true' and authentic poor have to be brought into the picture to be credited with cultural agency of their own. That is not only theoretically unfair to be right at the bottom of the social order means precisely to be deprived of agency but also technically challenging because the evidence is confined to conjectures and the over interpretation of problematic text such as colonial police reports. The unwillingness to take a clear stance is also apparent when it comes to assessing the influence of economic deprivation on the formation of political consciousness. She refuses to explain the nature of the link between social being and social awareness. Instead, that political activity took place 'on the backdrop' of growing social conflict.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, it is also one of her conclusions that the articulation of religious and caste identities was inseparable from the experience of economic exploitation and the destruction of urban living space.<sup>54</sup>

The Kanpur town alone had a few large mills, for the most part, the demographic growth of their cities was occasioned by the expansion of what the author calls the 'Bazar Industrialisation'<sup>55</sup> of the small-scale kind as well as the swelling of the administrative apparatus. The association of the sarrafs and aboriginal bankers into a recognisably Hindu merchant class was perhaps the most significant social expression of such

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp.4-5.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 35.



expansion. It was the class that dominated the social and cultural sphere in ways that profoundly affected the lives of the labouring poor. These merchants, says the author, 'not only dominated the urban economy, but were also the moving force behind the urban social and religious reform activities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century', and thus was a formative influence on the politics of the poor. The category 'urban poor' in turn was a far less cohesive social class, divided on lines of caste, occupation and religion and as frequently in the conflict between themselves as with their social and economic superiors. As in many cities at the time and perhaps up to the present day the urban poor were at the receiving end of the reforming gestures of the middle classes and government policies alike

Sudha Pai (2002),<sup>56</sup> in her monograph, discusses the rise of the BSP in the Uttar Pradesh politics in the post-1980s phase. In her study the author analyses the emergence, ideology, mobilisation strategies and electoral progress of the BSP, against the backdrop of the phenomenon of Dalit assertion, both historically and notably, the strong wave witnessed in recent years. The author states that there are two being adopted by the party are electoral grassroots activism. The author also discusses the considerable achievements and the reasons for the failure of the BSP to harness the rising wave of Dalit assertion that evident in Uttar Pradesh.

She examines the emergence, ideology and programmes, mobilisation strategies, and electoral progress of BSP against the conditions of two essential changes in Uttar Pradesh, since the early 1980s- 'a strong wave of Dalit assertion and a shift from a single party structure to a cleavage-based multi-party system in the post-Congress phase'.<sup>57</sup> The study makes available an understanding of the impact of the BSP on both UP and Indian politics in a phase when sectarian identities have become urgent.<sup>58</sup> According to her, the inheritances of the colonial period helped to shape Dalit movement and parties after

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<sup>56</sup> Sudha Pai, (2002), *Dalit Assertion and The Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The BahujanSamaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*, New Delhi: Sage Publication.

<sup>57</sup> Sudha Pai (2002) *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

independence. Most significant legacy was ‘the behind schedule development of identity consciousness among the depressed classes’.<sup>59</sup>

Dalit consciousness arose late in Uttar Pradesh compared to south and western India. While southern and western India experienced strong movement for improved social status, such social change was absent in large part of northern India.<sup>60</sup> In western India Prathana Samaj and Madras, the ‘self-respect’ movement concerned a large number of depressed classes and helped in the rise of consciousness among them.<sup>61</sup> Few small and weak movements which took place failed in conveying any change in the society, as in up lower-caste parties formed in the post-independence period.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the Dalit movement was slow in this part of the country. In her words, ‘the Republican Party of India, formed in 1956 was the continuation of political development in the 1940, but it substantiated to a short-lived experiment’<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the movements in the colonial era were inadequate to urban areas, that too among educated individuals of the depressed classes, who failed to mobilise the lower caste people in the rural areas.

The Bahujan Samaj Party formed in post-independence India, Sudha Pai argues, was the outcome of the different methods of affirmative action and democratisation in the 1980s. These processes and individuals, along with economic development and educational progress in parts of Uttar Pradesh, were contributory in creating a more socially and politically aware Dalit community. Kanshi Ram’s success lay in understanding this intense wave of Dalit assertion and using it to create a big party’.<sup>64</sup> She is of the view that Bahujan Samaj Party is not a revolutionary party, nor does it arise out of struggle at a grassroots level. It is not interested in breaking the oppressive caste structure. It is a reformist party, and its formation was meditative- to achieve a share in

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.21.

<sup>60</sup> Ghanshyam shah, (ed.), (2001), Dalit Identity and Politics, in Sudha Pai, *From Harijans to Dalits: Identity Formation, Political Consciousness and Electoral Mobilisation of the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.21.

the fruits of development and political power, barely a response to the oppression and domination by the so-called upper castes.

On the other hand, she argues that BSP lacks an economic ideology and a programme for which Kanshi Ram had not given any clear representation, though it has the Dalits' self-respect and confidence.<sup>65</sup> She examines the problems encountered by a Dalit based party in articulating and applying its mobilisation and coalitional strategies. She makes that a supplementary discussion. The Bahujan Samaj Party is constructed upon the previous work done by the scheduled caste federation, BAMCEF, a union of SC employees, and the DS-4.<sup>66</sup> BSP first started as an election spoiler party, powerless to win on its own but capable of ensuring its adversaries lost. Their consequent opportunistic coalitions, use of state power to antagonistically promote a scheduled caste federation and playing a politics of identity symbolism are what has got it so far. In her study of the BSP, she does not help us understand the specific contours of the social formation. There is much in common between her and Christophe Jaffrelot analysis of why the Dalit assertion took shorter to express itself in North India. In addition to the social geography of castes and Sanskritisation,<sup>67</sup> she highlights the role of the land structure and the growth of an educated and economically independent stratum among the Dalits as critical considerations. She is less enthusiastic about both the democratic and 'social revolution' identifications of the BSP, as her case study of Meerut makes apparent.<sup>68</sup> She argues that the string of opportunistic alliances combined with the centralisation of power in the party may hamper any further growth of the organisation. She emphasises the difference between a party movement in opposition and the use of state power to improve space and decrease the ability of the lower castes in their struggle for equality. According to her, one problem, possibly with the BSP and similar political

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p.20.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 101, The political arena in 1981, Kanshi Ram established the *Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti*, popularly known as DS-4, which was a political Organisation. The political project of Kanshir Ram was backed by aggressive strategies with the devastating language its slogans- Brahmin, Bania, Thakur Chor, Baki sab hum DS-4.

<sup>67</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot (2003), *India's Silent Revolution: the Rise of the Lower Castes in North India*, UK: C. Huxts and Co. Publishers, p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> Jagpal Singh and Sudha Pai, (1997), "Politicisation of Dalits and Most Backward Castes Study of Social Conflict and Political Preferences in Four Villages of Meerut District", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, Issue No. 23, 07 June, p.1461

formations of the lower castes, is that they are in a hurry. Having tried various avenues for upward mobility, the leadership now feels that the capture and differential use of state power alone can enhance their social project. The study constitutes a valuable addition to our limited knowledge of a new trend in politics.

Yagati Chinna Rao (2003),<sup>69</sup> deals with the familiar story of Dalits with a new perspective. Often social scientists in general and historians, in particular, interpret Dalit consciousness as false consciousness undermining their radical political self-assertion. This work mainly deals with the Dalits' political consciousness their struggle for identity and how they rose from a stage when they could develop their self-definition and roles within the dialectics of the nationalist anti-colonial struggle. The strength of this work lies in drawing upon vernacular sources and in presenting an insider's perspective.

Prakash Louis (2003),<sup>70</sup> briefly explains to attempts to identify the factors which respond against the age-old bondage of diverse and varied discernments and manipulations and shape the Dalit consciousness for liberation and determine the pathway for freedom.

K. C. Das (2004),<sup>71</sup> the study is an analytical study of socio-cultural consciousness and political participation of Dalit community. Dalit assertion for social identity or political participation often confronts hostility. The Gandhian project which involved renaming them as Harijans alongside campaigns to eradicate untouchability not only remained confined to the ideational level but it affected the liberal Sanatani Hindu more than it did the Dalit. Equally, the Ambedkarite legacy which focused primarily on the secular realm resources, education, jobs, and power remained limited. The gradual regression from a radical Ambedkarite movement to a Dalit political reformist movement under the leadership of BSP has compromised with upper-caste elites to achieve power by whatever means to introduce change from above rather than wage a long struggle at the grassroots.

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<sup>69</sup> Yagati Chinna Rao, (2003), *Dalit Struggle for identity*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publication Distribution.

<sup>70</sup> Prakash Louis, (2003), *Political Sociology of Dalit Assertion*, New Delhi: Gyan Publication House.

<sup>71</sup> K. C. Das, (2004), *Indian Dalits – Voice, Vision and Politics*, Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House.

Rajani Kothari (2004),<sup>72</sup> he exhibits the Role of caste in Indian politics. The author emphasises that political mobilisation of various section of Indian society has given salience to caste in Indian politics, He also points out that mobilisation of different caste groups has been a significant technique with various political parties for expanding their support base. To analyse the relationship between social status and occupational status of the scheduled caste.

Kanchan Chandra (2004)<sup>73</sup> conducts an in-depth study of the Bahujan Samaj Party in her work and illuminates the success of the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh by applying a theory about the circumstances under which ‘ethnic parties’ are likely to succeed. She argues that ethnic parties are mainly successful in patronage democracies, where political sustenance is traded for material benefits. In such contests, ethnicity is likely to become an essential basis of patronage transactions. Firstly, the ethnic target group of a particular party must be large enough to be a ‘representational blockage’<sup>74</sup> against the ethnic target group in the opposition parties so that a separate organisation is considered to be necessary. Based on these assumptions she explains the rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh.

She analyses that ‘elites in patronage consensuses seek a frequency to political office in an extended-term, but they are indifferent concerning the party that offers them such a channel.’<sup>75</sup> She describes that an office-seeking class of Scheduled Castes elites emerged in Uttar Pradesh as a result of affirmative action policies of the government. This class of educated and upwardly mobile Scheduled Castes wants to participate in the political system rather than mere benefits. Bahujan Samaj Party succeeded in fascinating these elites due to the occurrence of representative blockage. In Uttar Pradesh, Congress was the ruling party for the entire period from 1951 until the emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party on 14 April 1984. There was an under-representation of the Scheduled

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<sup>72</sup> Rajni Kothari, (1970), *Caste in Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, [reprinted in 2004].

<sup>73</sup> Kanchan Chandra, (2004), *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*, New York: Cambridge University press.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 175.

Castes concerning their population not only in Congress but in other non-Congress parties too.

Consequently, associated themselves with the Bahujan Samaj Party.<sup>76</sup> She points out that the Scheduled Caste population in Uttar Pradesh was not necessary to put the Bahujan Samaj Party in power, which was the main aim of Kanshi Ram to achieve through political action. 'He made a substantial move by producing a new category of Bahujan Samaj comprising SC, ST, OBC, and minorities, which constitute 85% of the population, though Scheduled Castes were its first preference.'<sup>77</sup> To quote Kanchan Chandra, 'The Bahujan Samaj Party's immediate and primary target in every electoral battle became the scheduled castes. As Kanshi Ram put it at a rally in Uttar Pradesh in 1996, the 85 % of people in this country belong to the Bahujan Samaj. This 85% is our ultimate target. But realistically, we can aim for about 41% in Uttar Pradesh. We have 50% of Scheduled Castes votes. If all Scheduled Castes vote for us, our target will be fulfilled. The Bahujan Samaj Party also seeks the support of the other section of the Bahujan Samaj in its electoral battle, but it does so selectively, seeking the support of only as many categories within the Bahujan Samaj as sufficient to take it to a winning position when added to the votes of the Scheduled Castes.'<sup>78</sup> Based on these assumptions she argues that Bahujan Samaj Party succeeded in Uttar Pradesh because the scheduled caste population was relatively large enough to place the Bahujan Samaj Party in the winning position. Plus, the party was able to take notice of the fact that the opposition parties do not include Dalits in leading positions when demands for a fair political illustration were elevated.<sup>79</sup>

Christophe Jaffrelot (2005),<sup>80</sup> the most systematically arranged data on the rise of the 'low castes'- both the OBCs and SCs in Indian politics. India is experiencing a silent revolution. The power is being transferred gradually from the upper caste elites to the

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pp. 172-182.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p.150.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, pp.172-182.

<sup>80</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, (2005), *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower in North Indian Politics*, UK: C. Huxts and Co. Publishers.

several lower caste groups. His thesis is formulated around a range of propositions, all dependents on the role that caste identity plays in different spheres.

His main argument is that ‘the Bahujan Samaj Party, led by the Untouchables, jumped on to one-fifth of the votes in Uttar Pradesh in the 1990s. No party could any longer disregard the lower castes.’ However, he remains confident about the Bahujan Samaj Party, including its strain of opportunist politics. Not only has Kumari Mayawati managed to become the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh thrice, but her electoral base also shows little sign of fragmenting.<sup>81</sup> It is this fact that has forced both the Congress and the Bhartiya Janta Party to engage in social engineering because the Bahujan Samaj Party holds the trump cards in the electoral arena of India’s largest state. Whether it is Digvijay Singh’s ‘Dalit agenda’ in Madhya Pradesh, or the BJP alliances with the BSP and accommodating Ambedkar in its pantheon of greats, Jaffrelot remains convinced that the battle for social equality has been finally joined in the North, ushering in a silent revolution.

Vivek Kumar (2006),<sup>82</sup> has recorded the structural change brought by the depressed movement in Uttar Pradesh mainly. The study discovers Dalit assertion since the modern period but particularises on the independent claim of Dalit political leadership since 1920 and illustrates the foundations of the formation of the Independence Labour Party in 1937 and the Scheduled Caste Federation in 1942 before independence.<sup>83</sup> The study also discusses the establishment and development of the Republican Party of India and the Dalit Panthers Party.<sup>84</sup> However, Kumar primarily focuses on the development of Dalit assertion through Bahujan Samaj Party leadership in Uttar Pradesh and its organising in similar parts of the country. The work covers the history of Dalit assertion through the organisation and independent formation of political parties independently and in a few parts of the country. It is in this context of Dalit assertion that the work discusses the evolution of the BSP movement, which has a long history along different epochs.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pp. 397-401.

<sup>82</sup> Vivek Kumar (2006), *India’s Roaring Revolution: Dalit Assertion and New Horizon*, Delhi: Gagandeep Publication.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p.67.

Each epoch has different ways of mass mobilisation and communication concerning its target groups, the facts from the base of Dalit assertion. He attempts to argue whether BSP is a convergence of social and political movements or is it only a political party. It is in this regard that the study highlights the construction of different ‘cultural and social symbols’<sup>85</sup> by the movement during its development. The study tries to briefly highlight the qualitative changes it has brought about in the politics of the state. For instance, how it has demolished the political domination of the upper castes in Uttar Pradesh, which was thought to be impossible.

Further, the work also looks at the structural changes led by BSP and also the channelling of Dalit assertion from local to global. Towards the end of the book, he attempts to find out the various problems faced by the BSP leadership in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>86</sup> Kumar refutes the famous argument of the break of the Congress rule being the only cause of the emergence of Bahujan Samaj Party. Instead, Congress rule resulted in the exclusion of the Dalits from the fruits of the development. He argues that the party has taken them for granted and failed to understand the aspirations of Dalits due to its condescending attitude. The party used lower castes and the minorities as ‘vote bank’ and deliberately kept them away from essential posts in the party. Dalits had deserted Congress even though it did so much for them. But he is of the view that the reality is something else, the socio-economic condition of Dalits in general before the rule of BSP in UP was terrible. Which points out that Congress hardly did anything for the lower castes.<sup>87</sup> Some researchers give the reason of the numerical strength of Dalits in UP as the only cause of the emergence of BSP.<sup>88</sup> He looks through the numerical majority of Dalits a significant cause for the party’s rise. In his words, ‘if we take the percentage of the Dalit population as the cause of the rise of BSP in UP then Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and West Bengal have more percentage of the Dalit population than UP. Then why has

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, pp.60-68.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.110.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



not BSP emerged in these states?’<sup>89</sup> Literacy is another factor assigned but along the lower percentage of population literacy rate of UP is low among the Dalits.<sup>90</sup>

Kumar elucidates that the massive army of Dalit employees, both in central and state government, played an essential role in the emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party.<sup>91</sup> Kanshi Ram launched BAMCEF, an employee’s organisation, before the formation of BSP to use these people to mobilise the grassroots.<sup>92</sup> Their influence cannot be underestimated. The employees contributed to the supply of man, mind, and money necessary to launch any movement.<sup>93</sup> They helped in establishing contacts with the masses and used the facilities of their departments to organise public meetings and also served as a medium of communication. They, along with a long history of Dalit assertion in Uttar Pradesh, held the ground for the emergence and development of the Bahujan Samaj Party.<sup>94</sup>

Badri Narayan (2006),<sup>95</sup> in his study, discusses the Dalit politics in Uttar Pradesh. The author states that the Dalit Politics reached in Uttar Pradesh much after it did Maharashtra, but seen in the context of power. The success graph of Dalit politics has been much higher in Uttar Pradesh due to Dalit leader Kanshi Ram, the founder and theoretician of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Further, the author stated that the Dalit struggle to capture power, their memories of the past, especially the history, became necessary weapons at the political scenario of the state.

In the BSP political Epistemology, the cultural narratives were very much rooted in Dalit memory. This would ensure a space for the BSP in the collective consciousness and helped in the political mobilization of the Dalits the aspiration would also have to be converted into symbols liked with this aspirations would also have to be converted into

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.111.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, pp.111-120.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Badri Narayan, (2006), *Women Heroes and Dalit Assertion in North India: Culture Identity And Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publication.

symbols of desire for political power the BSP worked hard to achieve this as it was an important political strategy for the party in Uttar Pradesh. In UP beside Ambedkar, Pariyar. Chhatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj, the other critical cultural Icons one the Buddha, Ravidas, Kabir and Eklavya<sup>96</sup>, But the local women heroes of the 1857 Mutiny, like Jhalkaribai,<sup>97</sup> Udadevi,<sup>98</sup> Mahaviri Bhangi, Avantibai,<sup>99</sup> Pannadhai and so on, attained most importance as symbolic Icons of Dalit identity, Characters form folklores, including Chuharmal and Dina-Bhadri, also emerged as significant political players. Thus fictional characters were transformed into real, larger than life characters.

Pradeep Kumar Sharma (2006),<sup>100</sup> in his research the Dalit Movements in India have occupied an essential place in the history of social movements. These movements have addressed numerous issues that facilitate to understand and analyse Indian polity. The literary expression of political consciousness and movements among or for the Dalits in north India is the new emerging trend. This trend has served enormously to the cause and widened its constituency. The book explores the relationship between politics and literature with a critical analysis of texts from the Hindi literature both by Dalits and non-Dalits. It demonstrated that political consciousness is also expressed through many more innovative and creative methods like art and literature.

S. M. Michaels (ed.) (2007),<sup>101</sup> The Vision and values throw light upon almost every aspect of Dalit life. It is a collection of articles by eminent scholars. The articles focus on

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<sup>96</sup> Badri Narayan, (2006), *Women Heroes and Dalit Assertion in North India: Culture Identity and Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p. 172

<sup>97</sup> Jhalkaribai born in 22 November, 1830. She was a woman soldier who played an important role in the Indian Rebellion of 1857. She served in the women's army of Rani Lakshmbai of Jhansi. She eventually rose to a position of a prominent advisor to the queen, Rani of Jhansi herself. The legend of Jhalkaribai remains in the popular memory of the people of Budelkhand over centuries.

<sup>98</sup> Udadevi was a warrior in the Indian Rebellion of 1857, who fought against the British East India Company. While upper caste histories highlight the resistance contributions of upper caste heroines like Jhansi Rani, the reality was also that the battles of independence from British colonial rule also featured Dalit resistance fighter like Devi. Devi and other female Dalit participants are today remembered as the warriors or "Dalit Veerangans" of the 1857 Indian Rebellion.

<sup>99</sup> Avantibai is a freedom fighter and queen of what is now Dindori in Madhya Pradesh, which in her time was called Ramgarh. An opponent of the British East India Company during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, information concerning her is sparse and mostly comes from folklore. She is claimed as a member of the Lodhi caste and has been used as an icon in politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>100</sup> Pradeep Kumar Sharma, (2006), *Dalit Political and Literature*, New Delhi: Shipra Publication.

<sup>101</sup> S. M. Michal, (2007), *Dalit in Modern India*, New Delhi: Sage Publication.

the significant concerns of the Dalits. First part deals with the historical aspect and traces the origin and development of untouchability in India. The Dalit vision of Indian society is not same as the upper caste Hindu vision. The second part has articles studying the contribution of Jyotirao Phule and B.R. Ambedkar, who laid the foundation for the Dalit movement and who is also known as the fathers as the Indian social revolution. Part third deals with methodological and operational aspect of Dalit in Indian society. Here the articles give a critique of traditional Indian society. The fourth and last part concentrates on the economic condition as the Dalits where problems of employment of the Dalit are also discussed.

Bidyut Chakrabarty (2008),<sup>102</sup> studies the Bahujan Samaj Party victory is not merely a change of guard in Uttar Pradesh. By providing a unique formula bringing both the upper caste and so-called untouchables together, the Bahujan Samaj Party created a formidable social compact which, although heterogeneous by caste, is politically united. Neither the Bhartiya Janta Party nor Congress has succeeded in creating constituencies beyond its so-called traditional base. The new government in India largest state is also an articulation of a process highlighting a definite shift in the center of gravity in Indian political power has been shifting lower and lower down the caste order.

The Bahujan Samaj Party political ascendancy has equated with India silent revolution, Jaffrelot argues that the success is achieved not by resorting to a Marxist class struggle, but by returning to Ambedkar project of uniting ascriptive groups which were victims of discrimination rather than only those who suffered from economic hardship. That has resulted in deep-seated change in India political panorama. What, the fragmentation of social base, the appeal to a broader constituency, seems to have lost its political appeal. Another framework based on apposition to the major political parties, namely the Congress and Bhartiya Janta Party. Within this framework of reference, anti-Congress and anti-BJP sentiments. In this process of a coalition, regional parties seem to be playing a crucial role in initiating a democratic upsurge involving women tribal Dalit lower castes and rural Voters.

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<sup>102</sup> Bidyut Chakrabarty, (2008), *Indian Politics and Society Since Independence Events, Processes and Ideology*, London: Routledge.

Yagati Chinna Rao (ed.) (2009),<sup>103</sup> in his Study, attempts to understand the Caste, as a category, has played an essential role in the analysis of Indian politics. While in the socio-political realm it has long remained a very crucial source of collective identity, in the contemporary discourse, when India is transforming itself into a modern society, it is the sub-caste that has acquired supremacy over the broader category of caste in Indian politics. This volume traces the shift in the collective consciousness of India's Dalits, a marginalised group in Indian society. Regarding the sub-categorisation of the scheduled castes that have emerged and which are widely debated in popular media and academic discourses.

Anupama Rao, (2009),<sup>104</sup> in her study, this book is beautifully divided in to two parts the first part trying to deal with Emancipation the historical background of Dalits and in second part deals with caste atrocities like, physical valiance, domestic violence and the failure of regional political party and some national political parties. The study is more vital for it's provided very browed and clear thoughts about a brief understanding of a problem that Dalit communities are facing from history to till now. Untouchables, usually known by degrading names such as Chamar, Mahar, Mang and Paraiyar, were dehumanised by the caste according to Hindu ethics. 'Dalits' word rigging powerfully by untouchables as an identity, to call own self Dalit, meaning, "Ground down", "Broken to pieces", "Crushed," is to convert a negative description into a confrontational identity and to became a particular sort of political subject for whom the terms of exclusion on which discrimination is premised are at once refused and reproduced in the demands for inclusion. Dalit historical conditions under which the untouchable subject became Dalit is critical, for it was mainly through the activism of Dalits that untouchability was secularised and politicised or that certain socio-religious practices were redefined.

Christophe Jaffrelot (2010),<sup>105</sup> studies the BSP has attracted the UP Chamars in enormous numbers because of small elite they owned which could not find a proper place

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<sup>103</sup> Yagati Chinna Rao, (2009), *Dividing Dalits: Writings on Sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes*, Delhi: Rawat Publication.

<sup>104</sup> Anupama Rao, (2009) *The Caste question: Dalit and the Politics of Modern India*, California: University of California press.

<sup>105</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot (2010), *Religion, Caste and Politics in India*, New Delhi: Primus Books.

for itself in any other party. The relative affluence was resulting from their activity as shoemakers. Some of the leather workers became artisans or even trader. Only after independence they could make some upward social mobility only because of the reservation system. That was enabled them to join a university and the public services in even more significant numbers in Uttar Pradesh. No doubt Chamars owned BSP, but BSP is not just their party even the Pasis voted for its candidates in various elections, and many non-Dalit communities also did so.<sup>106</sup>

Ramnarayan S. Rawat, (2012),<sup>107</sup> in her study important corrective, helps us “reconsider untouchability,” as the title indicates, not only by bringing to light little-known stories of Dalit life in nineteenth- and twentieth-century north India, but just as significantly by revealing how much of a role the modern historian has played in perpetuating mistaken assumptions that continue to frame how people see themselves and others. The study primarily concerned with the life histories of peasant Chamars in the modern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. This community are popularly understood to be linked with the leatherwork trade since time immemorial. The colonial state associated them with cattle poisoning and classified Chamars as a tiny population of criminals.

The Chamars, it turns out, were the largest caste group in the state, only a tiny percentage of whom a mere four per cent were involved in the leather industry. The vast majority, of both genders, were workers, cultivators, and agricultural labourers. How can we explain this misconception? Rawat determines that the colonial state, simplistically using caste as a standpoint in for historically knowledgeable professions restricted by kinship, and confined within patterns of discrimination, tried to squeeze the square peg of Chamar heterogeneity into the round hole of their restricted minded misrepresentation.

In the post-independence period, Chamars shifted their political objectives. Before they sought a better place for their community within the caste hierarchy, but now they found to produce inclusive histories that entangled various Dalit communities. Untouchables were now Adi-Hindus or India original inhabitants. From this point forward, Chamars worked with other Dalits to fashion an untouchable politics, the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>107</sup> Ramnarayan S. Rawat, (2012), *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black.

apotheosis of which was the creation of the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Republican Party of India.

### **Theoretical Concepts**

Theoretical understanding is essential for a better analysis of any subject. It is an analytical tool for understanding, evaluating and acting upon any subject. While dealing with the question of ‘Dalit Consciousness and Its Political Implications for Dalit Politics’ various concepts intervene in the understanding of the subject. The subject cannot be understood appropriately without knowing the concept of ‘Consciousness’ and specifically the ‘Dalit Consciousness’. There are several queries that emerge during the study of the subject. Like, what is consciousness and how it develops? What is Dalit Consciousness and how does it relate with the concept of ‘social justice’ and ‘democracy’? Therefore, it is quite mandatory to analyse various theories which are essential for formulating a better understanding of the issue.

### **Consciousness**

The history of human development is primarily the result of human consciousness. The element of consciousness plays an essential role in the identity of an individual and the progress of a society. The maturity of human consciousness plays a decisive role in the growth of an individual and society. Human consciousness is the main factor which separates the human being from the animal. The origin of the term ‘consciousness’ originally derived from Latin word *con* (with) and *scire* (to know). Thus, etymological meaning of the term emphasises the ability of an individual to understand and recognise.<sup>108</sup> The term consciousness has been discussed in various streams of social sciences like psychology, philosophy, political science, and sociology. Psychology deals with the basic questions like what is the source of the human consciousnesses, while philosophy tries to solve its unidentified interrelation with matter. The famous British philosopher John Locke defined consciousness as ‘the perception of what passes in a

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<sup>108</sup> Morgan Scott Peck, (1936), *The Road Less Traveled*, New York: Simon and Schuster, p.280.

man's mind'.<sup>109</sup> According to 'Collins Internet-Linked Dictionary of Sociology' consciousness is the part of the human mind that is aware of the person's self, environment, and mental activity. The consciousness mind contains memories, current experience and thought which are available to awareness. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider define consciousness in 'The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness' as "anything that we are aware of at a given moment forms part of our consciousness, making conscious experience at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives".<sup>110</sup> Consciousness is a state of human mind which is aware of the actions going around in society. In social arena, mindfulness can be manifest in different forms like individual consciousness, social consciousness, class consciousness, gender consciousness, etc. The human being is a social animal. Therefore they are compulsorily indulged various social actions and dialogue, which has slowly generated different forms of consciousness in human beings. This consciousness also helps to develop a particular identity of the individual which further transforms according to their social interaction. Different identity movements emerging in various parts of the world are the result of the growing consciousness among the different marginalised groups. Dalit identity emerged as one of the prominent status in present time, which is also the outcome of the ever-increasing consciousness.

### **Dalit Consciousness**

Dalit consciousness is one of the aspects of social consciousness. The Dalit community is located at the bottom of the Hindu society. In Hindu society, Dalits are exploited and left out over the centuries. An understanding of the development of the term 'Dalit' itself reflects the changeless nature of the community and make available meaningful visions to analyse the nature and possibility of Dalit consciousness. Dalit consciousness is political consciousness that is articulated politically during the Dalit movement. Political awareness is a complex perception as we examined in the second chapter and it is a very

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<sup>109</sup> Ned Block, Owen Flanagan, and Guven Guzeldere, (1997), *The Nature of Consciousness*, London: MIT Press Cambridge, p.789

<sup>110</sup> Max Velmans and Susan Schneider (2007), *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, Oxford U. K.: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, p.1

comprehensive perception playing a substantial role in the expression of Dalit community. It is participative having insignificant influence on the political organisation and its actors both individually and objectively. It connotes self-image vis-à-vis other individuals and societies, their association with socio-political localities and their associations with socio, economic, political and cultural structures of society. Political consciousness symbolises individuals of community cognitive comprehensibility of its objective circumstances as well as its awareness that in turn forms over and done with social experience political struggles and cultural traits. Dalit knowledge is a multifaceted method as it incorporates more than a few complications like political consciousness. It includes the understanding of the Dalits politics, processes of political socialisation and political culture among Dalits its impact on the structure of political awareness and its different ways of expressions, including literature.

Kumar tries to find out the emerging point of Dalit consciousness. Accordingly, the structural location of Dalits in the society and their social exclusion results in the construction of a unique awareness of Dalits.<sup>111</sup> According to the assumption of Vivek Kumar, Dalit consciousness emerged from inside the Dalit psychology, which is highly influenced by the social and political behaviour of the society towards Dalits. Further, Oommen defines Dalit knowledge, 'If proletarian consciousness is essentially rooted in material deprivation.<sup>112</sup> Dalit consciousness encapsulates deprivations stemming from inhumane conditions of material existence, powerless and ideological hegemony'.<sup>113</sup> Laura Brueck also supports the same argument. Accordingly, 'Dalit consciousness as an experiential and political perspective made up of the first-hand knowledge of caste-based oppression and atrocity, along with the political goal of liberation, awakening that results from the exposure of this atrocity as central to the maintenance of caste hierarchy.<sup>114</sup> In a

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<sup>111</sup> Vivek Kumar (2009), Dalit movement in Contemporary India, *Delivered a lecture in a seminar organized by Center for the Study of Social System, School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*, p.2-3.

<sup>112</sup> T. K. Oommen, (1990), *Protest and change: Studies in social movements*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 256.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p.3.

<sup>114</sup> Laura Brueck. (2010), "The Emerging Complexity of Dalit Consciousness", *Himal South Asian*. [Online: web] Accessed on 1 June, 2016. [URL:http://www.himalmag.com /component/content/article/19-the-emerging-complexity-of-dalit-consciousness.html](http://www.himalmag.com/component/content/article/19-the-emerging-complexity-of-dalit-consciousness.html), p.14.



general sense, Dalit consciousness is the realisation of oppression faced by the community by the dominant caste social groups. The marginalisation and exclusion of the Dalits in society were uniquely expressed in the form of Dalit consciousness, which led towards an identity formation as Dalits. The term identity is initially taken from the Latin word *idem*. It means sameness and continuity. In psychology, it is reflected in Sigmund Freud's theory of identification. While the concept of identity in political science emerged with the liberal and individualist paradigm of David Hume and John Locke, it is also reflected in the Marxist ideology of haves and have nots. The discourse on identity politics became more important in the post-1960s period, and it is manifest in the form of different social and political movements.

In recent times, the concept of identity politics has still been found to be relevant for both the developed and the developing countries. Identity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and it is reflected in various forms. Dalit identity is also a part of broader identity, which is shaped by its contact with the environmental settings. Identities often appear to be 'natural', something man is born with. But the fact is that identities are socially constructed through cultural practices and socialisation. Unnithan Kumar points out that, 'Identities are analytically complex to study because they are constructed and shifting, not fixed, entities, which can be negotiated, contested and reformulated as categories of representation.'<sup>115</sup>

Amartya Sen explains, 'We do belong to many different groups, in one way or another, and each of these collectives can give a person a potentially important identity.'<sup>116</sup> Identity is a process of realisation of 'Who I am?' Being a social animal, an individual belongs to different groups. Therefore it assimilates different enormous into one whole. He points towards an exciting finding that 'reason' plays an important role to judge which identity should gain priority among others. In his words, 'You have a reason about relative priority to give different identities'. He further explains that every identity is important at a particular time. He quotes, 'A vegetarian identity is essential if you are going to dinner, but it is not so important if you are going to an economics lecture.' This

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<sup>115</sup> Maya Unnithan Kumar (1997), *Identity, Gender and Poverty: New Perspectives on Caste and Tribe in Rajasthan*, New Delhi: Berghahan Books, p.5.

<sup>116</sup> Amartya Sen (2006), *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, New Delhi: Allen Lane Penguin Book, p.271.

argument of Amartya Sen is quite impressive for the interpretation of different identities of a human being in society. A Dalit possesses a distinct identity as a 'citizen' of the country, but it drastically changes when he enters in the social arena. In a changed political context, the 'reason' forced him to adopt the identity of the Dalit because it will help them to transform their status in society.

### **Areas of Study: Jalaun and Etawah**

In India, caste plays a vital role in the electoral processes of the country. The caste identities remain a very influential factor to choose a political representative due to the vested interests of those particular dominant caste groups.<sup>117</sup> Almost all political parties very well understand the dominant role of caste politics, and that very much affects the ticket distribution process. Uttar Pradesh is one of the states in which caste identities are highly politicised. In Uttar Pradesh, Dalit communities constitute a very significant part of the population and have played a vital role in the voter turn-out. So the present study examines the two districts, Jalaun, and Etawah of Uttar Pradesh. Firstly, the resource has chosen these two districts because the Schedule Caste population constitutes the majority here. Secondly, the two areas are in two different regions of Uttar Pradesh. Thirdly, it will help to collect the appropriate data for a comparative case study of both the districts. Fourthly, the study will help to evaluate how the government policy and identity politics are incorporated in a caste-based society. Fifthly, the study area also helps to dig deeper into the electoral violence, identity politics, and the discrimination process of the state towards the Dalit women and men. Sixthly, as the areas constitute of a majority of Scheduled Caste population, both the districts have played an essential role among the Dalit consciousness, Dalit movement, and Dalit participation in electoral process.

### **Research Problem**

The caste system of the Indian society forcefully denies the Dalit community to live a dignified life. The Dalits continue being deprived of all human rights during the whole

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<sup>117</sup> Rajni Kothari, (1961), "Panchayati Raj: A Reassessment", *The Economic Weekly*, may 13, p.759.

course of their life. Traditionally, the Indian society has been organised by a system of caste. Discrimination by caste is outlawed, but it persists in the whole country, particularly in the rural areas where the caste system is stronger. By this caste system, the Dalits are facing multi-faceted forms of discrimination in their daily life.<sup>118</sup> Every political organisation of the largest democratic country is claiming that they will solve all the problems of this marginalisation including the removal of discrimination, socio-economic improvement, and political power only to create a vote bank from the Dalit communities. But in a practical sense, nothing fruitful in terms of justice has been delivered so far to Dalit communities in the political arena of the country. In the face of a grave injustice, many Dalit political activists and leaders waged relentless struggles for the empowerment of these deprived masses. As a result, many vibrant social movements took place throughout the country. The post-Ambedkar period is a new beginning for Dalit communities for they have become more assertive about their identity and their struggle which targeted for equality and removal of untouchability. This acceleration has witnessed a more significant assertion by the Dalit communities in the social and political processes, giving rise to distinctive organisational entities that champion the cause of Dalit assertiveness in politics.

Uttar Pradesh has been one of the states of India where an extremely vibrant socio-political mobilisation of Dalits took place. The state also has observed a very drastic change in the political life of Dalits. It is also essential because there has been a Dalit chief minister for four terms. After the emergence of Bahujan politics, a caste-based political consciousness movement led by Kanshi Ram under the umbrella of BSP, Dalit politics has gone through numerous changes. On the one hand, the political aspiration of Dalits has become more assertive while on another, the mainstream political parties are showing more inclination towards Dalits to utilise them as a vote bank. The question arises again that how the Dalit leaders and political activists have been responding to these political parties. Has their political consciousness come to a level of bargaining with the mainstream political parties?

Furthermore, there are some political parties led by the Dalit leaders, yet the political hegemony of upper castes in various institutions and machinery of the

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<sup>118</sup> Joti Sekhon (2000), *Modern India*, Boston: McGraw-Hill, p.44.

democracy continues to prevail. It reveals that caste-based discrimination very much exists in the electoral politics despite Constitutional provisions for the empowerment of Dalit communities. The mobilisation of Dalits and other lower castes under the broader category of 'Bahujan' for political power, by mobilising people around their caste identities and by distribution of its seats to a particular caste which had hitherto been at the margins of the Hindu social order the party succeeded in politicising caste in Uttar Pradesh. Did that politicisation transform the system? What did the BSP do to change the lives of Dalits and the marginalised section? The case of Jalaun and Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh would be a testing ground for the proposed research problem. This district has been an active participant in the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In the democratic system of India, the Dalit populations have been very substantial in number to decide the winning of any political party. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, before the emergence of Dalit Bahujan politics, there used to be a considerable manipulation of Dalit vote bank by different mainstream political parties of that time. A few decades ago, the upper ruling class used to represent the Dalits or introduced by some Dalits. In the late 1980s, the first Dalit political platform in Uttar Pradesh was created by Kanshi Ram in the form of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Initially, it worked for arousing the Dalit socio-political consciousness through various means of mobilisation. This movement led by Kanshi Ram strengthened the caste identities of Dalits and inspired them for the political assertion and much more participation. However, as a general trend of Dalit politics in India, the Dalit people contested only reserved constituency seats but were not given a chance to challenge in general. This problem does not only prevail in the parliament elections and district elections but has also been seen even in the village sarpanch elections.

Moreover, Dalits are divided into so many sub-caste groups, and in a large number of villages, their status is that of a minority in comparison to other dominant castes. The non-Dalit political parties cleverly manipulate this division of Dalits for making their candidates win. Somehow the post-Ambedkrite political movements have

failed to forge the more substantial unity among the various sub-castes of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh in general, and in Jalaun and Etawah district in particular. Therefore, the core purpose of the study would be mapping the rise of political consciousness among the Dalits and how they respond against the manipulation of their vote banks by several mainstream political parties. The study also tries to understand different levels of political consciousness within the sub-caste groups of Dalits and how political parties manipulate this divide of Dalits sub-castes to manage the entire vote bank in their favour. Almost all the political parties distribute the tickets on the lines of caste, their population and influence in the constituency. So the caste identities remain a central point to decide the candidates for all the elections. Therefore, the study would try to understand the nature of caste identities and how it has reflected in the political consciousness of Dalit caste groups.

### **Scope of the Study**

The present research covers the two districts Jalaun and Etawah in Uttar Pradesh for the study to assess the political consciousness among the Dalit communities and the impact of a political party in empowering the Dalits in the process of participation in electoral politics of the country. Uttar Pradesh is one of the largest populated states in the northern part of the country and has the largest Dalit population. The historical initiatives that have taken place in the region to address the social, economic and political empowerment of Dalit communities in the state particularly and also in the country as a whole. In this context, the study proposes to focus on the impact of political consciousness, electoral strategy, political empowerment, and ways to remove the political marginalisation experienced by the Dalit communities in the state.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To find out the caste-based discrimination with Dalits at various levels of the electoral processes in Jalaun and Etawah.
- To assess how far identity politics has positively strengthened the political empowerment of Dalits in Jalaun and Etawah.

- To find out different factors associated with political discrimination and exclusion faced by Dalit leaders in particular and the communities in general in Jalaun and Etawah.
- To analyse the caste identities as a dominant factor in electoral politics and how different mainstream political parties respond to them.
- The study also analyses the Dalit Bahujan discourse established by Kanshi Ram and how far it has developed the socio-political consciousness among the marginalised groups.
- To understand the division of sub-caste groups within the Dalit communities, their political inclination, and how these divides are politically manipulated to win the elections.

### **Hypotheses**

- After the emergence of Dalit Bahujan discourse in the Indian politics, the level of political consciousness has arisen, and the Dalit communities have become more assertive to their political rights in the electoral process of Jalaun and Etawah in Uttar Pradesh.
- The division of Dalits into various caste groups is a significant hindrance in forging unity, and that is the main factor which provides enough scope to the political parties to manipulate their vote bank.
- Despite a strong movement to arouse the political consciousness among Dalits, they are still the victims of caste-based discrimination and socio-economic exclusion in different ways, at different levels.

### **Methodology**

The study used both primary and secondary sources. A field study is carried out to collect data to analyse the caste discrimination and assertion of identity politics in the proposed area of the study. The study used intensive fieldwork in two districts of Uttar Pradesh. The study also consulted and reviewed secondary literature and reports to frame the theoretical background of the study.

The present study deployed both primary and secondary data. The primary data collected from interviews with key informants and extensive field visits Dalit local leaders also been used. The field visits comprise of detailed observation, discussions, and casual conversations with the respondents. The secondary data for the study collected from various journals, books, articles, published, unpublished thesis and newspaper clips and also consulted various governments reports.

### **Interview Method**

An interview schedule is used with structured questions on the various aspects of the political consciousness among Dalits. It included questions on their awareness towards media, political leadership, political parties, elections, panchayat raj system, welfare schemes, development programmes, political participation, etc. The questions were of both kinds, closed-end and open-end.

Another important method of data collection in the present study was an in-depth interview method. Interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings people hold for their sub-caste people and political activities. Here for the research present utilised semi-structured interviews to understand the views of the critical leaders of various groups like Dalit activists, leaders representing members as well as leaders of various Dalit and non-Dalit political organisations. The interviews had open-ended questions, which covered all aspects of the research objectives. These interviews enabled the researcher to understand the political consciousness from both the perspectives of top-to-bottom as well as bottom-to-top.

### **Observations**

As the study is concerned with the examination of political consciousness among Dalits, it becomes essential to make use of the observational method to extract information and gather insight into the issues involved. It proved to be very useful to supplement the primary data with the observation made during the fieldwork. A diary was maintained to record the comments throughout the fieldwork. After completion of the fieldwork, the contents of the observation diary is classified and used while interpreting the data.

## **Participant Observation Method**

In participant observation, the researcher participates in and observes, as intimately as possible, the life and activities of the people and groups under study. Participant observation was used in the present research to carefully comprehend the everyday operations of the Dalit sub-castes. Rather than completely detaching from the life activities of the respondents, this method enabled to engage with their numerous socio-political activities. However, the application of the observation method in the collection of primary data was reduced the subjective biases if the observation is done accurately. The attempt has been made to cultivate an insider's view of what is happening.

## **Data Analysis**

The study based on primary data collected from extensive fieldwork. The same has first tabulated on the master table and then was further classified for the analysis, keeping in view the objectives and the nature of the present study. The data has been analysed to explore the political consciousness among Dalits.

## **Chapterisation**

### **First Chapter: Political Consciousness: A Theoretical Framework**

This chapter focused on political consciousness among Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. Also this chapter deals with a theoretical framework of consciousness and leads to brief mention of the philosophical way of self-consciousness. The role of media/ communication such as News Paper, Television, and Radio in creating consciousness among Dalits. The awareness of humans about anything contribute to be aware of what they are and to which they are affiliated with. The consciousness being a psychological and subjective assessment constitute by so many attributes like feeling, thoughts, perceptions, and awareness about the self and others. Individuals identify themselves through various socio-political characteristics since they are part of too many social structures. These socio-cultural and political attributes always remained the root cause for constructing the images, perceptions, ideas, and awareness about the self. The social relations and various interactions in the cultural environment create certain situations for an individual in which she/he differentiate to others. This whole process of self-identification comes



through a specific type of social, political and cultural consciousness. However, it is very complex to define or construct a theoretical framework for an idea, perception or such a term like consciousness.

### **Second Chapter: Political consciousness among the Dalits**

This chapter deals with the development of political ideology among the Dalits and generation political consciousness among Dalits communities in Uttar Pradesh. It has also discussed how Dalits are being influenced by their icons in different periods in the post-independence period. The chapter also throws some light upon the Dalit awareness programs and participation of Dalit communities in electoral politics. The political ideology among the Dalits and the consciousness of the Dalit people and Dalit awareness programs and participation in electoral politics.

### **Third Chapter: Political Consciousness in Jalaun District**

The chapter is based on an empirical study to gauge the political awareness among Dalits in Jalaun district. It has also discussed how Dalits are socially excluded in active participation in political activities in the state. This chapter analyses the medium of interviewing the respondents and tries to see how political consciousness has come in the Dalit society. What kind of discrimination and untouchability are they treated along with political consciousness

### **Fourth Chapter: Political knowledge in Etawah**

This chapter is also based on an empirical study to gauge the political awareness among Dalits in Etawah district. This chapter discusses political consciousness among the Dalits in Etawah district. In modern society, due to the impact of progressive social and economic forces, the old caste structure was crumbling though somewhat slowly and lost its rigidity. Caste discrimination is very much manifested in the district. In this caste discrimination, the Dalit consciousness is also very much progressive in post-Kanshi Ram era. As Dalit political consciousness spread all over the Uttar Pradesh state, the similar has also been manifested in the Etawah district. The present chapter is to analyse the Dalits political consciousness in the region.

## CHAPTER- 1

### **Political consciousness A Theoretical Framework**

The consciousness of humans about anything contributes to be aware of what they are and to which they are affiliated; such a consciousness constitutes human life-worlds. The consciousness being a psychological and subjective assessment constituted by so many attributes like feeling, thoughts, perceptions, and awareness about the self and others.<sup>1</sup> Individuals identify themselves through various socio-political attributes since they are part of too entangled social, cultural and political structures. These socio-cultural and political attributes always remained the root cause for constructing the images, perceptions, ideas, and awareness about the binaries of ‘self and the other’.<sup>2</sup> The social relations and various interactions in the cultural environment create certain situations for an individual in which she/he differentiate to others. This whole process of self-identification comes through a reflective social identity based on the images of other. However, it is very complex to define or construct a theoretical framework for an idea, perception or such a term like consciousness.

The meaning of defining consciousness let to the exploration of various dimensions and perspectives of self-identification. Defining of the term consciousness includes the nature and scope of the term and particular characteristics with exact possibilities of this socio-cultural and political phenomenon. To describe the term like political consciousness required the valid and systematic knowledge of political structures and behaviors surrounding of particular society which certainly includes the scientific investigations of facts and data to analyze. Moreover, to obtain the definition of a complex term like political consciousness required an in-depth study of various

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Bandura, (1999), “A Social Cognitive theory of personality”, in L. Pervin and O. John (ed.), *Handbook of personality*, New York: Guilford Publication, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

structures and substructure of ecology of politics and society in which individuals evolved their consciousness.

According to the new Marxist scholar, the modern capitalist structure is much more accountable for economic inequalities. The rise of modern capitalist imperialism is a fundamental force to derive the individuals in situations of different kind of disparities.<sup>3</sup> As Marx says, “it is the material condition that determines the social consciousness....” The concept of working-class or oppressed class in totality might be more effective to lead the struggles against the capitalist structure. The political mobilization on the line of caste, ethnicity, and religion can weak the class struggle those are universal in nature. In the views of new Marxist “Oppression is not a matter of perception, but of concrete, material reality”.<sup>4</sup> The materialist’s counter identity politics as it separates the progressive forces and fragments the fight against capitalist exploitation. The Indian Marxist Prakash Karat also holds a similar view that “Identity politics promote difference and separateness to stress one’s distinct identity”.<sup>5</sup> These differences turned into different political consciousness. He further states that contemporary theoretical assumptions of political consciousness “excluded others from joining the fight against that oppression. This helps to fragment the fight against all forms of oppression”.<sup>6</sup> The consequences of these fragmentations create an environment where the individuals of same identity groups can be divided in the form of conflicting and competing identities.<sup>7</sup> The similar is the case of working communities which are having nothing but are very fragile and weak in the consciousness about their marginalization. Thus, they class in itself but have not been able to become class for itself. Therefore, it’s hard to forge a comprehensive strategy

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony Brewer, (1980), *Marxist Theories of Imperialism*, New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.56

<sup>4</sup> Sharon Smith, (2008), “The Politics of Identity”, *International Socialist Review*, Issue 57, Online Published, URL: <http://www.isreview.org/issues/57/feat-identity.html>

<sup>5</sup> Prakash Karat, (2011), “The Challenge of Identity Politics”, *The Marxist*, 27(1-2): 39-50, p.42

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Taylor, (1994), The Politics of Recognition, in A Gutmann (ed.) *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.25-26.

to challenge contemporary exploitations. The rise of consciousness among the working classes of the world was viewed as a factor against the universal struggle of capitalist oppression and exploitation.<sup>8</sup>

The term political consciousness also has various dimensions and perspective to define including the formation of a socio-political identity of individuals. When an individual's get interacted with the social and political institutions, they start imaging their affiliations either on the basis social and cultural grounds or some interests. The imaginations of self and the other later developed in the idea of political consciousness in the minds of individuals.<sup>9</sup> In fact, individuals get affected by political institutions and try to construct knowledge about the formation and functioning of various dynamics of it. Therefore, political consciousness is an on-going process which constructs and correlates with the political understanding of the people in different aspects.<sup>10</sup> The political consciousness is also a very integral part of the functioning of democracy since it facilitates the individuals in different ways to make political understanding of political rights, movements, and political groups alongside the patterns of identity assertions. The exercise of political consciousness furthermore helps the political systems in increasing the participation of people according to their political affiliations and socio-cultural experiences. In other words, political consciousness is the outcome of political socialization and interaction. According to the Almond and Verba "political socialization is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed".<sup>11</sup> The process of political socialization has wider effects on the political processes and democratic functioning's. The political consciousness aspires the masses to meaningfully engage regarding the political issues of society that further lead to strengthening the democratic processes in society.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ronni Michelle Greenwood, (2008), "Intersectional Political Consciousness: Appreciation for Intragroup Differences and Solidarity in Diverse Groups", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol.32, pp-3647, Blackwell Publishing, Inc. Printed in the USA, P. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in S. P. Varma, (1980), *Modern Political Theory*, New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House, p.297.

The level of political consciousness has far-fetched implications for the efficacious functioning of democracy, as the increased awareness of people regarding political issues, will help them participate in a more meaningful manner in the political processes and make well informed decisions. In fact, if they possess a minimum level of political awareness, it leads to a greater degree of political involvement.<sup>12</sup> Political consciousness is relational and constitutive in content and nature, where the constitutive components signify political comprehension of beliefs, experiences, feelings, awareness, thoughts, ideas and cognitions (both subjective and objective) and the relational aspect establishes links between a persons comprehension of the self (that consequently becomes the political self) and ones relation with that of the external world. Hence the conception of political consciousness becomes a complex phenomenon in its definition and its examination implicates processes of its articulation, formation, manifestation and expression, both at the objective and subjective levels. Subjectively the individuals are part of some kind of socio-political substructures in the multi-layered societies. The conceptualization cannot be homogenous and uniform, rather it seeks to integrate multiple layers, particularly in a multi-cultural and heterogeneous society like India. The multicultural values of people in India divide them in several identities which generate different political consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

To comprehend political consciousness in this socio-political set up becomes extremely complicated and intricate, and without a critical analysis of all issues around this concept, answers cannot be sought. Shokri highlighted that political consciousness is the outcome of power relations established in the political sphere in a society where people's aggression converted into political activism.<sup>14</sup> Political consciousness could be construed as one's understanding towards other individuals or caste groups and their engagement with different sets of socio-political traditions and values. The

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Oakeshott, (1952), *Political Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge press, p.13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Mehdi Shokri, (2016) "Legitimacy and Theory of Political Consciousness: Evaluating Political Act of Aggression", *Journal of Political Sciences and Public Affairs*, 4: 191.

cultural practices and regional characteristics also play a pivotal role in consciousness building among the individuals. The cultural traits, socio-political understandings, and power struggles among the individuals create the environment in which they feel aware of their affiliation with different caste and class groups. The group differentiations several times show the struggle for power, to exclude others from the power-sharing in the socio-political institutions; especially the dominating forces of society only control most of the political institutions. Therefore the approach of rights emerged across the globe in which ethnic and caste groups start asserting for the power sharing and claiming for their rights.<sup>15</sup>

In consonance with the power-sharing and demands for political and economic rights, this could be concluded as the emergence of consciousness building politics, in which sections which were deprived of their fundamental rights, stood up against the exploitation and marginalization. So the legitimacy of political institutions can also be questioned by different scholars in their intellectual debates. The global, as well as local institutions, could be the participants of consciousness building and stimulating the demands for political rights. Berger and Luckmann have identified the role of an institution that “Knowledge precedes values in the legitimation of institutions”<sup>16</sup> where ideas and thoughts get channelized in the process of knowledge construction. The psychological understandings of the issue of political consciousness brings several changes in the way people interact in the political atmospheres. The political and social intuitions analyze these interactions based on the normative and rational principles while failing in them could lead to the illegitimacy of democratic institutions.<sup>17</sup> The power structure and domination on them by majority groups sometimes depict the divorce and contradictory picture of disbelief and frustration among the minority groups regarding the accountability, effectiveness and legitimacy

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Berger and Luckmann, (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality; a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, England: Penguin Group of Publication, p.111.

<sup>17</sup> Mehdi Shokri, (2016) “Legitimacy and Theory of Political Consciousness: Evaluating Political Act of Aggression”, *Journal of Political Sciences and Public Affairs*, 4: 191, p.1.

of political institutions to ensure the rights of different political groups. This disbelief and aggression most of the time manifested in the form of political and social assertions and challenge through movements which further became the source of justification of identity-based political movements.<sup>18</sup>

Political consciousness is not an indistinguishable phenomenon in ability and nature, but has several layers and multiplicity within the same identity groups which are subjective to the complications of social identification. The process of this type of formations is hard to identify the similarities and homogeneity among the people of the same community.<sup>19</sup> Those who interact at various structures and substructures could be the real manifestation of contradictory relations of consciousness building among the minds of different groups and ethnicity of the society. However, this class and caste consciousness in most of the cases is the result of imagination and comparison of self and others. The identification of self creates a kind of consciousness which does the comparison with others who are different from them. In his analysis, Hobsbawm tried to argue that “without ‘outsiders’ there are no ‘Insiders’”.<sup>20</sup> This debate of insider and outsider creates a dichotomy between different ethnic and social groups which later manifested in the political mobilization. Therefore, in this process people get affiliated with a certain kind of self-consciousness in which political and social actions, cultural and religious values dominate the real picture of the human self.

Moreover, the cultural traits and social traditions became the immediate achievements for long term self-reflective consciousness building and manifested in the functional features of humane existence.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in fact, the political consciousness is a part of the socio-political process which starts with the construction

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, (1996), “Identity Politics and the Left”, *New Left Review*, (1):217, pp. 38-47.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Arther S. Reber, (1985), *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, Second edition, New York: Penguin Publishers, p. 11.

of self-awareness which provides the remarkable ability to individuals of analyzing who they are and what is happening to them.<sup>22</sup> Like this, it's not possible to calculate the exact stages and steps of consciousness building among individuals, it continues from cradle to grave. To understand it in the wider context and connotation, it would be better to comprehend the concept and meaning of political development, political activism, political modernization, and political participation. All these processes create some kind of impact upon the entire political system and individuals also get affected by them. Before reconnoitering a functional definition of political consciousness, it would be important to understand the ideas of political and politics. There are processes like political culture, political socialization, political development, political modernization and their impact upon the individuals to generate a kind of political consciousness.<sup>23</sup>

Historically, since the development of the institution of family and later developments of the modern notion of states and polity, the power struggle in politics remained central. Human beings started becoming the part of political movements` either for liberation or expiation of political and economic empires. However, political participation and activism had been working in different forms and different structures of society. In contemporary times, different scholars also started defining the political activities of peoples in their intellectual debates and writings. Michael Oakeshott in writings has explained the political activity as “an activity in which human beings related to one other as members of a civil association, think and speak about the arrangements and the conditions of their association from the point of view of their desirability, make proposals about changes in these arrangements and condition, try to persuade others of the desirability of the proposed changes and act in such a manner as to promote the changes”.<sup>24</sup> His analysis of the political activity establishes that political activity is an endless process; people learn and act in the political environment of a society to increase their greater participation in politics.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Oakeshott, (1952), *Political Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge press, p. 15.



A critical examination of politics, helps in describing and analysing the various methods through which power is achieved, exercised and manifested in multifarious forms. It also helps in understanding the purpose for which power is used, different viewpoints of decision-making and the context in which those decisions are formulated and implemented. Creation of political consciousness is a constant process and is influenced by multiple factors. Thus, political processes can be construed as an extension of the consciousness of political acts and behaviors, that in its wider understanding focus on the learning of the dynamics of civil and political activism, socio-psychological analysis of various groups who are making efforts at implementing their ideas in the political sphere to ensure their share in the rulemaking and implementation.<sup>25</sup> The political power is one of them which entirely based on the conflicting ideas of power-sharing according to the interest of different socio-political groups. Robert Dahl in his explanation deals with power as a successful way to achieve the goals. He opines, “A has power over B to the extent he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do”.<sup>26</sup> Political power is a complete gambit of political activities and its functionalities in the different set of responsibilities, some of which are enshrined in the constitution and some influenced by the people’s activism. The entire political system including institutions and constitution comes under the ambit of political power. In the modern democratic political systems, political power gets its legitimacy from the different sources like institutions, values and people etc.

### **Political Socialization**

The people who engage in political activities are driven and influenced by some of the identities and its manifestation in the political systems. For example, if a person hails from a certain caste, class and ethnic groups, that person might be having the consciousness related to that group. The political person who is conscious understands

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<sup>25</sup> Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, (2013), “Theoretical Foundations of Political Psychology”, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, (2 ed.), p.1.

<sup>26</sup> Robert A. Dahl, (1997), *Modern Political Analysis* (Fifth edition), Delhi: Prentice Hall of India, p. 12-48.

the patterns of political activism and participation. A politically conscious person, however, liquefied in the understanding of the processes of politics, surely would be aware about the political activities and power, because all these are part of the political understanding of a person. According to Robert Sigel “political socialization categorically refers to the learning process by which the political norms and behavior standard to an on-going political system are transferred to the successive generations”.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, political power and its manifestation in different forms make people understand the wider meaning of politics and how it affects their day to day life. Apart from political activism, political socialization is another aspect which is deeply associated with political consciousness in which individuals learn the political activism to participate and to understand. Since the birth of a child in a family, the process of political socialization starts, which teaches the child about political affiliation. The political socialization increases awareness among the people about their affiliation to different political and social identities. The political systems also respond to them in a reciprocal way; the political institutions also influence the cognitive capacities of individuals.<sup>28</sup>

The family and friends are also the central points of political interaction and political engagement. The first learning of political socialization<sup>29</sup> starts from the family only; later on, other political institutions influence the political thoughts of humans. According to Almond and Powell Political socialization “is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed. Through the performance of this function, individuals are inducted into the political culture and their orientations towards political objects are framed”.<sup>30</sup> Political socialization is very gradual learning

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<sup>27</sup> Sigel Robert, (1965), “Assumptions about the learning of Political values”, *Annals of the American Academy of Politics and Social Science*, Vol. No.361, Issue 1, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> Pye Lucian W., (1966), *Aspects of Political development*, Boston: Little Brown, p. 89

<sup>29</sup> “It shows that political socialization refers to a gradual, continuous process of incremental change through child-hood and adolescence during which the new generation acquires the norms prevailing within the adult population”. D. C. Schwartz and S.K. Schwartz, (1975), *New Directions in Political Socialisation*, New York: Free Press, p.5.

<sup>30</sup> Gabriel A. Almond & G. B. Jr. Powell, (1966). *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston: Little Brown, p. 64

by the individuals about the political norms, values and acceptable political behavior in the political system of the country.<sup>31</sup> In fact, at every state of age group different institutions worked for the political socialization of an individual. Starting it with the family and friends later political parties, different political associations and institutions work for the opinion-making in different perspectives. It is a process of learning gradually where the attitudes, behaviors and norms acceptable to the contemporary political system are acquired. However, in its limited understanding, the political socialization seems conservative in the applicable part but it's true that political change is the driving force to make some political sense. Those who are born and brought up in a different political environment they act differently. Thus the political socialization constructs the different notions and understanding of political activism.<sup>32</sup>

### **Political activism and democratic participation**

Political activism is the main source of political mobilization in democratic systems across the globe. The people who are politically conscious and charged with certain ideologies put their demands in the political systems of the country. A large number of masses wage their struggle to emancipate from a different type of stigmas and marginalization. The political activism in a democratic system provides an opportunity for the masses to mobilize the individuals and communities to achieve their ends. These social values or biological differences construct the essential core parts of an individual's identity that provide a quick psychological affiliation with which one feel associated. Charles Taylor in his theoretical articulation has argued that "identity is deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it".<sup>33</sup> The involvement of citizens to articulate their demands in the political question can be possible in the democratic system. Therefore, democracy also considered as the main driving force to make it possible to mobilize the people based on their different

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<sup>31</sup> C. Hyman, (1956), *The study of Politics*, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, p. 24, and See, D. Easton, (1968), *Political Socialization in International Encyclopedia of the Social Science*, Nt. Free Press, p.24.

<sup>32</sup> Gabriel A. Almond & G. B. Jr. Powell, (1966). *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston: Little Brown, p. 56.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Taylor, (1989), *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 29.

political socialization.<sup>34</sup> The democratic process, increasing political activism also fuelled the much-awaited the demands of human liberation; especially in case of marginalized and indigenous communities.

The emergence of democratic political institutions and practices in modern politics has served the purpose of class consciousness. The identity based socio-political movements can be observed in all type of societies.<sup>35</sup> The social and cultural groups of society are more vocal to their rights and putting their demands in politics through various pressure groups.<sup>36</sup> In some parts of the world including India, the social and caste groups became very active and using their caste, class and ethnic ties to politically mobilize their communities. Hogg and Abrams define the political affiliation and collective community based understating as “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others”.<sup>37</sup> Basically, the definition prescribed by Hogg and Abrams is based on the dichotomy of self and others where individuals identify themselves in comparison to others.<sup>38</sup> They construct the idea of ‘self’ based on the imaginations of others and their comparison to cultural and social practices. The sources of identification might be different normative values enshrined in culture and traditions or biological structures. Moreover, the democratic spaces provide the inputs to mobilise the collective identities to forge better ties of belongingness in the social groups. The manifestation of these self-conscious identities into political activism has been depicting a different picture of political consciousness among the people.<sup>39</sup> The collective social identities produce plural perspectives and very nuanced and differentiated world view.

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<sup>34</sup> M. Baruah, (2012), *Political Sociology: Theories and Concept*, India: EBH Publishers, p.23.

<sup>35</sup> Atul Kohli, (ed.), (2001), *The Success of India’s Democracy*, USA: Cambridge University Press, p. 3

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Michael and Dominic Abrams Hogg, (1988), *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*, London: Routledge, p.2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Cressida Heyes, (2015), *Identity Politics*, New Delhi: Critical Quest Publication, p.2.

The certain set of principles and values systems guide the individuals collectively. Therefore, social identities are collectively responsible to raise consciousness among the group members against several social constraints. Moreover, collective consciousness could be articulated in the form of political consciousness.<sup>40</sup> Historically, the immense use of identity assertions in politics emerge in the Western democracies itself. The people who have been marginalized on the basis of gender, race, and ethnicity started mobilizing their communities to get their participation in politics and democratic institutions. In the 1960s and 1970s, due to the rise of new social movements fostering a collective sense of deprivation and marginalization of certain identity groups; they started making their political claims for recognition and accommodation for greater participation in the socio-political institutions.<sup>41</sup> The emergence of new social movements (gay and lesbian liberation, Black civil rights in the US, the American Indian movements and the second wave of feminism) in the west claimed and articulated their demands based on the injustice done to particular social groups.<sup>42</sup> Later on, the issue of marginalization and discrimination are becoming the center of political discussions in several other parts of the world.

The issues of democratic participation and ensuring their involvement in the democratic process is the core demand of new social movements. Particularly, the lower caste groups, indigenous communities, and gender groups questioned the domination of elite groups and male dominance in the political spheres. These movements challenged the dominant cultural practices and raised the self-consciousness among the group members to transform their scripted images. The democratic and peaceful movements in the different regions of the globe are working to increase the participation of the marginalised communities. For instance, the Black feminist identity politics, the Combahee River Collective<sup>43</sup> in its statement argued

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Mary Hawkesworth, and Maurice Kogan, (1992), *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, Volume 1, London: Routledge, p.577.

“The process of consciousness-raising, actually life-sharing, we began to realize our shared experiences and, from the sharing and growing consciousness, to build a politics that will change our lives and inevitably end our oppression”.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the experiences of marginalization augmented the feelings and movement of political participation of these groups in the power-sharing through the consciousness based on the particular identity. The socially oppressed groups raised their serious concerns which stigmatized their images as negative scriptures by the prevailing and dominating socio-cultural groups in the society. The caste divide is the appropriate example of this social stratification of different caste groups in which social and cultural practices dehumanized their social existence and kept them away from taking participation in the public affairs for long.

Moreover, these days the concept of political participation became the buzz word of academic debates across the globe. The communities which were alienated due to some of the social and cultural reasons from taking part in political activism; now they are given the extra privileges to increase their participation in the political institutions. Political participation is not only limited to the confined acts of voting, and participation through institutions. According to Weiner Myron, “any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods, intended in influencing the choice of public affairs and politics, the administration of public works or the choice of political leaders”.<sup>45</sup> Political participation is associated with a certain degree of political consciousness, it possesses ideology, leadership, objects, programs and organization as important fundamental factors which are inter-influential and interdependent. The motivation of political participation remain intake with a greater degree of political mobilization. The political participation shows and expresses the people’s power in the forms of democratic protests. When it comes to political participation of interest social groups, it is driven by certain programs, objectives, leadership, ideology and

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<sup>44</sup> The statement cited in Heyes, Cressida (2015), *Identity Politics*, New Delhi: Critical Quest Publication, p.4.

<sup>45</sup> Myron Weiner, (1971), *Crises and Sequences in Political Development*, in Binder, Leonard et all. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 164.

organization. It encompasses both institutionalized and non-institutionalized individual and collective actions, initiated and adopted by a group or a community to attain desired objectives.

There are many factors which work for increasing the political participation of individuals like, marginalization of a particular community, magnitude of suppression, political education, urge for essential changes, etc. According to Norman D. Palmer “the involvement of citizens in such political activities which directly or indirectly influence the behaviors and actions of decision-makers”.<sup>46</sup> The political consciousness also leads the leaders and activist as well as an individual participant to take part in political activism. The people of different social groups mobilize the masses to articulate their social and cultural traits to use them to raise the level of political consciousness. It is observed that the enhanced level of political consciousness broadens and increases the level of political participation. The political participation seriously performs the task of political consensus making among the people in the democratic setups. Milbrath’s study defines that “political participation was being interpreted quite broadly from spectator’s activities including exposing oneself to political stimuli, voting and political discussion to campaign activities and to gladiatorial activities such as soliciting political funds, being a candidate for office, and actually holding public or party office”.<sup>47</sup> The political participation from the above discussion can be identified that not confined to the level of political activism only. If an individual is holding the office and working to a certain ideology or given representation the official account also counted in the political participation. The political parties and political institutions are having the proper understanding of the emerging demands of political participation induced by the rising political consciousness through various movements of emancipation and liberation. The voices and experiences which were not part of mainstream politics now are becoming central

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<sup>46</sup> Norman D. Palmer, (1976), *Elections and Political development; the south Asian experience*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p. 57.

<sup>47</sup> Lester W. Milbrath, (1965), *Political Participation, How and Why Do People Get Involved in Politics*, Chicago: Rand McNall Publication, p. 124.

to the Indian political scenario. The improved levels of political consciousness is also intensifying the demands of political participation and inclusion.

The political democratization is also very important in case of comprehensive involvement of persons in political activities. The whole concept is evolving due to the increasing levels of political democratization; since it's the democracy which provides better opportunities to express their demands through peaceful means. Therefore, political participation can be achieved through the participation of people in different political activities. In the election local or national various social and ethnic groups take active participation in the activities of ensuring the sharing of political power. The people want to establish their shares in terms of voting rights, as a participant of political campaigning and through by taking part as a representative of political groups. To understand this phenomenon of political participation, the definition of Crook and Manor will provide a better understanding as he explains "citizens' active engagement with public institutions including voting, campaigning, and pressuring either individually or through a group".<sup>48</sup> In the political systems, political participation increases the pressure on the state to realize the demands of certain social groups. It also works as a pressure group to internalize the demands in the political systems in which political activist provide the input to the national leadership to consider the emerging demands of the people. Moreover, political participation is very broad activity and it helps individuals or social groups to understand their socio-economic grievances and it raises the political consciousness in one or the other form related to them in the environment of democratic institutions.

### **Individual and Collective identities and Political Consciousness**

The political consciousness is also very much linked with the different identities of peoples; whether they are individuals or communities. The human is social beings and

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<sup>48</sup> Richard C. Crook and James Manor, (1999), *Democracy and Decentralization in South Asia and West Africa: Participation, Accountability and Performance*, New York: Cambridge University press, p. 7.



interconnected with each other based on cultural and communitarian traditions.<sup>49</sup> Individuals in society define their identities based on socio-cultural practices. They construct the idea of self and others through this process. Several historical narratives and individual experiences also formulate the idea of self. Later on, the individuals connect their particular identities with the larger communities. Communities; which provides the socio-political input and thought to the peoples to live their life different to others. They also train the people regarding the development of personalities according to the cultural and religious believes how to behave in a particular way. In fact in contemporary socio-political discourses on identity, the personal identity is perceived as a substitute for dignity or self-respect. One more aspect of personal identity is its nature of stability in comparison to social identity; Alexander Wendt explained that, “Identities are relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self”.<sup>50</sup> Stable identities are less influenced by the notion of diffraction and manipulation. However, the individual identities have remained the part of political mobilization in different forms by the political leaders in the political systems of the country.<sup>51</sup> Identity is one of the central elements to interpersonal competence and the overall development of a personality. It circumscribes the role of an individual in the society.

Individuals in the societal order have intrinsically embedded themselves with each other with certain social values, ethnicity, language, and religion that define their distinguished commitments to that group; by this way, individuals construct the social identity or collective identity. Bhikhu Parekh a distinguished scholar on multiculturalism and identity defined social identity as “they [individuals] are socially embedded, members of different ethnic, religious, cultural, occupational and other groups, and are related to others in countless formal or informal ways. They define

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<sup>49</sup> Viktor Gecas, (1991), *The Self-Concept as Basis for a Theory of Motivation*, in Judith Howard and Peter Callero, (ed.), *The Self-Society Dynamic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, PP-171-187.

<sup>50</sup> Alexander Wendt, (1992), “Anarchy is What States Make of It”, *International Organization*, (46): 391–426, p.397.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

and distinguish themselves, and are defined and distinguished by others in terms of one or more of these”.<sup>52</sup> The individuals are central to decide to which group they belong and to whom they wanted to connect with. The powerful notion of individual identity is the articulation of populism in the hand of independent groups but in most of the cases, peoples are not free of identities. The construction of this notion led to the fragile structures of society. The group distinctions formulate the social categories of individuals. The members of those particular groups followed certain social norms and standard of conduct of that group to which she/he is associated. For instance, a Muslim woman is supposed to bear Burkha,<sup>53</sup> and Sikh men are supposed to wear turbans (Pagadi).<sup>54</sup> The social and cultural values of a community bind the individuals with certain practices and traditions from where it became very difficult to violate the norms. The modern multicultural states and other political institutions also understand the importance of the certain values and rules of a society, but in numerous cases, the same contradicts to the constitutional and modern values of democracy.

The dichotomy of self and others contribute a lot to understand the values of identity formation either it is individual or collective. The sense of belongingness to a particular group provides enough ground to construct the collective identity based on the particular political consciousness. Alexander Wendt explains that “Social identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to it while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object. [Social identities are] at once cognitive schemas that enable

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<sup>52</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, (2008), *A New Politics of Identity: Political Principles for an Interdependent World*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.87.

<sup>53</sup> The “Burkha” is not employed by those in the Muslim community who are familiar with women’s veiling practices. The word is currently used in France to refer to both the full-body covering including the face, except the eyes, as well as a mesh-fabric covering over the eyes. Burkha is the identity of Muslim women because identity reflects the culture of the individual.

<sup>54</sup> The turban (Pagadi) has been worn by people for thousands of years. In ancient Egypt, the turban was worn as an ornamental head dress. They called it ‘pjr’, from which is derived the word ‘pugree’, so commonly used in India. Kohanim (priests) in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem wore turbans; they go back at least as far as biblical times.

an actor to determine ‘who I am/we are’ in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations”.<sup>55</sup>

In a social group, individuals have certain kind of experiences, they belong to ethnic and cultural groups, religion and gender, and different nationalities, etc. these social groups formulated and articulated some sort of normative disciplinary actions to their members. As a consequence, individuals socially identify themselves as different from other social identities. By that time Marxist approaches of human liberation were mainly confined to the idea of class politics; the news social movements based on caste, gender, race, and ethnic identities dominated the contemporary discourses of identity politics. Linda Alcoff and Satya Mohanty interpreted that consciousness among the “oppressed identity groups for their democratic rights invoked the struggles for social justice”.<sup>56</sup> The arguments of Mohanty are very clear to the consciousness interpretation in the sense of identity formulation.<sup>57</sup> The social movements based on the community rights invoke the consciousness related to the particular group and its place in politics.

The interpretation of political identity-related issues in the modern democratic system develops a very definite kind of understanding based on the power conflict and self-consciousness. Different schools of thoughts had attempted to establish many competing theoretical and methodological frameworks to understand and explain the relationship between experience, culture, identity, politics, and power.<sup>58</sup> Sometimes, the group or collective identity-based consciousness has been the counter-attack of several Marxism scholars particularly. Marxist scholars<sup>59</sup> understand the groups or

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<sup>55</sup> Alexander Wendt, (1994), “Collective Identity Formation and the International State”, *American Political Science Review*, (88): 384–396.

<sup>56</sup> Linda Alcoff *et al.* (2006), *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, p.2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>59</sup> Marion Young, (1990), *Justice and the politics of difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 17.

caste-based consciousness as the false and breaking forces of united workers identities. Despite having its several critical and challenging aspects, identity politics has been the resurgence of political activism by marginalized groups to challenge the persistent injustice.<sup>60</sup> However, in the contemporary political debates and academic circles, the notion of identity formation and political consciousness could be seen as a central element that has produced plenty of literary academic works. The new social movements approach to understand the identity and its relation with political consciousness define it as a vast range of political actions that demand recognition and social justice to the certain oppressed communities. Marion Young analyze these movements as ‘identity politics’ organized by the communities that have been the victim of cultural imperialism, violence, exploitation, marginalization, and powerlessness.<sup>61</sup> Oppression and exploitation is the central idea that evoked the identity based social movements and constructs an idea of political consciousness.

The demands for recognition differently with their specific social characteristics remained the key elements of these struggles. Here the demand for rights is directly related to the recognition of them as all equal human beings like ‘others’ while the recognition demands the mutual respect and tolerance towards them.<sup>62</sup> The aspiration of equal participation in the political power-sharing guides the collective identities to mobilize the peoples. The experiences of oppression and exploitation unite them in the form of self-expression of particular identities. Thus, Cressida Hayes recognizes these struggles as “unifying claims about the meaning of political laden experiences to diverse individuals”.<sup>63</sup> These oppressed communities develop a mutual and all-inclusive understanding of issues related to the whole social groups. Almost all situations the differences are utilized as pressure building force to get political protection. Marion Young again identify the differences as a negotiating force in a political environment; “the politics of differences necessitate the recognition

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Cressida Heyes, (2015), *Identity Politics*, New Delhi: Critical Quest Publication, p. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

of self and other as well as taking the differences of groups seriously in assessing social and political relations”.<sup>64</sup> Every individual has a sense of self-respect irrespective of her/his different social characteristics. Furthermore, the politics of recognition demands the liberation from the imposed constraints of a dominant culture, and it also intends to reject the sense of inferiority associated with their identity.<sup>65</sup> In other words, it invokes feelings of pride as being different from others. For instance, the gay and lesbian rights activists started proclaiming publicly to assert their equal rights. However, the political consciousness produces a very complex web of literary interpretations; different theoretical perspectives and approaches to understand it from variety of ways.

The new social and political movements are mainly driven by the identity based political consciousness among the oppressed communities. The social operation based on the particular marginalization worked to humiliate the status of certain social groups. The blacks in America and Dalits in India is the best example of marginalization based on their social attributes. Hence, the core idea of political consciousness related to the particular identity is to get rid of from the constructed prejudices and stigmas in the society which keep them at the lower level. The demand simply based on shared human attributes is not for inclusivity within the fold of “universal humankind”, nor is it for respect despite the differences. Rather, the demand is for self-respect.<sup>66</sup> The rise of the new social movement approach identify the misconception and challenges of the earlier approaches related to the universalization of the question of different oppressed identity groups.<sup>67</sup> The demand for dignity and authenticity emerges central to the identity based social movements. Therefore, human dignity and respect to the others remained the central argument of the consciousness making processes. The construction identities are a social

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<sup>64</sup> Marion Young, (1990), *Justice and the politics of difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.130-131.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Sonia Kruks, (2000), *Retrieving Experiences: Subjectivity and Recognition in Feminist Politics*, Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, p. 114.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp-114-115.

phenomenon of different cultural and political groups. The new social movements considered identity as a distinct means of political mobilization.

The new social movements' approaches to identity and its relative consciousness to counter the materialist views of Marxist scholars who sought the class struggle central to the oppression of certain groups. They believe that political economy never been a sufficient approach to deal with different social and cultural categories of individuals. Cerulo analyzes the new social movement approach as "fight to expand freedom, not to achieve it; they mobilize for choice rather than emancipation,"<sup>68</sup> and focus is primarily on asserting identity to seek "recognition for new identities and lifestyles"<sup>69</sup> Polletta & Jasper Interestingly, the political consciousness is driven by the identity formulation movements. On the one hand, the traditional social structures want to maintain the status quo through the concept of identities are fixed whole at the same time the liberation movement deny the identity as a fixed social attribute. They believe that identities are socially constructed by the dominating elites which produce the hierarchies and inequalities in the society. It establishes the relevance of difference; cultural values and traditions that distinguish individuals or group of individuals.<sup>70</sup> Focus mainly remained about how to deal with differences in a political environment to ensure dignity and authenticity. Therefore, this approach identifies much more "broader purpose for identity construction and does not dismiss it for being "merely" cultural, symbolic, or psychological".<sup>71</sup> However, this approach has not been adequate to establish a causal relationship between identity politics and political economy. The new social movement approach to a political consciousness is being criticized on the bases that it excluded the questions of culture and identity from the political economy.<sup>72</sup> Basically, the different

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<sup>68</sup> K. A. Cerulo, (1997), "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions", *Annual Review Sociology*, (23): 385-409

<sup>69</sup> Polletta F., Jasper J. M. (2001), "Collective Identity and Social Movements", *Annual Review Sociology*, (27): 283-305

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Mary Bernstein, (2005), "Identity Politics", *Annual Review Sociology*, (31): 47-74.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

arguments of the new social movements to construct the identities which are of social and cultural prejudices are instrumental to create a sense of political consciousness. The individual and collective identities are remaining the central sources of mobilization and political consciousness building among the masses.

### **The Democratic Inclusion and Political Consciousness**

Democratic development across the world brings hope and opportunities to the people those were excluded from the processes of decision making in the political and economic environments. The democratic institutions created the opportunities at least to the marginalized groups to get organized on the basis of their common grievances. However, the term “democracy” initiates from the antiquity and denotes “people’s power” (from the Greek: demos – “people” and Kratos –“power”).<sup>73</sup> So, the main focus of democratic development is the upliftment of people related to any caste creed or ethnicity. Democracy is not narrowed to merely holding of elections and selecting representatives, having parliamentary debates or legislating laws. The meaning of democracy is much wider; indeed, the real test of democracy lies in its feasibility to create an inclusive political and social environment.

According to Udaya Wagle, the inclusive democracy is “a set of political practices aimed at minimizing the power of the elites and maximizing that of non-elites or ordinary citizens”.<sup>74</sup> The communities and identity groups which do not find representation in the economic, political and social institutions, their rights must be preserved in the politics and economy.<sup>75</sup> The accomplishment of democracy must be adjudged by the amount to which people have developed in different fields of life and are to be measured in terms of the numbers having access and fairness in enjoying the

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<sup>73</sup> Kurt A. Raaflaub, Josiah Ober, and Robert W. Wallace, (2007), *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, London: University of California Press, pp.10-11.

<sup>74</sup> Udaya R. Wagle, (2009), “Inclusive Democracy and Economic Inequality in South Asia: Any Discernible link?” *Review of Social Economy*, 67(3): 334.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

success of democracy.<sup>76</sup> Welfare and care of all the member of the society, especially underprivileged, marginalized and the excluded one must be on the priority of the policymakers and power-sharing groups.

The political participation of these socially marginalized groups must be ensured in a democratic country. Inclusive democracy must essentially progress towards a all-inclusive welfare development state. Development should not be construed plainly as economic advancement, but also guaranteeing the principles of social justice to all sections of the society.<sup>77</sup> The idea of democratic inclusion mainly focuses on the socio-political transformations. The central to the idea of democratic inclusion is the availability of civil and political liberties, development of democratic institutions to function the democratic systems smoothly. Another purpose of democracy is the inclusion and integration of marginalized groups into the mainstream of political process which is very necessary for the liberation of the downtrodden communities.<sup>78</sup> The democratic inclusion not only involves economic liberties but also focuses on the civil as well as the social rights of the individuals. Malloy very rightly argued that democratic institutions which involve national minorities in the political process, provide them the scope for individual and collective self-determination.<sup>79</sup> However, the group interests are represented by liberal politics and recognize them in the form of pressure groups, interest groups. In the liberal democratic form of political processes the race, caste, religion, ethnic and linguistic identities worked as pressure and interest groups.

Through the process of political mobilization and progress towards democratic inclusion, the multiple identities interact on the basis of their communitarian

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Malloy, T. H. (2006), "Towards a New Paradigm of Minority Law-Making: A Rejoinder to Palermo and Woelke's Law of Diversity", in *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 4 (2004/5), Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues, p.7.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.



interests.<sup>80</sup> In order to give respect and recognition to different marginalized identities; multiculturalism challenges the persistent patterns of political representation and power-sharing. Therefore, multiculturalism is very intimately linked with the politics of identity or the politics of recognition. The contemporary political activism the political consciousness is institutionalized in the liberal democratic setups through the mass movement for political participation and power-sharing.<sup>81</sup> The groups those were not unified and discriminated through various means unified themselves to ask for the expansion of equal rights, and material and symbolic equality in terms of economy as well as in the society. The theories of liberal democracy and multiculturalism have recognized the rights of different peoples having different identities.<sup>82</sup> There is a distinguishable relation between political participation and inclusive democracy to facilitate the rights of different groups and to ensure their share in the policymaking and policy implementation. Rueschemeyer, D. rightly analyzed that “A democracy cannot be inclusive without the incorporation of complete and effective participation of all the sections of the country in its political mechanism. The central premise of Democracy is political equality and political participation”.<sup>83</sup> Democracy which provides the proper and equal opportunities to their citizens can only be called as the inclusive democracy in which democratic institutions fairly deliver the services to all citizens with special consideration of the minority and marginalized groups of the society.

The democratic decentralization, reservation, and affirmative action became the actionable instrument to ensure political participation and ultimately to increase

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<sup>80</sup> Puja Kapai, (2010), “Building Inclusive and Just Societies: The Role of Deliberative Theory”, *Asian Law Institute*, The University of Hong Kong, Working Paper Series No. 016, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Scott Mainwaring, (1989), “Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation: Theoretical and Comparative Issues”, *Working Paper #130*, p. 11.

<sup>82</sup> Rochana Bajpai, (2015), “Multiculturalism in India: An Exception?” *Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs*, University of London, February, 13, p.2. <http://www.bu.edu/cura/rochana-bajpai/>

<sup>83</sup> D. Rueschemeyer, (2005), *Addressing Inequality*, in L. Diamond and L. Morlino (eds.) *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 47-61.

the democratic inclusion.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, political consciousness is part of democratic development in the process of political participation. Despite, the political inclusion the main tenants of political consciousness remained the influences of cultural values, social tradition and the identities based on them. Bhargava termed it the “identity constituting beliefs and desires”.<sup>85</sup> The people of having social and political affiliation performed the multiple connections to identity construction. The cultural values create some strong desires of attachment that is very essential to their individual identity. The social and cultural values remained at the center of the group identity. However, in fact, the individuals choose the specific identity to express their collective political desires. The prominent scholar of multiculturalism Will Kymlicka argued that “even citizens of same states have cultural identities that need institutional recognition”.<sup>86</sup> It is due to the cultural and economic deprivation of certain identities especially various ethnic and linguistic minority groups. Every society has its own prevailing body of values and practices which distinguishes one society from another, in regards to the ways in which members of a society should lead their individual and shared lives.<sup>87</sup> The differences should be respected and there should be efforts to build the notion of human harmonious identities based on the self-respect, recognition, and redistribution of economic resources.<sup>88</sup> The democratic rights of organization and political assertion also contributed to developing the political consciousness in the context of marginalized and oppressed groups.

Finally based on the above discussion it can be established that political consciousness is a very complex phenomenon to define in the single sentence. The functional catalysts of the political consciousness are political socialization, political participation, democratic inclusion, political activism, and community mobilization,

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<sup>84</sup> Rajeev Bhargava, (2002), The Multicultural Framework, in Kushal, Deb (Ed.) *Mapping Multiculturalism*, Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, pp.81-82

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Will Kymlicka, (2002), “Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East”, *Journal on Ethno-politics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Issue 4, p.328.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

etc. the identity building is also the part of political socialization which at the same time influence the political consciousness of the individuals. In fact, at the core of the political consciousness is the subjective understanding of self and others. The politically conscious communities preserved the cognitive socio-cultural values and transfer political knowledge from one generation to another. The political consciousness also critically looks at the power relations and social community structures. In fact, political consciousness played a crucial role in transforming the society and politics with their visionary movements and political activism. The political consciousness involves several other political terms which also contribute to the development of subjectivity of the political consciousness.

### **Philosophical understanding of consciousness: Marx versus Hegel**

In the context of the development of the ideological understanding of political consciousness, a number of scholars have worked for it; the most prominent are the Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, and Marx. At the core of Plato's understanding of the world was the Metanarrative consciousness which was having a difference of universal reality and external reality of the objects.<sup>89</sup> Plato explains that the reality which is observed by the sensual organ is not the real true consciousness about the object; that reality is constructed one.<sup>90</sup> Plato called this reality just an idea given to the images of reflection. "An Idea is not part of the world of time and space. It is eternal; it is the final and independent reality. The idea is an end as well as a source. The world of Ideas is the real world and the familiar world is a world of shadows".<sup>91</sup> In most of the cases, the real world is out of the reach from the layman individuals. The beautification and artistic literature are some of the attempt to achieve an understanding of the idea. The ideas are the only available sources of knowledge about the outer beauty of a product. At a principled level, the ideas of Plato have both ethical

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<sup>89</sup> Plato, (1955), *The Republic*, trans. H. D. Lee. Harmondsworth: Penguin, New York: Random, (1983), p. 3-4.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> C. L. Wayper, (1954), *The Western Political Thought*, London: English University Press, pp. 18-20

and metaphysical implications.<sup>92</sup> The metaphysical meaning of the philosophy has led to the outer reality of the object while the truth or reality hidden behind the shadows is the ethical understanding of that object. It upholds the permanency of ideas, objective facts and not only the appropriate human paradigm. This can also be construed in ethical terms that the 'Ideas' as the implicit targets of the imperfect historical representations and therefore sets a standard by which one could judge the world of flux.<sup>93</sup>

The political consciousness involves the political, cultural and social engagement of individuals through family, community and political activism across the states as well as center levels. The present definitions of political consciousness are somehow driven and influenced with ideas of two dominating figures Hegel and Karl Marx in their writings. Before Marx, the idealistic articulation of consciousness is presented by the Hegel.<sup>94</sup> Hegel in his famous works *Phenomenology of Spirit* highly emphasized on the "Self-consciousness" which evolve through the historical process.<sup>95</sup> Hegel exchanges his ideas from merely the discussing of consciousness in general rather much more focus given to self-consciousness. Similar to earlier idealist philosophers, Hegel propounded that consciousness of objects in essence denotes some awareness of the self, as a subject which is very much different to the realities known to the world. Therefore, Hegel moves his notion of self-consciousness a tad further and theorises that subjects are also objects to other subjects. Hence to understand the conscious self-first, one has to understand the concepts of otherness. If both the objects become aware in the same manner, then it is the possibility of becoming a conscious subject. Thus, self-consciousness could be termed as the awareness of the other's awareness of oneself. To see it in another way, one develops

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Karl Marx, (1843), A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, *Deutsch-Fransosische Jahrbücher*, 7 and 10 February 1844 in Paris, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>

<sup>95</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, (1931), *The Phenomenology of Mind*, London: George Allen and Unwin, p. 243-245.

a cognizance of oneself by seeing oneself through the lens of another. Hegel opines that the “struggle for recognition” is implied in self-consciousness.<sup>96</sup> The spirit of the world through the struggles increases the level of development in the true sense of ideas. This tussle is between two conflicting predispositions evolving in self-consciousness juxtaposed between the self and others while compare them at the same time the feeling of otherness increases the comparative articulation in terms of self-consciousness among the peoples as Hegel identifies it as a “life and death struggle” for recognition.<sup>97</sup> This conflict of the self and the other hugely impact the socio-political relations among the peoples in the society in which they live in contradictions.

GWF Hegel (1770-1831) in his writings and explanation of ‘knowledge’ claimed that, “Reason is the sovereign of the world”,<sup>98</sup> truth is complete, which simply in fundamental nature is the accomplishment of the wholeness, through the process of one’s own expanding knowledge of the Absolute. For Hegel, the reason was the complete truth which also constructs the ethic and morality of the people. His theory is premised on three hypothesis; that reality is an organic process, all organic processes are dialectical and reality lies in the Ideal and it may be attained through the realization of Spirit.<sup>99</sup> The expansion of spirit is the main reason of historical development. Therefore, the Spirit might be called as an Idea or Reason of the mind. For him, the reason led to the further development of the historical process. It is its own process to rationalize itself and to reach precision. History of the universe is an attempt on the part of the Spirit to realize itself through the examination of reason. The Spirit advances to greater junctures of progress and self-realization is construed as a dialectic process. Dialectics of different ideas could be possibly countered by the new

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., “Self-consciousness” In thinking I am free, because I am not in another, but remain simply and solely in touch with myself; and the object which for me is my essential reality, is in undivided unity my self-existence

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 279-280, “Spirit” Thing in itself also remains external and foreign to the conception of spirit as unity.

idea with a new consciousness. Hence, the imaginative originality may be realized through constant investigations that undergo a dialectic process in the search of greater levels of self-realization.<sup>100</sup> Even in this context, it is found that an artist is not bereft of the social phenomena, and his self-realization is through a dialectical process with the determination to attain the stage of Geist.

In contrary to the idealistic understanding of the consciousness of Hegel, Karl Mark presented the more scientific and materialistic understanding of consciousness in his book '*The German Ideology*'. He analyzed that "It's not consciousness that determines life but rather life determines consciousness"<sup>101</sup> his analysis of human life was based on the conflict of class struggle in which social and political elites have the maximum control over the means of production and mode of production. He presented the contrary ideas of consciousness to Hegel by his class analysis which he used to understand the historical development of the world and established the relationship between have's and have not's. Marx by using the dialectical materialism said that the whole historical development had been driven by the economic interests of the elites. Andrzej Warminski has argued that "self-proclaimed materialism that defines itself as the symmetrical inversion and negation of idealism winds up being defined and determined by that idealism as its own determinate negation".<sup>102</sup> In Marxian understanding, the human relations were predominantly influenced by as to who had control over the mode of production, such as land and factories. The political and social elite keep control of the means of production while the working class is exploited by them.<sup>103</sup> Almost all the land resources, factories and other amenities of production were controlled and mastered by the social and political elite citizens;

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 641.

<sup>101</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, (1967), *The German Ideology*, vol. 5, Collected Works, trans. Richard Dixon et al., New York: International Publishers, p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> Andrzej Warminski, (1995), *Hegel/Marx: Consciousness and Life*, Yale French Studies, No. 88, *Depositions: Althusser, Balibar, Macherey, and the Labor of Reading*, Yale University Press

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp.119-120

therefore the poor proletariat had very few options, but to labour according to the terms promulgated by the dominant upper caste elites.<sup>104</sup>

To complete class exploitation, Marx promulgated a scientific and pragmatic solution of revolution against the capitalist elite. Marx endeavored scientifically to pursue the structural causes behind the system of exploitation and degradation of working-class by the capitalist ones, and to offered pragmatic answers in the domains of economics and politics.<sup>105</sup> The main objective of Karl Marx's was to identify the elites and raise consciousness among the working class about several types of exploitations.<sup>106</sup> The bourgeoisie has consolidated the means of production and has determined that who would own the property and who could not. It gives rise to the oppression and exploitation of working classes. In the Communist Manifesto, he urged to the working class that "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production. The need of a constantly expanding market... chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe".<sup>107</sup> Marx argued that the working class primarily needed to develop a class consciousness. This is a subjective analysis of Marx where he felt a collective political action will be necessary to bring about social change. Marx also explains the problem related to the consciousness of working and exploited class; since they are mostly divided self-identities in the oppressed environment. The working class was mostly aware of the individual self not the larger consciousness of collective exploitation. Karl Marx called it the false consciousness in which members of a class, do not accurately realise their objective position. However, the analysis of consciousness developed by Marx and Hegel both contributed a lot to the development of political consciousness across the globe.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, (1848), (1969), "Manifesto of the Communist Party", Vol. One, Progress Publishers, Mascow, pp.98-137. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, (1948), The Communist Manifesto. London: Verso.

## Political Consciousness of Dalits in the Contemporary Indian Politics

Historically, Dalits in India since a long period of time have been the victim of *Brahmanical* caste structures of Hindu Society. The entire Indian society was organized on the bases of the Varna system. The Varna system has ancient origins and over the period of time, it has gone through intense changes in which the rigidity of caste orders did not allow the people of lower caste to upward movement. The most disturbing and troubling aspect of the caste system is the practice of untouchability. The untouchability is fixed on the basis of community occupation. The untouchable being at the lower ladder of the caste divide only allowed doing the manual labor. According to K. S. Shukla and B. M. Verma “Those who were engaged in unclean occupation was considered as polluted persons and had to go with this stigma in the prevailing reality and had to accept for themselves the status of untouchables”.<sup>108</sup> The marginalization of Dalits in the Indian society remained at the core of political socialization. In fact, the *Brahminical* social structure of the Hindu society has kept Dalits at the lower ladder from where there is no possibility of upward movement. Thousands of years slavery and oppression by the so called upper castes on the Dalits resulted in complete marginalization of the lower castes in the India society. The Dalits remained deprived of all kind of facilities of progress like education, wealth creation and to take part in the public proceedings of the society. Since long the untouchables remained in the isolation from the mainstream society.

The initial literary mention of the caste system were found in the Rigveda and Purnasukta hymn<sup>109</sup> in which caste system was initialized. The different caste groups based on the birth and occupation started taking place. In the Bhagavad Gita, the caste system was rationalised on the basis of the concepts of Guna Karma (deed) and

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<sup>108</sup> K. S. Shukla and B.M. Verma, (1993), *Development of Scheduled Castes and Administration*, New Delhi: Upper Publishing House, p.3.

<sup>109</sup> Louis Dumont, (1966), *Homo Hierarchicus*, Vikas Publication, Delhi, p. 21.



Dharma (Religion),<sup>110</sup> but later on the idea, Karma transformed in the rigid occupation-based caste hierarchies in the Indian society. During the period of Simritis and Sutras, the society had been divided into several castes<sup>111</sup> groups based on the birth instead of Karma. The philosophy of itself was contradictory in nature where it was the inbuilt prescription of human inequality. Later on, the labor was done by the Dalits also gets dehumanized through a process of alienation. The founder of the caste system had framed strict laws regarding food conduct, occupation and marriage which deny all kind of relation with the untouchables in the society. In similar point of time, these castes became so differentiated that they could not meet together in the social, economic and political spheres. The feeling and practices of untouchability start growing to heights in this age.<sup>112</sup> The untouchable were denied to have any kind of rights in society. Untouchability without doubt is the most spiteful feature of the caste system. Iravati Karve opines that untouchability is a by-product of Shudras,<sup>113</sup> whereas Ambedkar viewed it as a consequence of the caste system.<sup>114</sup> The concept and practices of untouchability became the curse for the development of the Dalits even after the independence of India where Dalit are still not allowed to fully integrated into the society.

Therefore, at the core of the political conscious of Dalits has been the caste oppression, educational, economic and political marginalization; and above of it the self-respect and recognition in the society. Therefore to understand the political consciousness a comprehensive study of all the Dalit liberation movements required and also analysis of these social and the impact of the political movements in the creation of Dalit political consciousness and the multiple ways in which it gets manifested in Dalit Literature. Most importantly the Dalit assertion in different form could be traced roughly during the period of the Bhakti movement (12th to 18th

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<sup>110</sup> Ranjit Rajadhyaksha (2004), *Encyclopaedia of Social Problems and Social Change*, Vol-I. *Dominant Publisher*, New Delhi, p. 235.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p.235.

<sup>112</sup> Sunder Lal Sagar (1975), *Hindu Culture and Caste System*, Delhi: Uppal Book Store, p. 32.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>114</sup> Iravati Karve, (1961), *Hindu Society- An Interpretation*, Poona: Decan College, p. 78

Centuries). Although the Bhakti movement was less political in nature it highly criticized the caste system and its oppression on the people. The Bhakti movement which was endeavored to purify Hinduism from its ills and immoral social traditions waged a valiant battle against the caste system.<sup>115</sup> Great saints like Ravidas, Pandita Ramabai, Chokamela, Kabir, Eknath, and many more influenced and made the enormous appeal, either through their literary works and preaching while traveling from one place to another. Despite different forms of the ideological movement led by the Bhakti saint, there were some commonalities all of them became very against the existing inhumane practices of caste oppression.<sup>116</sup>

During the period of British rule and after that a number of social revolutionaries worked for the upliftment of the Dalits. During this period, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was an early revolutionary leader, whose activism to uplift the Dalits and fight for the rights is well known.<sup>117</sup> Phule stressed mostly on the socio-political and educational advancement of the community which was completely excluded in the social system. The social movement of Phule was very inclusive and mainly focusing on the development of the untouchables and women of all caste groups. Subsequently, after Mahatma Phule, the Dalit liberation movement was led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who “played three roles: that of a caste leader, that of an untouchable spokesman and that of a national statesman”.<sup>118</sup> Dr. Ambedkar became the prophet of Dalit liberation. It was the time in which the speeches and writing, as well as the political activism of Ambedkar, flourished in all part of India. He established three political outfits, the Independent Labour Party which later transformed into Scheduled Castes Federation and the Republican Party of India, which laid foundation for later counter organizations to emerge like the Dalit Panthers. He attacked the system of caste and Brahmanical thinking of caste Hindus from all sides. The political and social strategy

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<sup>115</sup> Sanjay Paswan and Paramanshi Jaideva, (2002), *Encycloepadia of Dalits In India, Vol. I*, Delhi: Kalpaz Publishers, p.12.

<sup>116</sup> Eleanor Zelliott, (1972), “Gandhi and Ambedkar”, in J Michael Mahar (ed.), *The untouchables in Contemporary India*, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, p.53

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

of Dr. Ambedkar was very much successful to bring the social-political development of Dalits in his efforts. The movement was visionary and perfectly articulated that the Dalit masses of the countries got enlightened by the spread of political ideas at different levels from the understanding of one's self till the society transforms.

After independence and the demise of Dr. Ambedkar, the growth of Dalit movement experiences the mixed experiences in different parts of the country. The main source of Dalit liberation remained the constitutional provisions and Dalit literature developed by different Dalit scholars. Dalit Literature brought out the emerging political consciousness, which emphasised the struggle for self-respect and dignity and created a 'new self-image' for the Dalit community and also severely criticized the upper caste domination in politics, economy, and education.<sup>119</sup> The Dalit literature also became self-introspective in nature, which took up the task of guiding the movement in different parts of the country.<sup>120</sup> All the concern of Dalit has been reflective in the literature while the same time produces the political consciousness related to their socio-political issues. The Dalit literature provided pathways for espousing the right course of action to the Dalits during the articulation of movement. Dalit Literature represented the voice of the Dalit community and it's "movement against socio-economic exploitation and numerous types of atrocities committed on the Dalits; movements for better access to the opportunities and for the realization of goals of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice; and finally movements for gaining self-respect and dignified social identity."<sup>121</sup> The main concern of the Dalit political consciousness remained the social recognition and political and economic participation in the resources of the country. The most inspiring thing after Dr. Ambedkar is the literature available and produced by the Dalit writers and scholars in which they portrayed the true depiction of Dalits, their trauma and their struggle for emancipation and socio-political representation. The aesthetic sense of Dalit literature

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<sup>119</sup> R. K. Kshirsagar, (1994), *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders (1857-1956)*, New Delhi: M D Publications, p.179-181.

<sup>120</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2002), *Dalit Leadership in India*, Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, p. 20.

<sup>121</sup> Nandu Ram, (1995), *Beyond Ambedkar: Essays on Dalits in India*, Delhi: Har-Anand, p.31

is very much based on the ground realities of Dalit communities in the village and slums areas of the country. Particularly the Dalit movement and political consciousness is still highly influenced with the movements of Phule and Ambedkar which mostly emphasized the social and political democracy and economic liberation of Dalit communities. Contemporary, Dalit activism also very much focused assertive to the socio-political and even more religious transformation to achieve the emancipation of Dalit communities from the exploitative Hindu identity.

The Dalit political consciousness is mostly focused on transforming the shapes and images of socio-political orders of the Indian society; especially against the exploitation and atrocities done on the Dalit communities. The Dalit assertion became central to the social and political movements in India.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, despite the social activism and literary movements of Dalit liberation, the period after the 1980s is very important to bring the transformative changes in the political scenarios of Dalit communities. The rise of the Bahujan movement led by Manyawar Kanshi Ram almost in all parts of countries inspired and opened up the new dimensions of the socio-political movement of Dalit communities. The politics during those times sought to integrate all different manifestations of the Dalit identity including political movement, revival, literature and construction of new political identities to comprehensively achieve the ideals of equality, liberty, and social justice. Pai very rightly analyzed that “The decay of the Congress system in the 1980s and its ability to attract Dalit votes, together with increasing lower caste mobilization, provide space for the parties like BSP”.<sup>123</sup> The raising identity consciousness and politicized generation of Dalit communities were unleashing their political and social claims on the political systems. It was the time when political consciousness among Dalit communities manifested and articulated its different political perspectives and dynamics. Therefore, this churning in the Dalit political consciousness expressed and catalyzed through the

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<sup>122</sup> Gail Omvedt, (2008), *Dalit and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p.23.

<sup>123</sup> Sudha Pai, (1997), “Dalit Assertion in UP: Implications for Politics”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32(37): 2313-2314.

emergence of several regional political parties based on caste lines in many states of India.

Most importantly, the rise and electoral victory of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh led to the very transformative social engineering in the state politics. It has been successful in removing the hold of elite or dominating caste politics in the form of Dalit attitude and new confidence due to achieving power led to the weakening of the Congress and BJP in UP.<sup>124</sup> The political mobilization also became on the basis of caste identity. The Dalit communities in the other parts of the country became politically charged to ensure their political participation in politics. The ways of political thinking and political socialization has changed in the northern states of India, now Dalit communities seem more assertive and expressive to their socio-political rights. Kumar analyses that the political assertion of Dalit has materialized the ideas of egalitarian society produced by the earlier Bahujan revolutionaries.<sup>125</sup> In the past political participation of Dalits was mostly narrowed to casting their votes only. Their level of participation, whether small or large, never changed their conditions. It was easy for political parties to lure the Dalit communities by the time of elections. But after the rise of BSP as a significant force in the politics of many states; Dalit communities feel more comfortable with BSP. The Dalit assertion has sharpened in many folds, thousands of Dalit organizations political or non-political working on the ground to bring change in the conditions of Dalit communities.<sup>126</sup> Dalit political consciousness has become more vocal and getting training to settle the political bargaining more in favor of Dalit interests. The contemporary political movement of Dalit mostly represents struggle against repression and sets a positive agenda for Liberation and democratic mobilization and for a more inclusive politics in which every individual has equal rights, freedom and liberty in the society.

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<sup>124</sup> Sudha Pai (1994), "Caste and Communal Mobilisation in Electoral Politics in Uttar Pradesh", *Indian Journal of Political Science*, No. 3, July-Sep.

<sup>125</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2006), *India's Roaring Revolution: Dalit Assertions and New Horizons*, Delhi: Gagandeep Publications, p.13.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

The political consciousness among the Dalits is influenced by several factors including the historical legacies of caste oppression, Dalit assertion and liberation movements and the contemporary political participation in the politics of India. Comprehensively, the Dalit identity no more remained the politically irrelevant; the emergence of regional political parties based on the caste consciousness constructed the new understanding of political values of Dalit vote bank. The concept of political socialization in the context of Dalit political consciousness is also an instrument to understand the level of active participation of Dalits in politics. The inquiry into the courses of political socialization becomes inevitable for the analytical study of the political consciousness of Dalits, as it would discuss the multiple processes heading towards the development of political consciousness of an individual and community. The political mobilization and their share in the population; Dalit identities became decisive in the politics of India<sup>127</sup>. Therefore, any political party cannot ignore the Dalit communities and hurt the rights of Dalit not possible to win the elections. The social mobilization and increasing level of education among Dalit communities have been becoming the impetus of political consciousness that is the contemporary Indian social and political reality. The power structure and the patterns of political power-sharing also have changed due to the political consciousness among the Dalit communities.

In contemporary times, several castes based political organization in UP, Maharashtra and Southern states are very active to raise the concern of Dalit communities. In earlier times, the mainstream media used to ignore the issues related to Dalit communities. However, this trend of mainstream media is still the same but due to the presence of social media an alternative source of communication; the educated youth of Dalit communities working to raise the political consciousness. The different movies and another alternative source of communication are working to analyze the ground realities of Dalit communities'.<sup>128</sup> The Dalit communities are re-

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<sup>127</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2007), "Behind the BSP Victory", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.42, No.24, June 16-22.

<sup>128</sup> Pushpendra, (1996) "Dalit Assertion through Electoral Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4.

shaping their social image through constructing the new identities based on the egalitarian revolutions.<sup>129</sup> At the same time, the Dalit literature as well as the political and social activists are expressing their anger against the Brahminical caste hierarchies of the Hindu society. Moreover, the Dalit communities are also learning to transmit political knowledge to their coming generation through political narratives and literary writings. The central concerns of political consciousness among Dalit communities are still the day to day caste atrocities done by the upper caste groups. However, in a very short span of time Dalit identities are emerging as a decisive force in the politics of India. Still, the main source of inspirations of Dalit liberation are Phule-Ambedkar ideologies which mainly focus on the egalitarianism and self-respect. In conclusion, it can be established that the political consciousness among Dalit communities is growing, they are also articulating their voting power as a tool of socio-political emancipation.

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<sup>129</sup> Sudha Pai, (1997) “Dalit Assertion in UP: Implications for Politics”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.32, No.37, Sep 13-19.

## CHAPTER-2

### **Political consciousness among the Dalits**

The origin of the Indian social structure has a long history. The Indian Vedic literature divided the Hindu social structure into four groups known as Varna system. These groups are arranged in hierarchical order. In the social order, Brahmins occupies the top position in this hierarchy structure followed by Kshatriyas at the second and Vaishyas at the third position respectively. The Shudras have been placed at the last level of the pyramidal structure of the hierarchical varna system according to the Rigveda. Social scientists like anthropologists and sociologists have included another group in the varna system as a fifth group in the Hindu social order known as Ashprishyas (Untouchables).<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the Hindu social order has been divided into five major social groups arranged hierarchically in which Brahmins at the top and Dalits at the lower level. The existed literatures have demonstrated that the first three castes of varna system are being considered as twice-born categories, known as 'Dvija'. The men from these castes were entitled to use the sacred thread at the Vedic site of Upanayana whereas the Sudras were not allowed to perform.<sup>2</sup> The Sudra communities have been placed in such an occupation i.e., cultivate lands; mend the shoes, wash the clothes and all types of menial works. The members of this caste have also shared the stigma of untouchability; they were frequently denied to sit with members of the upper castes, and forced to use separate wells from those maintained for the use of others.<sup>3</sup> In this process the untouchable (Dalits) communities have been excluded from every sphere of life. The Hindu social order also allocates multiple rights and privileged status to Varnas located higher up in the hierarchy and denies the same to those who are lower in authority of the Varna system. The

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<sup>1</sup> John Campbell Oman, (2003), *Religious Festivals and Caste System in India*, New Delhi: Khana Publishers, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> RanjitRajadhyaksha, (2004), *Encyclopedia of Social Problems and Social Change*, New Delhi: DominantPublishers, p.235.

<sup>3</sup> MarkJuergensmeyer, (1988), *Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Social Vision of Untouchability*, Delhi: Ajanta Publications, p. 14.



unequal distribution of rights and privileges in a social structure also bears religious legitimacy that has been cemented extreme forms of inequality in Indian society.

### **Dalits in Indian social structure:**

In the Hindu social order of India, Dalits are being placed at the five-fold of the social fabric of the verna system. Historically, the Dalit have been exploited and subjected to atrocities due to the social stratification of Indian society. Even in the independent nation it has been reported in every nook and corner Dalits were being easily targeted denying Constitutional guarantees equal rights and privileges to every citizen. Throughout the centuries Dalits are the victims of expression of the existing contradiction, inequality and exploitation in the Indian hierarchical society. Besides this throughout the ages, Dalits were referred with different nomenclatures like Chandals, Avarnas, Achhuts, Adi-Dravida, depressed classes, oppressed Hindu, Harijan, Scheduled Castes etc.<sup>4</sup> However, after the emergence of the Dalit Panther movement, they preferred to be called as Dalits. In this backdrop, this chapter discusses about the emergence of Dalits and their social status in Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, this chapter discusses the political consciousness of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh state.

### **Untouchable to Dalit: Historical Journey**

“Dalit refers to those who have been broken, and grounded down by social groups them in a deliberate manner. There is in, the word itself, an inside rejection of pollution, Karma and justified caste hierarchy”.<sup>5</sup> The word Dalit for the first time used, in the context of caste oppression, by the nineteenth-century reformer Joytiba Phule.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, the category Dalit was also used by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar himself in his fortnightly Bahiskruit

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<sup>4</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2005), “Situating Dalits in Indian Society”, *Sociological Bulletin*, 54 (3), Sept-Dec., p. 514.

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Zelliot, (1992), *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Oliver Mendelsohn & Marika Vicziany, (1998), *The Untouchables : Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, U.K., p. 4

Bharat.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Ambedkar defined the word comprehensively that Dalithood is a kind of life which characterises the exploitation, suppression and marginalisation in social, economic, cultural and political structure of society domination by upper caste people of the varna system of the Hindu social order.<sup>8</sup> However, Dr. Ambedkar did not use the word Dalithood often, preferring to deploy different terms depending upon changing context. For example, when dealing with the imperial state he used the category of depressed classes and when addressing high caste Hindus he used the category ‘Bahiskruit’ meaning total out-caste.<sup>9</sup> He has clearly elaborated it that they all are exploited and the downtrodden, who have been deprived from the ownership of the means of production; denied basic rights of a dignified social life and livelihood; discriminated through biased socio-economic and political decisions taken in favor of non-producers and privileged classes; and kept deliberately away from the mainstream advantages of progress are to be considered Dalit.<sup>10</sup> In this context it is to be understood that a economically poor person from upper caste is different from a Dalit. A poor person may be deprived in the economic sphere, especially of income necessary to participate in the economy. However, he/she may not be necessarily deprived in social and cultural spheres, that is, he/she may not face the same type of exclusion in the social and cultural life of his neighbourhood as a Dalit faces.<sup>11</sup>

The recent use of the term Dalit has been developed in the manifesto of Dalit Panther movement in 1972. The manifesto defined “Who is Dalit?” clearly stating that the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, neo-Buddhists, the working-class people, the landless and poor peasants, women and those who are being exploited socially, politically, economically and in the name of religion.<sup>12</sup> So Dalits are exclusively

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<sup>7</sup> Harold Issac, (1965), “*Ex-untouchables*”, See Gopal Guru, (2001), “The language of Dalit-Bahujan Political Discourse”, in Ghanshyam Shah (ed), *Dalit Identity and Politics*, Bombay: Asia Publications, p.97.

<sup>8</sup> Gopal Guru, (1998), “The Politics of Naming”, *Seminar*, No.471, Nov. p.16.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid,

<sup>10</sup> D. M. Diwaker, (1999), “Dalit Question of Inequality, Exploitation and Movilization: A Micro View of Ground Realities”, *Man and Development*, Vol. XXI, No.3, September, p. 63

<sup>11</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2005), “Situating Dalits in Indian Society”, *Sociological Bulletin*, 54(3), Sept-Dec., p. 516.

<sup>12</sup> Gopal Guru, (1998), “The Politics of Naming”, *Seminar*, No.471, Nov. p.16.

socially and economically marginalised people in society. A variety of other names have also been used in both English and Indian languages in colonial era and independent India to designate these people who are at the lowest rung in the social structure. Besides the term Scheduled Castes and untouchables the terms Chandals, Avarnas, Depressed Classes and Harijan have become well known terms are being used for Dalits. James Massey<sup>13</sup> points out that, these have been changed occasionally in order to despise or to shows contempt the Dalits. Since they were considered outside chaturvarna the four-fold Varna system, they were labelled out-castes and untouchables and alienated from the mainstream.<sup>14</sup> Untouchable is the word used by Ambedkar for those who are placed at lowest strata in the Hindu social order. Though it first appeared in 1909 but the word had disappeared from ordinary parlance following public education and constitutional provisions. During pre-Independence, the Government used the term “depressed classes”. This term was replaced by Scheduled Castes in the Government of India Act 1935, when these castes were placed in a Schedule as these qualifying for special rights. In the arena of competitive politics, Ambedkar also preferred the term Scheduled Castes. It was evident when he used this term for establishing the political party Scheduled Caste Federation.<sup>15</sup>

In the present Constitution of India this term has not been defined explicitly and used it as a part of the vocabulary only. Mahatma Gandhi, an ardent champion for removing untouchability within the Hindu-Chaturvarna frame-work, called the untouchables as Harijans or children of the Hindu god.<sup>16</sup> The Harijan word was first used by Narsinha Mehta but was later propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi himself clarified this in one of the issues of the weekly Harijan. He argued that, it is not a name coined by me some years ago. He said, I used the word Asprishya in the pages of Navjivan, which means untouchable. I then invited them to suggest a better name, and one of the untouchable correspondents suggested the adoption of the name Harijan, on

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<sup>13</sup> James Massey, (1997), *Down Trodden - The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity and Liberation*, Geneva: WCC Publication, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Gopal Guru, (1998), “The Politics of Naming”, *Seminar*, No.471, Nov. p.17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid,

<sup>16</sup> Ghanshyam, Shah, (2001), *Dalit Movement and Search for Identify*, in Ghanshyam Shah (ed.), *Dalit Identity and Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publication., p.20.

the strength of its having been used by the first known poet-saint of Gujarat.<sup>17</sup> However, Dr. Ambedkar believed untouchables do not regard Gandhi as being earnest in eradicating untouchability.<sup>18</sup> According to him “Saints never carried on a campaign against caste and untouchability. The saints of the Bhakti sect were not concerned with the struggle between man and man. They were concerned with relation between man and God”.<sup>19</sup> In a later years a section of Scheduled Caste leaders rejected the term Harijan considering it an insult rather than an honour.<sup>20</sup> According to Gail Omvedt the term Dalit is a militant alternative to the Gandhian term Harijan.<sup>21</sup> All those who have been converted to Buddhism use the term Buddhist and reject all other nomenclatures, including their original caste names. In the mid-1970s Dalit leaders coined a new identity with the term ‘Bahujan’ with the emergence of Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF).<sup>22</sup> Kanshi Ram used the term Bahujan to encompass Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, and Minorities together for a greater alliance. In recent years the term Dalit has been discarded as a social reactionary category by a section of the community who prefer Bahujan with both the Buddhist as well as Dalit categories.<sup>23</sup> Kancha Ilaiah in his book ‘Why I am not a Hindu’ (1996) used the term ‘Dalit-Bahujan’<sup>24</sup> to maintain the unique identity of Dalits while expressing a broader alliance. Dalit is not a mere descriptive name or title, but an expression of hope for the recovery of their past

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<sup>17</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2005), “Situating Dalits in Indian Society”, *Sociological Bulletin*, 54(3), Sept-Dec., p. 522.

<sup>18</sup> Ghanshyam, Shah, (2001), *Dalit Movement and Search for Identify*, in Ghanshyam Shah (ed.), *Dalit Identity and Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p. 254

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Gail Omvedt, (1995), *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movements and the Construction of an Indian Identity*, New Delhi: Oriental Longman, p. 77.

<sup>22</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2005), “Situating Dalits in Indian Society”, *Sociological Bulletin*, 54(3), Sept-December., p. 522.

<sup>23</sup> K.C. Das, (2004), *Indian Dalits– Voice, Vision and Politics*, Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Kancha Ilaiah, (196), *Why I am Not a Hindu*, Calcutta: Samya Published, p. vii.

identity.<sup>25</sup> The very acceptance of the state of Dalitness is the first step on the way towards their transformation into full and liberated human beings.<sup>26</sup>

In the early 1920, Dalits of northern India particularly in Uttar Pradesh have started dissociating themselves from the fold of Arya Samaj and formed their own organisation to chalk out their future course of action. The great social reformist Swami Achhutanand who launched the Adi Hindu movement,<sup>27</sup> in association with Ram Charan who was the ex-Arya Samaj Dalit,<sup>28</sup> rejected the stigmatised social identities. In Uttar Pradesh the Dalits constituted them with the new identity i.e., Acchut identity. The new identity marked the beginning of a new era in Dalits' ideology and socio-political activities.<sup>29</sup> In the first meeting held at Etawah in December 1923, around 20,000 Dalits have attended in the meeting. Achhutanand declared that the present-day "untouchables" were the original stock of India and Hindus and Muslims were the upstarts.<sup>30</sup> This 'golden age' came to an end when the Aryans invaded and overpowered the peace-loving

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<sup>25</sup> James Massey, (1997), *Down Trodden - The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity and Liberation*, Geneva: WCC Publication, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid,

<sup>27</sup> Swami Acchutanand (1879-1933), was born to a Chamar family in Umari village in Mainpuri, UP. As his father was employed in a military cantonment area, Achutanand had a relatively privileged childhood. He received his early education at the cantonment school run by Christian missionaries where he learned to read Urdu, English, Hindi and Gurumukhi. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four, Achutanand travelled across north India with mendicant saints. One of the most prominent Adi Hindu leaders in the 1920 and 1930 was brought up at a military cantonment where his father worked and later settled in Kanpur. He had been taught by missionaries and had gained an extensive knowledge of religious texts. *Acchutanand biography*, pp.9-10, See, R. K. Kshirsagar (1994), *Dalit Movements in India and its Leaders*, Delhi: M. D. Publishers, and See, Nandni Gootu (2006), *Swami Acchutanand and The Adhi Hindu*, New Delhi: Critical Quest, p.12.

<sup>28</sup> Ram Charan (1888-1938), an Adi Hindu leader of Lucknow, was born in a slum at Gwaltoli in Kanpur. His parents were casual labourers but sent him to school despite economic hardship. Later he went to Lucknow where he worked in the Railway Audit Office to earn money to attend night-school for higher education and eventually took a degree in law. A. P. Chaudhury, (1973), *Picchre tatha Dalit Barg ke Mahan Neta Rai Ram Charan ka Jivan Charit tatha Unke Sanshipta Karya (Ram Charan biography)*, p.3, See, Nandni Gootu, (2006), *Swami Acchutanand and The Adhi Hindu*, New Delhi: Critical Quest, p.12.

<sup>29</sup> Nandini Gootu, (2001), *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 160, and S. Ramnarayan Rawat, (2011), *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Bloomington: Indian University Press, p. 159.

<sup>30</sup> Mangal Singh Jatav, (1997), *Shri 108 Swami Achhutanand Ji Ka Jeevan Parichay*, Gwallior: Saraswati Press, p. 14.

Adi Hindus with their brute force and treachery. After their conquest, the Adi-Hindus were turned into slaves and forced to perform 'low' jobs. Further the Brahmanical Hinduism, with its hierarchical caste system was imposed upon them. In the same meeting, he asked the government to employ Dalits in the army and police forces and provide them with opportunities to become members of the panchayats.<sup>31</sup> The Adi-Hindu Mahasabha was not alone in demanding separate representation. It has received similar petitions from Dalit organisations across Uttar Pradesh including the Adi-Dharmis from Dehradun, the Dom Sudhar Sabha of Garhwal and the Chamar Sabha of Kanpur.<sup>32</sup> Thus, unanimity in claiming a separate Achhut identity had become a marked feature of Dalit politics of the time.

During colonial rule majority of the Dalit organisations, 'came out in full force to express their grievances to the Simon Commission and demand a constitutionally defined affirmative action for the Achhuts, and the unanimous boycott of the commission by all the political parties, especially the Congress. This failure has resulted in the British government's initiation of constitutional negotiations for the Dalits. In the course the government invited Indian leaders of various parties and communities to the Round Table Conference in London in 1930. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan from the Madras presidency were invited as the representatives of Dalits.<sup>33</sup> Several public demonstrations, agitations and meetings were organised and addressed by the Adi Hindu leaders as well as other Dalit groups during the Round Table Conference over the issue of separate electorates for Dalits. During the second Round Table Conference in London in 1931, a 'wire' was sent by the group of Jatavs from Agra, in which they insisted that 'Ambedkar, not Gandhi' was their leader.<sup>34</sup> Again, when Gandhi undertook a fast against the Communal Award of 1932, which sanctioned separate electorates for Dalits, the Congress and Gandhi's project of Harijan upliftment was subjected to severe criticism by the Adi Hindu leaders. They pointed out sharply that, unlike the rest of Indian society,

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<sup>31</sup> S. Ramnarayan Rawat, (2011), *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Bloomington: Indian University Press, p. 147.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pp. 163-165.

<sup>33</sup> Dhananjay Keer, (1971), *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, p. 144.

<sup>34</sup> Owen Lynch, (1969), *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Myth and Charisma*, in Michael Mahar J. (ed.), *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 81.

Dalits were the victims of ‘double servitude’<sup>35</sup>, first, to the caste Hindus, and, second, to foreign rule. They have rightly asked ( ), after the foreigners left, who would rule in independent India?<sup>36</sup>

It is relevant to briefly discuss the question of separate electorates for Dalits, the subsequent Poona Pact, and Gandhi’s programme of achhuts (uplifting untouchables). The Indian leaders failed to arrive at a harmonious agreement over the question of representation for various communities in the Second Round Table Conference in 1931 in London.<sup>37</sup> Aloysius has discussed about the disagreements between Ambedkar and Gandhi<sup>38</sup> in the following lines:

Gandhi was he concerned more with being the sole recipient of the power settlement rather than the terms of the agreement itself. He obsessively claimed that he, in his person, represented everybody in India and no other representatives were required to bargain for power. Gandhi’s primary purpose for attending the Round Table Conference appeared to be to gain a monopoly of power or otherwise to let power remain in alien hands. On no count could power be shared with those who dared to sit as equals with the traditionally elevated and privileged.

In the later years, it was decided that the representatives would abide by the decision of the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. On 16 August 1932, MacDonald announced the Communal Award, by which a total of 71 seats in the Indian legislatures were set-aside for Dalits.<sup>39</sup> The prime minister, however, also promised to respect any alternative arrangement that the representatives of various communities might agree. As a result, for Dalits, the award meant that: (a) only they would choose their

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<sup>35</sup> D. C. Dinakar, (1986), *Swatantra Sangram mein Achhuton ka Yogdan*, Lucknow, p. 81.

<sup>36</sup> Nandini Gooptu, (2001), *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 175.

<sup>37</sup> Owen Lynch, (1969), *The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in City in India*, Columbia: Columbia University Press, p.81.

<sup>38</sup> G. Aloysius, (1997), *Nationalism without a Nation in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 199.

<sup>39</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 54.

representatives, and (b) they would be able to cast a second vote to decide who among the caste Hindus was best suited to represent their interests in a legislative body. While arguing about the issue Dr. Ambedkar stated that such a safeguard was necessary.<sup>40</sup> In other words, Ambedkar believed that the political separation of Dalits from the rest of the Hindu community was supremely necessary if the former were to escape their subjugation either in colonial or in independent India.

The Communal Award had reserved 20 seats for the Dalits in UP. But under the terms of the Poona Pact, those 20 seats were converted into double-member seats.<sup>41</sup> According to this revised system, each voter in a reserved constituency was allowed to cast two votes in two stages. In the first stage, which is called the primary stage, Dalits would vote exclusively for Dalit candidates. An election in the first stage became obligatory only when more than four candidates contested. The two candidates who secure the largest majorities in the primary stage were entitled to contest in the second stage. In the second stage or the general election the reserved seats became general seats by which the general candidates or for two Dalit candidates, or for one of each of the rationale of the two-vote mechanism that was put forward by the caste Hindu signatories of the Poona Pact. ‘The Dalits had two votes, one because of their *achhut* identity and the other because they were Hindus. Similarly, Hindus exercised two votes, one because their Hindu identity and the other because *achhuts* were Hindus.’<sup>42</sup> These blatant politics played by the caste Hindus during the Poona Pact sabotaged Dalit interests. In addition to the system of two votes, the electoral franchise, which was defined based on property and education, also worked in favour of the caste Hindus, which in turn benefited the Congress Party. Dr. Ambedkar was aware of this brazen politics. But with Gandhi’s life at stake, he did not have a choice but to accept the dictates of the caste Hindus.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid,

<sup>41</sup> Ibid,

<sup>42</sup> Ramnarayan S. Rawat, (2003), ‘Making Claims for Power: A New Agenda in Dalit Politics of Uttar Pradesh’, 1946-48, MAS, 37 (3): p. 607.

<sup>43</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, (2005), *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*, New York: Columbia Universtiy Press, p. 59-67.



The distortions inherent in the electoral system, a consequence of the Poona Pact, were revealed particularly in the 1946 elections in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>44</sup> During the time, the 20 reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh including four urban constituencies were seats that Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) contested. In the primaries of the electoral process nine SCF candidates gained successful as against four from the Congress Party.<sup>45</sup> However, in the general election or the second round, the Congress won all the seats due to the support of non-Dalit votes. A most striking result occurred in Agra, where four SCF candidates polled 47.39 per cent of valid votes as against 27.1 per cent by four Congress candidates.<sup>46</sup> In this way the result of the 1946 election justified this demand. This is how they plunged into accentuate political action with a demand to remove the ‘evil Pact’ after realization of Cripps Mission or Cabinet Mission formula that was influenced by the outcome of the 1946 elections.<sup>47</sup>

### **Ambedkar and social transformation in India**

In post-independent India, the United Provinces Scheduled Caste Federation (UPSCF)<sup>48</sup> continued to be an important political force through which Dalits in the state articulated their demands and aspirations. In the process the UPSCF has emphasised the importance of continuing its struggle for power in one of its final conferences in Lucknow on 24-25 April 1948.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Ambedkar delivered the inaugural address of the conference in which he stressed upon the significance of political power: ‘What I want is power, political power for my people for if we have power we have social status’ (*National Herald 26 April 1948*).<sup>50</sup> This statement by Ambedkar reflects the fear of Dalits in post-independent India. The Constitutional provisions of emancipation Dalits through abolition of untouchability, promises of citizenship and protective discrimination facilities did not

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<sup>44</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 57.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid,

<sup>46</sup> Peter Reeves, (1971), ‘Changing Patterns of Political Alignments in the General Elections to the U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937 and 1946, *MAS*, 5 (2): pp. 111-42.

<sup>47</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 57

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid,

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

convince the Dalits. They were apprehensive about the genuineness on the part of the caste Hindus in allowing the Constitutional promises to be realised. Until then the Dalit struggle for political power had been to secure a place for their voice in the legislative bodies and to gain economic facilities. But now, they continued their struggle for political power to ensure the actualisation of those constitutional promises. The deliberations at the conference injected new vigour into the delegates and inspired them to re-dedicate themselves for the Dalit cause.<sup>51</sup>

Over the years Dalits in general and the UPSCF in particular could not sustain this vigour and it gradually petered out mainly on account of the Congress's tricks of appealing the Dalit leaders with power.<sup>52</sup> On the occasion of the first general elections in 1951-52, many of the UPSCF leaders associated with Congress Party. At the end of 1952, UPSCF got disintegrated and was gradually erased from public memory.<sup>53</sup> There was also another reason for the failure of UPSCF in the elections was the inherent drawbacks of identity politics in the democratic framework, where the support of other communities is essential to win power. It was resulted in Uttar Pradesh that apart from Muslims in a few pockets of western part of the state, no other community or caste supported the UPSCF.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, except in urban areas in western UP almost all the Dalit castes, including the Chamars, supported the Congress rather than the UPSCF.<sup>55</sup> In the mobilisation and channelling of Dalit political energies for securing rights and power for Dalits got confused. The failure of the UPSCF was not the end of the Dalit movement and its struggle for power. They have learned lessons from the failure and Dalits began to look for ways to plug the limitations of identity politics. It was a search that resulted in the formation of the RPI in October 1957.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Owen Lynch, (1969), "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Myth and Charisma", in Michael Mahar J. (ed.), *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 133-35

<sup>52</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid,

<sup>54</sup> Owen Lynch, (1969), "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Myth and Charisma", in Michael Mahar J. (ed.), *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 136

<sup>55</sup> Ibid,

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 133-35.

Dr. Ambedkar's retrospection and analysis of the setback of the SCF in the 1951-52 elections arrived at two conclusions.<sup>57</sup> First, the system of reserved seats for Dalits was neither an alternative nor a substitute for the system of separate electorates. The unanimous rejection by the congress members in the Constituent Assembly, entertaining the idea of separate electorates for Dalits in post-independent India would be a fruitless exercise. The system of reserved seat single groups should be abolished. Agreeing with Dr. Ambedkar the executive committee of SCF passed a resolution for dissolution of the system of reserved seats.<sup>58</sup> Second, a Dalit based political party had less chance of success in the electoral process. It was felt necessary to form alliances with other political parties as well as other social groups reach to the objectives. Towards this end, the existing SCF had to be abandoned and a new political party was formed with a broader mandates.<sup>59</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar organized this new plan into action through encouraging Dalit activists to work with the leaders of other communities. In the process he began to consult various socialist leaders, particularly Ram Manohar Lohia, P. K. Atre and S. M. Joshi to seek their support for forming a new political party to be called the Republican Party of India. The choice for the name of the new party reflects Ambedkar's long search for a viable political platform for the oppressed masses. Gail Omvedt points out that Dr. Ambedkar's political career was devoted to finding forms through which Dalits could exert themselves in an autonomous fashion and at the same time build an enduring alliance with non-Brahmans, Shudras, Workers and peasants.<sup>60</sup> The primary aim of the new party was to mobilise the lower caste groups for the cause of political power. As a

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<sup>57</sup> SCF's worst performance in the elections, it did manage to win two Lok Sabha Seats, one in Hyderabad and the other in Bombay Presidency. It even, for the first time, secured representation in legislative assemblies of Madras, Hyderabad, the State of Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab state Union and Himachal Pradesh. See, Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 60.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid,

<sup>59</sup> Dhananjay Keer, (1971), *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, p. 487.

<sup>60</sup> Gail Omvedt (2000), *Undoing the Bondage: Dr. Ambedkar's Theory of Dalit Liberation*, in K. Yadav (ed.), *From Periphery to Centre State: Ambedkar, Ambedkarism and Dalit Future*, pp. 139-40.

result the RPI was established on 22 April 1958, and a branch was immediately formed in UP whose leadership was mainly drawn from the erstwhile UPSCF.<sup>61</sup>

T. C. Kureel<sup>62</sup> was the founder president of RPI in UP from 1958 to 1960. Two more leaders Chedilal Saathi, and B. P. Maurya<sup>63</sup> were active in the process political movement of state and revived the Dalit politics in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. Among the three leaders, the latter two leaders played a significant role in the revitalisation of the Dalit activism in state. Jaffrelot points out that Saathi was the main architect of the RPI in the state.<sup>64</sup> Saathi was attracted to Gandhi and the Congress office from where he went on to become secretary to Lal Bahadur Shastri and G. B. Pant when the latter become chief minister of the state. Dr. Ambedkar appears to have attracted him into the SCF in 1952, and then onwards he stayed loyal to Ambedkar and his political activism. In 1960 after Kureel, he became the president of the RPI and continued in that position until 1964.<sup>65</sup>

After Saathi, the man who stood at the forefront and who popularised the RPI was B. P. Maurya. Maurya was belongs to poor Jatav family in Khair a *tehsil* in Aligarh district.<sup>66</sup> During his childhood he was taught by a Catholic priest to read and write. Just like Saathi, the young Maurya was also influenced by Gandhi and the Congress slogan of

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<sup>61</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot (2005), *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*, New York: Columbia Universtiy Press, p. 87.

<sup>62</sup> Tilak Chand Kureel was the founding President of the Republican Party of India in Uttar Pradesh from 1958-60.

<sup>63</sup> Buddha Priya Maurya He was born September 12, 1928; A poor Jatav family son of Shri Bipti Ram Maurya at Khair Tehsil in Aligarh district He had become a Buddhishit in February 1957 in Aligarh and had therefore changed his name from Bhagwati Prasad Maurya to Buddha Priya Maurya. He was advocate Suprime Court of India and associated with the Indian National Congress, 1942-46. Sheduled Caste Federation, 1946-57 and Republican Party of India, 1957 to 1971; rejoined the Indian National Congress on Feuruary 1971, General Secretary, State United of Scheduled Castes Federation, UP., 1956-57 and Republican Party of India, 1957-62; Secretary, Republican Party of India, Norther India, 1963-68, Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 1961-67; Working President, Republican Party of India, 1969-1971; Member, Third Lok Sabha, 1962-67. Social activities working for the uplift of weaker sections of the society and to propagate the preachings of 'Buddha'.

<sup>64</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot (2003), *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India*, London: Hurst & Company, p. 107.

<sup>65</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 61.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid,

swaraj. He joined Congress in 1941 when Gandhi visited Khair, but soon left for Agra to pursue his studies. During his stay in the city he was involved in the Jatav movement. His association with Congress proved to be a temporary infatuation. However, after realizing the leadership strength in him, he met Dr. Ambedkar in Delhi and joined SCF. After this development, he returned to Aligarh where he completed the Master of law from Aligarh Muslim University and became Assistant Professor of Constitutional Law in the same university in 1960. Throughout the period when he pursued his legal studies, and even after joining the university as a teacher, he remained actively engaged with Dalit issues as well as the problems of landless labourers. He mobilised the landless labourers in Aligarh on the issues of land and minimum wages. In April 1957, he organised a conversion meeting where nearly 100000 Jatavs converted to Buddhism.<sup>67</sup>

The 1962 the party's election manifesto articulated Ambedkar's aims of Dalit that could be understood the main concerns and issues of the RPI. The manifesto was later placed before Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in the form of a charter of ten demands:<sup>68</sup>

- (1) The portrait of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, 'the Father of the Indian Constitution', must be displayed in the Central Hall of Parliament.
- (2) Let land go to the actual tiller of that land.
- (3) Let idle, and wasteland go to the landless labourers.
- (4) Adequate distribution of food grains and control over the rising prices.
- (5) A lot of slum dwellers must be improved.
- (6) Full implementation of the Minimum wages Act, 1948.
- (7) Extension of all privileges guaranteed by the Constitution to the SCs who have embraced Buddhism.
- (9) Harassment of the depressed classes should cease immediately.
- (10) Full justice for them under the Untouchability Act.
- (11) Reservation in the services to SCs and STs be completed as soon as possible not later than.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Zoya Hasan, (1989), "Power and Mobilization: Patterns of Resilience and Change in Uttar Pradesh Politics", in Frankel, R, Francine and M. S. A. Rao (eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, Vol. 1, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 116-17.

<sup>68</sup> Owen Lynch, (1969), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Myth and Charisma, in Michael Mahar J. (ed.), *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 104.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 'Election Manifesto – The Republican Party of India'.

In addition to the above ten resolutions another two more essential demands of the UP branch of the RPI were that Urdu should be made the official language of the state and measures be taken to teach Urdu on par with Hindi in schools and that taxes on shoemakers should be withdrawn.<sup>70</sup> These two demands clearly shows that the first demand owes its origin to the RPI electoral alliance with the Muslims in the state, especially in the city of Aligarh and the second demand was on account of the prominence of Jatavs/ Chamars, who were involved in the leather business and serving in the party.<sup>71</sup>

The manifesto of RPI also highlighted range of issues concerned not only with Dalits but also for the socially and economically marginalised communities. The party organised several mass mobilisations and protest movements to demand that the ruling Congress must implement these measures. When the government failed to do so, the RPI activists made several attempts to occupy uncultivated land. In 1964 as many as 30000 people were arrested in connection with that action.<sup>72</sup> During this period there were series of debate on Dalit issues with Congress. While Congress, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, considered discussions of caste distinctions to be a traditionalist discourse, the RPI fought to place the realities of discrimination against the lower castes at the heart of the national debate. While Congress sought to direct the nation towards increasing industrialisation in the 1950s, the RPI argued for radical land redistribution and agricultural reform to improve the economic position of the lower castes.<sup>73</sup> Through its activities and confrontations, the RPI was able to establish itself, albeit for a brief period, for the lower castes and other oppressed masses in the state as a durable alternative to the Congress.

Indeed the RPI greatest moments were the 1962 elections. The RPI contested 68 parliamentary seats out of this it won only three seats in Uttar Pradesh alone. Out of these three seats, Mr. Muzaffar Hussain was elected from Muradabad, second, Mr. B.P.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Paul R. Brass, (1985), *Caste, Faction and Party in Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Chanakya, p. 224.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Maurya was elected from Aligarh and the third seat Mr. Joti Saroop was elected<sup>74</sup> from Hathras parliamentary seats. Out the three seats two were from unreserved constituencies and one from a reserved constituency.<sup>75</sup> Even though the state and entire country were still under the influence of the Congress Party, the success of the RPI was undoubtedly a great achievement for the party. It reflected the determination of the Dalits to take power into their own hands and thereby change their wretched socio-economic condition.

The electoral success of the RPI was short-lived. The party could not win any seats after the 1967 assembly elections. Therefore, the party could not present itself as a political alternative to Congress. The reasons for the failure of the RPI experiment were many: first, the briefly successful local coalition between Dalits and Muslims engineered by B. P. Maurya in the city and district of Aligarh was driven by political opportunism rather than historical sympathy between the two groups. Predictably the partnership did not last beyond the 1967 and 1969 state assembly elections.<sup>76</sup> Second, the RPI's claim of being both a party of the poor and the party of 'Ambedkarites' confused its workers and supporters, the landless labourers workers in factories and other wage earners. As such for those who were wedded to class-based politics, the party was supposed to be organising the labourers and workers alone. Contrary to this expectation, the party's manifesto also described itself as Ambedkarite party, and it pledged to 'engage itself in organising the oppressed masses of India, particularly the Buddhists SCs, STs, and OBCs.'<sup>77</sup>

As a result, it was appeared there was void in communication between the leadership and the workers and supporters. The gap of communication led to disappointment of supporters of the party and the departed large group of people who

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<sup>74</sup> Joti Saroop was born in 1927 at Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. He was an Indian politician, elected to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India from Hathras (SC) as a member of the Republican Party of India.

<sup>75</sup> R. Chandidas, Ward More House, Leon Clark, Richard Fontera (eds.), (1968), *India Votes: A study book on Indian elections*, New York: Humanities press p. 246.

<sup>76</sup> Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany, (1998), *The Untouchables: Subordinations, Poverty and the State in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 213.

<sup>77</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 61.

were interested in class-based politics. Further the middle-class Dalits were content with the new opportunities thrown up by the Constitution of India such as the abolition of untouchability, reserved seats and promises of economic betterment. But pursuing these opportunities they wanted to enter the power structure and improve their socio-economic conditions rather than lead a movement to challenge the established social and political order.<sup>78</sup>

### **The emergence of Dalit Political Consciousness:**

The emergence of Backward and Minority Communities Employees' Federation (BAMCEF) in 1978 and the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samithi (DSSSS) in 1981 was the brainchild of Kanshi Ram. Kanshi Ram was formed these organization to respond the institutional discrimination against fellow Dalit employees by upper-caste employees. The followers of Kanshi Ram addressed him fondly as *Saheb* or *Manyawar*. Kanshi Ram also considered to be 'the messiah of the oppressed' and the embodiment of Ambedkar. He was born on 15 March 1934 in humble Ravidasi Sikh (Dalit) family in Khawaspur village of Ropar district in Punjab.<sup>79</sup> Kanshi Ram was fortunate enough to get education. In 1958 after his graduation, Kanshi Ram took up a job as a researcher in the Explosive Research and Development Laboratory (ERDL), an ammunitions factory in Pune. In the professional carrier, Kanshi Ram grew up in protected military environment and was follower of Sikhism, a religion that preaches egalitarianism. In the early years of his life Kashi Ram had little experience of the oppressive nature of the caste system and the suffering of Dalits as untouchables. It was for the first time in Pune he was exposed to the stark realities of caste.<sup>80</sup> Kanshi Ram stated that:

I was first exposed to the miseries of the Mahars and Mangs. After that, I read *Annihilation of Caste* and *What Gandhi and the Congress Have Done to the*

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>79</sup> Anand Teltumbde, (2006), 'An Enigma Called Kanshiram', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4: p. 4531.

<sup>80</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, (1998), TheBahujanSamaj Party in North India: No Longer Just a Dalit Party? *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 18(1):p. 35.



*Untouchable*. These are the two books, which have influenced me the most. Later I came to know about Mahatma Jotirao Phule.

In 1965, in the ERDL (Explosive Research and Development Laboratory) cancelled two holidays which was meant to celebrate the birthdays of Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Gautama Buddha and in its place sanctioned a holiday on the birthday of Tilak and on Diwali festival.<sup>81</sup> During that time Dalits were minority in the ERDL but they dared to raise voice on the cultural hegemony of the upper castes. Moreover, in Pune, particularly in the location of ERDL was located, young Dalits were continuously engaged in discussing the ideas of Mahatma Phule and Ambedkar. Dinabhana, a Dalit employee in the laboratory was enraged by the list of holidays and protested against the decision, leading to his suspension from the ERDL. Although Ambedkarite organisations had a strong presence in Pune but not single Dalit organisation took up the issue of the incident. After Ambedkar's death particularly in the early 1960s, RPI Dalit leaders were busy fighting against each other but the cancellation of the two holidays appeared to be a non-issue for them.<sup>82</sup> Kanshi Ram was enraged on the incident and supported Dinabhana and organised a protest against the decision of the management. Moreover, he filed a case against Dinabhana's suspension in a district court of law despite intimidation by the administration. It took two years that the court verdict came with revoking the suspension order of Dinabhanas' and restored the two holidays.<sup>83</sup>

During that time Dalit movement and politics in Maharashtra were dominated and controlled by the self-styled Ambedkarites who were divided into two broad groups: one group consisted of the RPI leaders from the Mahar caste and the other Congress Dalit leaders who others Dalit castes non-Mahars. In the later stage the former splintered into many factions, the latter group was more or less tamed by upper-caste Congress leaders like Y. B. Chavan.<sup>84</sup> During the initial phase of activism, Kanshi Ram got disappointed

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<sup>81</sup> Sudha Pai, (2002), *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 85.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid,

<sup>84</sup> Sudha Pai, (2002), *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 88.

with the Dalit politics of RPI brand but he worked for the party for nearly eight years. Most of Kanshi Ram ideas and argument took shape during this stage.

### **Dalit political participation:**

Over the years BAMCEF disenchanted with the *chamcha* politics of the RPI and the Congress Dalit leaders. Kanshi Ram and his close associates at the ERDL decided to develop an organisation that would spread the ideas and ideals of Ambedkar and Jotiba Phule.<sup>85</sup> During this time Kanshi Ram was joined by D. K. Khaparde<sup>86</sup> a committed Dalit employee, and together they began to formulate plans for an organisation to be formed by educated employees from the lower castes. On 6 December 1973, they established BAMCEF with the object of fighting caste discrimination against the lower castes within the civil service.<sup>87</sup> The motto, 'Educate, Organise, and Agitate', was adopted from Ambedkar's teachings. In 1976 a functioning office of the BAMCEF was established in Delhi.<sup>88</sup> The base in Delhi was a good move of BAMCEF and later it got to spread in Punjab, Haryana, UP and Madhya Pradesh.

A significant feature of BAMCEF was that unlike other Dalit socio-political organisations, it was relatively free from monetary constraints.<sup>89</sup> Almost all the members were government employees, and those salaried jobs enabled them to support the organisation's activities with generous monetary contributions. In the early 1980s, the BAMCEF claimed to have almost 200000 members, among whom were 15000 scientists and 3000 MBBS graduates, 500 Ph.D. and 7000 other graduates and post-graduates.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 86

<sup>86</sup> He was born 13 may 1939 in Nagpur, Maharashtra, a Mahar Buddhist after completion of his B.Sc. from institute of Pune. Whilst there he meet Kanshi Ram, whom he enlightened about the movement of Ambedkarism.A co-founder of the precursor to BAMCEF in 1971 and later the president of BAMCEF.

<sup>87</sup> Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany, (1998), *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, p. 220, and See, Vivek Kumar and Uday Sinha, (2001), *Dalit Assertion and Bahujan Samaj Party: A Perspective From Below*, Lucknow: Bahujan Sahitya Sansthan, p. 58.

<sup>88</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 86.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

<sup>90</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, (1998), The Bahujan Samaj Party in North India: No Longer Just a Dalit Party? *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 18(1):p. 36.

The primary aim of BAMCEF was to raise the consciousness of Dalits about their plight and press for social action. BAMCEF raised social consciousness among Dalits through various forms of literary and cultural events, such as launching the journal, *Oppressed Indian*; celebrating the anniversaries of Ambedkar's birth and death, restarting the Ambedkar Memorial Football Tournament and felicitations for Dalit poets (Kavisammelana) on Ambedkar Jayanti.<sup>91</sup> The social action activities have also been carried out through public awareness programmes like 'Ambedkar Mela on Wheels'. This programme was an audio-visual account of Ambedkar's life and views together with contemporary material on the oppression, atrocities and poverty faced by Dalits. This 'Mela' was one of the biggest mobilising campaigns undertaken by BAMCEF, taking place across north Indian states, which spread from Jabalpur to Jammu and Allahabad to Jaipur.<sup>92</sup>

The BAMCEF, under the leadership of Kanshi Ram, had always nurtured the idea of political power for the oppressed Indian. But Kanshi Ram could not have achieved his ambition by confining BAMCEF activities to middle-class and educated Dalits alone. To spread his idea of Dalit emancipation, Kanshi Ram constituted the 'Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti' (DS-4) on 6 December 1981. Although DS-4 was not a full-fledged political party, but its activities were more political than BAMCEF.<sup>93</sup> No government employee could become a member of DS-4, which anyway targeted the common Dalits to raise their awareness level and prepare them to participate in political activities. It has also mobilized to have an annual membership fee of DS-4 was Rs 3 with the criteria that those who do not belong to "twice-born castes" could become a member<sup>94</sup> of the organization.

DS-4 was divided into ten wings, each having a different role or responsibility. The first three were the Jagriti (consciousness), Mahila (Women's) and Chhatra

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<sup>91</sup> Sambaiah Gundimeda, (2016), *Dalit Politics in Contemporary India*, New York: Routledge, p. 87.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid,

<sup>93</sup> Badri Narayan, (2014), *Kanshiram leader of Dalits*, New Delhi: Penguin published p. 53.

<sup>94</sup> A. K. Dubey, (1997), *Kanshiram: Ek Alochnatamak Adhyayan*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, pp.52-53.

(Students) wings. Of these, the most active was the Jagriti Wing.<sup>95</sup> Its members travelled across villages and small towns of north India trying to sensitise common Dalits to their social, cultural and economic conditions. They popularised the message of Kanshi Ram and Ambedkar through speeches, music and theatre.<sup>96</sup> Activists of DS-4 travelled all over the country on bicycles fluttering blue flags. Kanshi Ram knew that unlike the powerful political leaders, the Bahujan Samaj could afford to use only small vehicles like bicycles, popular among the masses, on a big scale. He was convinced that the two wheels and two legs together could achieve a great deal.<sup>97</sup>

Cycling through the countryside, DS-4 activists used to sing several songs to rouse the Dalits. Kanshi Ram himself sang along with the activists. They also chanted slogans like “*Tilak, taraju aur talwar, joote maro inko char*” (*tilak*, a symbol for the Brahmans; *Taraju*, or scales, a symbol for the banyas; and *talwar*, a symbol for the Kshatriyas; ‘Beat them up four times with shoes/ Brahmans, Banyas and Kshatriyas and all’).<sup>98</sup> DS-4 organised a cycle rally in 1983-84 to mobilise people in the countryside. The first cycle rally started from Kanyakumari on 6 December 1983, the next from Kargil on 18 December 1983, the third from Kohima on 19 January 1984, the fourth from Puri on 28 January 1984 and the last one from Porbandar on 22 February 1984. All these rallies converged at the Boat Club ground in Delhi on 15 March 1984.<sup>99</sup>

In these rally nearly three lakh DS-4 activists were participated. They had instructions to address 7500 gatherings and make sure that at least ten crore people attended.<sup>100</sup> Cycling along the activists raised a number of slogans: “*Babasaheb amar rahein*’ (Long live Babasaheb), ‘*Kanshi Ram Zindabad/Zindabad, Zindabad*’ (Hail Kanshi Ram), ‘*Vote hamara raj tumhara: nahi chalega, nahi chalega*’ (Our vote, your rule: won’t do, won’t do), ‘*Jiski jitni sankhya bhari, uski utni hissedari*’ (The share in

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<sup>95</sup> Badri Narayan, (2014), *Kanshiram leader of Dalits*, New Delhi: Penguin published, p. 53.

<sup>96</sup> A. K. Dubey, (1997), *Kanshiram: Ek Alochnatamak Adhyayan*, New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, p.53

<sup>97</sup> Satnam Singh, (2005), *Bahujan Nayak kanshiram*, New Delhi: Samyak Publications, p. 35.

<sup>98</sup> Kamlakant, (2006), *Daliton Ke Messiah Kanshiram*, Delhi: Raja Pocket Books, p. 15.

<sup>99</sup> Badri Narayan, (2014), *Kanshiram Leader of the Dalits*, New Dalhi: Penguin published, p.54.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid,

power should be proportionate to the size of the community), *'Kanshi Ram teri nek kamai, tune soti kaum jagai'* (Kanshi Ram, you have earned a good name; you have awoken a slumbering community), *'Baba tera mission adhura, Kanshi Ram karega poora'* (Baba, your unfulfilled mission will be completed by Kanshi Ram), *'Bharat ki majboori hai, Kanshi Ram zarooi hai'* (To alleviate India's plight, Kanshi Ram is necessary), *'Sare desh mein ek hi naam: Kanshi Ram, Kanshi Ram'* (The country echoes with just one name: Kanshi Ram, Kanshi Ram), *'Ab bahujan ki bari hai- ikkeesvi sadi hamari hai'* (It is now the turn of the bahujans; we will own the twenty-first century), *'Kshatriya Brahman baniya chhod, baaki sab hain DS-4, and so on.'*<sup>101</sup>

Prior to launching the Bahuja Samaj Party (BSP) Kanshi Ram tested the Dalit political perspective by contested the Haryana assembly elections through DS-4 in 1982. He referred to this as a 'limited political activity'.<sup>102</sup> In these elections, DS-4 obtained 47,499 votes 1.11 per cent of the total votes. That was much better than the performance of three other political parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI), The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) and Congress (Socialist). He was heartened by the result since he was not looking to win a seat. He declared that by 30 June 1983 DS-4 would be in a position to form a national party for the Dalits.<sup>103</sup>

### **Formation of BSP and Emergence of Political Consciousness:**

The emergence and establishment of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) as an important political force can be traced back to several significant developments in the state and the country since the independence. In the changing context, unlike the RPI, the BSP has definite self-independent, strong and assertive leadership and with a distinct social base. In the political field, BSP provided space for the Dalit leaders where they have lost their credibility in Congress Party in UP and many other states of north India. Kanshi Ram, a Ramdassia Sikh belonging to the Chamar caste among the Scheduled Castes was born in 1934 in a rural district in the Punjab.<sup>104</sup> BAMCEF provided the initial base in formation

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>103</sup> Kamal Bharti, (1996), *Kanshiram Ke Do Chehre*, Rampur UP: Bodhisattva Prakashan, P. 13.

<sup>104</sup> Ambeth Rajan, (1994) *My Bahujan Samaj*, Delhi: ABCDE, p.1

of BSP in cadres and considerable infrastructural support. The explicit goal of the BSP in contrast to its predecessor organisations was to obtain political power. According to Kanshi Ram “Political power is the master key with which you can open any lock whether it is social education or cultural lock”.<sup>105</sup>

While working in Maharashtra, Kanshi Ram was being addressed as ‘Manyawar’ or ‘Sahib’ by realizing the need for expanding his movement in other parts of India. The office of BAMCEF was therefore shifted to New Delhi. He sensed there was a strong impulse in Dalits mobilization under the banner of DS-4 and created their political party. Though Kanshi Ram was not happy with the limited political impact of DS-4, he understood the need to change the weapons of battle with time. On 14 April 1984, birth anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar’s, Kanshi Ram announced the launch of a new political party called the Bahujan Samaj Party at the Boat club in New Delhi.<sup>106</sup>

The following five points are the ideological objectives of the Bahujan Samaj Party:<sup>107</sup>

- (1) Struggle for self-dignity; (2) Freedom from higher caste’s traditional rule; (3) Establishment of an equal society; (4) Establishment of brotherhood in the divided society based on caste; (5) Struggle against untouchability, inequality, injustice and Hindu communalism.

The party adopted Dr. Ambedkar’s ideology and soon became the political voice of the Dalits in India. BSP gave new hope to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in creating a secure platform in Indian politics under the leadership of their community leaders.<sup>108</sup> While the RPI never managed to emerge as the political representative of the Dalits. The Bahujan Samaj Party gained momentum on this powerful platform in the 1990s.<sup>109</sup> Kanshi Ram, founder of the BSP was a disciple of Ambedkar, drew his

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<sup>105</sup> Ambeth Rajan, (1997), *My Bahujan Samaj Party*, interview with Kanshi Ram, February 24, 1997, Ludhiyana, p.32.

<sup>106</sup> Badri Narayan, (2014), *Kanshiram Leader of the Dalits*, New Delhi: Penguin, p.107.

<sup>107</sup> K. C. Dheer, (2009), *Bahujan Virodhi Bhartiya Rajniti Ka kala Itihas*. New Delhi: Samyak, pp. 178-179.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

inspiration from his mentor's reading of Dalit identity. In 1995, Mayawati a Dalit woman leader who was confidant to Kanshi Ram succeeded him and became Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. For the first time, the largest state of India was governed by a Dalit. Women became a source of pride for the community.<sup>110</sup>

BSP was emerged as one of the dominant political parties in Uttar Pradesh, during 1991 and 1993.<sup>111</sup> The poor performance of the BSP in the 1996 Assembly election and the 1998 Lok Sabha election, invited much criticism and re-evaluation of the success of the party.<sup>112</sup> Social scientists have attributed it to the party's failure to consolidate its earlier gains and obtain support from all sections of the Dalit community.<sup>113</sup> In the later stage, the improved performance of the BSP in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections was attributed to the weakness of the BJP.<sup>114</sup> For the better performance of the party, BSP adopted two-fold strategies since the mid-1990 for its political gain, first forming coalitions with other political parties, such as, the Bharatiya Janata Party and second, giving tickets to the upper castes. Social scientists have argued that by adopting the two-fold strategies BSP had lost its exclusive identity and no longer remained as Dalit party.<sup>115</sup> With this political plans of BSP intended to widen its vote bank in Uttar Pradesh. Further the party has gained political power and even formed a single-party government in Uttar Pradesh in 2007.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Sudha Pai, (2002), *Dalit Assertion and The Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*. New Delhi : Sage Publications, p. 153.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid,

<sup>113</sup> Pradeep Kumar, (1999), "Dalits and the BSP in UP Issues and Challenges", *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXIV, no. 14, 3 April, pp. 822-26

<sup>114</sup> Sudha Pai, (1999), "BSP's New Electoral Strategy Pays Off", *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXIV, No. 44, 30 October, pp. 3099-101

<sup>115</sup> Sudha Pai, (2002), *Dalit Assertion and The Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*. New Delhi : Sage Publications, p. 153.

## **Role of BSP in Creating Political Consciousness**

The Dalits constitute one of the poorest and marginalised sections of the population in Uttar Pradesh. Their socio-economic exclusion from the productive sources has made them suffer from the trauma of social inequality, economic backwardness and psychological inferiority. However, the conditions of Dalits have not remained that pathetic and horrible over the period. The socio-economic transformation took place even then the pace of change has been slow. The new employment opportunities in both public and private sectors have minimised their dependence on landownership thereby altering the nature of old patron-client relationship. Culturally, the Scheduled Castes have also improved their conditions. The catalyst for change has been education and spread of electoral process. Small urban elite have also come up within the Dalit community in the post-Independence period, particularly among the Chamars. They were the first to avail the education facilities and were consequently well placed to avail the benefits of the reservation policies. Some of them have prospered in their traditional business, which has equipped them to form the vanguard of the new Dalit assertiveness in mid-1980s. An emerging Dalit middle class comprising the academicians, Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, engineers, journalists and prospective entrepreneurs shaped the political consciousness of Dalit communities in Uttar Pradesh, and the formation of BSP strengthened the Dalit politics in the state.

The post-independence, Dalit Movement in U.P. was divided into three phases. The first was from 1956-1969 when Dalits decided to form their party under the leadership of Bhim Rao Ambedkar. The second phase is about the failure of Dalit political parties that enabled the Congress to secure Dalit support under the leadership of Indira Gandhi by sharing the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao'. The third phase started from the early 1980s when the Dalit Movement entered into competitive democratic politics with the emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party. In the post criticism of Dalit Movement had distanced itself from the initiatives for social transformation and focused only on political



motives and goals.<sup>116</sup> The emergence of political consciousness among Dalits in the post-Ambedkar phase was started after formation of Bahujan platform by Kanshi Ram in Uttar Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh was witnessed a path-breaking movement under the leadership of Kanshi Ram who had put Dalit Politics in mainstream politics in the region.<sup>117</sup> It was also the era of emergence of Dalit Panthers. Kanshi Ram established a category called Bahujan, which comprises 85 per cent of the society.<sup>118</sup> He used this category explicitly as a political tool for the Dalit mobilisation. Keeping this view in his mind, Kanshi Ram established a non-political organisation called the All India Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) on December 6, 1973.<sup>119</sup> The membership of the organisation was open only to Dalits employed in the public sector. The BAMCEF widened its base swiftly across the country, though it remained unnoticed by the mainstream media. To counter this media bias, the organisation launched its own journal, “Oppressed Indian”, and later scores of daily/weekly newspapers in most Indian languages.<sup>120</sup>

In 1989, BSP entered into the competitive electoral politics as it was the time that the Dalit Movement in U.P. turned into a whole political movement with less focus on social reforms and economic equality. The BSP was successful in increasing its social base continuously over successive elections. The BSP’s political strategy was mainly based on caste rather than class, even if it claims that the party works for the lower class people. However, it was heavily dependent on the lower castes and could garner political support only from the Scheduled Castes and no other sections of society. This

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<sup>116</sup> Sudha Pai, (2001), ‘From Harijan to Dalits: Identity Formation, Political Consciousness and Electoral Mobilization of the scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh’. In Ghanshyam Shah (ed), *Dalit Identity and Politics*, New Delhi: Sage publication, p.286.

<sup>117</sup> Anand Teltumbde, (2006), “An Enigma called Kanshi Ram”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 4, Vol. 41, Issue no 43-44, pp. 4531-4532.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid,

<sup>119</sup> Ibid,

<sup>120</sup> Ibid,

development restricted the expansion of the BSP's electoral base.<sup>121</sup> Therefore; BSP brought a decisive and surprising shift in its basic ideology and electoral strategy. Apart from Dalits mobilization, BSP also focused on 'social engineering' to bring Brahmins and other upper castes together through the policy of Sarvajan. Though, the BSP claims in all public forums and political manifestos that its policy brings the Dalits and upper castes together, it included only Brahmins in its political strategy with explicit focus. This social engineering brought Dalits and Brahmins together, which resulted in a huge victory for the BSP in the 2007 State Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>122</sup> The following table shows the BSP's position in State Legislative Assembly election.

**State Legislative Assembly Election:**

Sl. No.	Year	Total candidate contested	Reserved elected candidates	Un-reserved elected candidates	Total elected candidates	Percentage
1	1989	372	5	8	13	10.72
2	1991	386	0	12	12	10.26
3	1993	164	23	44	67	28.55
4	1996	296	19	48	67	27.75
5	2002	401	24	74	98	23.19
6	2007	403	59	147	206	30.43
7	2012	403	17	63	80	25.91

Source: [www.electioncommissionofindia.com](http://www.electioncommissionofindia.com)

The following table shows the success and failure story of BSP in Uttar Pradesh in general elections:

<sup>121</sup> Jens Lerche, (2003), 'Hamlet, Village and Region: Caste and Class Difference Between Low Caste Mobilization in East and West UP'. In Roger Jeffery and Jens Lerche (eds), *Social and political Change in Uttar Pradesh*. New Delhi: Manohar Publication, p.186.

<sup>122</sup> A. K. Verma, (2007) "BSP's Strategy for Uttar Pradesh: Wooing The Brahmins for a New Alliance", *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 25, pp. 2647-2648.

### BSP's position in General election and Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh:

Sl. No.	Year	Total no of candidates contested	Reserved elected candidates	Un-reserved elected candidates	Total elected candidates	Percentage
1	1989	67	1	1	02	9.93
2	1991	85	1	0	01	8.70
3	1996	80	4	2	06	20.61
4	1998	80	2	2	04	20.9
5	1999	80	9	5	14	22.08
6	2004	80	14	5	19	24.61
7	2009	80	15	5	20	27.42
8	2014	80	Nil	Nil	Nil	4.1

Source: [www.electioncommissionofindia.com](http://www.electioncommissionofindia.com)

Many arguments have been put forward by critics and scholars in their post-poll analysis of the failure of the BSP in the assembly elections. Of these three noteworthy arguments are as follows: first, that the BSP government was embroiled in corruption and scams, such as the Taj Corridor case and second, that the BSP government incurred the wrath of the public by wasting vast amounts of money on constructing the Ambedkar Memorial and installing statues<sup>123</sup> of Dalit Bahujan pioneers in the public domain. Finally, the Dalits, who constitute 21 per cent of the population of the state and who have been the BSP's solid support base since its inception deserted the party during the Assembly elections in 2012.<sup>124</sup> The desertion by the Dalits tilted the balance in favour of the other political parties especially the SP. Therefore, the BSP's failure in the assembly elections lies neither in the corruption charges against its government nor the intensity of the non-Dalit public nor in its desertion by the Dalits rather it lies in the shifting of Muslim loyalties from the BSP to the SP.

About the first argument, corruption charges against the BSP government would have had such a significant effect on the voting behaviour of the UP public against that

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<sup>123</sup> Abhay Vaidya, (2012), In Mayawati's defeat there's hope for Dalits. *First Post*. Retrieved 7 May 2012, from <https://www.firstpost.com/politics/in-mayawatis-defeat-theres-hope-for-dalits-237841.html>

<sup>124</sup> Oliver Heath and Sanjay Kumar (2012). Why did Dalits desert the BahujanSamaj Party in Uttar Pradesh? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(28): 41-49

party. For in contemporary India, every political party and outfit is involved in various corruption charges and scams. In that context it is not surprising to see something of the same pattern in the BSP of course, it should be recognised here that since every political party is involved in corruption BSP, should follow the same path especially, when corruption has become the order of the day and when the voters are accustomed to electing those political parties entangled in fraud and scams, again and again, there is no sense in pointing the finger at the BSP alone. Instead this has to be dealt with systematically like the electoral rejection of all those corrupt political parties.

The second argument stated that majority of the non-Dalit public in Uttar Pradesh never supported the installation of the statues of Ambedkar Memorial Parks in Lucknow and other locations. With this apprehension, the non-Dalit people were opposed the Dalit-Bahujan memorials, later it was resulted a turning against the BSP during the assembly elections. However, the percentage of this category of non-supporters cannot be so significant as to upset the winning possibilities of the BSP. The third argument put forward with the critics that the abandonment of the BSP by the Dalits led to its downfall in the assembly elections justified it on account of the failure of the BSP to secure a majority of the seats in the reserved constituencies.

An important question at this juncture could be why is a Dalit based party not winning in these reserved constituencies when other parties are winning? It is sufficient to mention here that the main problem lies in the very notion of a reserved constituency. A constituency is reserved for Dalits or Adivasis because a majority of the population in that constituency belongs to the reserved category of people. But there is a possibility that the combined population strength of the non-Dalits may be higher than that of the reserved category population. In such a constituency it is easy for any political party to win in any election if it manages to secure the support of two or three castes or communities and this is how the non-Dalit based political parties have been wining in the reserved constituencies in UP. The BSP's failure in wining majority reserved seats is not the sufficient argument that the Dalits have deserted the party.

Since formation of BAMCEF (All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation), the BSP considered Muslims as part of the Bahujan Samaj. The presence of Muslim's in the party in earlier phase was deemed to be marginal. But that situation began to change in 1993. Partly inspired by its own Bahujan ideology and compelled by electoral politics, the BSP started to allocate a good number of seats to Muslims both in the State Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary elections. The Uttar Pradesh has 18.5 per cent Muslim voters who play a decisive role in at least 130 Assembly seats. The importance of Muslims in the BSP began to increase further when the party following its Sarvajan formula gave them 61 seats during the 2007<sup>125</sup> and 85 seats in 2012 elections.<sup>126</sup> Of course it was not just the BSP that had been eyeing the Muslim vote bank. The Samajwadi Party was also one of the prime contenders in the competition for the support of the Muslims. Indeed after the Yadavs, Muslims constituted major support base for the SP. Just like the BSP, the SP also began to allot good number of seats to Muslims. For instance, in 2012 Assembly elections, the SP assigned them 78 seats and when the polls for the UP State Legislative Assembly were announced, similar thinking as the SP, the BSP was also quite confident that it would come back to power on account of the support it enjoyed among the Brahmins and Muslims in addition to its traditional support base the Dalits. Rahul Gandhi's appeasement of the Muslims in the form of a sub-quota of 4.5 per cent within the 27 per cent quota for the OBC changed the politics of the assembly elections as well as the winning chances of the BSP.<sup>127</sup>

The BSP had started mobilising the upper castes in 1998-99 and the 1999 parliamentary elections.<sup>128</sup> Kanshi Ram distributed approximately 12 per cent of tickets to the *Savrn*. In 2002 assembly elections, BSP gave 38 tickets to *Brahamins*, of whom only seven won and the party got only 4.7 per cent votes of *Sarvajan*.<sup>129</sup> But since the beginning of 2005, Mayawati started mobilising *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and

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<sup>125</sup> Statistical Reports of the Election Commission of India 2007.

<sup>126</sup> Statistical Reports of the Election Commission of India 2012.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ghanshyam Shah, (eds.) (2002), *Caste and Democratic Politics in India*, New Delhi: Permanent Black. p.21.

<sup>129</sup> National Election Studies, New Delhi.

*Kayasthas* vigorously. *Brahmin Jodo Sammelan* was organised across the state with a specific membership drive, which culminated in the *Brahmin Maha Rally* in June 2005 in Lucknow.<sup>130</sup> It was a tactical move because it changed the preconceived notion of Brahmins about the BSP. To convince them further Mayawati groomed an upper-caste leadership in her party and changed the party's slogan from "*Jiski Jitni Sankhya Bhari, Uski Utni Bhagedari*" to "*Jiski Jitni Taiyari, Uski Utni Bhagedari*" To bring in a large number of savarn, the BSP constituted *Bhaichara Baraho Committees* in every assembly constituency. The economically poor among the upper castes were made the target. Mayawati vehemently criticised former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a Brahmin, for not paying attention to their problems. Finally, in a pragmatic move she distributed majority of tickets to Brahmins, Rajputs and Vaishyas. In 2007, when BSP came to power with 206 of 403 seats, it adopted '*Sarvajan Sukhaye, Sarvajan Hitaye*' as its motto.<sup>131</sup> The words mean that its government was one for everyone's welfare and everyone's interests. That was the brave new BSP while sought to shed its image as a party of the Dalits. In all the BSP leadership followed a different strategy. Along with its core constituency of Dalits the BSP mobilised the so-called upper castes, and they also voted for BSP. However, it has failed even to achieve a single seat in general elections held in 2014 out of 80 seats contested in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ghanshyam Shah, (eds.) (2002), *Caste and Democratic Politics in India*, New Delhi: Permanent Black. p.21.

<sup>131</sup> Statistical Reports of the Election Commission of India 2007.

<sup>132</sup> Statistical Reports of the Election Commission of India 2012.

## **Conclusion**

The political consciousness among the Dalits has been expressed through the Dalit literature. It has broadens the understanding the socio-politico-cultural conditions of Dalit communities that envisions the transformation of society through a visionary movement. It also emphasises for the transmission of knowledge from one generation to other to build capacities of the future generations for an exploitation free society. Therefore, it has been learned that political consciousness among the Dalits has gradually evolved its autonomous political space and challenged upper castes' hegemony in all spheres of life i.e., social, political, economic, cultural and literary. In fact, it is due to the political changes taking place at the grassroots level are making Dalit politics and literature progressive. In spreading the Dalits political consciousness, literature becomes best tool for the expression of not only the feelings, agony and exploitation but also empowers Dalits to rise against exploitation and establishment of equality and egalitarian society.

## **CHAPTER- 3**

### **Political Consciousness in Jalaun District**

In India, caste-based politics has always remained at the forefront. But during the last two decades, the assertion of the people from low castes including the Dalits has assumed exceptional significance. The Dalit question is one of the most important topics in today's political and academic debates in India. Dalit assertion, Dalit leadership and voting pattern of the Dalits, etc., are the elements of these debates. Dalits are underprivileged in all social, economic and political fronts which lead to their misery, discrimination, exploitation, and oppression by the caste dominated society. The theory of the caste interlinked with the *varna model* has divided the Hindu society into four orders-the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Sudras.<sup>1</sup> The first three castes are considered twice-born or '*Dvija*' since the men from these castes were entitled to use the sacred thread at the Vedic site of Upanayana, which the Sudras were not, allowed to perform.<sup>2</sup> Sudras were the people who cultivated the land, washed the clothes and did all types of menial works. Members of the untouchable caste, however, shared the stigma of untouchability; they were frequently denied the chance to eat, smoke or even sit with members of the upper castes, and they often must use separate wells from those maintained for the use of others.<sup>3</sup>

India after gaining independence enacted different social legislations to reform the position of Dalits which included removal of untouchability and discrimination against them and secondly, to elevate their status in such a way that they have equal status with

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<sup>1</sup> John Campbell Oman, (2003), *Religious Festivals and Caste System in India*, New Delhi: Khana Publishers, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Ranjit Rajadhyaksha, (2004), *Encyclopedia of Social Problems and Social Change*, New Delhi: Dominant Publishers, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, (1988), *Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Social Vision of Untouchability*, Delhi: Ajanta Publications, p. 14.



other segments.<sup>4</sup> The provisions of voting rights, reservations in education and jobs and in the politics field, are the steps which have been in existence since the adoption of the Constitution.<sup>5</sup> Efforts are still going on to remove different discriminatory practices against them. One of the major aspects of the socio-economic status of Dalits is their political consciousness and awareness about various political activities and participation in these activities. The Dalit consciousness about political activities may contribute to various decisions relating to their rights and privileges. Thus political awareness and participation of the Dalits is an important area of study.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note that in Uttar Pradesh where the Scheduled Caste population is 21 percent<sup>7</sup> and this size of the population is in a position to make a recognizable impact on the politics of the state. But the rise and expansion of BSP and Dalit aspirations symbolized by the leadership of Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh are seen as an example of Dalit assertion.<sup>8</sup> It is also important to discuss the pattern of political participation of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. In political participation, we do not confine ourselves to the act of voting alone, since there are other political activities which are more important indicators of political participation. The issue of participation covers a wide range of activities like participation in rallies, becoming members of different political parties or the other pressure groups, forming their own political party or raising issues of political importance through different mediums-radio, television, newspapers, etc.<sup>9</sup> or participating in elections at all levels-voting, campaigning or contesting. The political consciousness and level of participation of Dalits in these activities in Uttar Pradesh have not yet been explored by any of the researchers. Therefore, considering the

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<sup>4</sup> Jay Lakshmi (2014), "Relevance of Ambedkar's Contribution In The Upliftment of Modern Days Dalits and Women", *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Volume 19, Issue2, Ver.IV, Feburary, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 65

<sup>7</sup> Census, 2011, Government of India.

<sup>8</sup> Sudha Pai (2009), "New Social Enginneering Agenda of the Bahujan Samaj Party: Implication for State and National Politics", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, December, p. 339.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

importance of these facts, an attempt has been made to understand and analyze the Dalits and their political consciousness in Uttar Pradesh. The present study focuses on the political consciousness of the Dalits in Jalaun district.

### **Brief History of the District**

The district Jalaun is in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, bordering Etawah and Auraiya. In ancient times, the Rishi Jalwan lived here, so its name was Jalaun. But some people around it consider its name as Jalim, because there used to be a Sandhya Brahmin who is considered the first founder of this settlement.<sup>10</sup>

The district Jalaun is located near the rivers, Yamuna, Betwa, and Pahuj. The land here is plains which is very suitable for human development.<sup>11</sup> As such, the people have lived here since very ancient times. The city of Kalpi is situated on the banks of river Yamuna, which is considered to be the ancient and largest settlement of the district.<sup>12</sup> The first traditional scholar and ruler of this region were Yayati, who is mentioned as an emperor in the Mahabharata Purana and was also a great conqueror.<sup>13</sup> Who extended his kingdom far and wide. The earliest Aryans associated with this region were the Chedi.<sup>14</sup> The region emerged very prominently during the period of the Mahabharata, which describes the Kurus, Panchalas and Matsayas as well as the Chedis.<sup>15</sup> The ancient history of the district is connected to the entire Bundelkhand region.<sup>16</sup> There is a history of

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<sup>10</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> D. L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). “Jalaun A Gazetteer”, “District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh”, Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.10.

<sup>13</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 9

<sup>14</sup> D .L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). “Jalaun A Gazetteer”, “District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh”, Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.115.

<sup>15</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 9

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

climbing and spoiling many rulers here. The region has also been ruled by King Harsha Vardhan, which is mentioned in documents by the Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang.<sup>17</sup> The successor after Harsha was a Buddhist Brahmin and ruler of Kannauj, who went to Rajputana ambitious ruler Nagabhata, from where he descended from his grandson Mihira, known as Raja Bhoja.<sup>18</sup> Later the Chandela rulers of Kalinjar occupied the region and Kalpi remained under their rule for a few hundred years. Kalpi was one of the main forts of these rulers till Prithviraj took it under his rule as a result of a fight with Raja Parmar.<sup>19</sup>

In early times Jalaun has been home to two Rajput descendants, Chandel in the east and Kachwaha in the west.<sup>20</sup> The city of Kalpi was conquered by the armies of Muhammad Ghori in 1196, Kalpi being the most important place associated with the affinity of Muslims.<sup>21</sup> However, the occupation of Muslims in contemporary Bundelkhand remained nominal in 1202.<sup>22</sup> As Shahabuddin was the first ruler to invade the region at the end of the 12th century. From whom it was called the founder of the Bundela regime. Thereafter, Pathans and Mughals later dominated the scene but the Lodi dynasty remained connected between the Pathans.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> D. L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.115.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. and see, District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 9

<sup>20</sup> <https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/s34c5bde74a8f110656874902f07378009/uploads/2017/12/2018021725.pdf>, District Survey Report for (Planning and Execution of) Minor Mineral Excavation, p.6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. and see, D.L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.155.

At the beginning of the 14th century, the Bundelas captured the greater part of Jalaun and were also successful in assuming the fortified post of Kalpi.<sup>24</sup> But the Sultanate of Delhi gained the annexation of Kalpi. In 1583 emperor Akbar visited Kalpi, where he was the guest of Jagirdar Abdul Matlub Khan. Quli Khan and Abdur Rahim Khan-Khana ruled the place during the Mughal period.<sup>25</sup>

Akbar's state officials in Kalpi maintained a nominal right around the district, and the Bundela chiefs were in a state of chronic rebellion. Due to which Maharaja Chhatrasal died in the fight for independence.<sup>26</sup> After spreading his rebellion in 1671, he occupied a large province south of the Yamuna. With the help of Marathas, he conquered Bundelkhand.<sup>27</sup> On his death in 1732, he attained the third dominions to his Maratha allies, who managed to occupy the whole of Bundelkhan for a long time.<sup>28</sup> The Marathas dominated the region for over a hundred years.<sup>29</sup> The country was a victim of constant chaos and conflict under Maratha rule. The origin of poverty and desolation during this period must be traced which is still distinct across the district. Kalpi was built by the British in 1806, and on the death of Nana Gobind Rao in 1840 his property also passed on to him.<sup>30</sup> The area underwent various interchanges and in 1856 the boundaries of the British district were largely settled with an area of 1477 miles.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 9

<sup>25</sup> D. L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.123.

<sup>26</sup> <https://jalaun.nic.in/history/> History of Jalaun district.

<sup>27</sup> D. L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.1125.

<sup>28</sup> <https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/s34c5bde74a8f110656874902f07378009/uploads/2017/12/2018021725.pdf>, District Survey Report for (Planning and Execution of) Minor Mineral Excavation, p.6.

<sup>29</sup> D. L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.127

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.82

<sup>31</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, pp. 9-10.

Jalaun was the scene of much violence during the 1857 revolution.<sup>32</sup> When the revolution began in Kanpur, the news of it reached Kalpi, the 53rd natives of the Infantry escaped leaving their officers, and the revolution reached Jhansi and started killing the Europeans. Ultimately September 1858 that the rebels were defeated.<sup>33</sup> In 1857, there was a fierce armed struggle between the British army and freedom fighters led by Nana Sahib of Bithoor, Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi and Tatyana Tope. These proceedings occurred at Orai, Kalpi, Jalaun, Konch and places like Kachchwahagrah.<sup>34</sup>

In the 19th century, the district suffered a lot from the aggressive Kans grass (*Sacrum spontaneum*), separation many villages and their land is thrown out of cultivation.<sup>35</sup> In 1901, the two largest cities are Kaunch and Kalpi of the district was 399726 with a population. There is an Indian Midland railway line from Jhansi to Kanpur, a small part of it is watered by the Betwa Canal. Grain, Oil-seeds, cotton, and ghee were exported.<sup>36</sup> In the 20th century, the whole of India started in the name of new nationalism, which also influenced Jalaun. At the national level, Congress had become the mouthpiece of the aspirations of the people, making the Congress very popular in this district, and a branch was established in this district. The people of this district were involved in all national-level movements to oust the British government, which included civil disobedience and the Quit India Movement.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> D.L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.90

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.159.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>35</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p.10

<sup>36</sup> D.L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Jalaun A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XXV, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.57.

<sup>37</sup> District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p.10

### **Administrative Setup**

The district Jalaun (headquarters at Orai) is located in the south part of the Trance Yamuna tract of the country known as the Bundelkhand region. The district is divided into 5 tehsils into Jalaun, Orai, Kalpi, Kaunch, and Madhogarh.<sup>38</sup> For the implementation and monitoring of development plans, the district is divided into 9 development blocks, Rampura, Kuthaund, Madhaganj, Navigation, Jalaun, Maheva, Kadaura, Dakor, and Konch. The area of the district is 4565 Sq. Km. In which rural area is 4491.5 Sq Km and urban 73.5 Sq Km.<sup>39</sup> District Jalaun ranks 57<sup>th</sup> terms of population in the state. The percentage share of the urban population in the district is 24.8 percent as against 22.3 percent of the population in urban areas of the state. Jalaun district has a population density of 370 persons per sq. km., which is lower than the state average of 829 persons per sq.km. Jalaun district ranks 63<sup>rd</sup> in terms of sex ratio (865), which is lower than the state average of 912 females per thousand males. Jalaun district ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in literacy with 73.7 percent which is higher than the state average of 67.7percent. The district has 564 Gram Panchayats and 1151 revenue village with 942 inhabited villages and 209 uninhabited villages. There are 10 statutory cities in the urban area; the statutory cities include 4 Municipal Councils and 6 Nagar Panchayats. After the 2001 census neither a statutory city has been added nor merged. There are 288338 households in the district accounting for 9 percent of the total households in the state. The district has an average size of 5.9 persons living in each households.<sup>40</sup>

### **Profile of the District**

**Table No. 3.1 Total Population.**

Social Categories	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
All Categories	906,092	783,882	1,689,974	100
Scheduled Castes	252,588	215,590	468,178	27.7
Scheduled Tribes	428	404	832	--

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.12.

**Source:** District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 15.

**Table No. 3.2 Literacy.**

Social Categories	Persons	Males	Females
Total	73.7	83.5	62.5
Scheduled Castes	68.5	80.4	54.4
Scheduled Tribes	59.0	69.3	47.7

**Source:** District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. 15.

**Table No. 3.3 Category of Workers (Main & Marginal).**

Category	Cultivators			Agricultural Labourers			Workers in Household Industry			Other Workers		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
All Categories *	31.6	35.1	20.7	39.1	35.0	52.0	4.2	3.1	7.6	24.9	26.6	19.6
S C #	7	7	67	5	4	7	1	1	4	7	7	62
S T \$	23,2	20,7	2,4	55,7	45,3	10,3	2,8	1,8	98	27,6	22,8	4,8
	73	84	89	07	36	71	12	31	1	95	44	51
	51	41	10	44	32	12	14	9	5	98	26	72

**Note** A – Persons, B – Males and C – Females. The figures for All categories are in percentage and the figures for Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes are in number.

**Source:** District Census Handbook - Jalaun, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, Page no. - Categories- \* - 15, Sheduled Caste- # - 54-55, Sheduled Tribes- \$ - 62-63.

### Data Analysis and Sampling Design

In this study the Jalaun district was selected for the field study because of two considerations: first, the district has a **low concentration of Scheduled Caste population compared to Etawah** and second, it is a stronghold of Dalit consciousness

among Dalit communities.<sup>41</sup> The majority of Scheduled Caste population of the district have been converted to Buddhism.<sup>42</sup> In this study area, a total number of 8 villages have been selected to map the political consciousness among the Dalit communities.

### **Socio-economic Background of Respondents**

In the study area, a total of 8 villages<sup>43</sup> have been selected from the Jalaun district. In each village, ten-sample respondents/household have been interviewed. Thus, the total number of sample household is 80. Out of 80 samples, 82.5 percent were males and 17.5 percent were females. Of course, efforts were made to take an equal number of female samples but it was not possible as they were not forthcoming to talk to the researcher. The respondents of the sample were of different age groups starting from 20 years onwards. The age-group wise distributions of the respondents are given in the figure: 3.1, shows.

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<sup>41</sup> Political consciousness is visible among all the Dalit sub-castes in District Jalaun. They are all giving their participation in the political party.

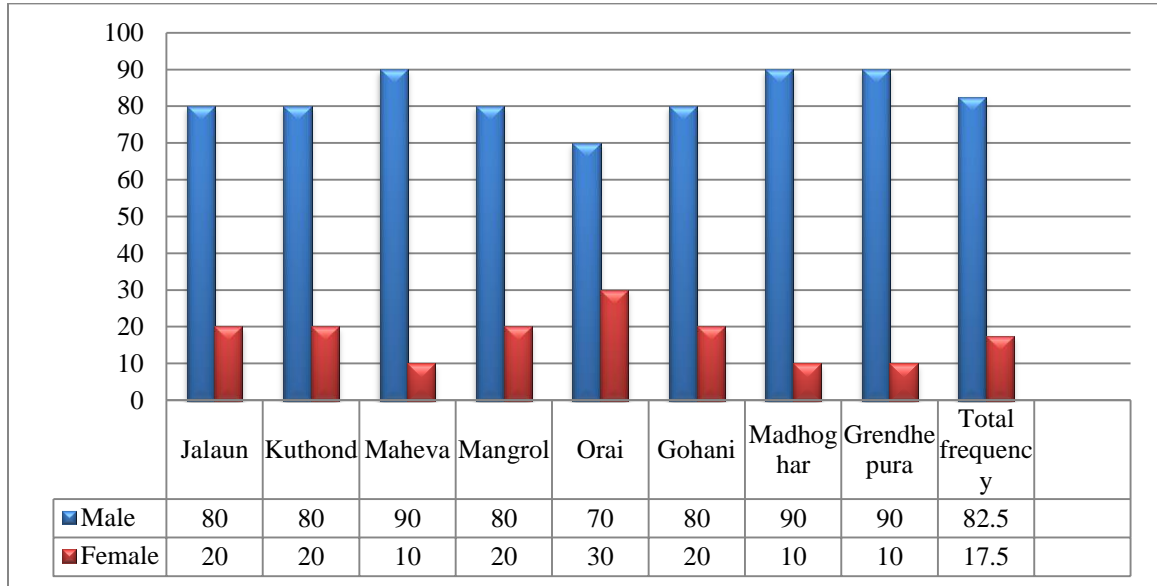
<sup>42</sup> Dalit communities are officially Hindu in Jalaun district, but mostly Chamar caste people have converted to Buddhism. They do not believe in the festivals of Hindu religion, they only consider Ambedkar Jayanti, Buddhist Jayanti, and all Buddhist festival.

<sup>43</sup> Field study of area 8 villages has been selected from random sampling in Jalaun district. Village is Jalaun, Kuthond, Maheva, Mangrol, Orai, Gohani, Madhopur, and Grendhepura.

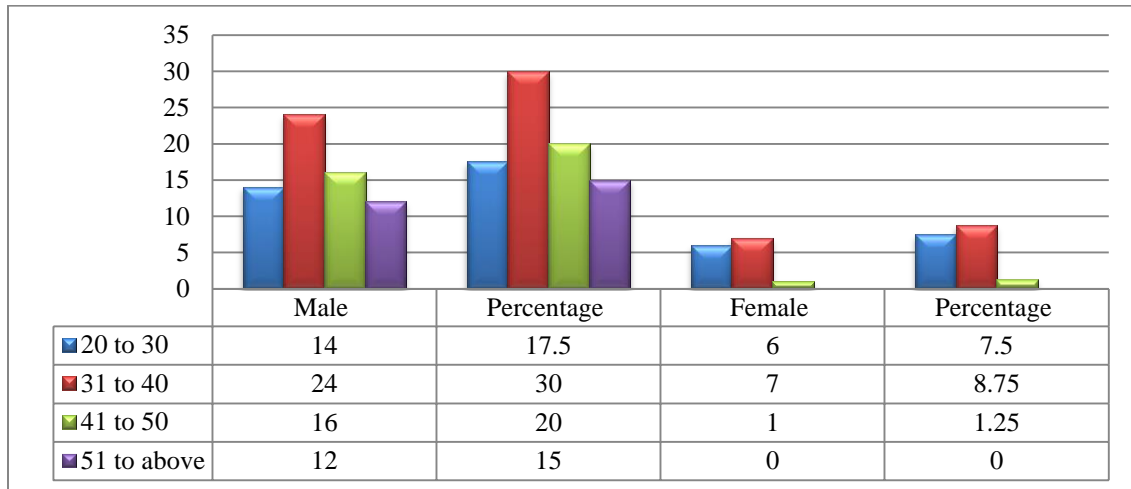


**Respondent details: Jalaun Uttar Pradesh**

**Figure: 3.1 Male and Female**



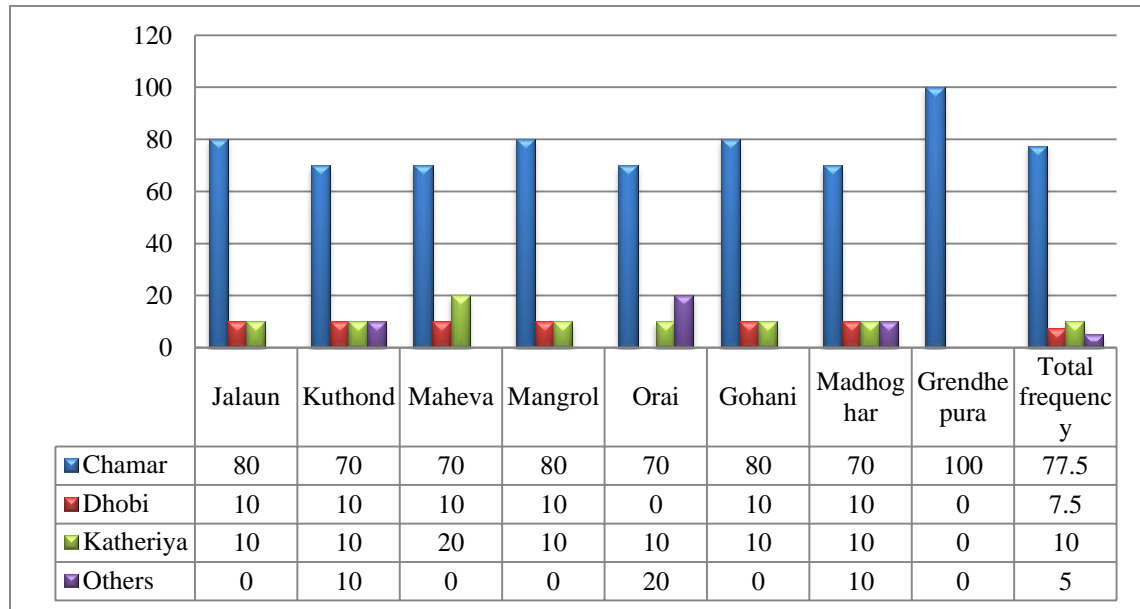
**Figure: 3.2 Age group**



The figure: 3.2 shows that age-wise distribution of respondents in the study area beginning from the age-group of 20 years to above 50 years. The age-group of 20-30 years respondents were 17.5 percent male and 7.5 percent female whereas the age-group of 31 to 40 years, 30 percent male and 8.75 percent were female respondents. In the age group of 41-50 years, the male respondents were 20 percent and female respondents 1.25 percent, and the above 50 years respondents were only 15 percent male respondents. It is

also necessary to discuss the sub-caste wise distribution of respondents in the study area.<sup>44</sup>

**Figure: 3.3 Sub-caste wise respondents.**

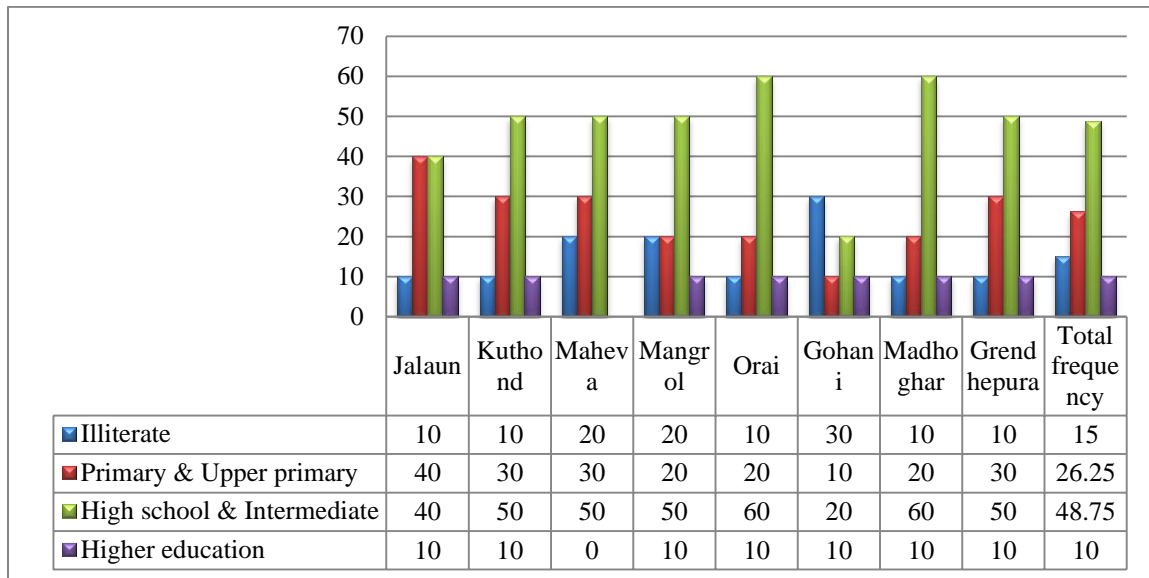


The Scheduled Caste population in Jalaun district is comparatively low. Within the low concentration of Scheduled Caste community in this district, the sub-caste groups play a significant role in promoting Dalit consciousness at the district as well as the state level. In this study the figure: 3.3 shows that the majority of respondents were from Chamar community i.e., 77.5 percent and the other respondents were from a sub-caste group of Dhobi 7.5 percent and Katheriya 10 percent respectively.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 3.2 is given and analyzed. Selected for respondent is field study area.

<sup>45</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 3.3 is given and analyzed. Respondent caste vised selected each of village in Jalaun district.

**Figure: 3.4 Educational background of respondents.**



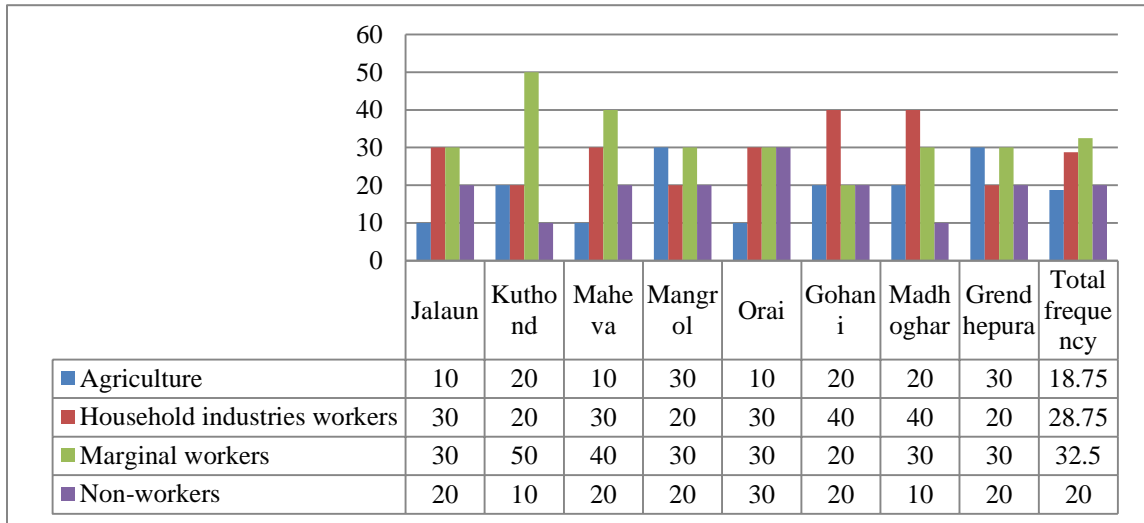
Education plays a crucial role in promoting political consciousness. In this context, the figure: 3.4 shows the educational background of the respondents in the study area. Out of the total respondents, 48.75 percent of respondents' education status was either High School or Intermediate level, followed by 26.25 percent respondents who were of primary and upper primary education, whereas only 10 percent of respondents were from higher education background. Lastly, the graph shows that 15 percent of respondents were from illiterates. It is also important here to discuss the occupational status of respondents in the study area.<sup>46</sup>

In Jalaun district agriculture is one the major sources of livelihood. The figure: 3.5 shows the occupational status of respondents. In this, 18.75 percent were agriculturists, 28.75 percent of respondents were household industry workers, 32.5 percent of respondents were marginal worker and 20 percent of respondents were non-workers.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 3.4 is given and analyzed. Respondent is educational background each of village.

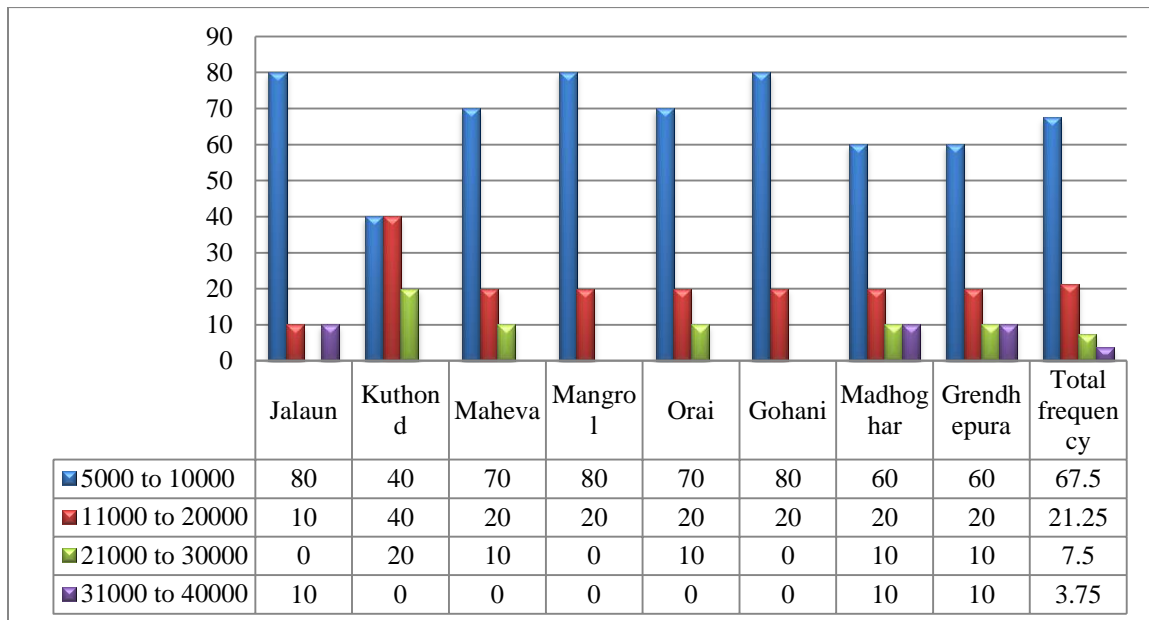
<sup>47</sup> The data of figure no. 3.5 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study.

**Figure: 3.5 Occupational status of respondents.**



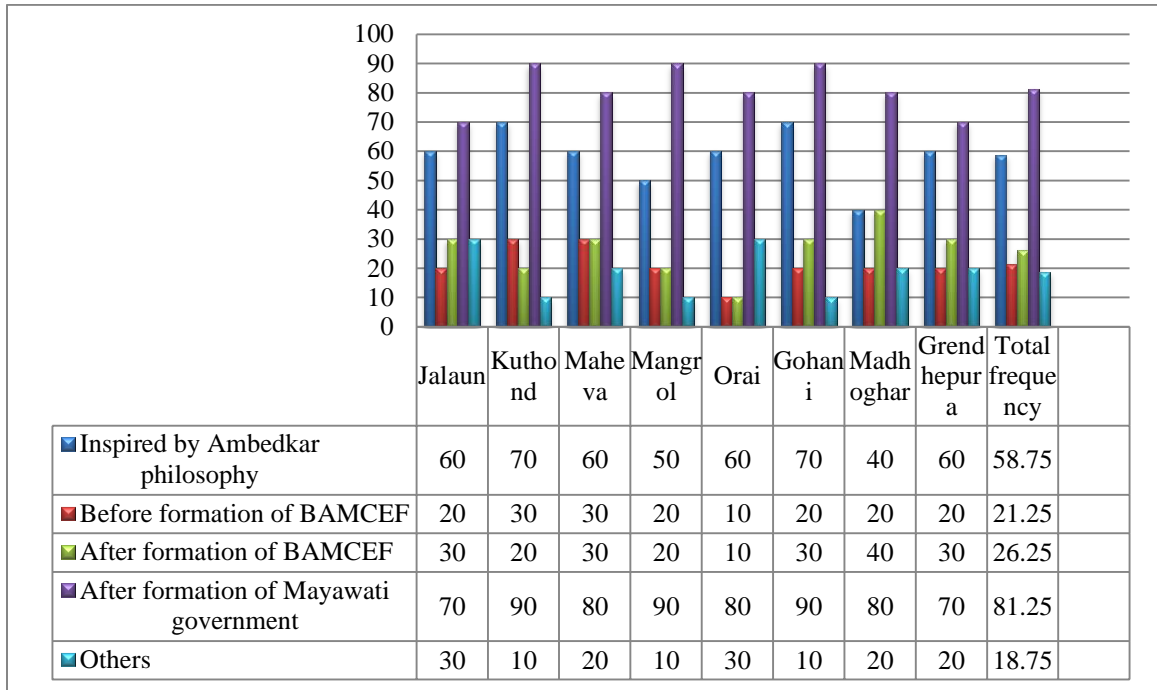
The figure: 3.6 shows that the majority of respondents in the income groups of Rs. 5000- to Rs. 10,000- i.e., 67.5 percent; whereas 21.25 percent of respondents were in the income level of Rs. 11,000 to Rs. 20,000. The graph also shows that 7.5 percent of respondents were in the income group of Rs. 21,000- to Rs. 30,000- and only 3.75 percent of respondent monthly income is Rs. 31,000- to Rs. 40,000-.<sup>48</sup>

**Figure: 3.6 Monthly income of respondents.**



<sup>48</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 3.6 is given and analyzed below.

**Figure: 3.7 Respondents views on political inspiration from different sources.**

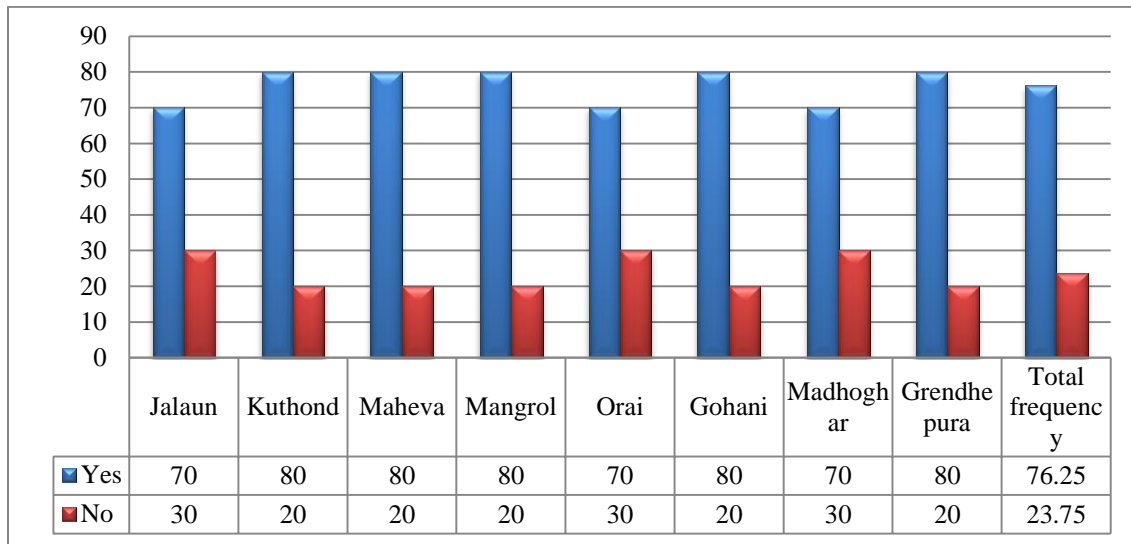


**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar is an icon for the Dalit community of India and he has always been an inspiration for Dalit political consciousness. In this study of the Jalaun district, 58.75 percent of respondents have stated that Ambedkar’s philosophy is one of the greatest inspirations for them and is the foundation for their political consciousness. 21.25 respondents have expressed the fact that prior to the formation of BAMCEF Dalit communities were active in politics of the state, but 26.25 percent have stated after the formation of BAMCEF the political consciousness among Dalits was strongly bonded in the district. 81.25 percent of respondents have stated that after formation government under the Chief Ministership of Kumari. Mayawati, Dalit political consciousness was widely spread and they could speak openly in favor of the Dalit community in the district.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The data of figure no. 3.7 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure

**Figure: 3.8 Respondents views on close relatives active in politics.**



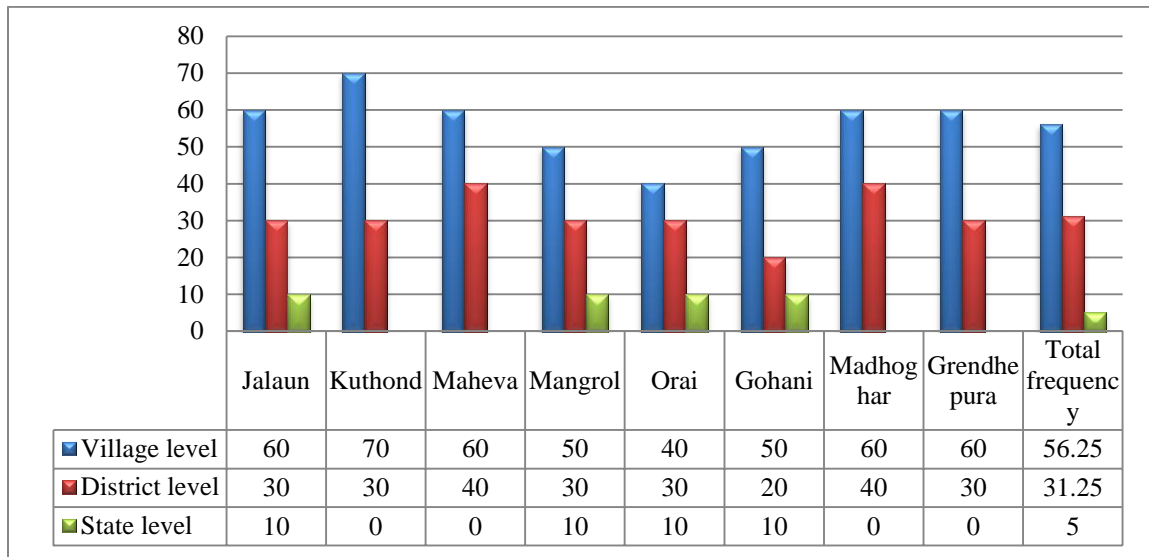
The figure: 3.8 shows that close relatives of respondents are active in politics. While interacting with them they have stated that Dalits are active in politics from the village level to state level. The figure: 3.8 shows that 76.25 percent of respondents have stated that the Dalits are active in politics at the village level. 23.75 percent of respondents have stated that none of their relatives are active in politics but when the issue of Dalits comes to them they are more concerned for their community.<sup>50</sup>

As it has already been discussed that the Dalit population in Jalaun district is comparatively lower than the Etawah district but they are much more active in issues related to their community. During the field study, the respondents have expressed their activeness in politics at different levels of state politics. The figure: 3.9 shows that 56.25 respondents have stated that they are active at the village level whereas 31.25 percent have stated that they are active at district level. Lastly, only 5 percent of respondents have stated their active at state-level politics.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.8 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent have given their views on the question asked them by the researcher

<sup>51</sup> The study of figure no. 3.9 is discussed. The respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. But mostly respondents active are village and district level. The figure discussed is each of village respondents on view.

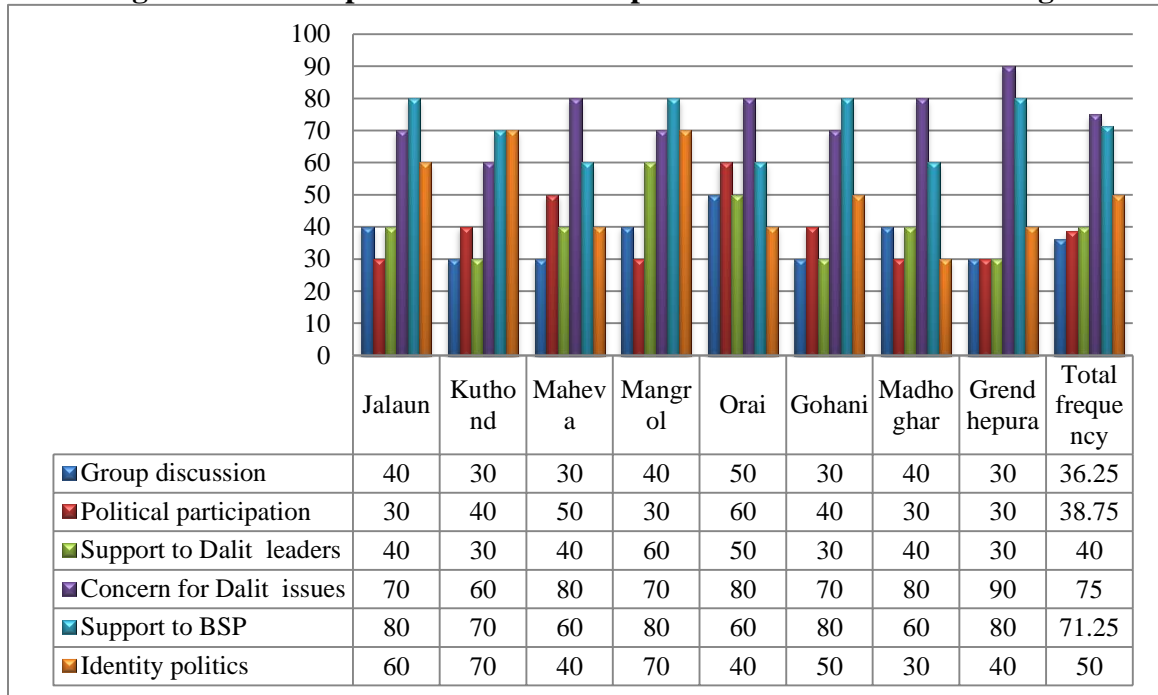
**Figure: 3.9 Respondents views on being politically active at different level in politics.**



Political consciousness among Dalits has manifested in different forms in Jalaun district. Though the population size of Dalits is less in number but they are active in identity politics and consciousness. The figure: 3.10 shows the political consciousness among Dalits in the study area. Out of total respondents, 36.25 percent stated that group discussion about the Dalit politics in the state is one of the processes of political consciousness among the Dalits in the study areas. 38.75 percent of respondents have said that participation of Dalit leaders in politics is truly promoting political consciousness among the Dalits in the district. Supporting Dalit leaders in the politics is always given priority but that would be depending upon the political leaders, and their past activities on issues related to Dalits. In this context, 40 percent of the respondents have stated that they are supporting the Dalit political leaders, whereas 75 percent of the respondents have that they are also concerned for the Dalit issues. Therefore, any political leader needs to address issues related to their community. It is a fact that the Dalit community has always supported the Bahujan Samaj Party because this is the only political party which raises the issues of the Dalits at state and national level as stated by 71.25 percent of respondents. Further 50 percent of respondents have also agreed that in the politics of the state particularly the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has established the caste-based identity politics in the state. The respondents further stated that caste

discrimination is deep-rooted in the rural society of the district but due to the presence of BSP in Indian politics Dalits are politically more conscious.<sup>52</sup>

**Figure: 3.10 Respondents views on political consciousness among Dalits.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

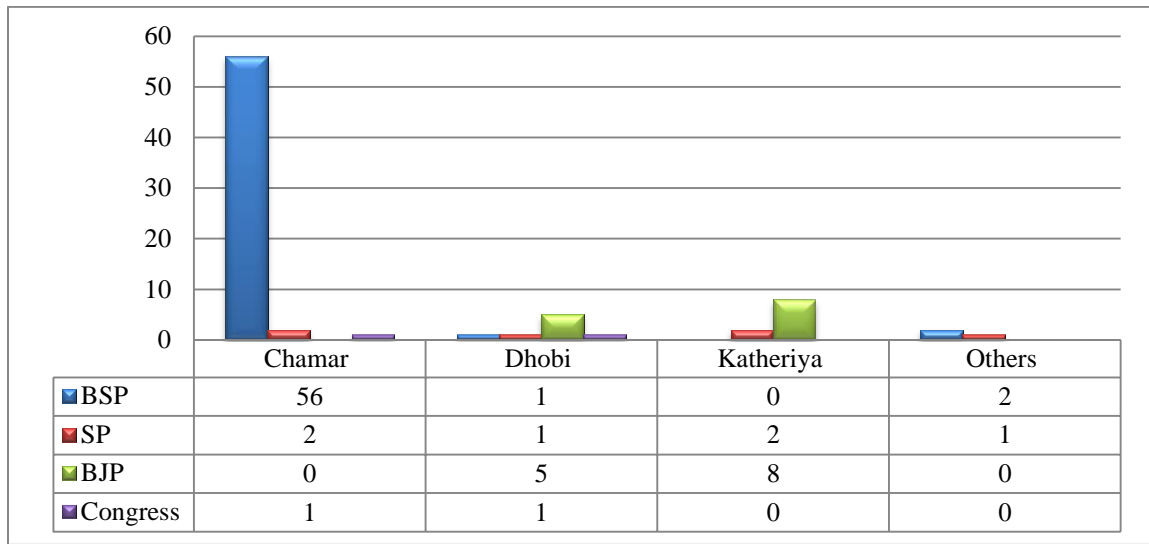
The Chamar sub-caste is the majority group in the state as well as in Jalaun district. In this context the figure: 3.11 shows that 56 percent of respondents have said that Chamar sub-caste supported BSP for the protection of interests of Dalit communities. On the other hand, only 2 percent of respondents have stated that they supported Samajwadi Party which is also concerned about the Dalits cause. The Dhobi and Katheriya sub-caste groups supported Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In Jalaun district the support base of Congress party has not been marked significantly in the present political scenario despite it being one of the oldest political parties in India.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> The data of figure no. 3.10 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked open-ended questions for respondents in the study area. The data were analyzed based on the ideas they had put forward

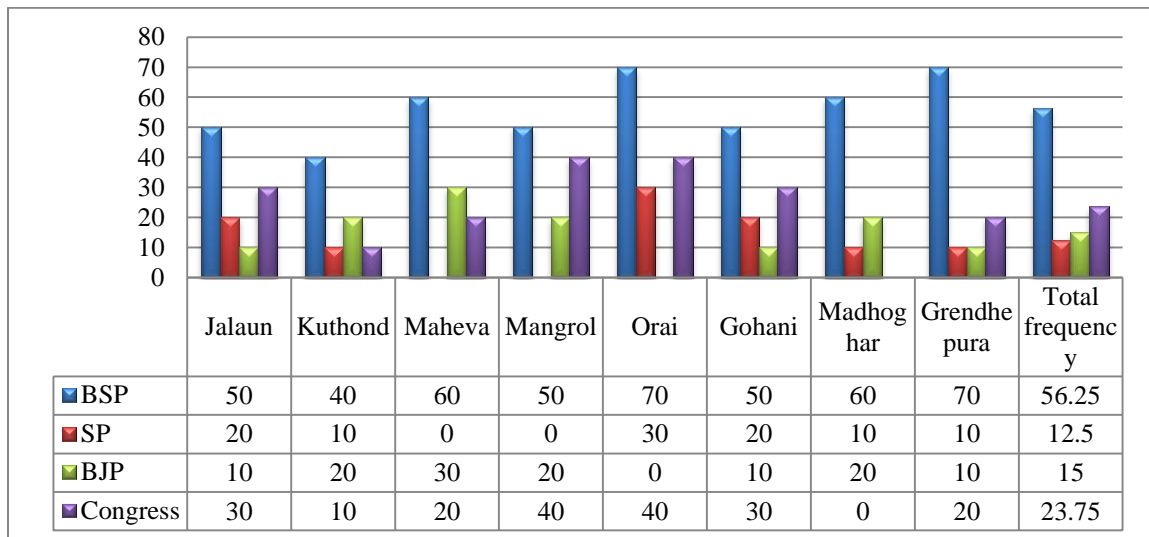
<sup>53</sup> The data of figure no. 3.11 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked a question for respondents support for any political party in the study area. Respondent support to caste wise different party. The majority of the population in each village is of the Chamar communities. Hence most of the Chamar communities support to BSP.



**Figure: 3.11 Division of sub-caste wise support to political parties.**



**Figure: 3.12 Concern of various political parties on development issues of Dalits.**

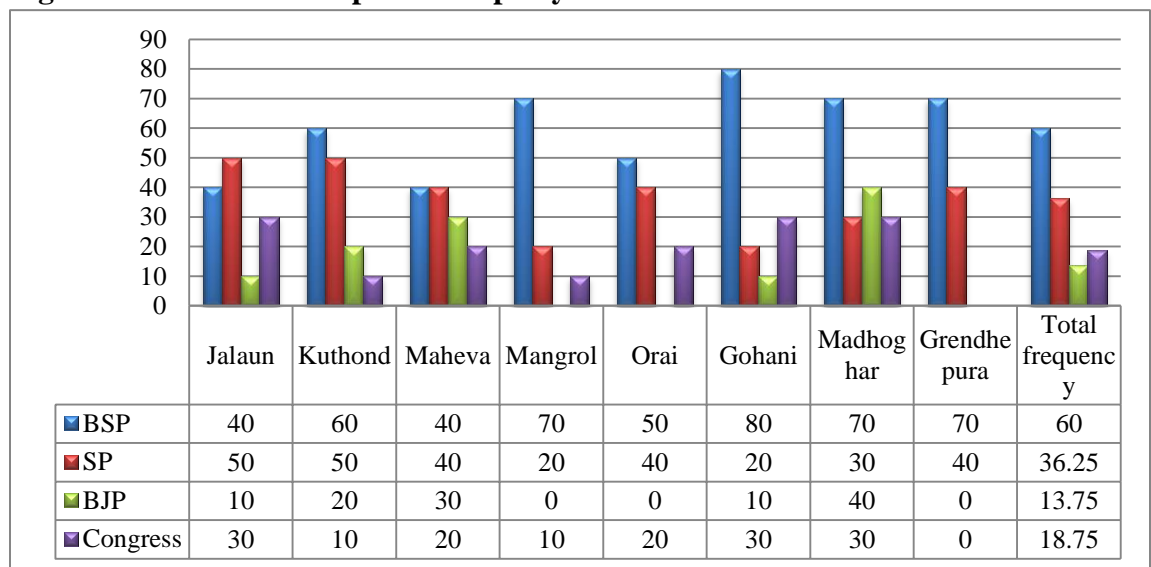


**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Improving socio-economic conditions of Dalits has occupied the center stage in India politics. In the post-independence period, political leaders have put forward various paths for the upliftment of this section, hoping thereby to mobilize them and obtain their support in the political activities of India. In this study, the respondents have expressed their opinion on various political parties and this concern for the developmental issues of Dalit community of the study area. The figure: 3.12 shows that 56.25 percent of

respondents said that they supported BSP because the development of Dalit communities is the primary agenda of this party. On the other hand, 12.5 percent of respondents have stated that they supported Samajwadi Party which is also concerned about the Dalits cause. 15 percent respondents supported Bharatiya Janata Party and only 23.75 percent have stated that they supported to Congress party. In Jalaun district Dalit sub-caste groups supported political parties other then BSP.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure: 3.13 Which political party raised most cases of Dalit issues?**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

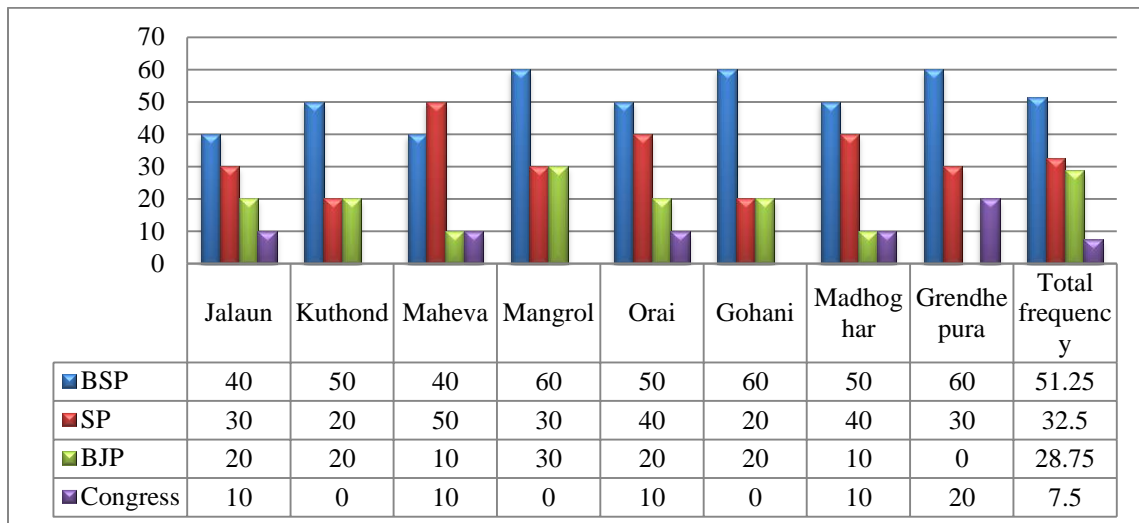
As has already been discussed, that Dalits are considered as a vote bank for political parties. With this objective, political parties raise the issues of Dalit communities at the national and state level. In this study, the figure: 3.13 shows that 60 percent of respondents tell that Bahujan Samaj Party raised the issues related to Dalit communities. Further other respondents have stated that other political parties too were concerned with the Dalit issues. In this context, 36.25 percent respondents supported Samajwadi Party, 13.75 percent supported Bharatiya Janata Party, and 18.75 percent respondents supported Congress party.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> The data of figure no. 3.12 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked a question for respondents discussing in each village, the respondents say that BSP and Congress are at the forefront in the field of development.

<sup>55</sup> The data of figure no.3.13 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked the question for respondents from each village are told while discussing social problems. There is

Jalaun is one of the backward districts in the Bundelkhand region. Uttar Pradesh was ruled by different political parties over the years. During the field study, the question as to which political party worked most for the development of the Jalaun district was discussed by respondents of the district. The figure: 3.14 shows that 51.25 percent have said that during BSP government the development of Jalaun district was at itspeak. 32.5 percent fell that it was during the SP government, whereas 28.75 percent stated that BJP government has initiated the development of the district. 7.5 percent state that under the Congress government, the district has least development.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure: 3.14 Different parties’ government’s initiatives in the development of Jalaun district.**



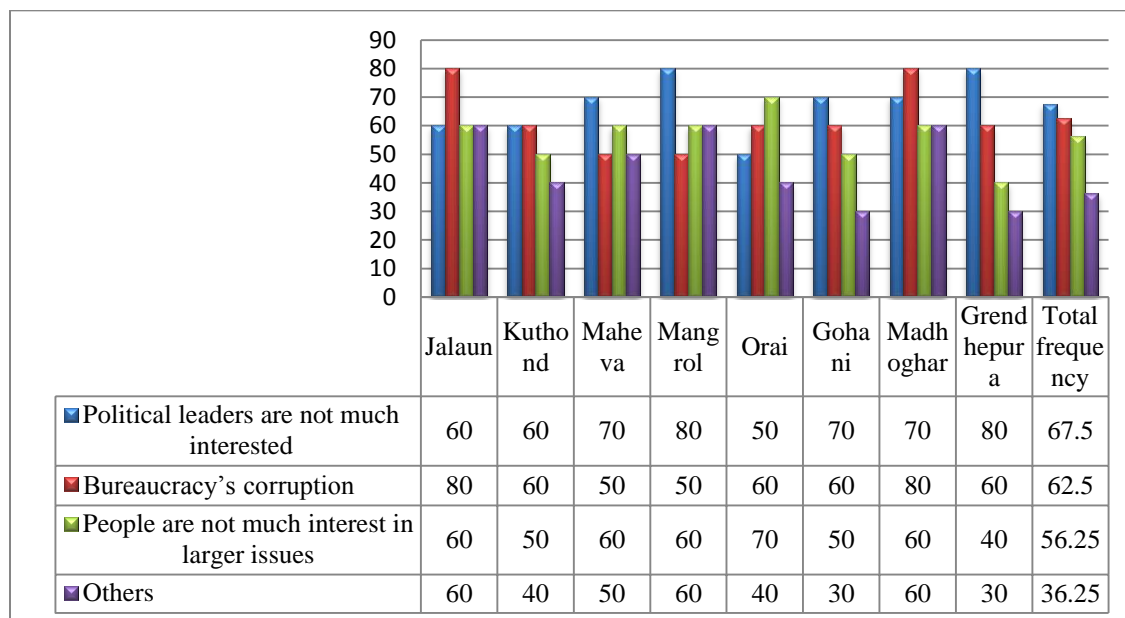
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

discrimination on the basis of discrimination and untouchability. Dalit society does not know its rights because there is a lack of education. Therefore, discrimination and untouchability have become common with poor Dalit people. The economic, educational and unemployment problems of Dalit society are still there today. They are not getting a good education. He told that the daughters of my society are not read and write because if they go to study, then upper caste boys bother with them. When they protest, they threaten them and molest them. When they protest more, they rape her. So that the girl could not complain at her house or police station. If a case becomes serious. So the upper caste people intimidate the Dalit people and resolve the matter at the village level All political parties are raising voice at their level, but most BSP voices Dalit issues at the national level.

<sup>56</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.14 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. Each village respondent discussing for the initiative of Jalaun district

The reason behind the underdevelopment of the region is that in Bundelkhand, at the top of the social, hierarchy are the castes like Rajputs Brahmins, Kayesthas, Jains and Banias, who have the control over the major chose of landholdings and on the trade and business.<sup>57</sup> Naturally, they have been influencing the politics of the region from the beginning. The middle castes like Lodhi and Yadavs are now emerging on the political scene after the ‘vandalisation’ of politics.<sup>58</sup> The Scheduled Castes are getting organized now under the banner of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and have showsn their political strength in Satna parliamentary constituency in last 1996 election which the BSP won. But still the ‘unholy trinity’ of the landlord, money lender and trader continues to hold the center stage of politics and money and muscle power rules the politics.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure: 3.15 Respondents views on under-development of the district.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The figure: 3.15 shows that 67.5 percent of the respondents have stated that the negligence of political leaders was one of the main reasons for the underdevelopment of

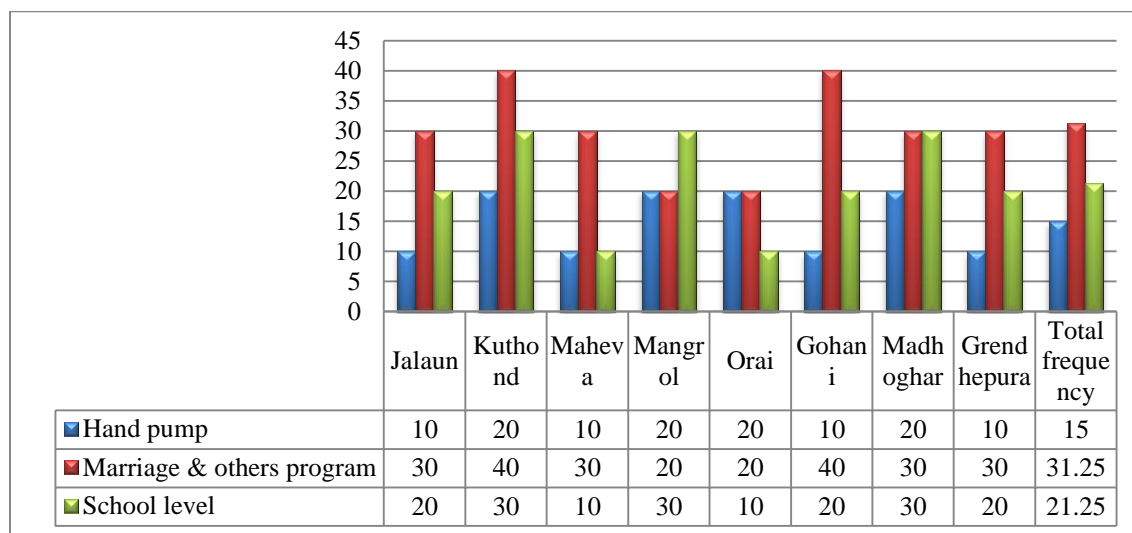
<sup>57</sup> Rakesh Nath Tiwary, Study on Bundelkhand, p. 16 [http:// planningcommi ssion. nic.in/report s/sereport/ser/bndel/stry\\_bndel.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/sereport/ser/bndel/stry_bndel.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

the district. 62.5 percent have stated that bureaucratic corruption is another major challenge in the development process of Jalaun district. As caste plays a significant role in the district, 56.25 percent respondents have said that people of this region are not taking much interest in the development of the district. Lastly, 46.25 percent stated that other factors are also contributing to the underdevelopment of the region.<sup>60</sup>

**Figure: 3.16 Respondents views on Dalits suffering untouchability at the village level.**



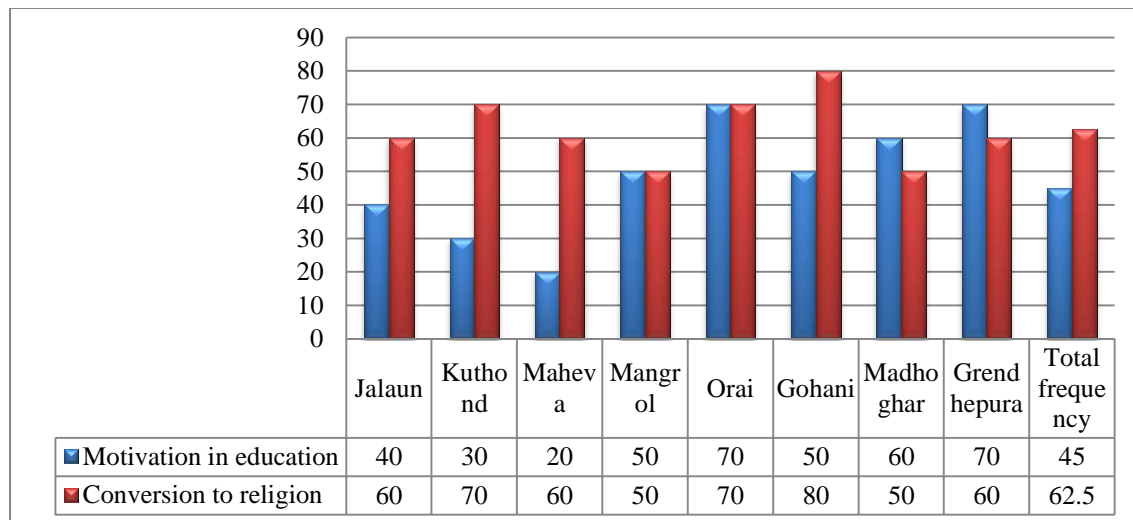
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Caste discrimination at the village in Indian society is a historical phenomenon. While interacting with respondents about the extent and nature of caste discrimination that Dalits are facing today, respondents have stated that the practice of untouchability by upper caste people still existed in rural areas. In Jalaun district majority of Dalits have converted to Buddhism but have they are still there stated as practice of untouchables that the Dalits suffer untouchability of different public places have been indicated in the figure: 3.16. The 15 percent of respondents have stated that they encountered the practice

<sup>60</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.15 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher of each village, it is learned that in Bundelkhand, a government of any political party formed. But here most corruption takes place in the field of development. Due to which the district is still very backward in the development area of Jalaun.

of untouchability while using a hand pump for accessing drinking water at their villages. Further 31.25 percent of respondents have testified about the practice of untouchability; especially during a marriage ceremony in their villages. The practice of untouchability has also existed in education institutions. In this context, 21.25 percent of respondents have stated that Dalit children have experience extreme untouchability at the school, practicing in accessing public places within the school premises.<sup>61</sup>

**Figure: 3.17 Abolition of the caste system from the Hindu social system.**



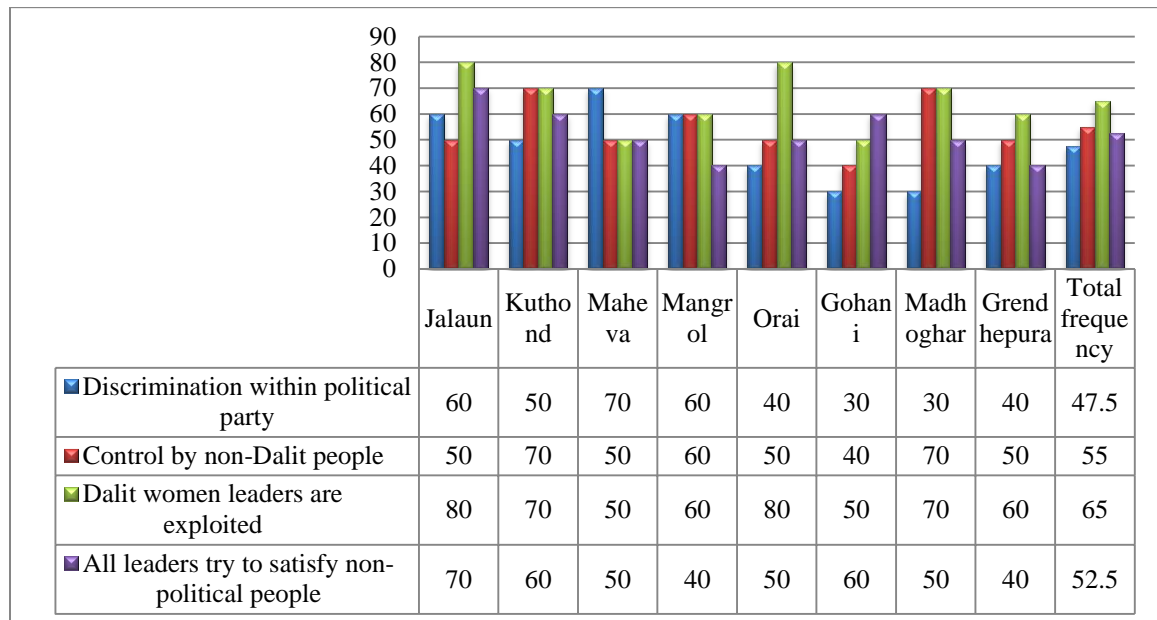
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

In order to get rid of caste discrimination and the practice of untouchability, the Dalits of Jalaun districts have converted to Buddhism. As per the constitutional provision, the state has taken various measures to abolish caste discrimination but it is still extensively practiced by several of people Hindus the Dalit community to gain equal status and opportunities in the society. During group discussion with the respondents, they have stated their understanding of abolition of caste discrimination. The figure: 3.17

<sup>61</sup> The data of figure no.3.16 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked the question for respondents from each village are told while discussing untouchability at the village level. The satire of Indian society is that caste untouchability has not ended even today. Although strict laws have been made in the Constitution, no one abides by those laws. Even today the upper caste people follow the laws of Manu. No matter how much a person of Dalit society studies and reaches good positions, the discrimination with him never ends. Even today, the Dalit society does not allow upper caste people to take water from the hand pump. At the wedding and ceremony, Dalits sit away and provide food where there is dirt. In many primary schools, upper-caste teachers provide cleanliness work to Dalit children. And sit separately in the classroom.

shows that 45 percent of respondents have stated education plays a significant role in the abolition of the caste system in society. Apart from this, 62.5 percent of respondents believe that conversion to another religion would be also way to abolish the caste system in Indian society.<sup>62</sup>

**Figure: 3.18 Respondents views on kind of problem that scheduled caste political leader’s face.**



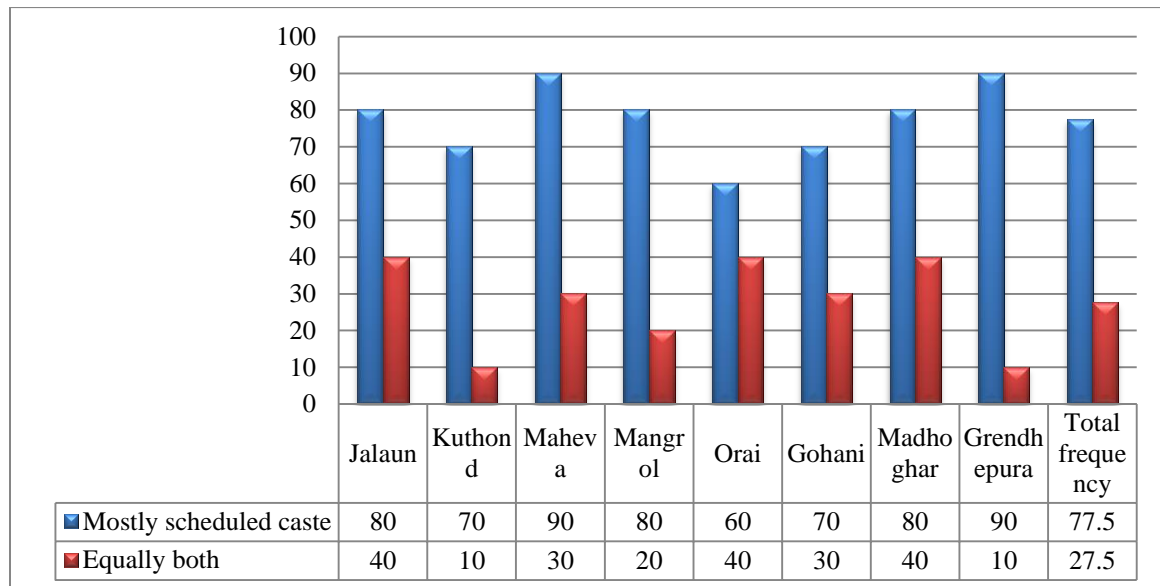
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The figure: 3.18 shows that Dalit political leaders face different forms of caste discrimination in their political journey. 47.5 percent of respondents have stated that discrimination within a political party is one of the major problems for Dalit political leaders. 55 percent of respondents have stated that mostly non-Dalits were controlling political parties even though efficient Dalit political leaders are also a part of the party. Further 65 percent of respondents have said that Dalit women leaders are being exploited at different stages of their political career. 52.5 percent have stated that the upper caste

<sup>62</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.17 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. While discussing with the accountants of every village, education, and religion conversion has been given importance to end the caste system. Some respondents said that if the level of education increases, the caste system will end. Some Dalit respondents also said that by converting to religion, caste will end. Because Hinduism is based on the caste system.

political leaders are always trying to satisfy non-political people in order to maintain their vote strength for a future election.<sup>63</sup>

**Figure: 3.19 In your opinion which of the community get major support of Dalit leaders during election?**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

During the field study, the research concluded that getting non-Dalit communities' support for Dalit political leaders is a hard journey in their political life. Figure: 3.19 shows that 77.5 percent of respondents have stated that most of the non-Dalit voters would not support Dalit leaders unless their constituency is reserved for Scheduled Castes. Although 27.5 percent have stated that other communities are also getting support from voters in their political carrier but that is based on the caste line.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> The data of figure no. 3.18 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure. In all political parties, Dalit leaders are discriminated against and rejected in non-Dalits people.

<sup>64</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study area data of figure no. 3.19 is given and analysed. Non-Dalit people are supported but they are candidates of the political party. Everyone votes on reserved seats, but non-Dalits do not support the Dalit political party.



The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), formed in 1984, is a political party follows the ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and stands for the interest of the Dalit communities of society. The BSP states that it represents the people at the lowest levels of the Hindu social system—those officially designated as members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes—as well as other religious and social minorities.<sup>65</sup> The core support group of the BSP consists primarily of the Dalits (Scheduled Castes, former untouchables). The party focused on respecting and upholding the constitutional rights of the lower caste members of Indian society.

The inspiration for the creation of the party was the long-time Dalit activist and constitutional expert, Dr. Ambedkar. Kanshi Ram, a Dalit and a civil service worker, was spurred into pro-Dalit activism in the 1960s after reading Ambedkar's writings and through witnessing first-hand caste discrimination.<sup>66</sup> Kanshi Ram's efforts to mobilise Dalits and other minorities led to his involvement in politics, in which he spent years crisscrossing Uttar Pradesh state and traveling throughout the country eliciting support for the cause. In 1984 he founded<sup>67</sup> the party and led it until he was succeeded by Kumar Mayawati in 2003. Although Kanshi Ram was responsible for building the support base for the party, Mayawati shaped and nurtured it into a powerful political force in Uttar Pradesh and at the national level.<sup>68</sup>

Having a Dalit political party was needed for the interest of Dalit communities. In this context, the figure: 3.20 shows that representation of a Dalit political party like Bahujan Samaj Party in the electoral politics of India has brought numerous changes in Dalit community's life particularly to Dalit political leaders. In this context, figure: 3.20 shows 61.25 percent of respondents have stated that the presence of BSP in Indian politics has empowered the Dalit community. 58.75 percent have affirmed about the major development of Dalit society whereas 66.25 percent have stated that Dalits have gained a

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<sup>65</sup> Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, Bahujan Samaj Party, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bahujan-Samaj-Party>

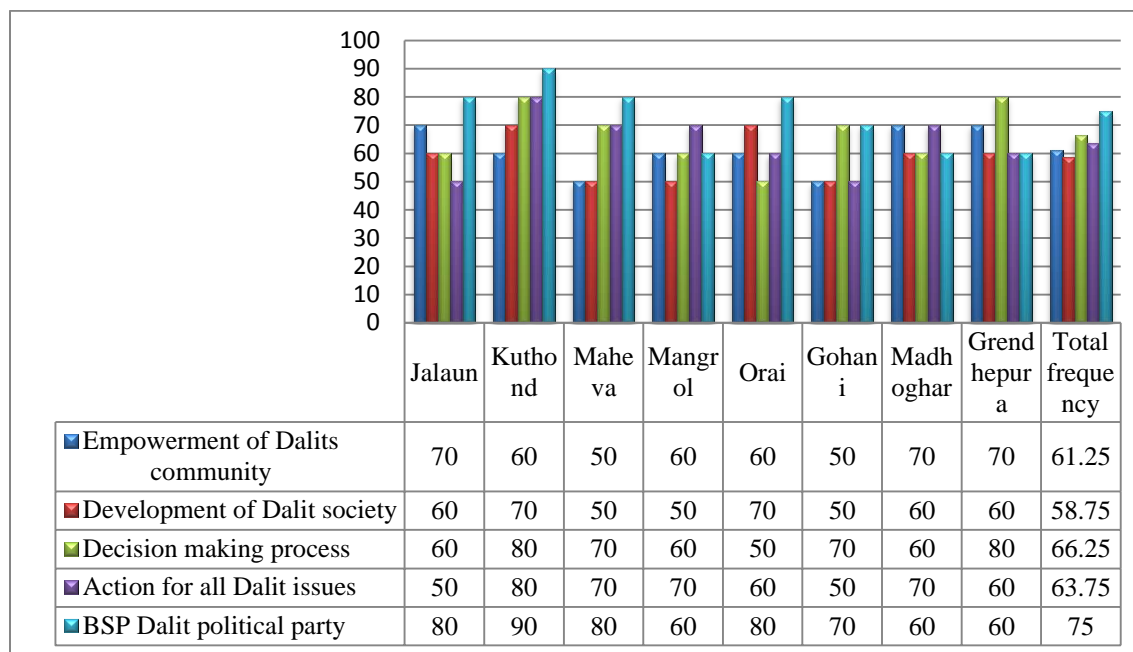
<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

major share the decision making the process. Further 63.75 percent have stated it is the Dalit political party was always inactive on the issues of Dalit community.<sup>69</sup>

**Figure: 3.20 Do you think the scheduled castes should have a separate political party to represent their interests?**



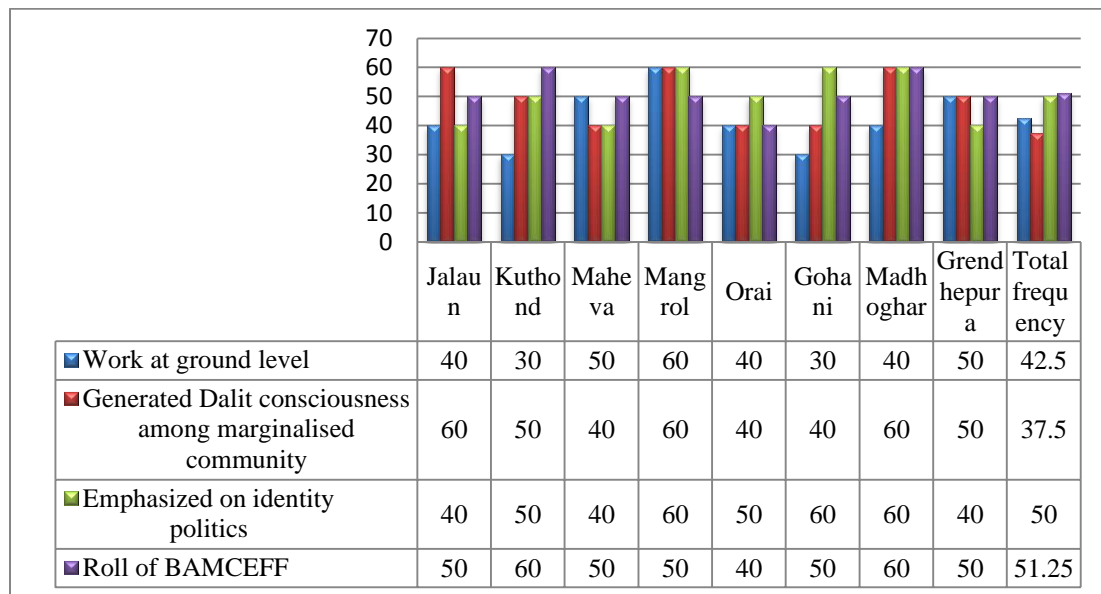
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The constitution of India has conferred social, economic and political rights for backward sections of society for their overall development in their life. After Dr. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram had realized the rights of Dalit communities for the development and representation of Dalit communities. To translate his vision into reality he had dedicatedly worked for the upliftment of Dalit communities. The figure: 3.21 shows the contribution of Kanshi Ram in generating political consciousness among the Dalit communities. 42.5 percent stated Kanshi Ram worked at ground level in order to consolidate the strength of Dalit communities. 37.5 percent have stated the dedication of Kanshi Ram had generated consciousness among Dalit communities, whereas 50 percent

<sup>69</sup> The data of figure no. 3.20 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure. These figure analyses of separate Dalit political party, but some respondents do not support the Dalit political party. Because casteism gets a boost, but most of the respondents support the Dalit political party.

felt that he had emphasized upon identity politics. Formulation of Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) had truly enabled Kanshi Ram to succeed in his journey towards the upliftment of Dalits and was attested by 51.25 percent of the respondents.<sup>70</sup>

**Figure: 3.21 Kanshi Ram’s initiative for Socio-Political consciousness among marginalized groups.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

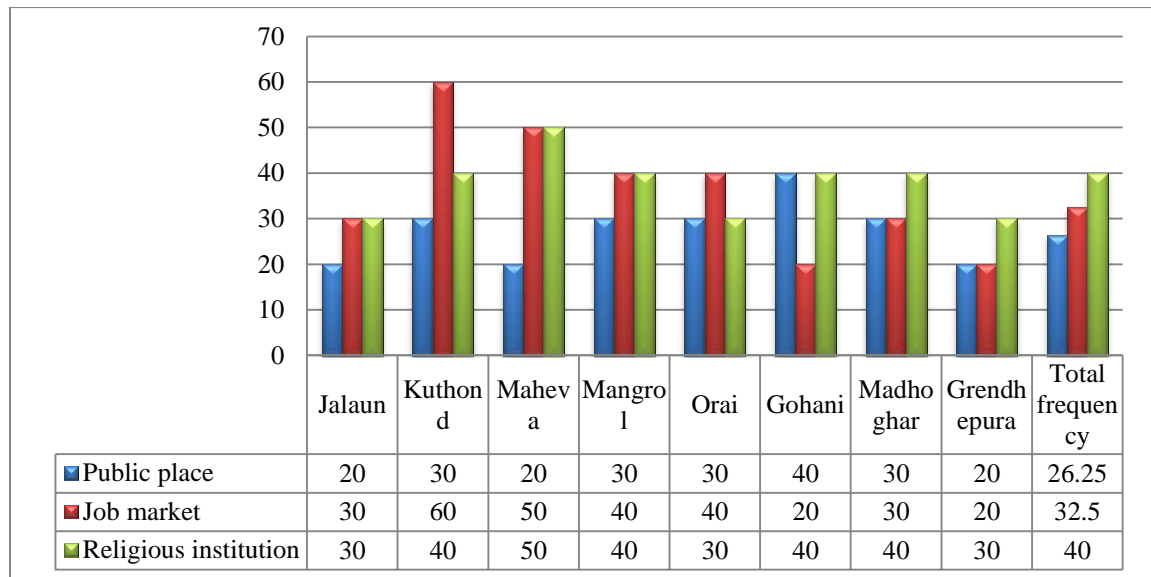
The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) had formed government in Uttar Pradesh in 2007 and Kumari Mayawati’s became the Chief Minister. No doubt it was a great achievement for BSP as a Dalit political party and getting a full majority to form a government in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>71</sup> It has also encouraged Dalit political leaders to carry forward their journey for the interest of this backward community and enabled them to raise their voice for the rights and freedom of these marginalized communities. However, the caste-based atrocities have not been completely wiped out in rural society. In this context, the respondents have expressed the put that Dalits have been subjected to atrocities regularly

<sup>70</sup> The data of figure no. 3.21 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given in the figure

<sup>71</sup> Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, Bahujan Samaj Party, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bahujan-Samaj-Party>

in a different place, in their socio-economic and political life. The figure: 3.22 shows that 26.25 percent says Dalits have been the victims of atrocities in public places where as 32.5 percent stated they were experiencing the caste discrimination in the job market. Also, 40 percent affirmed that caste atrocities were indeed still taking places in religious institutions.<sup>72</sup>

**Figure: 3.22 Caste-based atrocities during the Mayawati government.**



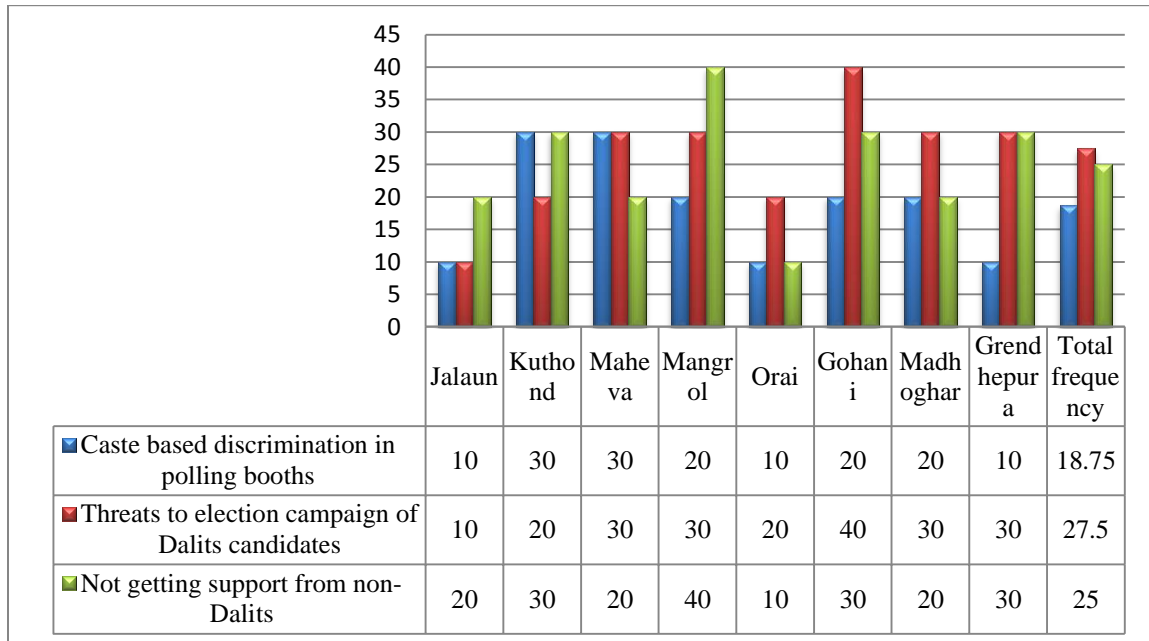
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The practice of caste-based discrimination was not confined to the social life of Dalits alone, but it has also existed in electoral politics. The figure: 3.23 shows 18.75 percent of respondents have stated the caste-based discrimination occurred in polling booths. 27.5 percent answered that the Dalits faced life threats during their election campaign. 5 percent of respondents have stated that even though Dalit political leaders were active they were however not getting full support from non-Dalit communities.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.22 is discussed. The 8 sample village's respondents have given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. These data collection fields work each of village by researcher.

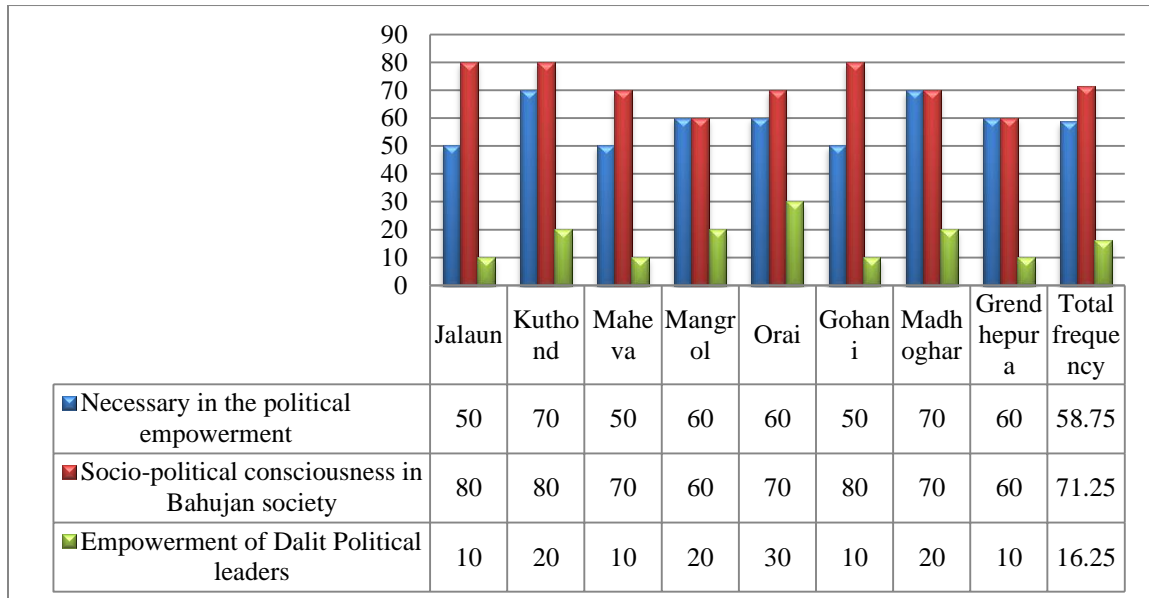
<sup>73</sup> The data of figure no. 3.23 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given in the figure. According to the respondents, despite the law and order situation, Dalit people are discriminated against during election.

**Figure: 3.23 Caste-based discrimination in electoral politics.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

**Figure: 3.24 Need of identity politics for the political empowerment of Dalits.**

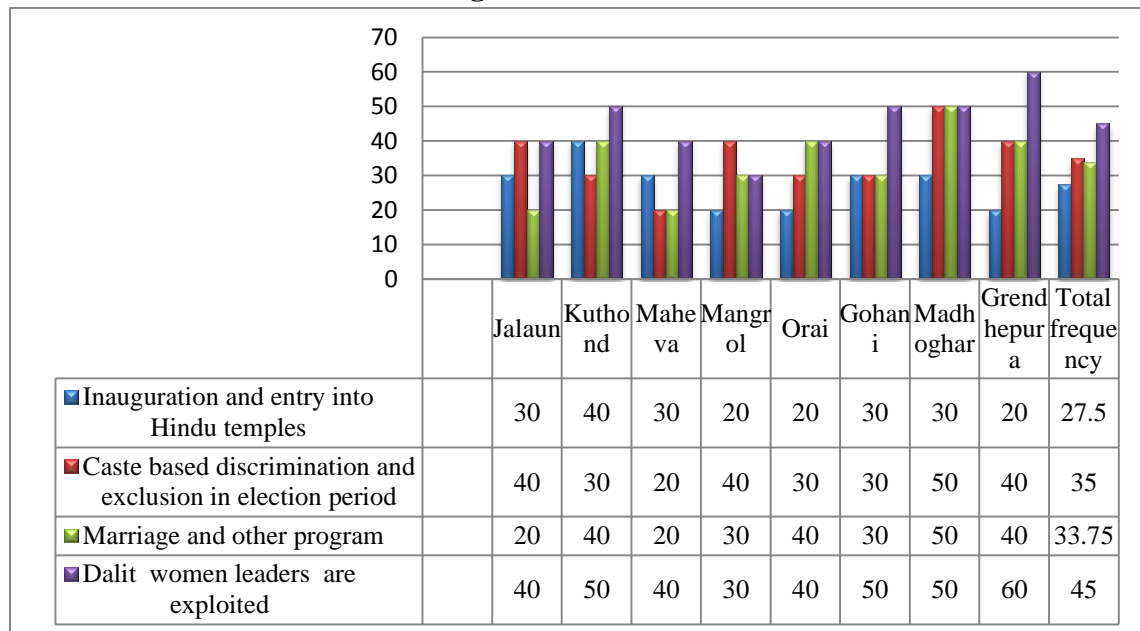


**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The need for identity politics for political empowerment of Dalits was overwhelmingly supported by the respondents of the study area. The figure: 3.24 shows that 58.75 percent stated that there is a need for identity politics for political

empowerment; whereas 71.25 percent expressed identity politics is necessary for socio-political consciousness in Bahujan society. Lastly, 16.25 percent stated that for the empowerment of Dalit political leaders, identity politics is essential.<sup>74</sup>

**Figure: 3.25 Discrimination and exclusion of Dalit political leader, at Village/District/State level.**



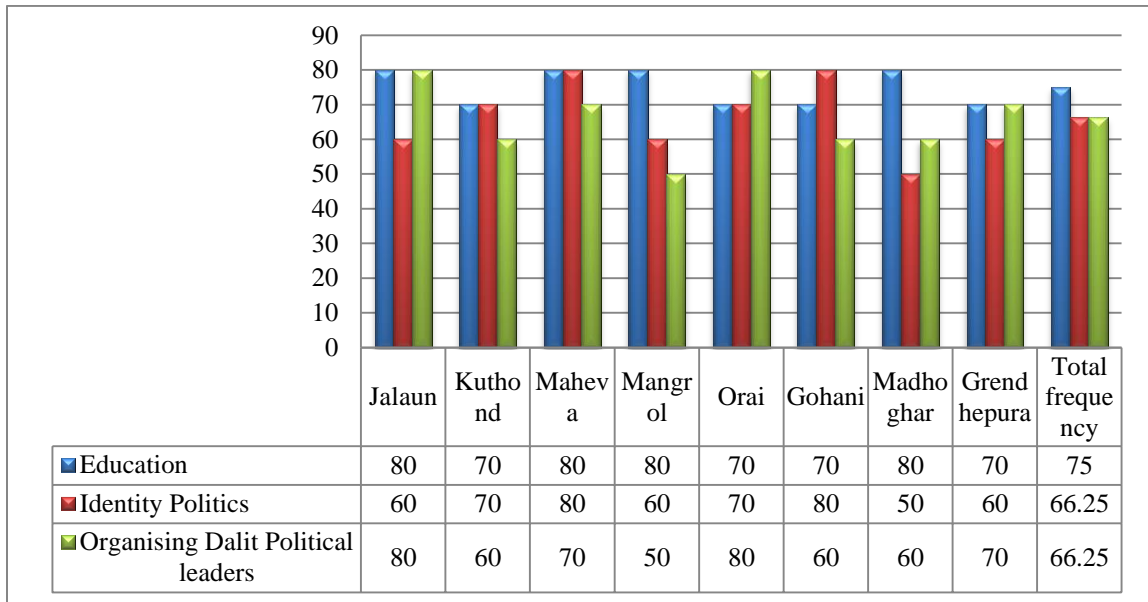
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Discrimination and exclusion of Dalit political leaders have been prevailing from village level to state-level politics as stated by respondents of the study area. In the figure: 3.25 shows, 27.5 percent of respondents have stated that Dalit political leaders are not allowed to enter Hindu temples. 35 percent have said that most Dalit leaders have experienced that caste-based discrimination and exclusion during the election period. The respondents have further stated that even after getting elected to the Legislative Assembly or Local governance bodies, Dalit leaders are unable to take the independent decisions because they are being controlled by non-Dalit leaders. The most cases, it has also been

<sup>74</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.24 is discussed. The 8 sample villages' respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. Respondent each of village discussed her researcher very necessary identity politics in this country.

reported that Dalit women leaders were getting exploited in different spheres of their political life as testified to by 45 percent of the respondents.<sup>75</sup>

**Figure: 3.26 Respondents views on Dalit Political Consciousness.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

In the completion of field study, the respondents have given their views to promote and consolidate Dalit political consciousness. The figure: 3.26 shows that 75 percent of respondents have stated education is an important tool for Dalit communities as well as for Dalit leaders, for promotion political consciousness among this backward community. Secondly, 66.25 percent have stated that identity politics would mobilize large sections of backward communities in the political process of the country. In order to promote political consciousness among Dalit communities, 66.25 percent of respondents

<sup>75</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of the figure no. 3.25 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. In Indian society, discrimination on the basis of caste is very high. Even after becoming the four times Chief Minister Mayawati, people use words like Chamariya at the village and state level. Discrimination against Dalit at the time of electoral politics is a common practice.

have felt that Dalit political leaders should be organised to work for their community and help them to represent in every sphere of their life.<sup>76</sup>

### **Case Study in each of village of district Jalaun**

#### **Case Study: 1**

Mr. Raghavendra Singh<sup>77</sup>, a resident of Jalaun district, said in her own words “I have been actively working in BSP for the last 15 years. I am the party’s sector president. Apart from me, my relatives have also participated actively in politics. I attended the BSP rally for the first the time, where I heard the views of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati and their thoughts impressed me a lot. This made me feel that I should bring political consciousness among my people in rural areas. I made all the sub-castes of Dalit society aware of politics in my area, and in that I also got success. When I started working in rural areas, many people said that they are still facing untouchability. We invite people from the upper castes to our wedding and other programs and we also go sometimes but we do not get any respect in their functions. They offer us food where there is garbage or dirt. If we refuse to eat food, then they threaten us not by denying work on their lands. Because we do not have enough land, we have to depend on them. Not only this, even they do not allow us to have water from their hand pumps, although hand pumps have been installed by the government in every neighborhood.”

***What are the social and political problems in your constituency?*** “Raghavendra Singh, face was filled with sadness for a long time and he put his head down and kept quiet. I asked him as to what happened. He said with a sad face, “I will definitely tell you about the problems. There are many people who are working in good positions in various fields as well as in politics. But so far no one has neither asked about problems or tried to solve

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<sup>76</sup> The data of figure no. 3.26 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure. These figure discussed are political consciousness in Dalit society.

<sup>77</sup> Mr. Raghavendra Singh, (39) higher secondary educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in Jalaun district. The interview is conducted on 12/10/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with the idea of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati in Dalit community. The respondent clearly point out about the untouchability in rural areas and the lack of resources in the village.



the problems, because till date people of my society are working in good positions. He told that due to lack of education, many girls from the Dalit community are not able to read and write. These girls are teased by upper-caste boys on the way when they go to schools. If they complain to the police station, they get threatened or molested. When they protest regarding these issues they get raped by the upper-caste boys. The upper caste people frighten the Dalit communities and resolve the matter at the village level. We have unbearable pain in our hearts but what we can do? If they want to do something again they have to think about whether his or her daughter gets married or not. They filed many false cases against Dalit boys, so they could not get a high position in the government service. Our Dalit society is facing a very pathetic condition at the village level.”

***What are the problems faced during elections?*** He answered “At the time of the election, upper-caste people stay with us day and night to mobilize our people to vote and tread us as vote bank. They offer different kinds of gifts to gather votes from Dalit community, such as providing houses, installing hand pumps, going land for cultivation. They give you whatever you ask at the time of elections. These promises would not be fulfilled after elections rather we face only exploitation and suffer atrocities perpetrated against us. At the time of elections, if we do not cast their vote according to upper castes wishes they would thrash us in our village. If we complain to the police and election office against upper-castes regarding atrocities committed on Dalits, they do not accept their over complaints.”

***Which political party does Dalit society support?*** He answered: “There are many sub-castes in Dalit society in which Jatav (Chamar) population constitutes the majority. Their vote bank is totally committed to BSP. People of other castes support different parties. There was a time when all the Dalit castes supported the BSP. But now is not the case, due to their lack of representation, they started supporting other parties. The BSP has been faced with political crises since 2012. Jatavs failed to treat other sub-castes of the Dalit community as their equals. In the same way as the upper-castes treat lower caste people at the village level, they Jatavas treated Dhobi, Katheriya, Kori, and Balmiki communities. No political responsibility has been given to the people, other than Jatavas

in the BSP at the village level. Due to this reason, non-Jatav castes have started supporting BJP and SP party. BJP has been working for the last 10 years to mobilize non-Jatavas in its party. They succeeded to mobilise the support of non-Jatav castes for its political party through its Rashtriya Svamsevak Sangh. The BJP and RRS have given good positions and honor to non-Jatavas in their political party.”

***To whom dose credit go for the political consciousness that is visible in the Dalit society?*** “The credit goes to Kanshi Ram who worked tirelessly to bring political consciousness among Dalits which is visible today itself. I was also extremely influenced by Kanshi Ram dedication to emancipate Dalit society. He invented different ideas to bring political consciousness as well as to unite Dalits. Dalits started to support BSP because Kanshi Ram had given equal representation to all Dalit castes according to their population representation. Political awareness rise after Mayawati became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. In the course of time, many Dalits realized that our party had failed to protect our interests and so that is the reason why some people started to support other parties. There is criticism by people at ground level that the party has been captured by Brahmins and distribution of tickets to moneyed people led to the expulsion of many leaders who hed earlier worked with Kanshi Ram. Party started to given tickets to people who never worked for our Bahujan society which has caused anger in the Bahujans. Because of these reasons, Dalit society is supporting other political parties, though BSP had worked hard to bring political consciousness among Dalits.”

***Do Dalit leaders face discrimination at the time of the elections?*** “Yes, of course, it is true in ‘*Bagula Kitna bhi Udd le, Lekin Hans Nahin Ban Sakta*’. This adress is usually used by upper-caste over Dalits. It is very unfortunate the caste system is still present in today’s society. Although strict laws have been guaranteed in the Constitution no one abides by these laws. Still, Dalits are victims under caste discrimination though they have occupied good positions in various fields. Even though Mayawati served as Chief Minister of U.P. for four times, upper caste people have insulted by calling her a *Chamariya*. This is process their casteist mindset. Even president of India as discriminated on the basis of caste though he is having a Constitutional position. Then it is ever more painful to imagine the condition of Dalits at the village level.”

***What is the role of the caste during the elections?*** “Every political party search for a particular caste candidate before elections is based on, which caste dominates more and its strength in the given constituency. These constituencies are identified on the basis of candidate caste. Therefore; we can say that caste plays a very crucial role in the electoral process.”

## **Case Study: 2**

Mrs. Javitri Devi<sup>78</sup> is a resident of Kuthond, Jalaun district. She narrated her experience thus: “when I was a school teacher 15 years ago, I experienced with discrimination in the harassed of the school headmaster because of my caste. For that, I fought hard but failed. But I did not stop fighting because this discrimination was not faced just by me. Rather, there was oppression and discrimination against all Dalit women, who continued to suffer that oppression quietly. I was very sad and could not understand what to do. Then one day I made up my mind to quit my job. After that, I decided to join politics. I knew little about Dr. Ambedkar and I had never read his books. One day my friend gifted me some books which were written on Dr. Ambedkar’s struggle. This has given me the energy to fight for all women in my society. I started my politics with Panchayat elections and lost the election for the first time. However, I did not give up, and the second time I contested again without spending any money and I won securing majority totals votes. The reason for that victory was to go to the women and make them aware of the significance of education and how it can solve most problems. That’s why I got the votes from all women.”

***Are your relatives active in politics?*** Yes, “my husband is involve in politics at the district level and he had contested district panchayat elections many times. He did not win but recognition has been won at the district level. Then I realized that human identity is very important in society. We never stay away from politics because coming into

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<sup>78</sup> Mrs. Javitri Devi, (45) higher education educated person belong to Katheriya community. She lived in village Kuthond, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 13/10/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with the idea of Dr. Ambedkar life and Struggle. So I decided to join politics.

politics is a very difficult struggle and that would in turn help us to do a lot for the community. I am very happy with my struggle because I have inspired many women to enter into politics. My family has supported me a lot to get into politics.”

***From which communities did you get the votes support in Gram Panchayat elections?***

“All the people of the community supported me in the panchayat elections. The highest number of votes in my panchayat were cast by Jatav (Chamar) people. Being a reserved seat, 2 candidates contested in panchayat election. I belonged to the Katheriya caste, whose votes were very few. The second female candidate was from the Jatav caste which had more number of votes. And he also got full support from BSP, due to which the upper caste people in the whole panchayat hated the Jatav people. At that time, I was not a member of any party, and so upper-caste people supported me. If you subscribe to BJP, then we can all together win you this election. I was quite confused that on one side there is my Dalit society which has been oppressed by the upper caste people, and how then can I relate to the upper caste people? I had struggled a lot and nobody was seeing that struggle, only my caste was being seen. Well, I want to join politics and so I took up the BJP membership, and I also had won the election.”

***What is the level of untouchability in the rural areas?*** “It is a little bit less but untouchability has more to do with people who are doing jobs like manual scavenging. The upper caste people treat Dalit communities as untouchables. This problem occurs directly or indirectly with everyone.”

***Can the caste-system be abolished by Hinduism?*** “Yes, it can be done. If people are educated then the caste-system will definitely end. This is a very serious issue and it will take years to abolish the caste system.”

***What are the problems faced by the Dalit community in this constituency?*** “The serious problem of the Dalit community is that of self-employment. Their livelihood is in a very pathetic situation due to lack of land, and because of which they are not able to get good education. Those who are wanted to study, they discontinued because of harassment in caste discrimination. Girls are very much deprived of education because parents pay

more attention to the education of boys. If a girl wants to study then she is not able to study because of harassment by the upper caste boys.”

***Do you consider the Bahujan Samaj Party as a Dalit political party?*** “In my view, the BahujanSamaj Party is not a Dalit political party because people of all classes take part in it. Talking about the Dalit community, Jatav community has dominated BSP, which results in other Dalit castes to quit BSP and join and support BJP or SP. The BSP defeat in the 2012 assembly elections was due to the fact that it had changed its ideology and adopted the ideology of the sarvjan and shifted from core bahujan ideology, due to which the Dalit vote bank got confused and started supporting other parties.”

***How do you view discrimination of Dalit leaders and voters during elections?*** “At the time of the elections, I have seen that there is a lot of discrimination and oppression by non-Dalit caste leaders both at village level, and the state level, and that also includes ministers or chief ministers. At the same time, Dalit voters are not allowed to vote by upper castes. Highly domineering people cast their votes. When they protest, they start beating them. Therefore, the people of the Dalit community remain silent. One of the reasons for these problems is that the castes of the Dalit community are not organized.”

***What is Kanshi Ram’s contribution to Dalit Bahujan politics?*** “Today, even though people from the Dalit community are in politics working in different parties, the political discourse of Dalit Bahujan has been raised by Kanshi Ram. Through his social engineering, he worked to gather the entire Dalit society and he also largely succeeded. Bringing the whole community on one platform and achieving political power that has been a great struggle. His political contribution cannot be forgotten. But the BSP has buried his thoughts.”

***What are your suggestions for bringing about political consciousness in Dalit society?*** “Today, we see that among the Dalit castes, only the Jatav (Chamar) caste is mostly active. Other Dalit sub-castes are much less active in politics, which I think is the biggest reason by they are not getting opportunities. If they get a chance, they are able to establish their identity by staying in that ideology. This is the reason behind by they join a political

party of some other ideology as different from that of BSP. Political consciousness is visible in Dalit society although the political consciousness of ideology is not visible.”

### **Case Study: 3**

Mrs. Sushma Devi<sup>79</sup>, a resident of Maheva, Jalaun district, she recounted her experience thus: “I had contested the panchayat election 20 years ago. I won the election and became a sarpanch, but the upper caste people of my panchayat did not like it. They prevented me from attending several meetings. Even my husband did not allow me to address the meetings. There was also debate with my husband regarding my presence in panchayat meetings. My first struggle started with my family concerning my rights which they were opposing. Women have a right to raise their voice in the village politics. I raised my voice and said to them that I am sarpanch of this village, and so I will decide what decisions we have to take in the village. I got appreciation across all the castes regarding my working style and the way I was solving my village’s problems. I won the second panchayat elections because of my performance in my first tenure and I got acceptance from all the castes in this election. This struggle gave me the strength to participate in politics. My dream is to become an MLA of my region but it is not an easy task as there are many people ready to spend crores of rupees to get an MLA seat in the elections.”

***What is the level of untouchability in rural areas?*** “I belong to Chamar caste and was working as the Sarpanch of my Panchayat for 10 years. I have been indirectly treated as an untouchable. Even today, the upper caste doesn’t consider Dalits as human beings in the villages. They don’t allow Dalits into religious ceremonies, temples and take water from their hand pumps.”

***What do you think to end the caste-system?*** “Abolishing the caste system is not such an easy task. The caste system is very strong in the rural areas. It does not allow people to love each other, sit with each other and have food together. The caste system could be

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<sup>79</sup> Mrs. Sushma Devi, (45) upper secondary educated person belong to Chamar community. She lived in village Maheva, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 05/11/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness elected for Sarpanch. Respondent face by caste discrimination in electoral period.

eliminated only by education. That is why everyone should receive education. To attend each others marriage ceremony and inter-caste dining would help us reduce caste consciousness among people. Among the sub-castes among the Dalit castes and although, there is no proper food they consider each other high and low. To eliminate caste-system, people have to be possess of education.”

***Is the Bahujan Samaj Party a Dalit political party?*** “I understand that the BSP is a Dalit-Representing political Party. BSP has worked a lot to bring out Dalit history, which led them to understand Dalit politics and thus it represented Dalit cause at the national level. But in 2012 assembly elections, the party fielded candidates who did not work at the ground level and non-Dalit castes did not vote for BSP. In spite of having an absolute majority in the UP state assembly, the party failed to solve Dalit problems. This is the main reason for BSP’s failure in the 2012 election.”

***Are Identity politics necessary for political empowerment?*** “I believe that, identity politics increases casteism. People say that Kanshi Ram started identity politics but as far I am concerned all political parties indulge in identity politics. I also think that by not giving equal representation to all castes we create an atmosphere of animosity among people. Many people consider that BSP is a Chamar party, Samajwadi Party is a Yadavas party and BJP is a party of Thakurs and Brahmins. Due to this reason, people of other castes hate these castes. The vote bank gets divided among all castes and candidates are chosen on the basis of the population of their caste, political empowerment would only be possible through political consciousness; if party workers work at ground level to that end. Education is one the weapons to raise political consciousness among Dalits.”

#### **Case Study: 4**

Mr. Beer Singh<sup>80</sup>, a resident of Mangrol, in Jalaun district, remembered a terrible incident that happens in front of his eyes 20 years ago. “A woman was forced by upper-caste people to work in their fields. When she opposed it she was beaten up and later she died.

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<sup>80</sup> Mr. Beer Singh, (42) higher secondary school educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Mangrol, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 25/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with the idea of Dalit identity politics.

I filed, FIR at the police station but family members were continuously threatened and finally they withdraw that case. In this case, many political leaders are involved in protecting perpetrators rather than women. Then I decided that it is necessary to enter into politics to struggle for justice for my people. I did politics both the village and district level. I have been an active BJP worker and General Secretary at the district level in Jalaun.”

***What is the level of untouchability in rural areas?*** “Incidents like touching and non-touching Dalits are no longer seen. I eat food in upper-caste home and they too eat in my home.”

***What do you think to end the caste-system?*** “Yes, the caste-system can be destroyed by staying in Hinduism. The caste system will end when the entire society gets educated. That is why we need to educate each section of the community in India.”

***What are the social and political problems of Dalit society?*** “If we look at the problem of Dalit society, we need to take into consideration the whole of India. For example, education, unemployment, and economic problems are very serious in Dalit society. Politically, most of the Dalit leaders are voted to power only by the Dalit community. Non-Dalit castes cast very few votes for the Dalit leaders. Non-Dalit castes vote for a Dalit leader only when he represents their ideology and party.”

***Is there caste-based discrimination in the election time?*** “During the election time, it is common to experience caste discrimination. This problem is most visible in the rural areas. For example, Non-Dalits people insult Dalits when they go to cast their vote, like commenting like ‘*Look the chamara has come, Kori has come it has come to Korea, it has been Dhobiya, it has come to beaten*’ Singh.<sup>81</sup> Sometimes non dalit people do not let the Dalit to caste their vote and sometimes they are forced to vote for upper caste candidate of political parties.”

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<sup>81</sup> The caste name Jatav (Chamar) the word ‘chamara’, like Kori caste the word ‘Korea’, like Dhobi caste the word ‘Dhobiya’ is used by non-Dalit to humiliate and abusive the member of the chamar, kori and dhobi caste.



***Should there be identity politics?*** “I think identity politics is very important for Dalit society because it allows us to take decisions independently and freely the kind of which we are lacking in other political parties. Therefore, Dalit society should resort to identity politics and there should be a Dalit political party that would represent Dalit interest. At the time of elections party tickets are given to the upper caste people and the Dalit people for the most part serve as party workers.”

***Which are the political parties that divide the Dalit votes?*** “I am a supporter of the BJP but I want to tell you one thing that all political parties try their best to divide Dalit vote bank except the BSP. That makes it easy for them to win the elections.”

***What do you think should be done to bring about political consciousness in Dalit society?*** “In order to bring political consciousness in Dalit society, activists and popular leaders of political parties should work at the grassroots level. That gives confidence to them. Some political leaders go to Dalit localities during elections and give them all kinds of gives and offers to get their votes, but they simply neglect the same people after winning the elections, and due to that there is much negative thinking about politics in Dalit society. They think that every caste should get equal representation in politics.”

### **Case Study: 5**

Mr. Damodar Singh,<sup>82</sup> a resident of Orai Jalaun district, opines thus: “I was a small worker in my village. People used to respect me in the village, as I used to speak to people and they supported me in every field. Once I went to a BSP rally in Lucknow in 1995, and there I heard Kanshi Ram’s views and thoughts that extremely influenced me. I became aware of our people and BSP politics. Due to lack of financial support, I could not propagate much about our politics but I did enlighten my family and relatives how are very much active in politics. My financial situation was not good, financial support was not good and I needed money to run my family. I did politics at the village level but I did

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<sup>82</sup> Mr. Damodar Singh, (47) higher secondary school educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in Orai, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 26/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with the idea of Kanshi Ram and first time attempt BSP rally in Lucknow

not contest in village panchayat elections, although I like it very much. It is easy to contest in elections but it is very difficult to make people aware of our Bahujan politics.”

***What are the problems faced by the Dalit society in rural areas?*** “I think casteism is a cruel problem. Many great people led movements to eliminate it, but they had nearly failed. The caste system has created many restrictions within the people to touch or non to touch, food, marriage, and religious rituals. Among the Dalit castes, there are many sub-castes who are seen to superior and some inferior. Dalits are socially and economically backward, due to which they do not live a respectful life. Dalit boys and girls are not getting education because of their social, educational and religious disabilities in the society. Atrocities against Dalits are still prevalent in villages such as lynching, honor killings and rapes.”

***Which are political parties that are working in the interest of Dalit society?*** “I have been active in politics for the last many years. I attend Political consciousness because of BSP and Kanshi Ram and this is the only party which is consistently working for Dalit issues. It is the only party which represents Dalit issues at the national level. Higher caste people exploit Dalits and they are getting tickets in BSP. Chamar is the only caste whose vote bank is assured for BSP and that is the reason why this community has become an enemy in the eyes of upper caste people. But the party is still giving tickets to upper castes. To keep my society safe I support BJP even though I don’t want to. If we do not support them then they will oppress our society.”

***Do Dalit leaders face caste discrimination?*** “There is huge discrimination in all political parties in the case of Dalit leaders. Because the Dalit society is not united that is the reason why they are simply neglected in society.”

## Case Study: 6

Mr. Tula Ram,<sup>83</sup> a resident of Gohani, Jalaun district. He said: “I have been active in politics for 30 years and served as the village sarpanch for 5 consecutive terms. The BSP was an emerging party when I first entered politics. Once I went to a BSP meeting to get party membership and at that time Kanshi Ram and Mayawati were addressing that meeting. I have done my graduation, but I was not interest in an office job. I used to work for the Congress party at that time although I was not getting much respect in the party. Due to that reason I left the congress and joined BSP. At that time Kanshi Ram strictly instructed me to work honestly for people in politics. He insisted that I should be aware my people about politics and bring all Dalits have to be brought on one platform. Initially, all of my relatives contested in elections from Vidhan Sabha to LokSabha on Congress party tickets. But I began to contest in elections as a BSP candidate. I remained politically active from the village level to the district level and state level. I have never sought any position from the party; I am only a political activist.”

***What are the social and political problems of Dalit society?*** “Even today untouchability is a very serious social problem in UP. Discrimination and harassment of Dalits happens due to their social and educational backwardness. The social problem is that even today Dalits are treated as untouchables. People are being exploited because of the caste system. I encouraged people to adopt Buddhism to end this caste-system. Very soon I realized that this is a big problem, it will take many years to abolish the caste system. Even Politically Dalits are loolced down upon. Whenever they have problems no known Dalit leader comes to listen to them.”

***The BSP has been consistently failed from the 2012 assembly elections, what is your opinion?*** “I have been working in BSP for last many years. The strategy and ideology that the BSP has established in the Bahujan society, has as far as I understand, changed after Kanshi Ram’s its strategy and ideology. Previously, BSP was following the

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<sup>83</sup> Mr. Tula Ram, (60) higher secondary school educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in Gohani, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 27/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with emergence of BSP and left the Congress party.

ideology of “*Bahujan Hitaya, Bahujan Sukhaya*”, which brought political consciousness in Bahujan very rapidly. But now, after adopting the ideology of “*Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya*”, it has created confusion in the Bahujan society. Distribution of tickets was made to wealthy persons rather than honest leaders who were working at ground level. Due to these reasons, the Dalit vote bank shifted to other political parties.”

***Is there discrimination on the basis of caste?*** “There is caste discrimination at the time of elections, and it will remain as long as casteism exists in India, especially among Dalits, except for Chamars, other sub-castes are being exploited.”

***Can political power be achieved through identity politics?*** “It is very important to have identity politics in today’s context. All political parties are into identity politics. So the Dalit society should also follow suit. Nowadays, all political parties try their best to divide the Dalit vote bank. They know that a bigger Dalit vote bank will nearly decide one’s party victory.”

***What was Kanshi Ram’s role in creating the Dalit Bahujan discourse?*** “Kanshi Ram has played a big role in creating Dalit Bahujan discourse. He worked day and night to bring all people on to one stage. He told us about the value of vote and how the upper caste people are maintaining their hegemony with our vote. ‘*Vote Hamara Raj Tumhara*’; this slogan had developed social and political consciousness among our people. No one can forget his political contribution to India. He sacrificed his life to fulfill the dreams of Dr. Ambedkar. He considered the Bahujan society as his own family until the end of his life.”

### **Case Study: 7**

Shri Ram Diwakar,<sup>84</sup> a resident Madhoghar, Jalaun district, said that “After influenced by Kanshi Ram’s movement I became very active in BSP politics. I entered the political

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<sup>84</sup> Shri Ram Diwakar, (65) higher education educated person belong to Dhobi community. He lived in village Madhogarh, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 28/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of Kanshi Ram, Dr. Ambedkar and emergence of BSP.

arena along with one doctor and I am one the biggest supporter of BSP. I conducted cadre camps to bring political consciousness in the Dalit society. Many of my relatives who are active activists in BSP have contested in the Gram Panchayat as well as District Panchayat elections.”

***What are the problems of Dalit society?*** “Untouchability is one of the main problems today. Even today Dalits are treated as untouchables but untouchability has declined somehow since the 1990s. Because there is a fear in the upper caste people that the Dalits are now in a position to form a government. The second problem is the caste-system which is not easy to eliminate. If Dalit castes want freedom from caste exploitation, they should leave Hinduism and adopt some other religion. Or adopt Dr. Ambedkar's ideology or Buddhism. Dalit have similar problems across India such as lack of quality education, employment, and land.”

***Which castes support the Dalit candidates in Gram Panchayat elections?*** “The upper caste people say that Dalits should contest only in reserved seats. If Dalits contests from the unreserved seats, they do not get votes from the upper caste. Upper castes thrashed them if they did not vote them and they took away land from Dalits. They do not allow us to work in upper-caste fields. This is all about the dependence of Dalits on upper-castes due to lack of land.”

***How do discrimination and exclusion happen with the Dalit society?*** “In the electoral process, caste discrimination is common in Indian society. If there is caste, definitely caste discrimination would be there. There is discrimination with non-Dalit castes as well. From the village level to the state level, there is large scale discrimination against Dalit leaders. Even the Chief Minister is called as a Dalit leaders as in case of a Dalit Minister and the President.”

***What do you mean by identity politics?*** “Identity politics are very important for Dalit society. He says that power is possible for Dalits with identity politics only. All political parties are involved in identity politics. Caste is very important factor in Indian politics. Every political party selects the candidates on the basis of their castes proportion to the total populations.”

***What is Kanshi Ram's contribution to Dalit-Bahujan politics?*** “If you want to talk about Dalit Bahujan discourse, you must talk about Kanshi Ram who has really worked tirelessly to develop Dalit Bahujan discourse. His contribution cannot be forgotten in Indian politics. Kanshi Ram played a greater role to bring about political consciousness among Dalits in India.”

### **Case Study: 8**

Mr. Ram Kumar,<sup>85</sup> lives in Grandhepura village, in the district Jalaun, He said that: “When BSP and SP coalition government was formed for the first time, the BSP became a topic of discussion in the media about Dalit politics. It has created interest in me to learn more about BSP. One day, I went to my relative's house. There was a meeting of Kanshi Ram around 8 O' clock in the night. I attended that meeting and I was greatly influenced by his views to emancipate Dalit community. Since that time, I am actively participating in the elections to Gram Panchayat to the District President and elections to the Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha.”

***Which political leaders have come to you to solve your problems?*** “Whenever atrocities happen over Dalits, Dalit leaders come first. Non-Dalit leaders only come to our localities to ask for votes during elections. Non-Dalit leaders would not help us if we do not cast our vote for them.”

***According to you what is untouchability at the village level?*** “Untouchability is like a disease and it is still prevalent in the villages. I was a Sarpanch 10 years ago. One day I went to the village panchayat office. One the Thakurs was sitting on the chair and I also went and sat along with him. His eyes became reddish and he thought how a Dalit can equally sit with an upper caste. He did not talk with me for 2 hours and he did not ask me to have a glass of water. I was panchayat Sarpanch but they treated me as an Untouchable. At ground level, Dalits do not understand how upper-castes practice untouchability.”

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<sup>85</sup> Mr. Ram Kumar, (55) Intermediate educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Grandhepura, district Jalaun. The interview is conducted on 29/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of BAMCEF and Kanshi Ram.

***Could caste-system be abolished by staying in Hinduism?*** “It is impossible to eliminate the caste-system from within Hinduism because caste-system is an integral part of Hinduism. It cannot be eradicated, If the caste-system ends, Hinduism will also end. If Dalits want freedom from exploitation, then all the member of Dalit community should accept Buddhism, as it a humantarin religion.”

***What are the problems facing the Dalit society?*** “It is a sin to born in a Dalit family where caste system would not allow us to undertake a different occupation on the basis of over talent. Even though Babasaheb has made provisions to protect our people in the Constitution, our society nonetheless continues to be socially and economically backward. They are beaten up every day because we have stopped doing bonded labor. Our sisters and daughters do not get into schools due to harassment made by upper caste in the villages. When the BSP was in government from 2007 to 2012, law and order was fine. Now Dalit society is in a very bad save. Government employees do not do their work. When Dalits go to the police stations with their problems, police harasses theme.”

***Which caste people did you vote for the Sarpanch elections?*** “I contested from the unreserved seat which was opposed by the upper caste people. They said that you cannot contest elections, as this seat belongs to us. But I fought the election and I was openly supported by the people of my community as well as some upper castes. Since I have been active in politics and helping people in solving their problems from Panchayat to the District level, I won with good number of votes.”

***Is the Bahujan Samaj Party a Dalit political party?*** “Certainly not. Bahujan Samaj Party is not a Dalit political party at this time. It is a party of all but works for the interests of the Dalit community. Previously BSP used to follow the path of “*Bahujan Hitay*”, “*Bahujan Sukhae*”, but for the last 15 years it is pursuing the path of “*Sarvajan Hitaye*”, “*Sarvajan Sukhaye*”. Due to this reason the upper caste people have become more dominant in the BSP. The Dalit community on the contrary is not getting the respect that it was being given during the time of Kanshi Ram. The Dalits were exploited on large scale even in the absolute majority government in 2007. They did not get employment. Even people, those who were working for the party for the atleast 20 years

at ground level were not given tickets. That is the reason as to why Dalit vote bank shifted to other political parties.”

***What kind of discrimination is their Dalit society during elections?*** “Yes, still there is caste discrimination at the village level, on the basis of a person caste people vote. After upper-castes cast their vote, the rest of the people would follow. Many poor people would not oppose them because they depend upon their for an agriculture land. Especially in my region, the Balmiki and Katheriya, and Kori communitis are force to cast their votes according to upper castes wishes.”

***Is it necessary to do identity politics?*** “In today’s time, it is very important to practice identity politics because it is political identity that brings political consciousness in Dalits. it could help to attain political power through this consciousness. Identity politics is practiced by all the people of India. The process was started by Kanshi Ram and with this strategy only they ultimately captured political power. Identity politics are indorses by practicing all political parties in India.”

***Do Dalit political leaders face discrimination and exclusion?*** “As I told you earlier that when I contested this Sarpanch election, many of the upper castes discriminated me on the basis of caste. They campaigned against me. They are many Dalit leaders how have been victimized under caste discrimination it both village level as well as the state level. They do not want Dalits to in the political field, join politics or to capture political power. For this reason is that the upper caste people do not want Dalits to participate in the political process.”

***What is the role of caste identity of a candidate in electoral politics?*** “The caste identity of the candidate plays a very important role in Indian politics. Identity politics started in Uttar Pradesh and all political parties field their candidate on the basis of their caste. The proportion of a caste against the total population helps to scure success in elections. Nowadays people are not getting a chance to contest in the elections. Those who are really working at ground level, do politics at the grassroots level but do not get a chance to contest elections.”



*What was Kanshi Ram's role in creating the Dalit Bahujan discourse?* “I think it is very rare to have a leader like Kanshi Ram in raising the Dalit Bahujan discourse. He has done a commendable job to bring all disadvantaged people of the society on to a single platform and develop political consciousness in them. Today, it is clearly visible in the deprived society. This credit goes to Kanshi Ram. The formula of his social engineering was very simple, so that the people of the disadvantaged society easily understood his ideology.”

*Does a political party try to divide the votes of Dalit communities at the time of elections?* “All political parties try their best to divide votes of the Dalit community during election time, except for the BSP. That is a political conspiracy of all parties to capture political power.”

#### **Conclusion:**

The political leadership of Dr. Ambedkar was inspired by his commitment to the development of the weaker sections of the society. The social order of Indian society had deprived the Dalit communities to lead a dignified life. It was the dedication of Dr. Ambedkar that has enabled Dalit communities to represent Dalits in the democratic institutions in the post-independence era. Today the issue of Dalit consciousness has widely spread in every corner of our country. A feeling is growing within the community that caste-biased discrimination cannot stop the Dalit leaders to enjoy the political rights along with social and economic rights in the society. In the field study, it has been learned that though Jalaun district is one of the backward districts in Uttar Pradesh and the population size of Dalits is comparatively lower than the Etawah district. However the political consciousness of the Dalits has united them to look forward to establishing identity politics and consolidate their vote base not only in the state but also at the national level. Three issues have clearly emerged from respondents view after the field study in this district that in order political consciousness Dalit need to educate, organize Dalit political leaders and adhere to identity politics.

## **CHAPTER- 4**

### **Political Consciousness in Etawah District**

Political participation is the process through which an individual plays a greater role in the political life of his society takes, part in the decision-making process for achieving common goals of the society. Political participation refers to actual participation in those voluntary activities by which members of society show interest in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of the political system.<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, political power is the key to all social progress and the Dalits and Tribals can achieve their salvation by capturing political power.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ambedkar has urged that political power is the key that can open all locks and doors in the society and government. He also warned the depressed people to be on their own guard against any false promises and urged them to believe only those leaders who had experience their woes. Dr. Ambedkar, while speaking in Minorities Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference<sup>3</sup> on 20th November 1930, said before the British about the loathsome conditions of the untouchables that nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove these unless we get political power in our own hands.<sup>4</sup> Addressing on the last day of two-day fifth Conference of the then United Province of Scheduled Castes Federation on April 25, 1948, in Lucknow, Dr. Ambedkar said:

*“Political power is the key to all social progress and the Scheduled Castes can achieve their salvation if they captured this power by organizing themselves into the third party*

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<sup>1</sup> Rashmi Srivastava, (2000), Empowerment of Women Through Political Participation with Special Reference to Madhya Pradesh, in Niraj Sinha (ed.) *Women in Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications, p.206.

<sup>2</sup> Hari Narake (ed.), (2003), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol.17, part-3, pp-388-389/ Janata, dated 1st May 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Vasant Moon ed, (1882), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, *Higher Education Department*, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, Vol-2, pp.303-305

*and holding the balance of power between the rival political parties Congress and Socialists. The Scheduled Castes cannot capture political power by joining the Congress”.*<sup>5</sup>

Ambedkar also pointed out that political reform must precede social reform and without political power, to the Depressed Classes their status would not improve.<sup>6</sup>

### **Profile of the Etawah District**

The district Etawah is bordered by West Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand, with its headquarters in Etawah. It is sometimes known as the city of bricks. Tradition and the appearance of land suggest that the modern city was founded on an ancient Khera<sup>7</sup> or town site, as the old bricks is found here, allowing brick kilns to ever exist here. Due to which its name was Etawah. According to some scholars are of the opinion that the area from Agra to Bateshwar was known as ‘Ishtapath’. There are many Shiva temples in this area; there may be ‘Isht Dev’ of that area. Because the city of Ishtkapuri was named after the word, which is ‘Isht’, mentioned in the Bhareshya Purana. After many years the Ishtkapuri town was changed to Etawah.<sup>8</sup>

The history of Etawah is quite interesting as Panchal was a part of the country in ancient times. It extends from the Himalayas in the north to the Chambal River in the south.<sup>9</sup> The region has been given prominence in the Mahabharata period, whose local

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<sup>5</sup> HariNarake (ed.), (2003), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol.17, part-3, pp-388-389/ Janata, dated 1st May 1948.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.82.

<sup>7</sup> D.L. Drake-Brokmann, I.C.S. (1909). “Etawah A Gazetteer”, “District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh”, Volume XI, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.177-220. Kanar is now marked by a largely deserted khera about two miles from the Jumna and not far from the present site of Jagamanpur in Jalaun. The Raja of Jagamanpur is the head of the Sengars and was once known as the Raja of Kanar Khera, Kanar gave its name to a pargana in the time of Akbar.

<sup>8</sup> District Census Handbook - Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p.9.

<sup>9</sup> D.L. Drake-Brokmann, I.C.S. (1909). “Etawah A Gazetteer”, “District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh”, Volume XI, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.126.

traditions are linked to the modern city of Chakarnagar in the district, which seems to be from the monocular described in the Mahabharata.<sup>10</sup> It was a Ekchakra where the Pandavas, along with their mother Kunti, spent a year of secret exile.<sup>11</sup> The Guptas once again established imperial unity in India during the fourth century. The Chinese traveler Fa-Hien visited a city called Alvi, which was known as the modern city of Airwa Katra and underwent treatment at the Dragon Shrine. Fa-Hien in his documents described it as “a city near a large forest” (*Atavi*). There are remnants of a large number of Buddhist and Jain temples since ancient times.<sup>12</sup>

After the coronation of Raja Harsha, (in 606 A.D.) the district came under Thaneshwar dynasty. Hiuen Tsang has worked on its prosperity, which is mentioned in its documents.<sup>13</sup> In 1193 AD, Jaichandra of Kannauj was defeated at the battle of Chandawer by Shahab-ud-din Ghorī.<sup>14</sup> The district of North India passed under the influence of Muslim power, leaving Malwa and some contiguous districts, which by the end of the century had been held in various degrees of subjugation. However, the local history of the district during the 12<sup>th</sup> century is more or less the accounts of the settlers and emergence of some Rajputs.<sup>15</sup> The districts of Bidhuna and Phaphund, bordering the district of Kanpur, were occupied by the Gaurs, as the two areas came under the Mahoba area of the Chandelas.<sup>16</sup> In Mainpuri the Chauhans occupied the western part of the district with extensive recitations.<sup>17</sup> Mallu Iqbal Khan marched towards the region in 1400–1401 and was opposed by Rai Sumar Singh or Sabir of Etawah and adjoining Zamindars on the banks of the now Ab-i-Siyah (Kali Nadi) near Patiali. Rai opposing

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., and see, District Census Handbook - Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p.9.

<sup>13</sup> D.L. Drake-Brookman, I.C.S. (1909). “Etawah A Gazetteer”, “District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh”, Volume XI, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superintendent, Government press, p.126.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.68

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.69-71

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.127

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.128.

army was defeated and reached the borders of Etawah. Where he took refuge, in the fourth year of Akbar's reign, Bahadur Khan granted the manor of Etawah to Ali Quli Khan younger brother, named after the emperor's foster mother, Maham Anka.<sup>18</sup>

The district was ceded to the British government on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1801 by Nawab Saadat Ali Khan in association with Doab and other tracks.<sup>19</sup> his action was taken in lieu of a guarantee of patronage, and through payment for the maintenance of the Oadh local forces that were finally stationed at Kanpur. Yet Maratha Inroads were given a thumbs-up in Etawah for a few years, while the first years of British administration saw scenes with landlords recalling the experiences of royal officials in the 16th century, and this of Saudaus, Sahson The landlords were not even there. And Kamait was eventually commissioned in 1816 A.D. It was settled within that the history of the district can be called one of peaceful progress and reform, which was later broken only due to the Revolt of 1857.<sup>20</sup>

On 25 December 1857, a British Column arrived in the district Etawah. The building of Etawah Tehsil was surrounded and uprooted by Kunwar Johar Singh, because Taj Khan was helping the British to move forward.<sup>21</sup> The British re-erected the pillar in Etawah on 6 January 1858, but the Sanghars were crushed with great difficulty. In 1885, when Dussehra and Muharram coincided on the same day, communal riots spread among Hindus and Muslims.<sup>22</sup> In 1907, it was provoked that the Zorawar Singh Nigam had set up a conspiracy to drive away the British.<sup>23</sup> But was found unfounded at baseless and

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<sup>18</sup> District Census Handbook - Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p.9-10.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.10, and see, D.L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Etawah A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XI, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superident, Government press, p.144

<sup>20</sup> D.L. Drake-Brokman, I.C.S. (1909). "Etawah A Gazetteer", "District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh", Volume XI, Allahabad: Printed by F. Luker, Superident, Government press, p.147.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.157.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p55

<sup>23</sup> District Census Handbook - Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p.10.

Khalil who was responsible for the rumor was arrested and sentenced. This district came to focal point in 1914–15 due to revolutionary activities. Gendalal Dixit, a teacher of Auraiya, formed Shivaji Samiti and also formed an organization called 'Matri-Vedi to provide independence for the country.<sup>24</sup>

In 1920, Gandhi ji launched the non-cooperation movement throughout the country, in which the response of the people of Etawah was enthusiastic.<sup>25</sup> In 1920-21, the District Congress Committee was formed, headed by Maulana Rahamat Ullah. Jyoti Shankar Dixit of Etawah was arrested in the 1925 Kakori conspiracy case, but was later released. Boycott of Simen Commission, in 1928; after; Quit India Movement in 1930 and 1942 Civil Disobedience Movement was started in Etawah like other parts of the country. Thus, the people of Etawah played a major role in India's freedom struggle.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, in 1923, Swami Achhutanand started the Adi-Hindu movement, in which Achuthanand partner, Etawah Swami Chhahanand, also brought Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts with the help of songs, poems and hymns to awaken the Dalit society of Etawah Has been contributing Due to which the Dalit society takes a greater participation in the politics of Etawah today.

### **Administrative Setup**

The district is a part of Etawah Kanpur division, whose geographical area covers 2311 Sq. Km. Etawah rural area is spread over 2260.4 Sq. Km. in terms of geographical range, 50.6 Sq. Km. in terms of urban geographical boundary. The district Mainpuri and Kannauj share the northern boundary, and Jalaun shares the south boundary. On the western side shares the boundary of Agra, on the eastern part shares the boundary of Auraiya. The district is divided into 5 tehsils, as Jaswantnagar, Saifai, Etawah, Bharthana and Chakarnagar. The district is divided into 8 development blocks under the development of schemes such, as Jaswantnagar, Saifai, Barhapura, Basrehar, Takha,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.10-11

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Bharathana, Maheva and Chakarnagar. There are 420 gram panchayats and 692 revenue villages in the district with 686 inhabited villages and 06 uninhabited villages. In the urban area, there are 6 statutory cities. Statutory cities include 03 Nagar Palika Parishad and 03 Nagar Panchayats. Etawah district is widely popular for its culture in Uttar Pradesh. The culture of Etawah is depicted essentially in its people, their language, race, religion, costumes, and tradition.<sup>27</sup> Etawah ranks 61<sup>st</sup> in terms of population, according to the 2011 census. The sex ratio of the district is 870 per thousand males. The district's literacy rate is 78.4 percent. Bharathan Tehsil has the highest number of 231 villages, while Saifai has the least 59 villages.<sup>28</sup>

Etawah district consists of different social groups. As per the 2011 Census, the Scheduled Caste community (well known as Dalit community) constitutes more than 20 percent of the total population size of the district. Ancient India's Hindu social order i.e., divided into four branches, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra, still persists in the Etawah district. The following tables show the profile of the district.

In modern society, due to the impact of progressive social and economic forces, the old caste structure is crumbling though somewhat slowly and has lost much of its rigidity. The caste discrimination is very much manifested in the district. In this caste discrimination, the Dalit consciousness is also very much progressive in post-Kanshi Ram era. As Dalit political consciousness spread all over the Uttar Pradesh state, similar awareness has also been manifested in the Etawah district. The present chapter aims to analyse the political consciousness of the Dalits in the district.

## **Profile of the District**

**Table No.: 4.1 Total Populations.**

Social Categories	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
All Categories	104,480,510	95,331,831	199,812,341	100

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp.12-13.

Scheduled Castes	21,676,975	19,680,633	41,357,608	20.7
Scheduled Tribes	581,083	553,190	1,134,273	0.6

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. ix.

**Table No.: 4.2 Literacy.**

Social Categories	Persons	Males	Females
Total	67.7	77.3	57.2
Scheduled Castes	60.9	71.8	48.9
Scheduled Tribes	55.7	67.1	43.7

**Note:** Figures in bracket are showing percentage.

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, p. ix.

**Table No.: 4.3 Category of Workers (Main & Marginal).**

Category	Cultivators			Agricultural Labourers			Workers in Household Industry			Other Workers		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
All Categories *	33.7	35.9	23.7	31.2	30.4	34.9	4.11	3.18	8.29	30.9	30.4	33.0
S C #	6	9	5	3	0	2				1	3	4
S T \$	13.6	83.4	14.1	40.1	81.3	18.6	14.9	57.7	42.2	21.6	79.7	20.2
	5	9	4	6	7	2	4	3	6	0	9	0
	07	07	00	07	07	00	04	00	04	40	35	05

**Note** A – Persons, B – Males and C – Females. The figures for All categories are in percentage and the figures for Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes are in number.

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Etawah, Census of India 2011, Uttar Pradesh, Series 10, Part – XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, 2011, Page nos. - Categories- \* - 15, Scheduled Caste- # - 50-53, Scheduled Tribes- \$ - 58-61.

### Data Analysis and Sampling Design

In this study the Etawah district was selected for the field study because of two considerations, first, the district has a high concentration of Scheduled Caste population and second, a stronghold of Dalit consciousness among these communities. In this study



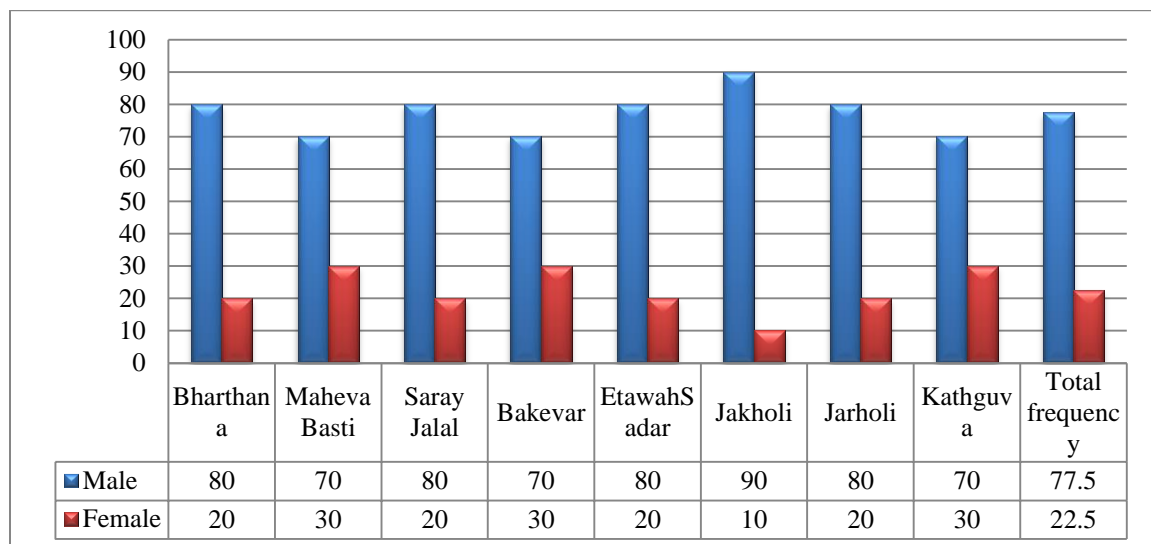
area, a total number of 8 villages<sup>29</sup> have been selected to map the political consciousness among the Dalit communities.

### Socio-economic Background of Respondents

In the study area, a total of 8 villages have been selected from the Etawah district. In each village, ten-sample respondents/households have been interviewed. Thus, the total sample of households is 80. Out of 80 samples, 62 were males and 18 were females. Of course, efforts were made to take an equal number of female samples but it was not possible as they were not forthcoming to talk to the researcher. The respondents of the sample were of different age groups starting from 20 onwards. The age-group wise distributions of the respondents are given in the figure: 4.1 shows.

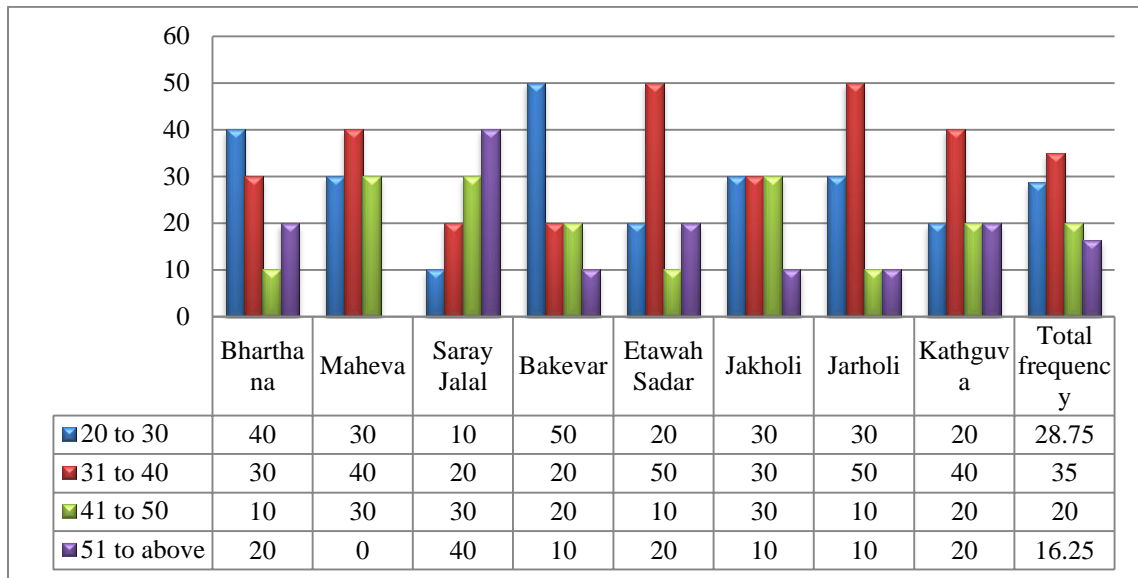
### Respondent details: Etawah

**Figure: 4.1 Gender-wise distributions of respondents.**



<sup>29</sup> Field study of area 8 villages has been selected from random sampling in Etawah district. Village is Bharthna, Maheva, Sarayjalal, Bakevar, EtawahSadar, Jakholi, Jarholi and Kathguva.

**Figure: 4.2 Age-wise distribution of respondents.**



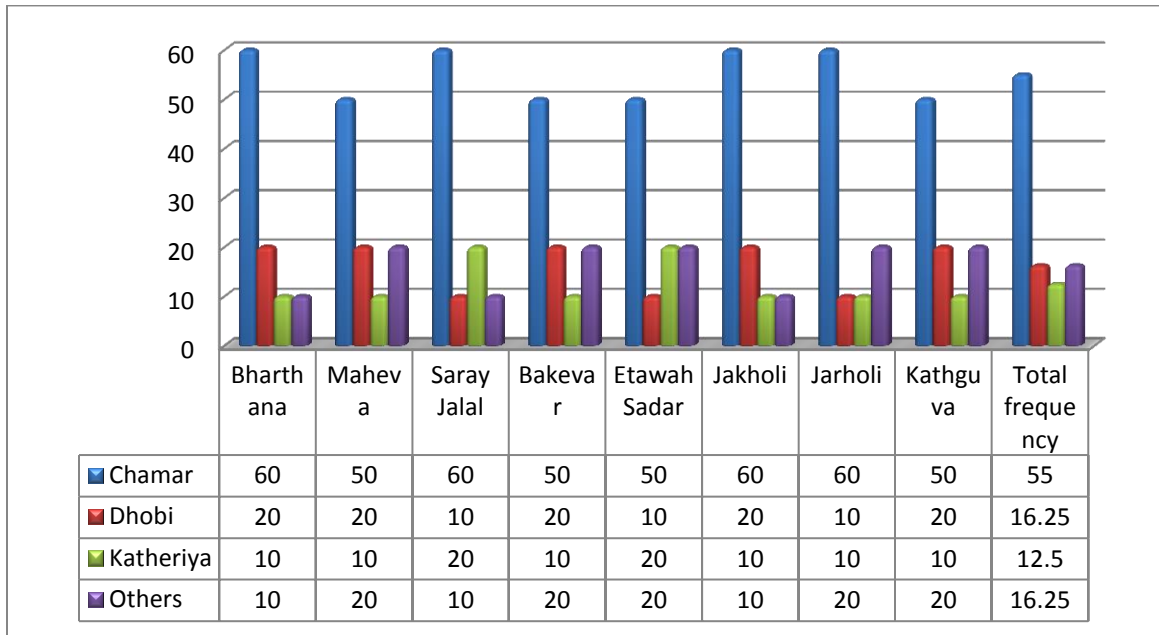
The figure: 4.2 shows that age-wise distribution of respondents in the study area begins from the age-group of 20 years to above 50 years. The age-group of 20-30 years respondents were 31.25 percent whereas 35 percent of respondents were from the age-group 31 to 40 years. The majority of respondents were in the age group of 30-40 years. In the age-group of 41 to 50 years respondents constituted 18.75 percent and in the above 50 years category respondents were 15 percent. It is also necessary to discuss the sub-caste wise distribution of respondents in the study area. The following Figure 4.3 shows the details.<sup>30</sup>

The Scheduled Caste population of Uttar Pradesh constitutes one of as the largest communities in the entire population of the state. Etawah district is one of the Scheduled Caste concentrated districts in the state. Within the Scheduled Caste community, the sub-caste group plays a significant role in promoting Dalits consciousness in the state. In this study, the figure: 4.3 shows that majority of respondents were from Chamar community

<sup>30</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 4.2 is given and analyzed. Selected for respondent is field study area.

i.e., 55 percent, and the other respondents were from the sub-caste group of Dhobi 16.23 percent and Katheriya 12.5 percent respectively, and 16.25 others sub-caste community.<sup>31</sup>

**Figure: 4.3 Sub-caste wise distributions of respondents**



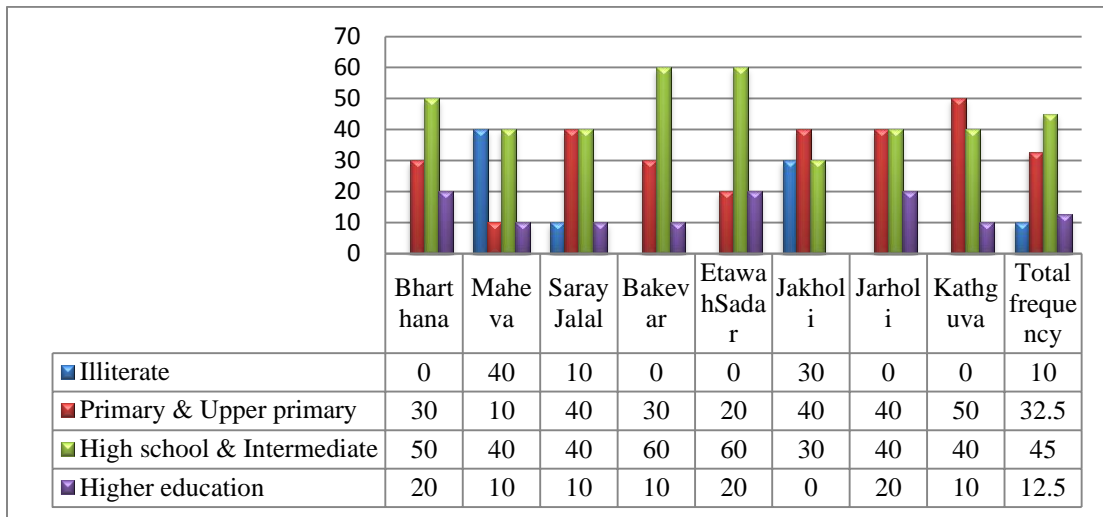
Education plays a crucial role in promoting political consciousness among Dalit. In this context, the figure. 4.4 shows that educational background of the respondents in the study area.

Out of figure: 4.4 shows that total respondents, 45 percent of respondents' education status was High School and Intermediate level. They are followed by 32.5 percent respondents where educational background was primary and upper primary level, whereas 12.5 percent of respondents were from a higher education background. Lastly, the graph shows that 10 percent of respondents were illiterates. It is also important here to discuss the occupation status of respondents in the study area.<sup>32</sup>

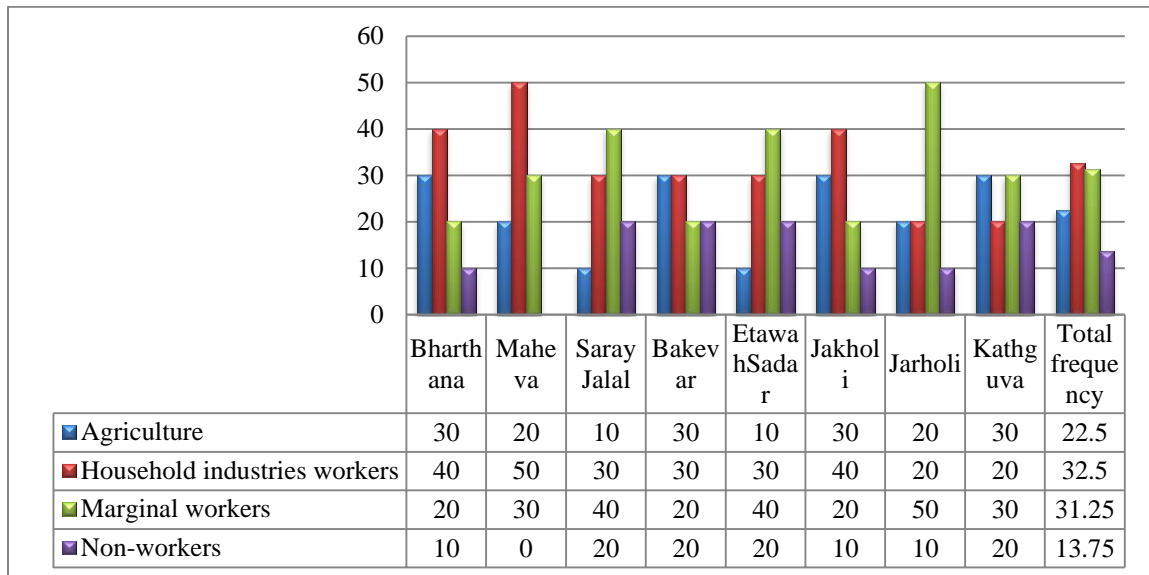
<sup>31</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 4.3 is given and analyzed. Respondent caste vised selected each of village in Jalaun district.

<sup>32</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 4.4 is given and analyzed. Respondent is educational background each of village.

**Figure: 4.4 Educational background of the respondents.**



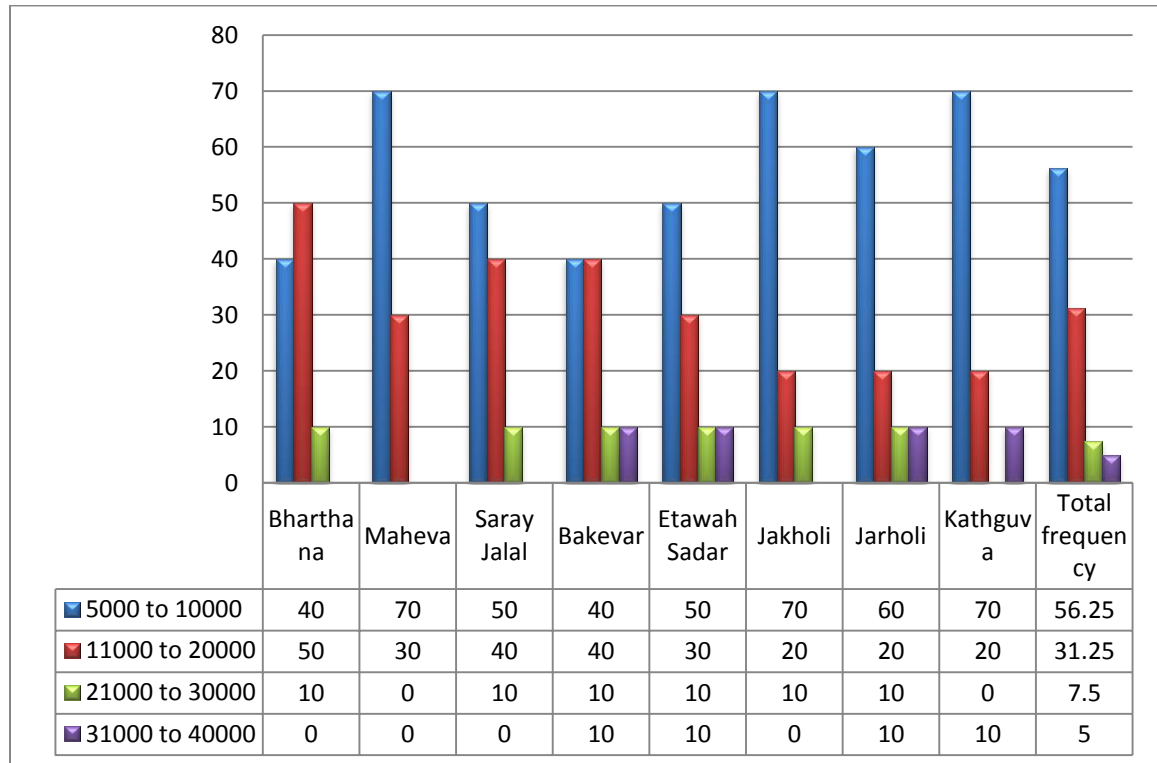
**Figure: 4.5 Occupation status of respondents.**



The figure: 4.5. shows that detail. Agriculture is one of the major sources of livelihood in rural areas of our country. However in the case of this study, it has been found that the household industry workers constituted the majority among the respondents, 32.5 percent of respondents were from household industry workers, whereas 22.5 percent from agricultural background. The Figure.4.5 also shows that 31.25 percent

of respondents were from the marginal worker and 13.75 percent of respondents were from non-workers of the study area.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure: 4.6 Monthly income statuses of respondents.**

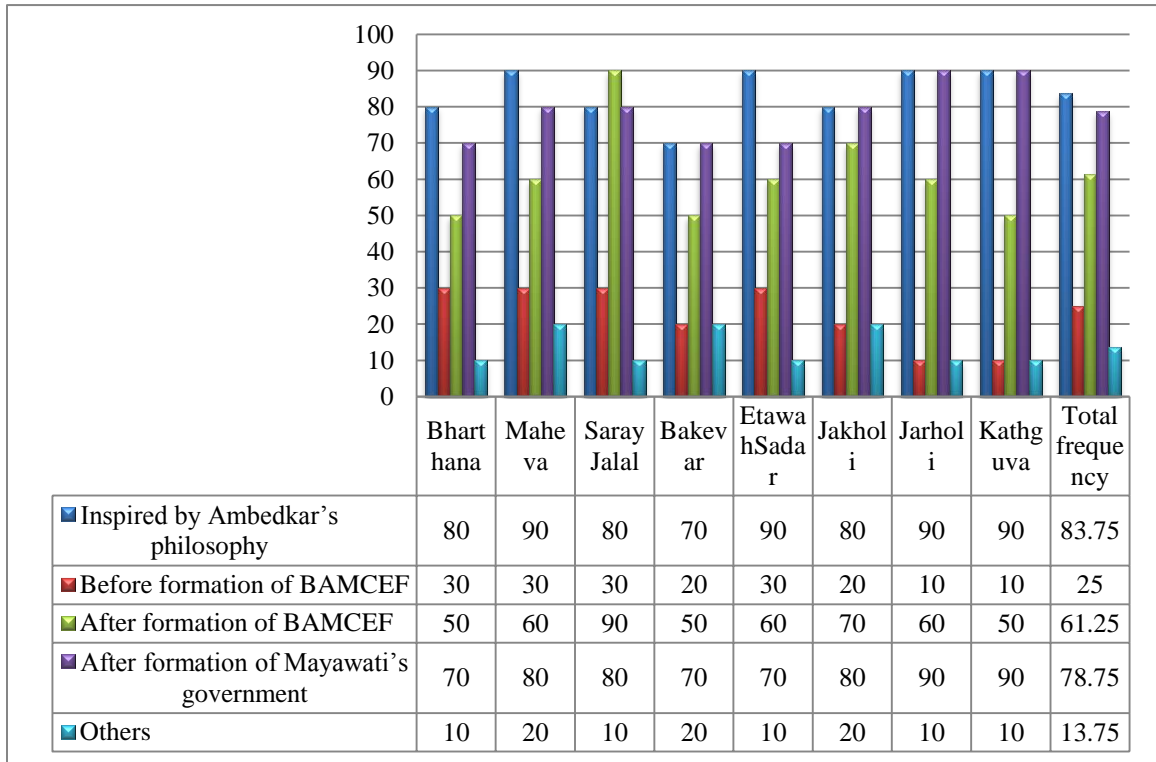


The figure: 4.6 shows that the majority of respondents were in the income group of Rs. 5000 to 10,000/- i.e., 56.25 percent whereas 31.25 percent of respondents were in the income level of Rs. 11,000 to 20,000. The Figure also shows that 7.5 percent of respondents were in the income group of Rs. 21,000 to 30,000 and only 5 percent of respondents monthly income was Rs. 31,000 to 40,000.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The data of figure no. 4.5 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study.

<sup>34</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study are data of figure no. 4.6 is given and analyzed below.

**Figure: 4.7 Respondents views on the source inspiration in generating interest in the political activities of the state.**

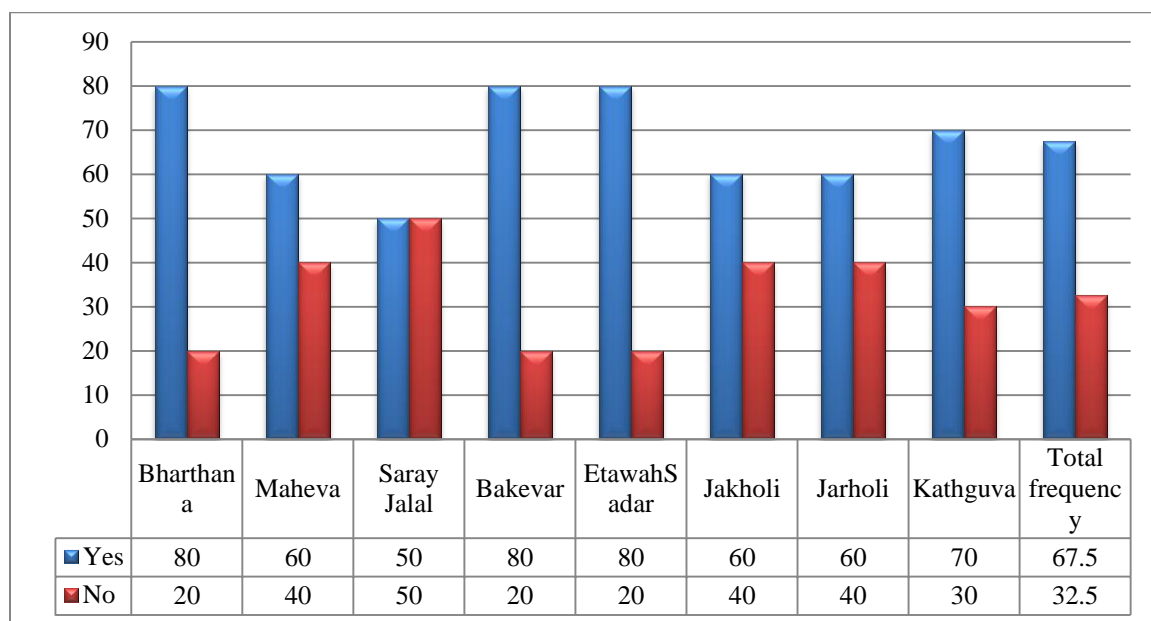


**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The figure.4.7 shows that respondents have expressed their views on how they have been motivated or took interest in the political activity of the state. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy and his contribution towards the upliftment of the Dalit community of the country had inspired the most among the respondents of the study area. The figure: 4.7 shows that 83.75 percent of respondents have observed that they were inspired by Dr. Ambedkar to participate in the political activity of the state. The Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) constituted by Kanshi Ram because he realized that the formation of Bahujan employee's bureaucrats was important to serve Dalits' interests. The motto of constituting BAMCEF was 'Payback to society', to inspire the Dalit bureaucrats to do their bit for the Dalit masses. In this way, a continuous supply of intellectual property, money, and talent was ensured. Kanshi Ram did not want to make BAMCEF an employees union. He wanted it to become an organization of educated Bahujan employees i.e., "the think tank, talent bank, and

financial bank of the Bahujan Samaj”. In this study area, 61.25 percent respondents have said that they had been inspired by BAMCEF to participate in political activities of the state whereas only 25 percent stated that they are interested in politics of the state prior to the formation of BAMCEF because Dr. Ambedkar was the only icon of Dalit community. The figure: 4.7 shows that 78.75 percent of respondents had opined that the formation Mayawati’s government in Uttar Pradesh had inspired the Dalit community in taking part in the political activity of the state. Lastly, only 13.75 percent of respondents have stated that there are other factors that have influenced them to be part of the political activity of the state.<sup>35</sup>

**Figure: 4.8 Respondents views on their close relatives in active politics.**

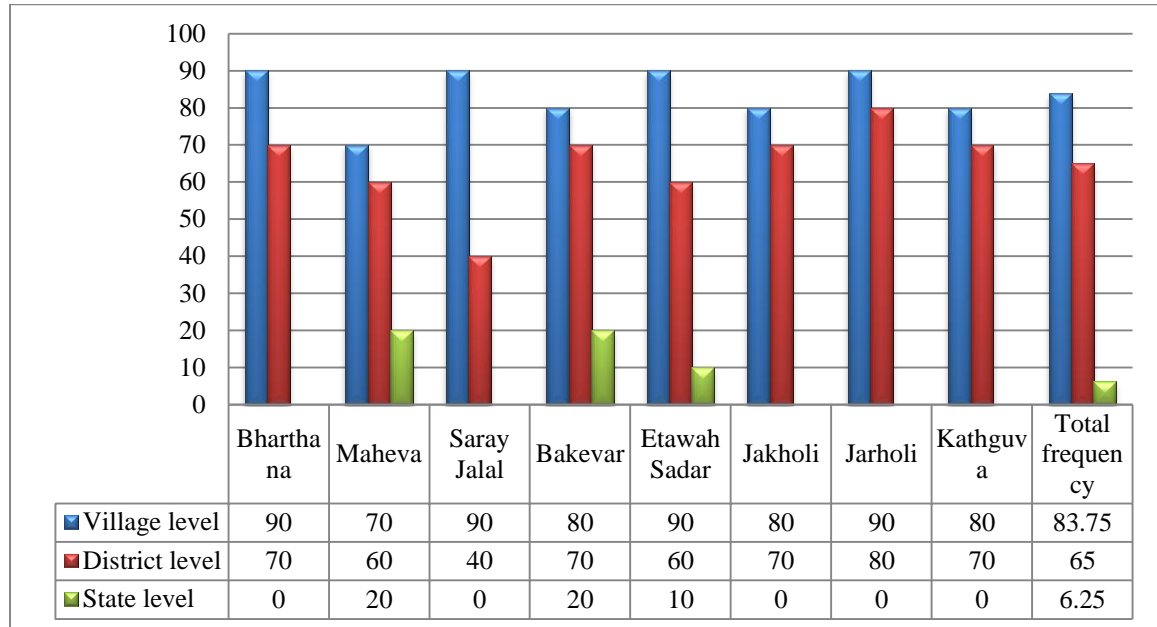


Active participation of Dalits in politics of the Uttar Pradesh is very well known in the political scenario of India. The formation of BAMCEF and emergence of Bahujan Samaj Party have consolidated Dalits position in politics of the state. The figure: 4.8 shows that 67.5 percent of respondents have stated that their close relatives are active in the politics of the state. It shows that Dalits have not only been active in politics but they

<sup>35</sup> The data of figure no. 4.7 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure

are also active in educating the Dalit communities to assert their political rights in our country.<sup>36</sup>

**Figure: 4.9 Respondents views on active in politics in different level.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Dalits of the study area became active in the political activities of the state after the BSP its presence felt in the political scenario of our country. While interacting with them they have stated that Dalits are active in politics from the village level to state level. The figure: 4.9 shows that 83.75 percent of respondents have stated that the Dalits are active in politics at the village level. Further 65 percent of respondents have said that Dalits are also active in politics in district level. Only 6.25 percent have stated that they are active in state-level politics. Thus it can be seen that Dalits are much more active in political activities at the village level rather than in state-level politics. Though they are quite an interested in the politics of the state they could not however actively engage in state-level politics. The very reason for the situation is that even after seven decades of India's independence, Dalits are still struggling to meet their basic necessities. In this

<sup>36</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 4.8 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent have given their views on the question asked them by the researcher



challengeable social and economic life they could not even think of being active in at politics in the state level.<sup>37</sup>

Political consciousness is closely associated with the socio-cultural, economic and political process that has been spread from the individual level to the community level in the state. Political consciousness constitutes knowledge about political institutions, its dynamics, and processes and is a key concept for understanding the political system. It has a strong correlation with participatory orientation and political efficiency of the people. The level of political consciousness has far-reaching consequences for the successful functioning of democracy. People's awareness about political issues would certainly enhance their participation meaningfully in political processes and help them take enlightened decisions. In fact, possession of a minimum level of political consciousness leads to a certain degree of their involved political participation.

Political participation plays a significant role in the democratic political system of our country. Lack of political awareness and passivity of the general masses make the political system irresponsible and irrelevant for the general masses. It is political consciousness and political awareness which bring the sense of interest articulation among the general masses. When the interest is articulated as a result of political consciousness, it leads to interest aggregation. When the interest is aggregated, the resultant effect is mass mobilization. When the masses are mobilised the outcome is effective participation of the masses in the affairs of the political system.<sup>38</sup> The process of political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which members of society show active interest and play a significant role in the selection of rulers. It includes voting, seeking information, discussing, attending meetings, contributing financially, and communicating with the representatives, enrolment in a party, canvassing and registering voters and working in campaigns.

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<sup>37</sup> The study of figure no. 4.9 is discussed. The respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. But mostly respondents active are village and district level. The figure discussed is each of village respondents on view.

<sup>38</sup> Neena Sharma, (1985), *Political Socialization and its Impact on Attitudinal Change towards Social and Political System*, New Delhi: Inter India Publication, p. 128.

The political participation aspect draws the attention to political activities rather than to the attitude and behavior of the private citizen to those who are professionally involved in public affairs.<sup>39</sup> The emergence of political consciousness among the Dalits in India has been recorded since Dr. Ambedkar's active involvement in Indian politics. In the mid-1970s, once again, the Dalit leaders coined a new identity in the name of 'Bahujan', with the emergence of Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF).<sup>40</sup> Kanshi Ram used the term Bahujan to encompass Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, and Minorities who unite together for a greater alliance. In recent years the term Dalit has been discarded as a social reactionary category by a section of the community who prefer Bahujan with both the Buddhist as well as Dalit categories.<sup>41</sup> Kanchallaiah in his book 'Why I am not a Hindu' (1996) used the term 'Dalit-Bahujan' to maintain the special identity of Dalits while expressing a broader alliance. In this context, the following graphs present the level of political consciousness among the Dalits in Etawah district. Following graph Figure.4.10 discusses the respondents view on political consciousness in the Etawah District. During the field study, the respondents of selected villages have expressed their opinion on the level of political consciousness of Dalit communities in the Etawah district in which Dalit population is most concentrated. The identity-based political consciousness of Dalits was reflected in different forms. While interacting with them as can be seen in the figure: 4.10 shows that 72.5 percent respondents stated that they conduct a group discussion about the Dalit politics in the state. 73.75 percent of respondents have pointed out that the participation of Dalit leaders in the political process of state is a reflection of empowerment of the Dalit communities in the district. In order to establish Dalit identity politics in the state politics, the Dalit communities are prioritizing support for Dalit political leaders. During the field study, 70 percent of the respondents have stated that they are supporting to Dalit political leader, whereas 76.25 respondents have said that they are also a concern for the Dalit issues that the political leaders should consider them

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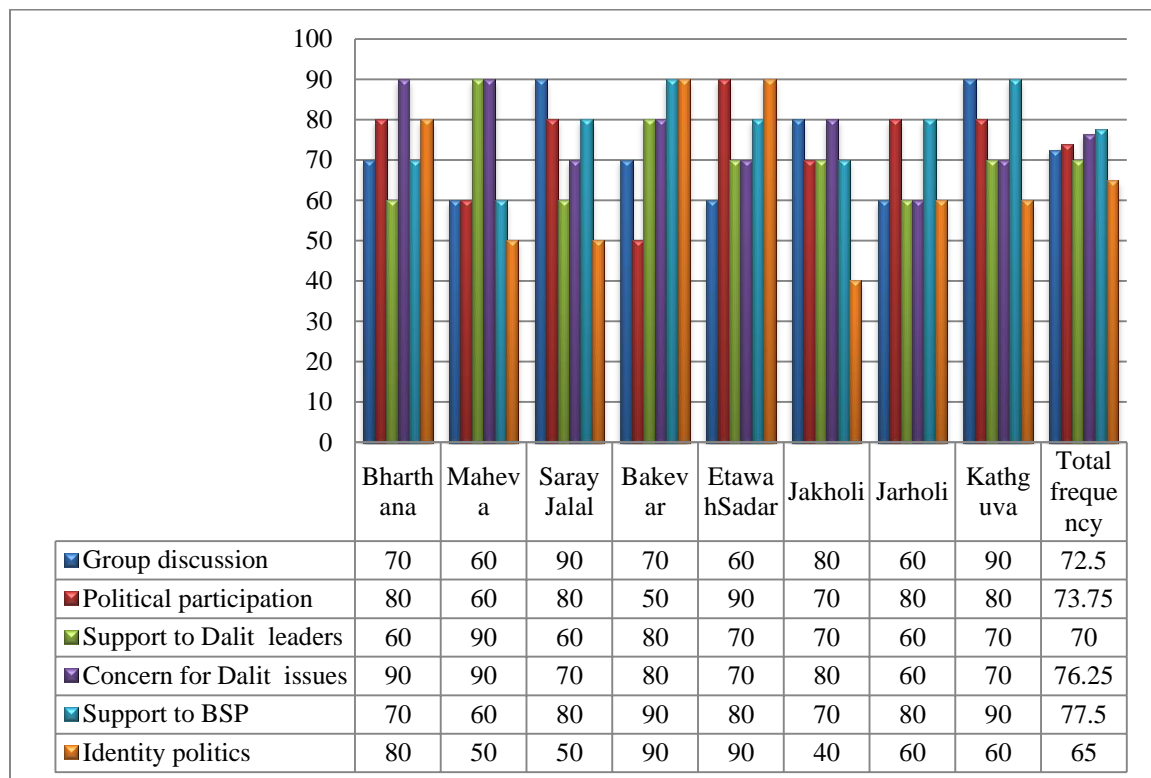
<sup>39</sup> S. Akinchan, (1995), *Caste, Class and Politics*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, p. 86.

<sup>40</sup> Vivek Kumar, (2005) "Situating Dalits in Indian Society", *Sociological Bulletin*, 54(3), Sept-Dec., p. 522.

<sup>41</sup> K. C. Das, (2004), *Indian Dalits – Voice, Vision and Politics*, Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, p. 5.

and address those issues without fail. Supporting the BSP is Dalit communities priority because this is only political party raises their issues at state and national levels as stated by 77.5 percent of respondents. Further 65 percent of respondents have also indicated that it is because of the presence of BSP in Indian politics that the Dalits have been enabled to talk about the identity politics in the rural areas. Though social hierarchy is very much prevailing in the rural areas of the district Dalits are politically conscious because of the presence of BSP in Indian politics.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure: 4.10 Respondents views on political consciousness among Dalits.**



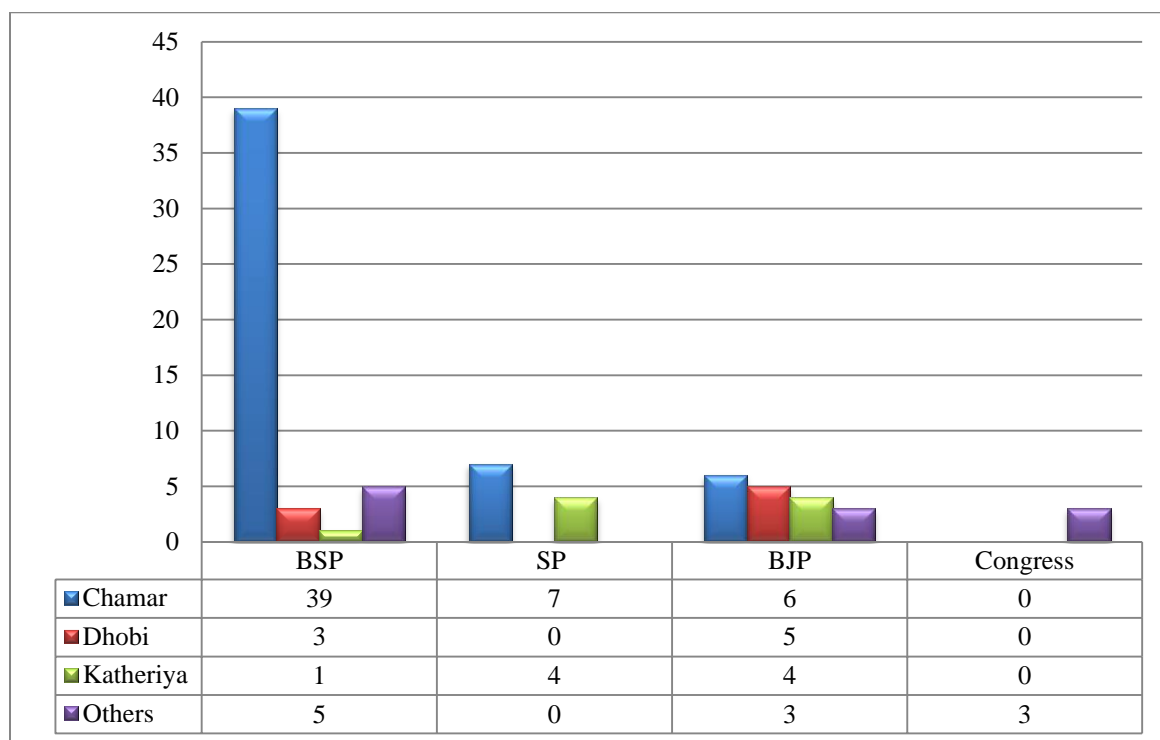
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

While discussing the question as to which political party the Dalits were supporting the most, a majority of the respondents overwhelmingly stated that they do supported to BahujanSamaj Party as the first choice. In this context, the sub-caste wise respondents have indicated their choice among various political parties. As Etawah

<sup>42</sup> The data of figure no. 4.10 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked open-ended questions for respondents in the study area. The data were analyzed based on the ideas they had put forward

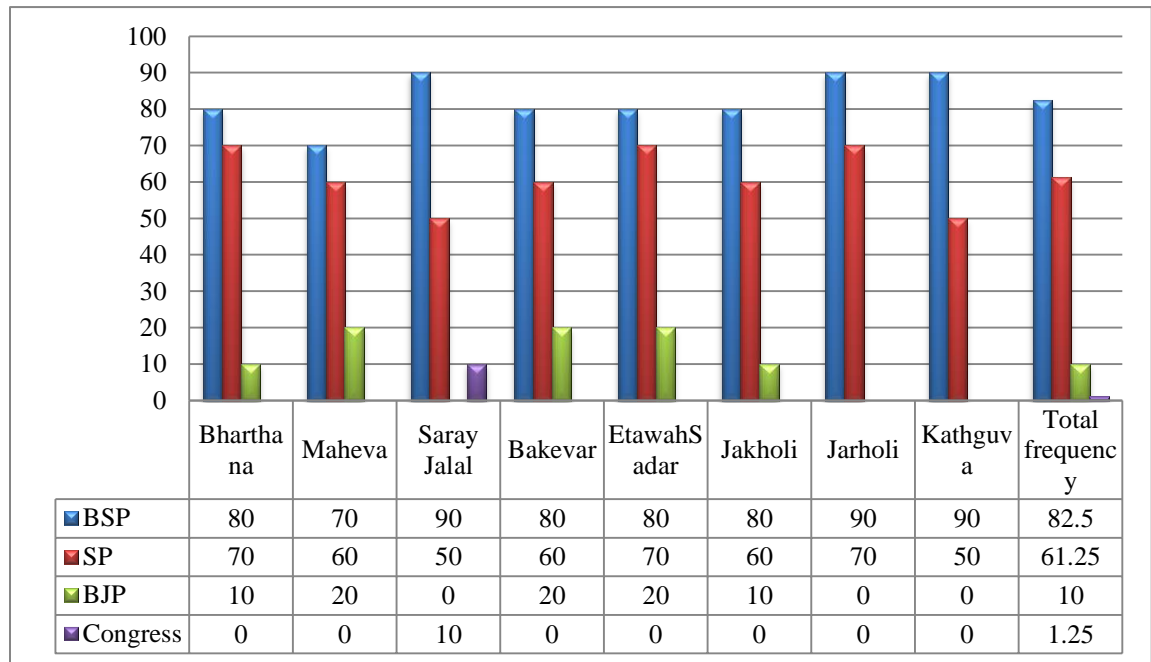
district has highest concentration of SC population and within that, the Chamar sub-caste group constitute the largest population in the district. The figure: 4.11 shows that 39 respondent of Chamar sub-caste group have stated that they supported to the BahujanSamaj Party. Whereas the other sub-caste groups like Dhobi, Katheriya, and others have rarely supported the BSP. In the process of discussion they have also stated that in most cases it has been found that the Katheriya community supported the Samajwadi Party, Dhobi community supported the BharatiyaJanata Party. There was also mixed response from respondents that some of them also supported the Congress party on the basis of issues related to their community.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure: 4.11 Respondents views on supporting political parties, sub-caste wise.**



<sup>43</sup> The data of figure no. 4.11 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked a question for respondents support for any political party in the study area. Respondent support to caste wise different party. The majority of the population in each village is of the Chamar communities. Hence most of the Chamar communities support to BSP. Because for the first time won the member of parliament seat in etawah by Kanshi Ram. Due to which the rise of social and political consciousness in Dalit society in Etawah district is more than that of Jalun district.

**Figure: 4.12 Respondents views on support given by political parties on development issues.**

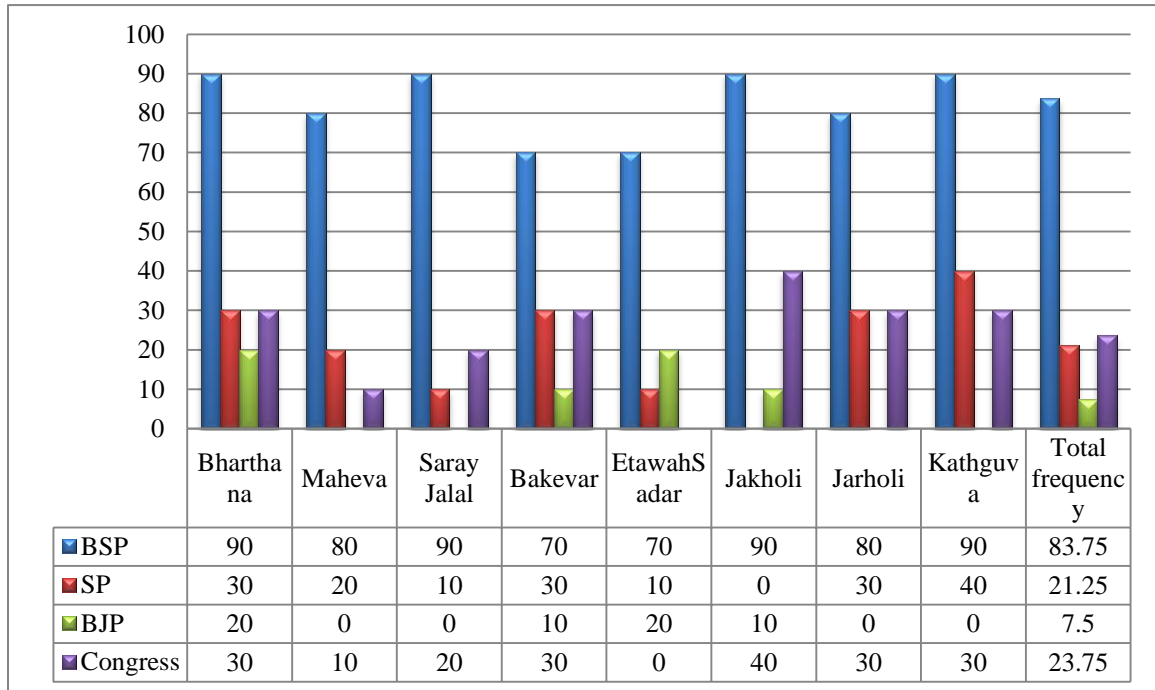


**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Development of the people has always been an important agenda of every political party of our country. As far as the issue of development of the Dalit communities is concerned, political parties have not addressed the issue seriously. In this context, the respondents have stated that the BSP always stood at the forefront for addressing their issues. Therefore the figure: 4.12 shows that 82.5 percent of respondents revealed that they supported the BSP for the development of Dalit communities. On the other hand, 61.25 percent of respondents have stated that they supported the Samajwadi Party which has also some concern for the Dalits cause. The respondents have also stated that 10 percent of the respondents supported the Bharatiya Janata Party and only 1.25 percent have stated that they supported to Congress party.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> The data of figure no. 4.12 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked a question for respondents discussing in each village, the respondents say that BSP and Congress are at the forefront in the field of development.

**Figure: 4.13 Respondents views on political parties which raises issues of Dalits at the national level.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

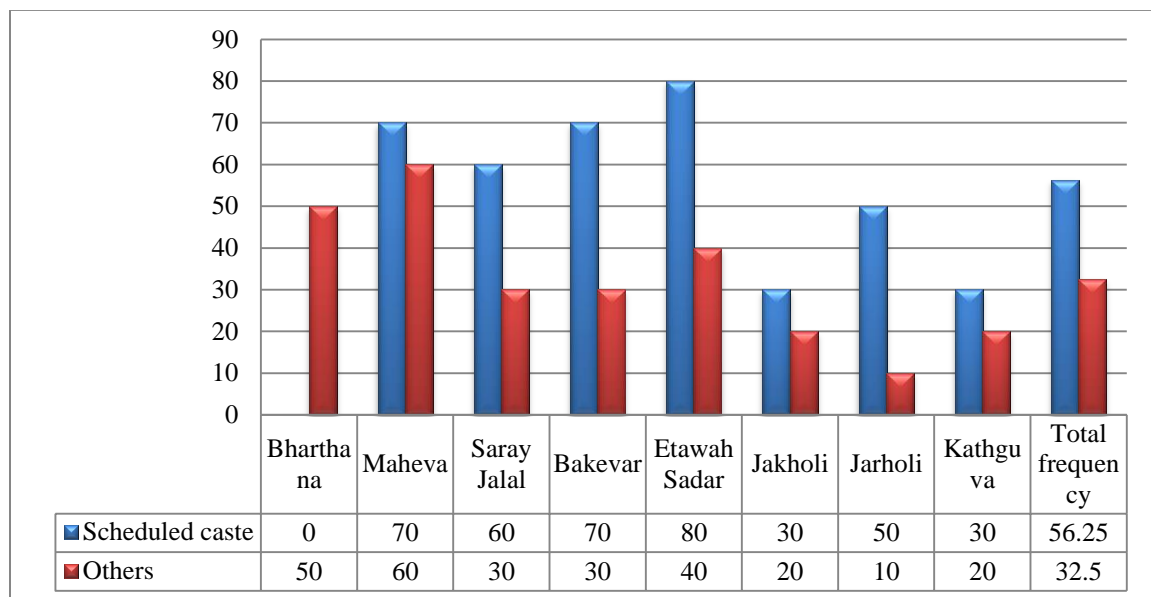
The figure 4.13 shows that 83.75 percent respondents have affirmed that the Bahujan Samaj Party raises the issues related to Dalit communities. Although other political parties rise the Dalit issues at the national level respondents have stated that it is negligible. In this context they stated that 21.25 percent chose Samajwadi Party, 7.5 percent chose Bharatiya Janata Party and 23.73 percent chose the Congress party. Respondents have also noted that the other political parties have also raised the issues of Dalits at the national level.<sup>45</sup>

In the figure: 4.14 shows that respondents have stated that although the political parties have raising issues related to Dalits at the national level it is mostly the Dalit political leaders who comes forward to help Dalits when there is need. In the study areas,

<sup>45</sup> The data of figure no.4.13 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked the question for respondents from each village are told while discussing social problems. There is discrimination on the basis of discrimination and untouchability. Dalit society does not know its rights because there is a lack of education. Therefore, discrimination and untouchability have become common with poor Dalit people. The economic, educational and unemployment problems of Dalit society are still there today. They are not getting a good education

56.25 percent of respondents have indicated that Dalit political leaders are much more concerned for their community whereas 32.5 percent of respondents have stated that non-Dalit political leaders are also concerned about the issues of Dalit community. The respondents have further stated that when we need the presence of political leaders for helping Dalit, then it is mostly the Dalit political leaders who come forward for protecting the interests of the Dalit community.<sup>46</sup>

**Figure: 4.14 Social background of political leaders who come forward to help/support Dalits.**



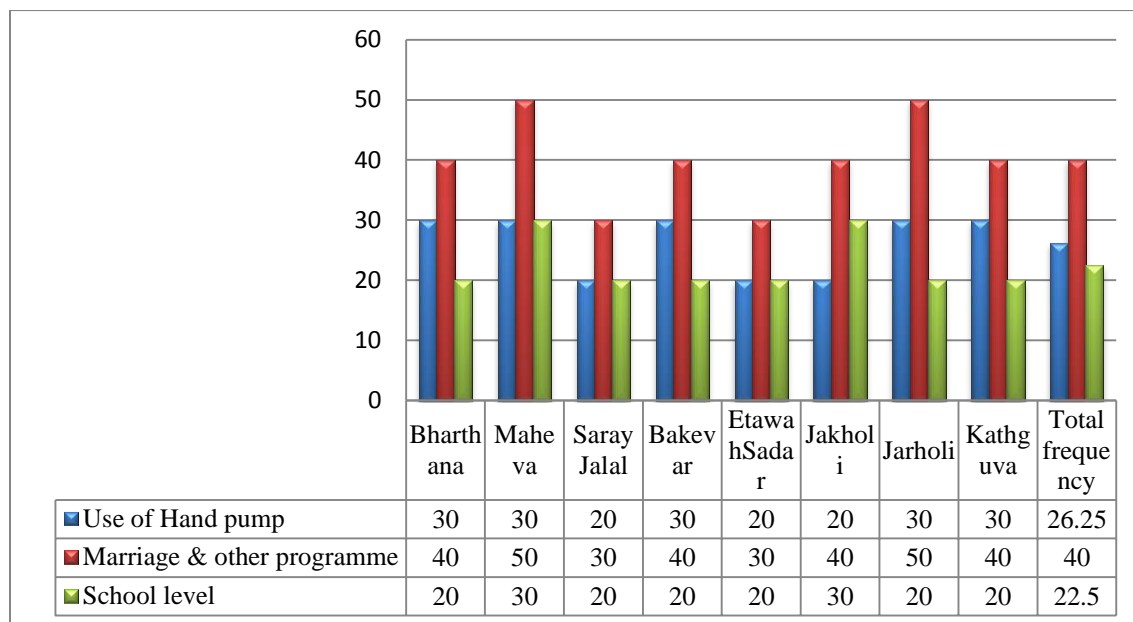
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10

The practice of untouchability has been constitutionally banned in post-independence India but it still exists in rural villages of our country. During the field study, the respondents have stated that different forms of untouchability that they have been experiencing in their locality. The figure: 4.15 shows that 26.25 percent of respondents have revealed their experience of untouchability while using a hand pump for accessing drinking water at their villages. Further 40 percent of respondents have pointed

<sup>46</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.14 is discussed. The 8 sample village's respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. Dalit leaders support any time but non-Dalit leaders did not support.

out the practice of untouchability was mostly seen during a marriage ceremony, when the Dalit grooms sit on the horse and go on a process on in their village. The practice of untouchability also existed in education institutions. In this context, 22.5 percent of respondents have that stated Dalit children are enduring the practice of untouchability at the school in accessing public places within the school premises. Adding to the practice of untouchability that was adversely affecting their children most and because of this sometimes their children are not much interested in attend schools.<sup>47</sup>

**Figure: 4.15 Respondents views on Dalits facing the problem of untouchability at the village.**

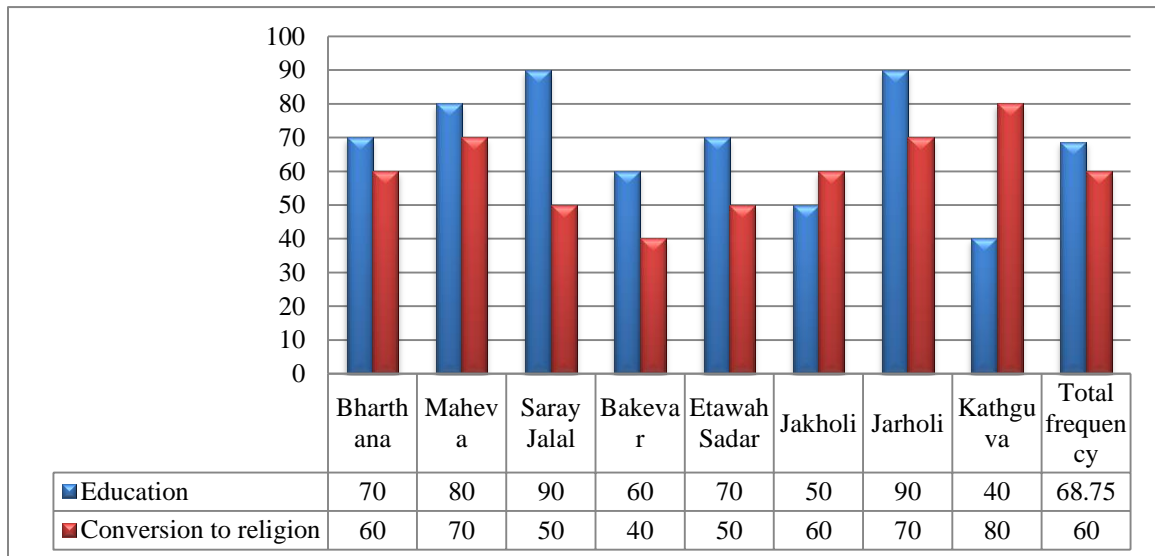


**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

<sup>47</sup> The data of figure no.4.15 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. I asked the question for respondents from each village are told while discussing untouchability at the village level. The satire of Indian society is that caste untouchability has not ended even today. Although strict laws have been made in the Constitution, no one abides by those laws. Even today the upper caste people follow the laws of Manu. No matter how much a person of Dalit society studies and reaches good positions, the discrimination with him never ends. Even today, the Dalit society does not allow upper caste people to take water from the hand pump. At the wedding and ceremony, Dalits sit away and provide food where there is dirt. In many primary schools, upper-caste teachers provide cleanliness work to Dalit children. And sit separately in the classroom.



**Figure: 4.16 Respondents views on the abolition of the caste system in Indian society.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

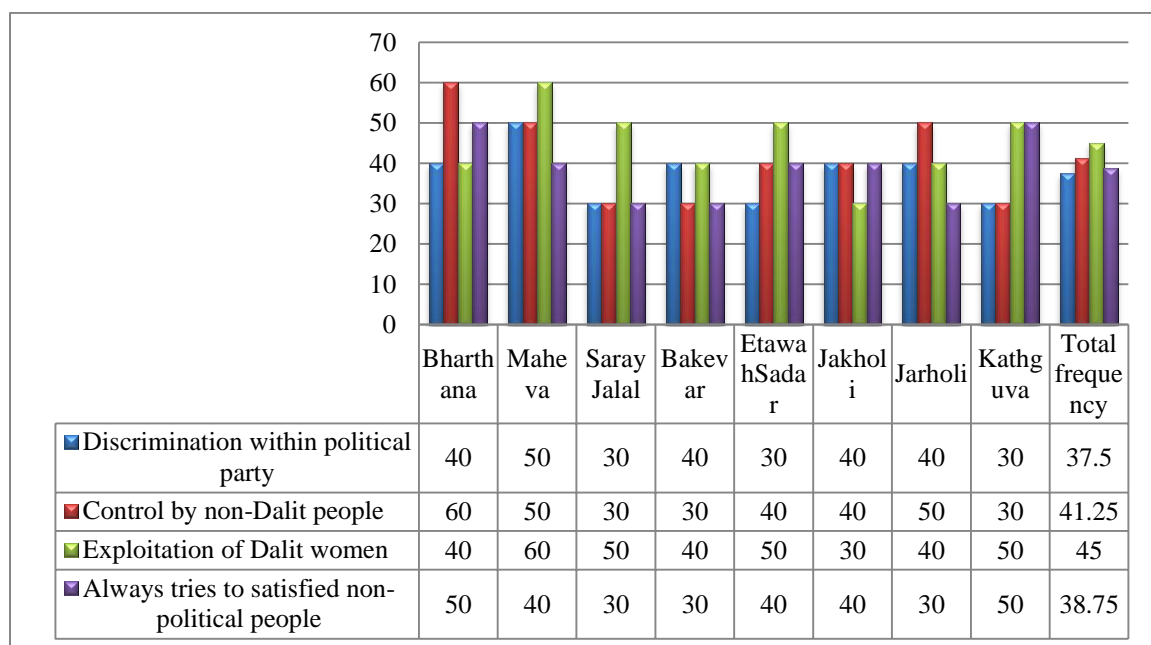
In post-independence India, various rules and laws have been enacted to abolish the practice of caste system. While interacting with respondents in the study area they have acknowledged their awareness of the legal abolition of the caste system in the society. The figure 4.16 shows that 68.75 percent of respondents have stated that education plays a significant role in the abolition of the caste system in society. Apart from this, 60 percent of respondents have point out that conversion to any other religion would be another way to abolish the caste system in Indian society.<sup>48</sup>

In order to obtain information about different kinds of problems that Scheduled Caste community are facing in their constituency the result have been discussed in the figure.4.17 shows that 37.5 percent of respondents have stated that discrimination within a political party was one of the major problems. 41.25 percent of respondents have said that non-Dalits were controlling political party. Further 45 percent of respondents have stated that Dalit women leaders are being exploited at different stages of their political

<sup>48</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 4.16 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher.

leadership career. 38.75 percent respondent have indicated that the upper caste political leaders were always trying to satisfy non-political people.<sup>49</sup>

**Figure: 4.17 Kind of problems that Scheduled Castes face in their constituency.**



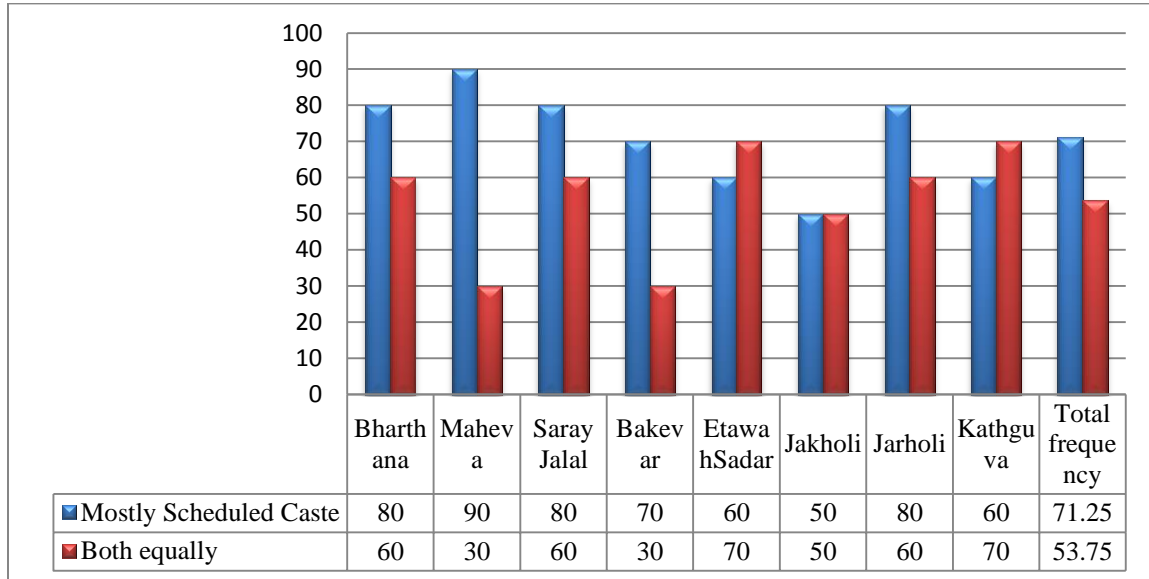
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The journey of Dalit leaders has always been a challenging for them because they have to struggle to gain support from different communities of society. The figure 4.18, shows that 71.25 percent of respondents have stated that mostly Scheduled Caste political leaders have not been received support from voters of other communities of the society. Although 53.75 percent has stated that other communities are also not getting support from every voter in their political carrier but that however is due to other factor and is not based on the caste line.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 3.17 is discussed. The 8 sample village's respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher.

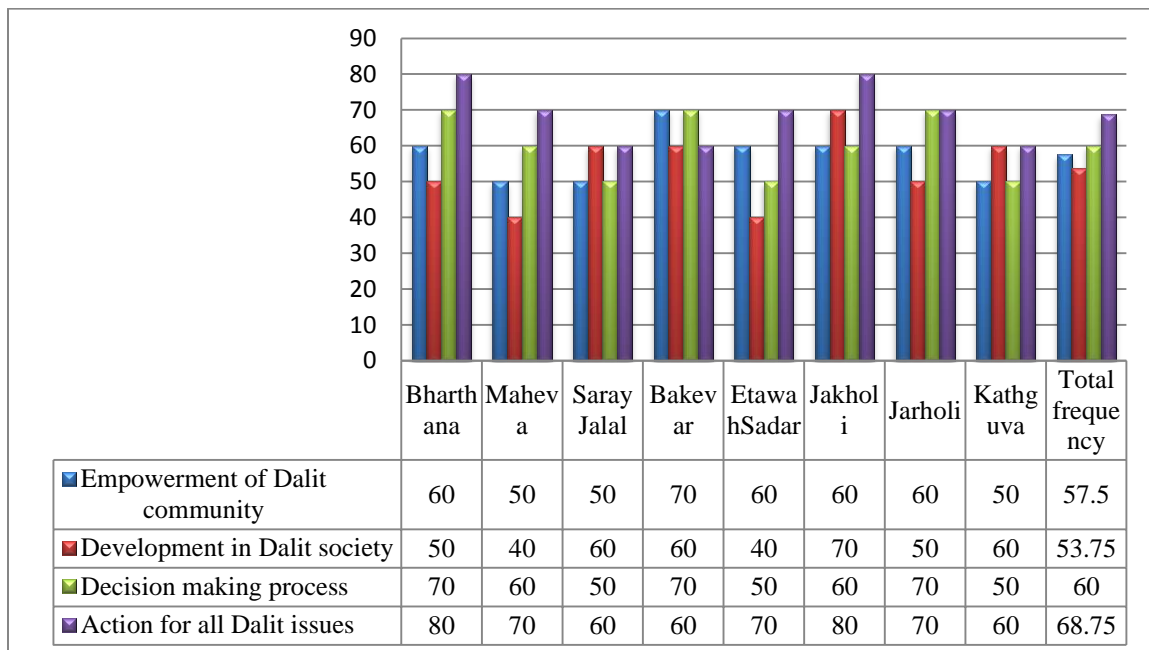
<sup>50</sup> There are 8 sample village has been selected for the study area data of figure no. 4.18 is given and analysed. Non-Dalit people are supported but they are candidates of the political party. Everyone votes on reserved seats, but non-Dalits do not support the Dalit political party.

**Figure: 4.18 In your opinion which community's political leaders did not get voters support?**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

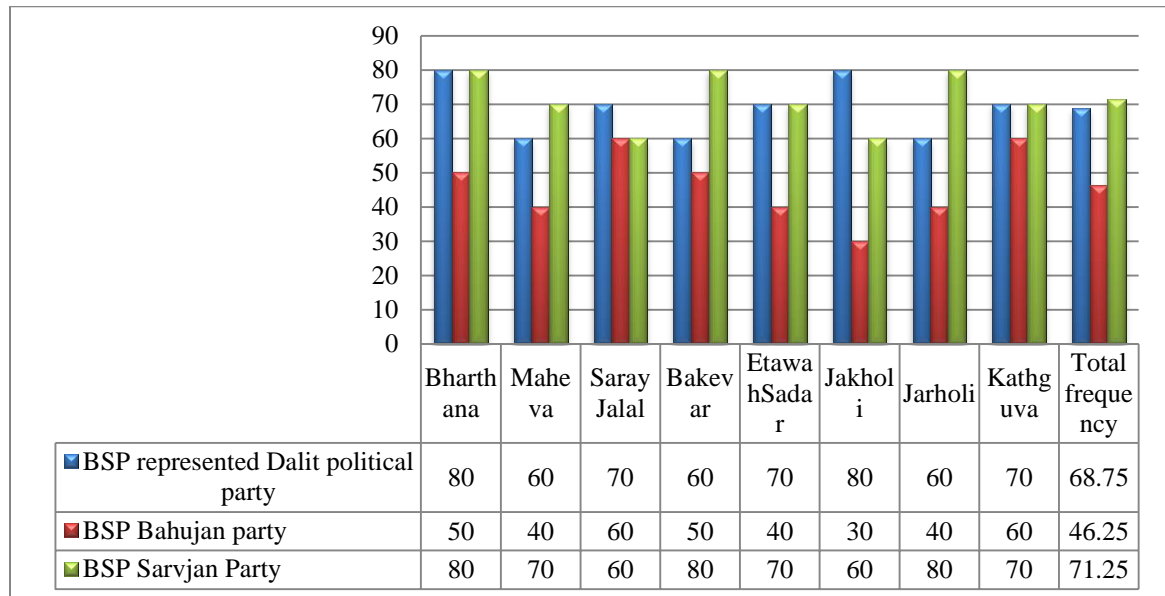
**Figure: 4.19 Respondents views on the role of a Dalit political party for the interest of the Dalit community.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The figure: 4.19 shows that representation of Dalit political party like Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in electoral politics of India has brought about number a change in Dalit community's life. In this connection, the 57.5 percent have stated that empowerment of Dalit community has been possible, only because of the presence of the Dalit political party. 53.75 percent respondent have stated that the party stood for the major development of Dalit society. Whereas 60 percent respondent have stated that Dalits have been enabled to take part in the decision making the process. Further 68.75 percent have stated it is the Dalit political party is always inactive on the issues of Dalit community.<sup>51</sup>

**Figure: 4.20 How BSP represents Dalit as a Dalit political party: Dalit perception.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

Although it is the general perception in peoples' mind in the BSP that BahujanSamaj Party is a Dalit political party but over the years it has shown its wider

<sup>51</sup> The data of figure no. 4.19 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure. These figure analyses of separate Dalit political party, but some respondents do not support the Dalit political party

support base and entered in state national politics. The figure: 4.20 shows that<sup>52</sup> 68.75 percent of respondents said that BSP represents a Dalit political party. Further, 46.25 percent of respondents have agreed that BSP represents a Bahujan<sup>53</sup> party whereas 71.25 percent have stated the BSP is Sarvajan<sup>54</sup> party.

The caste-based atrocities have been an everyday phenomenon in Indian society. The continuing failure of justice when it comes to protecting the rights of India's 200 million Dalits is a key obstacle to ending caste discrimination and dismantling the structural hierarchies behind the deep-rooted discriminatory mind-set of the people. A number of reports have been issued on the failure of the administration of justice to protect Dalits in India. Most recently the 2015 Equity Watch report "Access to Justice for Dalits in India" released by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), supported by Christian Aid and the European Union, finds that violence and atrocities against Dalits are rising in India and there is an urgent need to step up efforts to ensure justice for such victims. According to the National Crimes Statistics presented in the report there has been a 19.4% increase in crimes against Dalits from the previous year. The number of cases registered under the Scheduled Caste (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) Prevention of Atrocities Act has also risen every year since 2011, taking a massive leap in 2014 to 47,064 cases against 13,975 cases in 2013. The report concludes that dominant castes in India are perpetrating violence against Dalits to reinforce the hierarchical caste-related power structures and suppress Dalit rights assertions and claims.<sup>55</sup>

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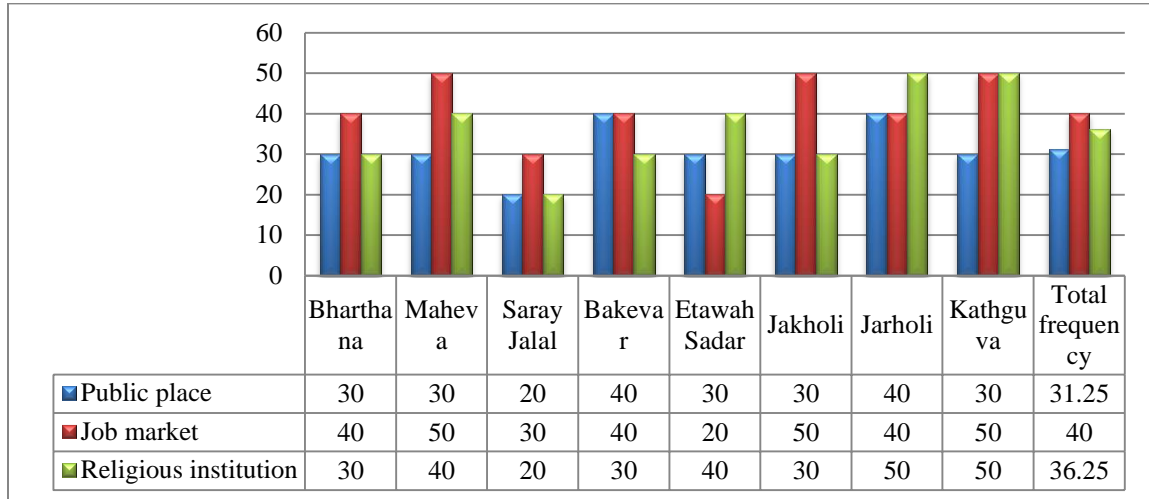
<sup>52</sup> The data of figure no. 4.20 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure.

<sup>53</sup> The term Bahujan refers to the Dalit and Backward Castes that together constitute the oppressed majority, historically dominated by the upper castes who form an oppressive elite minority.

<sup>54</sup> Sarvajan: SC/ST/OBC, minorities and marginalised savarn community are Sarvajan society.

<sup>55</sup> Caste discrimination in India IDSN Briefing Note · 2016, p. 1, <http://idsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/IDSN-briefing-note-India-2016.pdf>

**Figure: 4.21 Incidents of atrocities during the Mayawati government if any and if yes, places that the incidents of atrocities have been committed or reported.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

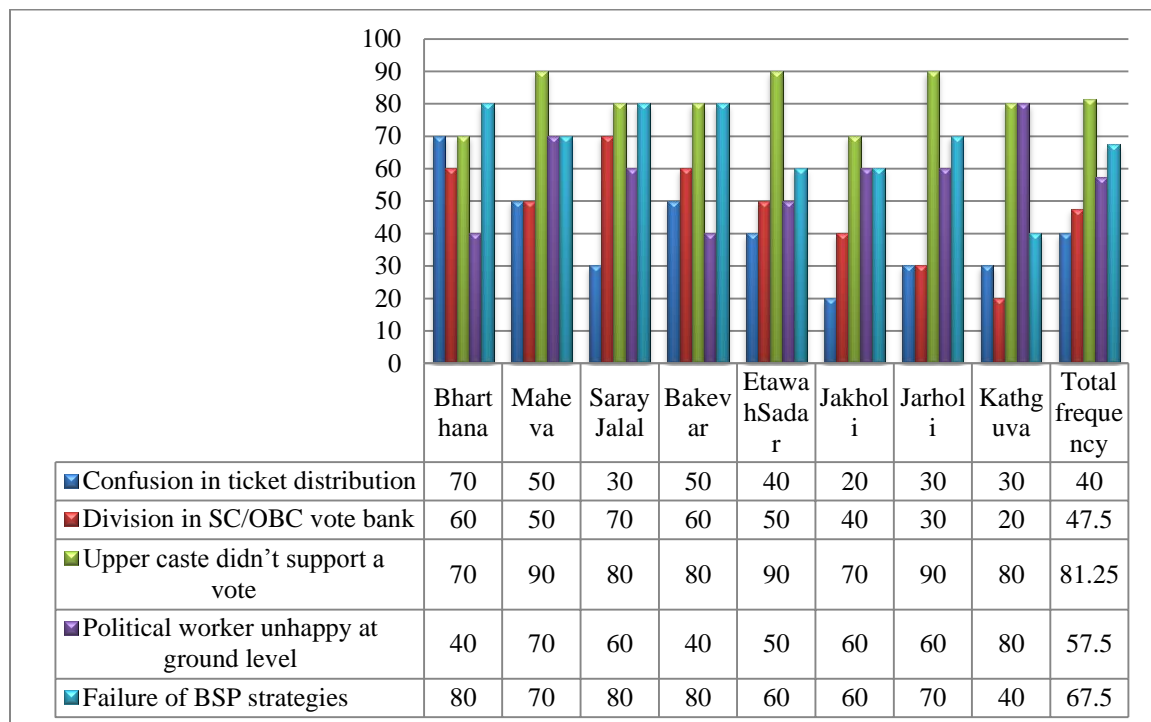
In order to collect information about the level of atrocities that took place during the BSP government in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Kumari Mayawati, Chief Minister (2007-12), the respondents in the study area have stated their views on the incidents of atrocities suffered by the Dalit communities. The figure.4.21 shows that 31.25 percent of respondents have pointed out that the atrocities are taking place in public places. 40 percent respondents have stated that they are going through the caste-based discrimination in the job market whereas 36.25 percent attested to the incidents of caste-based atrocities in religious places.<sup>56</sup>

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati became the Chief Minister in 2007 after being elected as the single largest party in Uttar Pradesh assembly election and completed her 5 years term. Despite having majority support for her party, she failed to win in 2012 elections. In this connection, the respondents of the study area have stated several factors responsible for the failure of Mayawati in forming government in the 2012 elections. The figure: 4.22 shows that 40 percent of respondents have stated about confusion in ticket distribution. 47.5 percent respondent have said that there was division of SC and OBC

<sup>56</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 4.21 is discussed. The 8 sample village's respondents have given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. These data collection fields work each of village by researcher.

vote bank. 81.25 percent respondent stated that higher caste people did not cast their vote in support of BSP. 57.5 percent respondents stated that political workers at the ground level were not satisfied and 67.5 percent have attributed its loss to the failure of BSP strategies in the election.<sup>57</sup>

**Figure: 4.22 Factors attributed to the failure of the BSP in the 2012 Vidhan Sabha elections.**



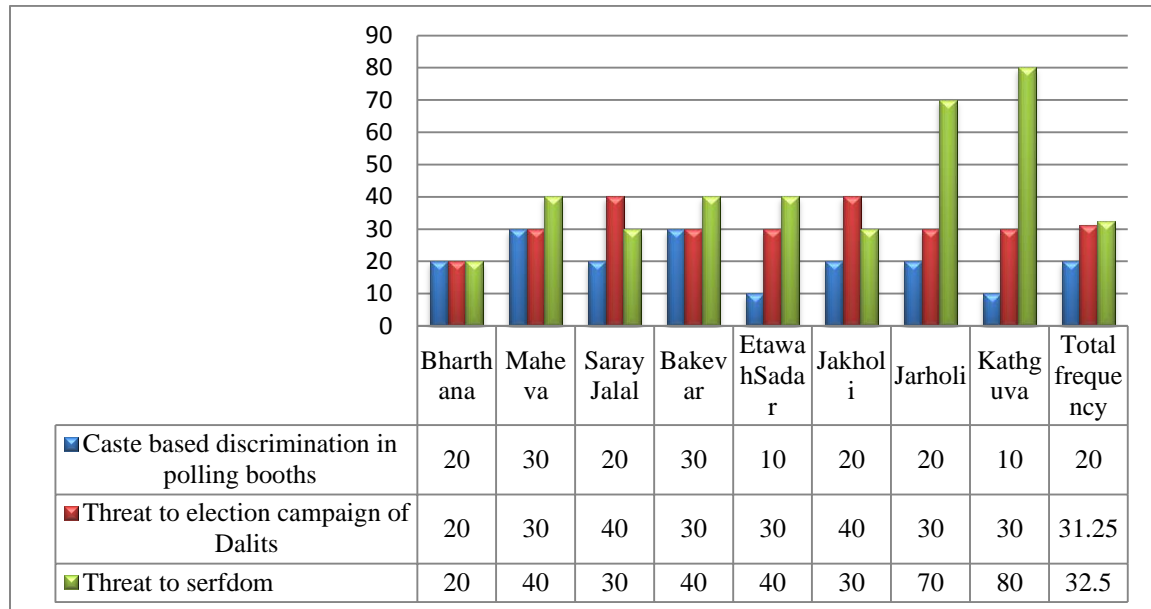
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The figure.4.23 shows the caste-based discrimination in the electoral process. 20 percent of respondents have stated that there was caste-based discrimination in the

<sup>57</sup> The data of figure no. 4.22 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given in the figure.

polling booths. 31.25 percent respondent referred to various threatening to calls issued to Dalits in the election campaign and 32.5 percent said about threat to serfdom.<sup>58</sup>

**Figure: 4.23 Caste-based discrimination in the electoral process?**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

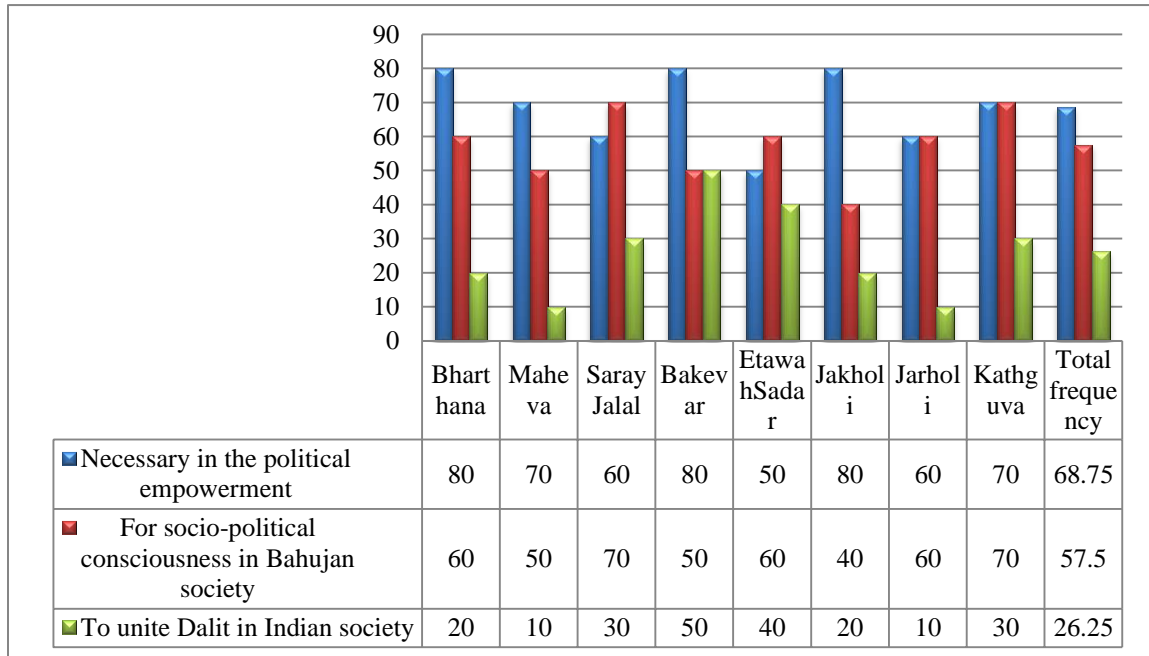
The figure: 4.24 shows that identity politics are extremely necessary in the political empowerment of Dalit society. In the following graph 68.75 percent expressed respondents said that identity politics is necessary for the political empowerment of Dalit society. 57.5 respondents said that for raising the socio-political consciousness in Bahujan society, identity politics is necessary. 26.25 percent of respondents have pointed out that in order to form a single platform of Dalits in politics, identity politics is indispensable.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 4.23 is discussed. The 8 sample village's respondents have given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. These data collection fields work each of village by researcher. According to the respondents, despite the law and order situation, Dalit people are discriminated against during election.

<sup>59</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of figure no. 4.24 is discussed. The 8 sample villages' respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. Respondent each of village discussed her researcher very necessary identity politics in this country.

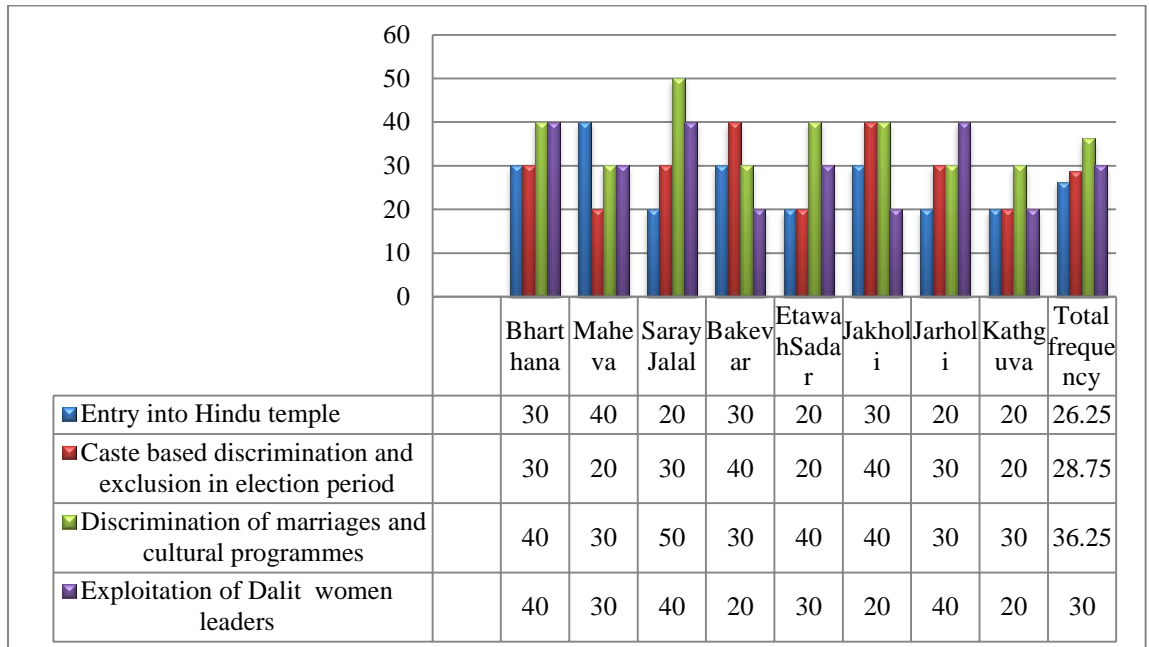


**Figure: 4.24 Identity politics positively necessary in the political empowerment of Dalit society.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

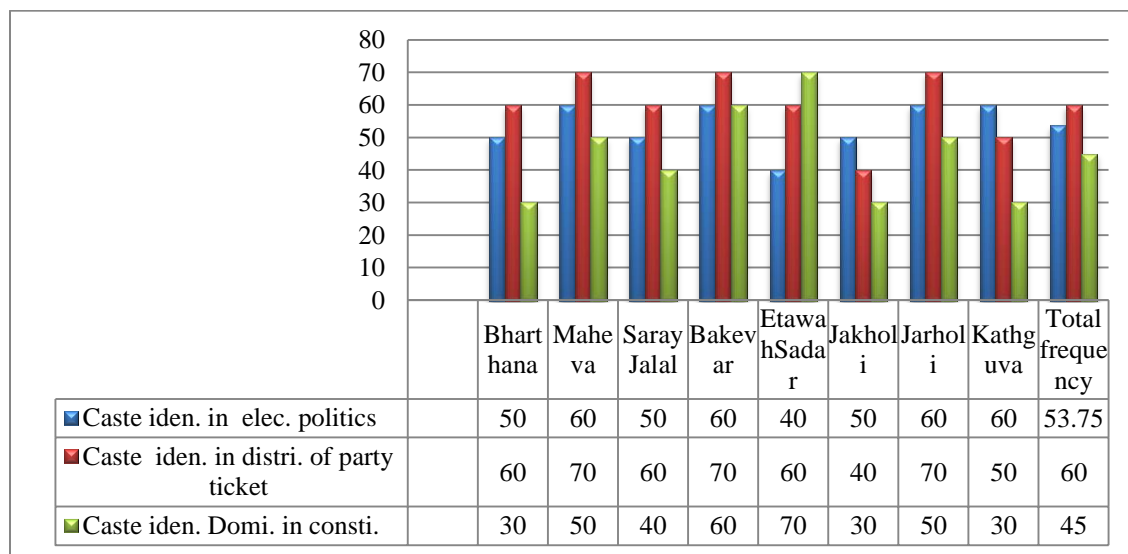
**Figure: 4.25 Dalit leaders suffer discrimination and exclusion at Village/District/State level.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which is more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The Constitution of India has guaranteed the protection of weaker sections of society from any form of discrimination in every sphere of human life. Despite having constitutional provisions and rules, the Dalit leaders are facing discrimination and exclusion at the village, district, and state level. The figure: 4.25 shows that kind of discrimination experienced by Dalit leaders. 26.25 percent of respondents have stated the Dalit leaders face caste discrimination when they enter Hindu temples. Caste-based discrimination and exclusion in election period is generally widespread stated by 28.75 percent of respondents. The leaders are also face caste-based discrimination when they attend of marriage and other cultural programs of higher caste communities as attested to by 36.25 percent respondents. Whereas 30 per respondents have testified that Dalit women leaders are being exploited by non-Dalit leaders.<sup>60</sup>

**Figure: 4.26 Caste identities as a dominant factor in the electoral politics.**



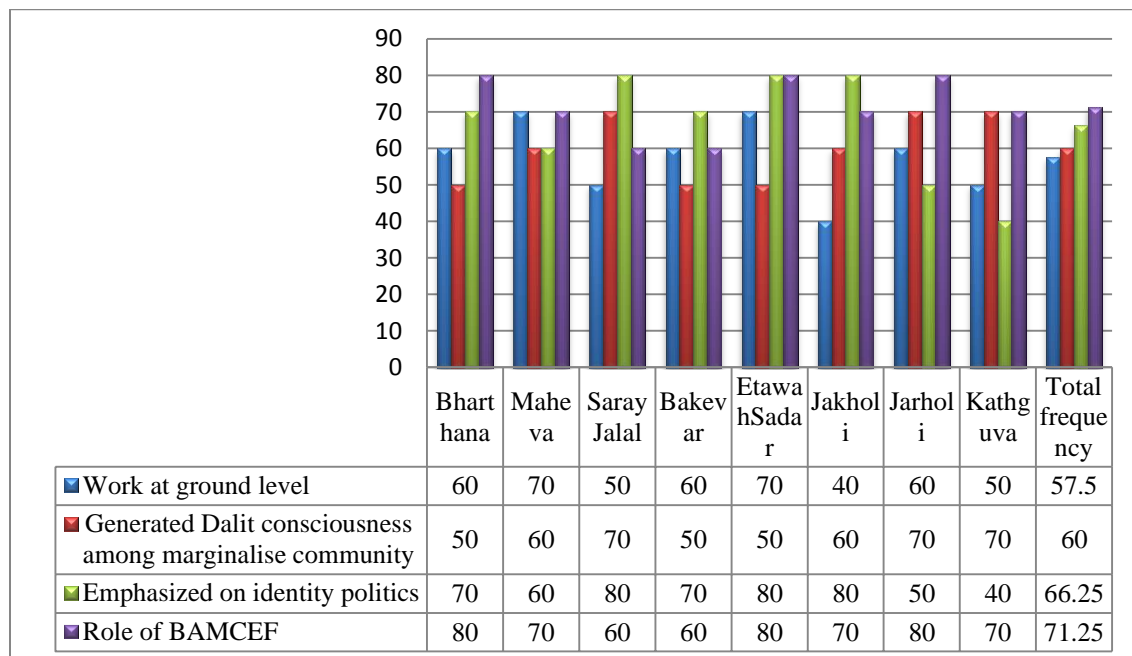
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

In India, we find that, despite the adoption of a liberal democratic polity after independence, communities and collective identities have remained powerful and

<sup>60</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of the figure no. 4.25 is discussed. The 8 sample villages respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. In Indian society, discrimination on the basis of caste is very high. Even after becoming the four times Chief Minister Mayawati, people use words like Chamariya at the village and state level. Discrimination against Dalit at the time of electoral politics is a common practice.

continue to claim recognition. Caste has become an important determinant in Indian society and politics. The Figure: 4.26 shows that caste-based identity politics in Uttar Pradesh. 53.75 percent have stated that caste identities in electoral politics very much exist. 60 percent of respondents have stated that identity plays an important role in the distribution of tickets during the elections. 45 percent respondents have said that caste identities are always dominant in the constituency in the study area.<sup>61</sup>

**Figure: 4.27 Dalit Bahujan discourse established by Kanshi Ram and developed the socio-political consciousness among marginalized groups.**



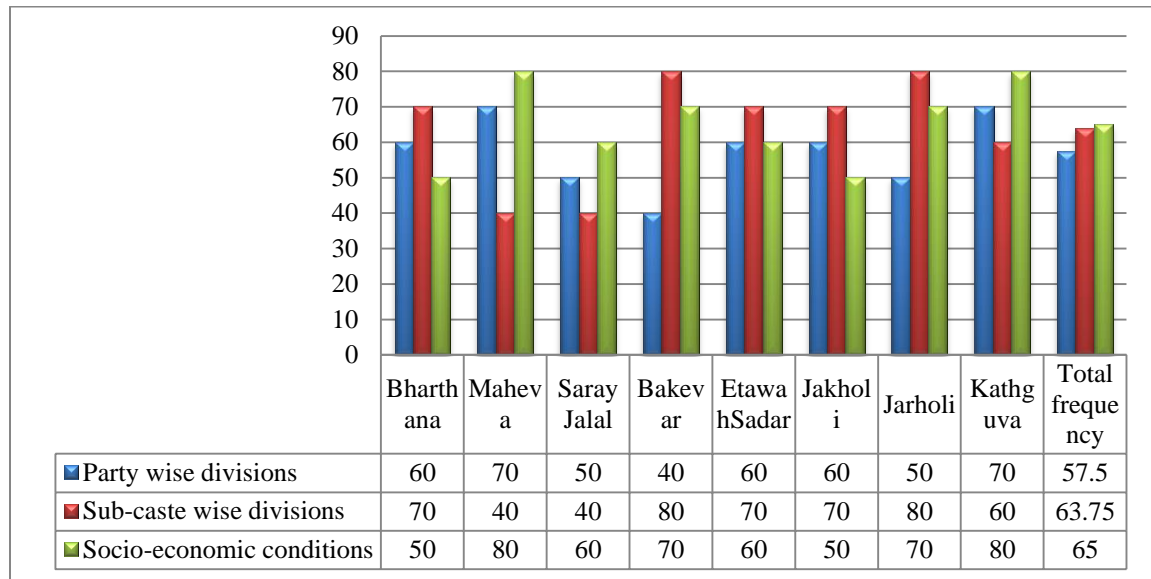
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The discourse of Dalit Bahujan established by Kanshi Ram has not only developed the socio-political consciousness among Dalit communities but has also injected the identity of Dalits assertiveness in the electoral politics of India. In this context, the respondents have expressed their views on the role of Kanshi Ram on uniting Dalits in a single platform in the politics of our country. In the figure: 4.27 shows that 57.5 percent of respondents have stated that Kanshi Ram had worked dedicatedly at the grass roots level in order to consolidate Dalits. 60 percent respondents have stated that

<sup>61</sup> The data of figure no. 4.26 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study.

Kanshi Ram had generated Dalit consciousness among marginalized communities. 66.25 percent respondent agreed that Kanshi Ram emphasized upon identity politics and 71.25 percent said that BAMCEF Dalit ideology was at the forefront and it played a significant role in generating Dalit consciousness among weaker sections of society.<sup>62</sup>

**Figure: 4.28 Political parties manipulate the Sub-caste wise division of Dalit communities in society**



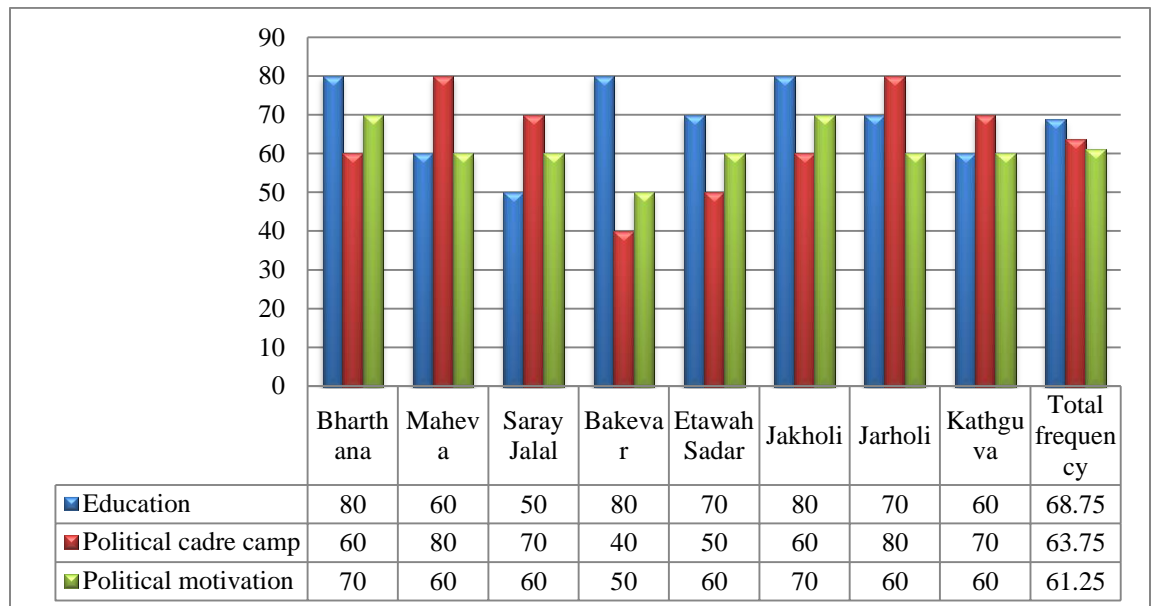
**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

The figure: 4.28 shows that the sub-caste wise division of Dalit communities has provide space for non-Dalit political leaders to manipulate this community in electoral politics. In this context, 57.5 percent of respondents have stated that there is a party-wise division of sub-caste groups among the Dalit communities. 63.75 percent of respondents have testified to the fact that sub-caste wise division has provided space for non-Dalit leaders to apply the principle of divide and rule policy in the political process of the state. 65

<sup>62</sup> The data of figure no. 4.27 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given in the figure

percent respondents felt that due to sub-caste wise division among Dalit communities the socio-economic conditions of this community are being affected.<sup>63</sup>

**Figure: 4.29 Respondents observations and views on Dalit political consciousness.**



**Note:** The respondents have given multiple answers, which are more than the total number of sample size of each village i.e., 10.

After discussing various issues related to Dalit political consciousness, the respondents of the study area have pointed out that their view are important and issues the need to be focused in order to spread political consciousness among Dalit communities. In this context, the figure: 4.29 shows that 68.75 percent of respondents have stated that education is an important tool to consolidate political consciousness among Dalit communities. 63.75 percent respondent have pointed out organizing political cadre camps is another tool for raising political consciousness. Lastly, 61.25 percent stated respondent indicated that political motivation is also important among the Dalit

<sup>63</sup> The data analysis of the field the study of the figure no. 4.28 is discussed. The 8 sample village's respondent has given their views on the question asked them by the researcher. The respondent said that BJP, SP, and Congress divided Dalit vote bank but not divided vote bank Bahujan Samaj Party in this state.

communities so that every section of Dalit society would be more conscious in political sphere of their life.<sup>64</sup>

### **Case Studies in each village in Etawah district.**

#### **Case Study: 1**

Mr. Praveen Kumar<sup>65</sup> hails from Bharthana, of Etawah district. In his own words: “I have been active in politics for 10 years. My family members were attacked by non-Dalit people. I went to the BSP leaders to demand justice. At that time, the BSP was in a government in UP. But none of the leaders helped me, to get justice and punish the caste people who attacked my family. They had a large population in the village. Dalit leaders did not want to lose their vote bank. Therefore, the leaders supported those non-Dalit people. We were pressurized to close the matter. From that day on, I became disenchanted with BSP. All the Dalit people in my village decided not to vote for BSP. I was very keen to get into politics. That is why I joined the BJP. Today I support BJP because the BJP takes along everyone with them. I remain active in politics at the village level. I help the people of all the Dalit communities in the rural areas. I make them socially and politically aware of Dalit society and it right.”

***What are the social problems of Dalit society?*** “People of Dalit society have to face problems in every field. Due to lack of education, socially, economically and politically, they are being exploited and tortured. This problem is the same across India. Dalit girls have to suffer atrocities like molestation, rape, etc. Untouchability is still prevalent in society today.”

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<sup>64</sup> The data of figure no. 4.29 is based on the Question of a field study by the researcher. There is a total of 8 sample villages have been taken into account for the field study. The analysis of the data is given below in the figure. These figure discussed are political consciousness in Dalit society.

<sup>65</sup> Mr. Praveen Kumar, (35) higher education educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Bharthana, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 10/02/2017. The case study explains about the consciousness Dalit leaders and Dalit political party does not support the Dalit community.

***Do Dalit leaders face caste discrimination?*** “If you go with the Dalit leaders from the rural level to the district and state level, there is some kind of discrimination and exclusion all the time. Due to lack of education, the caste system in the society is still very strong.”

***What role does a candidate's caste play in electoral politics?*** “At the time of election, the caste of a candidate plays a very big role. The vote bank does not see the political party, it sees the caste condition. Political parties see the caste and dominance of that caste of the candidate. In today's politics, all political parties divide their vote bank by dividing the sub-castes of Dalits and other backward classes of society. In the elections to the District Panchayat, Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha, there is a lot of division of votes on the basis of sub-castes of Dalits.”

***What do you think should to bring about political consciousness in Dalit society?*** “Dalit society should be made aware of the field of education. When the Dalit society is educated, it will learn about its identity and rights. Dalit leaders will have to work at the grassroots level in the society.”

## **Case Study: 2**

Mr. Yatendra Gautam<sup>66</sup> hails from Maheva, Etawah district. He narrates his experience: “I have been active in politics for about 15 years. I was influenced by the views of Dr. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram, and Mayawati. I am the District General Secretary of BSP. My relatives have contested the District President and state Assembly election. I am participating in politics in a whole-hearted manner from the rural level to the district level. I have raised my voice on Dalit issues served. I fully aware of my responsibility support the Dalit society.”

***What are the social and political problems of Dalit society?*** “Caste discrimination is more in the Dalit society. I go to the houses of high caste friends and so they provide us

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<sup>66</sup> Mr. Yatendra Gautam, (40) higher education educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Maheva, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 11/02/2017. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of Dr. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram and Mayawati in Dalit community. The researcher discusses for untouchability, caste-based discrimination and political consciousness in Dalit community.

meals in separate utensils. Afterwards we have to clean their utensils. When upper caste people come to my house, they do not even drink tea and water in my house. I go to weddings of non-Dalit people, but there are different dining hall for Dalits. Even today, Dalit people are treated with untouchability indirectly. Politically challenged Dalit society candidates are not allowed to contest from the unreserved seat. Dalit candidates from Gram Panchayat to district and state level are allowed to fight only on reserved seats.”

***Is identity politics necessary to gain political power?*** “Identity politics is very much important for the Dalit society to secure power. I have experienced that identity politics is termed as casteist by non-Dalits. If non-Dalits resort to identity politics, then they will call it politics for the country’s interest. Today, all political parties are into identity politics.”

***How does the caste discrimination occur with Dalit leaders?*** “There have been many examples of discrimination between me and my neighbors. If there is caste, there will definitely be discrimination because there is a lack of education at the village level. In politics, all societies have to be taken into consideration.”

***What role does a candidate's caste play in electoral politics?*** “All political parties conduct a survey as to which caste is dominant in which area. Candidates of the same caste are pitched against each other, due to which political parties easily win elections. If all the votes of Dalit sub-castes go to one political party, then all political parties will try their best to divide the vote bank on the basis of sub-caste. I or my party workers do not try to divide the votes of the Dalit sub-castes. Even I could not achieve success in the election. We only work to connect and unite society.”

***What do you think can be done to raise political consciousness in Dalit society?*** “Senior leaders will have to work at the grassroots to bring about and raise the level of political consciousness the Dalit society. Kanshi Ram had worked hard at the grassroots level. Kanshi Ram had always lived among the people in the society, and thus the BSP has come to power. Today, the tickets are not distributed properly in time, due to which the workers are angry with the BSP.”



### Case Study: 3

Mr. Jai Prakash Dohare<sup>67</sup> is a resident of Sarayjalal, in Etawah district. To quite an experience: “I became active in politics in 2003 during the election as a student. I contested the student organization election in the college and won with a huge margin; which made me interested in politics. After this I contested the elections Gram Panchayat. I have become the sarpanch for the third time in a row. My brother-in-law has been an MLA from BSP. After this he has been an MLA from SP. I have contested the elections for the Zilla Panchayat. In future I have to contest the state Assembly election. Because I am doing a very good job in my field, people like us. Solving the problems of Dalit society and giving full support to them in their suffering. I am deeply influenced by the views of Dr. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. I may work as a member of any party. But I will never forget the views of Dr. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. Because his ideas have given me a lot of strength, I will work on his ideas all the time.”

*What are the social and political problems of Dalit society?* “Exploitation, atrocities, rapes, torture and physical hares and persecution of Dalits are very much Wherever the population of Dalits is less the suffering in much more. Dalit society is unable to raise its voice because it is financially weak. Non-Dalit castes take advantage of their economic weakness. Untouchability is still widely seen today. People from lower castes go to non-Dalit people’s marriage and gatherings, but they are not treated well. If the lower caste people do not go, then the non-Dalit people do not allow the lower castes to work on their land. Dalit castes are landless, due to which Dalits depend on the land of other non-Dalits. The level of education is very low. The participation of Dalit society in higher education is very low. I am meeting for the first time some, who are in higher education. People in my society do not know about higher education. So my society is far behind. Talking about this district, there are very few political problems. Everyone has the right to contest elections. Those who have an interest in politics, they are contesting elections.”

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<sup>67</sup> Mr. Jai Prakash Dohare, (36) higher education educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Sarayjalal, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 14/02/2015. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of Dr. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram and education life and contested election for student organization for collage level.

***Should there be a Dalit political party of Dalit society?*** “Bahujan Samaj Party is a Dalit political party which followed Bahujan ideology. But today the BSP is a party of Sarvajan. It walks with all sections of society. Ever since BSP has adopted the ideology of Sarvajan, the graph of BSP politics has moved downwards. If we talk about Dalit issues, from the rural level to the district and state level, the voice is raised. Therefore, the Dalit society may be doing politics for other interests apart from its own interests. But the Dalits are unable to raise their voice on Dalit issues.”

***Is identity politics necessary to gain political power?*** “If Dalit society wants to gain power, then identity politics is very much needed. Through it, alone Dalits achieve social, economic and political development of their society. Kanshi Ram started identity politics, and he succeeded in it and, due because of that the BSP formed government four times in Uttar Pradesh. Kanshi Ram filled the social and political consciousness in the Dalit society. Even today, every Dalit leader is influenced by his views.”

***Are Dalit leaders also discriminated against in politics?*** “At the time of elections, non-Dalits along with Dalit sub-castes get threatened. Because if the Dalit society does not vote for there are parties, they do not allow them to do agricultural work in their land the pramilataing, forces cast the vote of Dalits. Discrimination with the Chamar caste is less because the Chamar caste is more in number. In education and economic spheres, the Chamar caste is far ahead among the Dalit castes.”

#### **Case Study: 4**

Mr. M.P. Singh<sup>68</sup> is a resident Bakevar, of Etawah district. To quite an experience: “Nearly, 25 years ago, I had some very negative thinking about politics. I used to think that people who are in politics are very selfish. I have a friend, how was always discussing about Indian politics. He was an educated man and I considered him a very strong person. I thought that, because he did not do any work; he was busy doing politics day and night. His family was very upset with him. One day I asked him, you are not thinking about the future and what are you going to do about your family? He asked me

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<sup>68</sup> Mr. M. P. Singh, (47) higher education educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in Bakevar, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 20/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of reading Dr. Ambedkar Writing.

to read about Dr. Ambedkar. I considered Dr. Ambedkar the architect of the Constitution. Then I studied the life and struggle of Dr. Ambedkar. Then I understood how far behind my society is because educated people like us are not doing any work for the society but are limited to their family only. Then one day my friend told me about Kanshi Ram, the Member of Parliament who was from Etawah Lok Sabha seat and I went to meet him. Hearing his thoughts, the man hard work hidden inside me had woken up. I was influenced by Kanshi Ram's ideas and made me understand politics leader. I actively participated in politics as well in taking care of my family and giving my time to make people aware in the society. Thus political became my business. Then I was made the general secretary of BSP. Today I am not an official of the party; I only serve as a party worker."

***What are the social and political problems faced by Dalit society?*** "Dalit society faces discrimination and untouchability on the bases of caste. Dalit society does not know its rights because they have little as no education. Therefore, discrimination and untouchability have become common with poor and illiterate Dalit people. The economic and education-related problems and unemployment plague the Dalit society live today. They are not getting proper education. The Dalit society is very much politically aware, so at least it participates in politics."

***Should there be a Dalit political party from among the Dalit society?*** "Only a Dalit political party will increase inequality in the country. The Dalit society is represented by the Bahujan Samaj Party. There is no need for a separate Dalit political party. BSP works in the interest of all classes."

***Is identity politics necessary to attain political power?*** "Yes, it is very important to indulge in identity politics. All political parties do it. And because of that, they have come to power."

***How does the caste affect Dalit leaders?*** "I have been in politics for many years. Due to caste-system, there is discrimination and exclusion of Dalit leaders at every level. All Dalit leaders are directly and indirectly discriminated against from the rural level to the district and state level."

*What role does a candidate's caste play in electoral politics?* “There is a lack of education in the Dalit society. Full attention should be paid to education. Dalit society should be transformed into a social power by recovering the unity of the reserved classes by eliminating social discord; only those Bahujans can get proper representation in every field. Dalit, backward and minority communities’ unity can alone bring a humanitarian society.”

### **Case Study: 5**

Mr. Ashwini Kumar<sup>69</sup> is a resident of Etawah Sadar of the Etawah district, He narrates her experience: “I have been active in politics for 10 years. I am a worker of BJP, it sector president. 10 years ago I was the Sarpanch of my gram panchayat. I am very much interested in politics and I want to contest the assembly elections too. I got political consciousness through media. I think that people of the same caste should not dominate in Dalit politics. All Sub-castes should get a chance. The BJP has given me an opportunity status. I will definitely represent my district politically are day. I will make my society and people aware of rights and ddddd.

*What are the social problems faced by Dalits society?* “Dalit society is faced with many problems. It is economically and socially backward. There are no means of employment. Dalit castes continue to be exploited and tortured. Once I went to the house of a high-caste leader belonging to my party. He asked me to sit outside the house, I sat outside. Many non-Dalit workers were sitting inside the house. I could not understand why I was asked to sit outside. After some time a person brought water in an unwashed glass and tea in a destroyed cup. I got into thinking that Netaji has such a big house. Financially very strong, then why was I given water and tea in this kind of cup? I could not understand anything. Then the plate in which the food came for me was also dirty. I asked the person what the leaders are doing. He said that everybody is having food inside. I am a Dalit, so food is being served with me in such a vessel. I did not eat food and walked away. Netaji called me and asked me why you didn’t eat your food? I told him I am a human being,

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<sup>69</sup> Mr. Ashwini Kumar, (28) higher education educated person belong to Katheriya community. He lived in EtawahSadar. The interview is conducted on 02/01/2017. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of BhartiyaJanta Party. The respondent clearly point out about the caste-based untouchability in rural area.

not an animal. He said that one has to behave by looking at the society. I told him you look at your society; I will look at my society. Then from that day on I was not treated like this. But I stopped going to his house.”

***Should there be a Dalit political party of Dalit society?*** “The Dalit society should have a political party, which only represents the Dalit society. Dalit people in other political parties do not have the right to take decisions, due to which reason no work is done in the interests of Dalit society.”

***Is identity politics necessary to gain political power?*** “Identity politics is extremely important for the Dalit society. Because all political parties do identity politics. And they work in the interest of their society, as they always remain in power.”

***What do you think should be done to raise political consciousness in Dalit society?*** “Through education, Dalit society’s political consciousness can be brought afford. The Dalit society is illiterate and cannot understand politics. When political consciousness raises they be able to develop themselves and their society.”

### **Case Study: 6**

Mr. Budhapriya Gautam,<sup>70</sup> is a resident of Jakholi, in Etawah district. he had his experience in his own words: “I have been active in politics for 20 years. I follow Ambedkar’s ideology. I have never met Kanshi Ram but his views are peoples among and I was influenced me a lot. Once he came to address a public meeting in Etawah. Then I saw him and heard their views. Since that day I am a BSP worker in my area. I have fulfilled all the responsibilities given to me politically.”

***What are the social and political problems of Dalit society?*** “Dalit society is socially, economically and politically very backward. He does not have the means of employment. There is not enough land to sustain him and due to which his life is going through a lot of hardship. If poor Dalit women go to work on the land of non-Dalit people, then there they full oppression. If the daughters of Dalit society go to study, non-Dalits harass them, and

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<sup>70</sup> Mr. Boddhpriya Gautam, (50) Illiterate person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Jakholi, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 17/12/2016. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of Ambedkar ideology and BSP.

they are thus deprived of education. The families of some Dalits are economically and socially backward because some Dalits have him health. The children of such families are also deprived means of food, living, and education. Politically Dalit society has become a little aware. But being selfish, they are destroying their ideology. In the process of contesting and winning elections, they keep changing from one party to another political party. Due to which their political identity is being eroded. The BSP has failed nearly in the 2012 assembly elections. The reason for this is that the votes of the Dalit castes were divided on the basis of caste. Non-Dalit castes were made candidates they did not, however, vote for the BSP.”

***Should there be a Dalit political party of the Dalit society?*** “There should be a political party representing the Dalit society. That in the way, the social and economic conditions of the Dalit society can be changed. Because when a Dalit candidate is elected in the Dalit party, he will think about his society. The BSP represents the Dalit society but it is not a Dalit political party. The BSP represents all sections of society. There is a problem with the BSP, that gives Dalit candidates only the opportunity to contest on reserved seats. Thus, BSP candidates with reserved lose constituencies. The candidates who win the elections develop their own caste and class, owing to which Dalit society is backward.”

***Is identity politics necessary to attain political power?*** “Identity politics should be based on caste, because the politics of identity has achievable been started by Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and backward classes. When the Dalit society started its own politics of identity, there was a lot of opposition to it in Indian politics.”

***Do Dalit leaders face discrimination?*** “At the village level, caste discrimination of Dalit leaders is glaring. Most of the time I have seen and felt that caste discrimination. The Dalit leaders in SP, BJP, and Congress suffer the most on a very large scale.”

***What role does the candidate play in electoral politics?*** “If there is caste, the role of caste will also be there. It is very difficult to win elections without going into political equations. Many political parties divide the votes of the Dalit sub-castes. For example, on reserved seats, all political parties field candidates from different Dalit sub-castes.

Therefore the Dalit vote gets divided. Any political party whose Dalit leader supports non-Dalit castes wins the election.”

### **Case Study: 7**

Mr. Saranam Singh<sup>71</sup> is a resident of at Jarholi, in Etawah district. Narrating her experience, he says: “I have been active in politics for alow 35 years. I have worked with Kanshi Ram Ji. When he contested from the Etawah Lok Sabha seat, I have been campaigning with him. I have been very impressed with Kanshi Ram. He has worked hard to make people of all Dalit and backward societies aware of their rights and privileges. But now there is a lot of change in Dalit politics. Politics is being done by undermining the ideology of Kanshi Ram. That is why Dalit politics is failing. Except for Bahujan ideology, Dalit, backward and minority society has been shattered by the ideology of Sarvajan. I have become very old, party workers do not listen to me. Therefore, the party is becoming very weak. I have been in the post of District Office Secretary when Kanshi Ram was an MP. I have held several important positions. For example, I have been the sector president, district election incharge and booth president. Now there are new workers. They are running the party.”

***What are the social problems of Dalit society?*** “On the basis of caste, there are few problems now. 25 years ago the social problems of Dalits were very high. Untouchability was at its peak. The non-Dalit castes used to harass the people of Dalit society a large scale. Reservation is not available in social, economic, educational spheres as also in the case of, self-employment, higher education, technical education. There is little participation of Dalits in the courts, due to which Dalit people do not get justice.”

***Should there be a Dalit political party of Dalit society?*** “There should be a Dalit political party of the society. I consider the BSP the political party of Dalit society, even though Kumari Mayawati has adopted the ideology of Sarvajan, different from her

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<sup>71</sup> Mr. Sarnam Singh, (48) higher education educated person belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Jarholi, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 16/02/2017. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of Kanshi Ram. The respondent clearly point out about the caste-based social, economic, educational problems in rural area.

Bahujan ideology. But the BSP pays respect to the Dalit society first, and works in the interest of the Dalits.”

***What has been the contribution of Kanshi Ram in Dalit politics?*** “Kanshi Ram has reached the pinnacle of Dalit politics. In the times to come, one cannot expect Dalit politics to reach that peak. Kanshi Ram started his politics "Vote hamara raj tumhara nahi chalega nahin chalega” which means, 15 percent rule over 85 percent will not do.”

***What role does a candidate's caste play in electoral politics?*** “The caste of the candidate plays a very big role in electoral politics. All political parties go and do politics. There is a saying leave 100 horses to eat on a pile of gram together, so the devour horses eat all the grams. Therefore, the remaining horses are fed separately. In the same way, Dalit society is also divided into elections.”

### **Case Study: 8**

Mr. Ram Avtar,<sup>72</sup> is a resident of at Kathguva, in Etawah district. He says that, “I have been active in politics for 20 years. I was studying at that time. There was a lot of interest for getting into politics. Because the supporters of SP were turning into goons in every village area. I subscribed to the BSP to end that punk. I was financially strong and my family members gave me full support. I was very keen to contest elections. But the old activists had been working in the BSP for many years. My biggest challenge was to contest elections at the state level. That is why I started taking part in politics in the Gram Panchayat. There was no success in the first and second instances. The third time I won by a huge margin of votes. Then I was made the District Election Incharge of BSP. I put my energy, money, and mind into the election. But to succeed in Dalit politics is a very difficult task as the Dalits tend to harm each other. I also was removed from the post of BSP officer. But I am still working as an activist for the BSP.”

***What are the social and political problems of Dalit society?*** “With the formation of the BSP government in Uttar Pradesh, there is a lot of change in the social, economic and

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<sup>72</sup> Mr. Ram Avtar, (25) higher secondary education educated belong to Chamar community. He lived in village Kathguva, district Etawah. The interview is conducted on 18/02/2017. The case study explains about the consciousness with idea of BSP government in 2007 period. The respondent clearly point out about the caste-based discrimination and divided in sub-caste group.



political outlook of the Dalit people. Especially the conditions of Dalits in Etawah district seem to be unpwering. Caste discrimination occurs with all castes. Be it Dalit castes or non-Dalit castes, all are discriminated against. There are sub-castes among the Dalit castes to. Because they are very weak economically and educationally, non-Dalit castes continue to exploit and oppress them.”

***Should there be a Dalit political party of Dalit society?*** “I consider BSP a Dalit political party. Because it has always worked in the interest of Dalits and raises Dalit issues at the national level as well. It worked hard to spread the ideology of Dr. Ambedkar among the Dalits. Therefore, there should be no other Dalit political party.”

***Is identity politics necessary to gain political power?*** “I believe that if Kanshi Ram had not started the politics of identity, the BSP would never have formed the government in Uttar Pradesh. Identity politics is very much needed in today's time because all political parties are doing identity politics.”

***How are Dalit leaders discriminated against?*** “There is some discrimination. Discrimination and exclusion are common in politics. If you have to do politics then all this will definitely happen to the Dalit leaders. Because we also need the votes of non-Dalit people. Non-Dalit people generally do not accept Dalit leaders as their leaders.”

***What role does a candidate's caste play in electoral politics?*** “Caste plays a big role in electoral politics. The caste of the candidate determines whether the candidate will win the election or not. All political parties field the candidate of the same caste in the election. The candidate selected from the mmmm community.”

## **Conclusion**

India is one of the world's largest democracies and the second most populated country. For centuries Dalits have been victims of gross human rights violations. In fact, Dalits have been considered the most degraded, downtrodden, exploited and the least educated in Indian society for various reasons. They are considered to be 'untouchable' because upper caste people do and hard work them, they are considered polluted and unclean. The caste hierarchy has excluded these people from the caste system and therefore they are branded as 'outcaste'.

Dalits have suffered for ages. Lately, they have become conscious and have realised some of their potentials. They no longer want to be subjugated to the upper castes. They have the torch of Ambedkar to take them forward. Ambedkar's social reform movements occupier a significant place for the Dalit community. Phule also played an important role in the emancipation of the Dalits. When English education was introduced in India and the Brahmins of Pune opposed education for Dalits, Phule came out strongly in support of the Dalits. With educational awareness created in the Indian constitution, Dalits became socially conscious about the circumstances and social problems of untouchability and caste discrimination. The education that the Dalit youths received in the post-independence period gave them the idea for revolution and voice for protest. Now, the Dalits have realised what is good and what is bad for them. Because of education, the Dalits have become more conscious and now they cannot be deceived as early by the upper caste people as in the former years.

## CONCLUSION

The present study intended to map growing political consciousness among Dalits at grass-roots level. The anti-caste or social reform movement like in western and southern India, Uttar Pradesh has witnessed lack of conducive environment for emergence of successful mobilization of Dalits. The formation of lower caste party i.e., Bahuja Samaj Party (BSP) emerged as threat to the Congress party in its vote share in rural India. The emergence of the lower caste party has helped in the building of Dalit identity not only in Uttar Pradesh but all over India. Bahujan Samaj Party has moved forward with an outstanding leadership of Kanshi Ram which has distinguished itself from the mainstream parties and presenting itself as an alternative to national party taking the interests of the marginalised section of the society. The party was the result of the struggle against the unequal social order. Dalit understood that their lower status in the society was because of the dominance of the so-called upper castes. They got inspired with the call given by Kanshi Ram i.e., 'Educate, Organize and Struggle'. Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was an icon of Dalit society. The guiding principles of Dr. Ambedkar has not only enabled the Dalit communities to organize social revolution for their dignity and rights in the society but also shown a way to form a political party to participate in electoral process of our country. Kanshi Ram has criticized the Hinduism through its ideology and stated 'Manuwad' as a common enemy for Dalits. Kanshi Ram's ideology was to capture political power to construct Dalit-Bahujan state and to bring social transformations appealed the lower castes. As he felt that power is essential not only for forming a government but also to bring changes in the lives of Dalits. The beginning of Dalit movement was the initiative taken by Kanshi Ram by organizing the employees among the Dalits to form BAMCEF which acted as think tank and treasure for the movement. The very objective of the movement was to pay back to society.

In the late 1980s, the first Dalit political platform in Uttar Pradesh was created by Kanshi Ram in the form of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Initially, it worked for arousing the Dalit socio-political consciousness through various means of mobilization. The movement was led by Kanshi Ram strengthened the caste identities of Dalits and encouraged them for the political assertion and participation. However, as a general trend

of Dalit politics in India, the Dalit people contested only reserved constituency seats but were not given the chance to contest in the general seat. This problem is not only prevails in the parliament elections and state election but also seen even in the village panchayat elections. Moreover, Dalits are divided into numerous sub-caste groups and large number in population in villages, but in the context of their status they are minority in comparison to other dominant castes. The non-Dalit political parties cleverly manipulate this division of Dalits for making their candidates win. However, the post-Ambedkrite political movements have failed to forge the larger unity among the various sub-castes of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh in general, and in Jalaun and Etawah district in particular. Therefore, the objective of the study is for mapping the rise of political consciousness among the Dalits and how they respond against the manipulation of their vote banks by several mainstream political parties.

The founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party, Kanshi Ram, a disciple of Ambedkar, drew his inspiration from his mentor's reading of Dalit identity. In 1995, Mayawati, a Dalit woman leader who was a confidant of Kanshi Ram, succeeded him and made history by vesting the Chief Minister position in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the largest state of India was governed by a Dalit woman C.M. She immediately became a source of pride for this community. Although the BSP was formed to bring change in Dalit society by empowering Dalits in socio-economic and political spheres, and through which it has got its success in politics, but the success has not been maintained in the later stage of its political movement.

The thesis is carries four main chapters and introduction and conclusion. The title of first chapter is "Political consciousness a Theoretical framework". This chapter focuses on political consciousness among Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. It discusses the theoretical discourse of consciousness and the philosophical way of self-consciousness. It has also discusses that the role of media/ communication such as News Papers, Television, and Radio are the medium in creating consciousness among Dalits. Further the consciousness of human being contributes in generating their identity within the society. The consciousness being a psychological and subjective assessment constitute by so many attributes like feeling, thoughts, perceptions, and awareness about the self and

others. Individuals identify themselves through various socio-political attributes since they are part of too many social structures. These socio-cultural and political attributes always remained the root cause for constructing the images, perceptions, ideas, and awareness about the self. The social relations and various interactions in the cultural environment create certain situations for an individual in which she/he differentiate to others. This whole process of self-identification comes through a certain type of social, political and cultural consciousness. However, it is very complex to define or construct a theoretical framework for an idea, perception or such a term like consciousness.

The meaning of defining consciousness led to the exploration of various dimensions and perspectives of self-identification. Defining of the term consciousness includes the nature and scope of the term and particular characteristics with exact possibilities of this socio-cultural and political phenomenon. To describe the term like political consciousness required the valid and systematic knowledge of socio-cultural surrounding of particular society which certainly includes the scientific investigations of facts and data to analyze. Moreover, to obtain the definition of a complex term like political consciousness required an in-depth study of various structures and substructure of an ecology in which individuals evolved their consciousness.

The political consciousness among the Dalits is influenced by several factors including the historical legacies of caste oppression, Dalit assertion and liberation movements and the contemporary political participation in the politics of India. Comprehensively, the Dalit identity no more remained the politically irrelevant; the emergence of regional political parties based on the caste consciousness constructed the new understanding of political values of Dalit vote bank. The concept of political socialization in the context of Dalit political consciousness is also an instrument to get to know the length and width of Dalit participation in Indian politics. The political socialisation of Dalits became vital element in analysing the political socialisation of the community due to its social implication of enriching the political consciousness of community member and the community itself. The political mobilization and their share in the population; Dalit identities became decisive in the politics of India.

Therefore, any political party cannot ignore the Dalit communities and hurt the rights of Dalit not possible to win the elections. The social mobilization and increasing level of education among Dalit communities have becoming the impetus of political consciousness that is the contemporary Indian social and political reality. The power structure and the patterns of political power-sharing also have changed due to the political consciousness among the Dalit communities.

The second chapter is “Political consciousness among the Dalits”. This chapter deals with development of political ideology among the Dalits and generation political consciousness among Dalits communities in Uttar Pradesh. It has also discussed how Dalits are being influenced by Dalit icons in different periods in the post-independence period. The chapter also throws some light upon the Dalit awareness programmes and participation of Dalit communities in electoral politics. The political ideology among the Dalits communities and their consciousness has brought great changes uniting the Dalits in society. It also examines how Dalits are influenced by their Dalit icons through various periods. There are various Dalit awareness programmes that strengthened the consciousness among Dalit communities and enabled them to participate in electoral politics. The origin of the Indian society is long back, where the Vedic literature divided the Hindu societies into a category of four which is entitled as Varna System. The Varna System categorically divide people on the basis of their birth to a particular family called caste group. Brahmins are considered at the top in the caste hierarchy or in the Varna System. Kshatriyas comes in the second layer of the hierarchy and Vaishyas in the third. The Shudras are being placed at the last level of the paramedic structure of the hierarchical varna system according to the Rigveda. A fifth group has been invented by anthropologist and sociologist called *Ashprishyas* or untouchables. These category of people are the Dalits in the Hindu social order. Accordingly the Hindu social order, there are five major social groups arranged in a hierarchical manner with Brahmins at the top and Dalits at the lower level. The two caste category of the top two called as twice-born (*dvija*). They have their own particular way of attires and appearances. Men of the top caste group a yarn, a sacred thread cross to their chest that tied the two ends. This is wearing as per the teaching of Vedic site of Upanayana. Apparently, this has been

prohibited to the wear by Sudras, the lower caste people or the untouchables. The Sudras have been assigned particular occupations of cultivating land, repair shoes, washing clothes and other types of unskilled occupations. This caste group faces a serious stigma of the practice of untouchability from the upper caste community. They denied access, participation in many of the social activities including eating, drinking and smoke along with the upper caste people and these people were restricted physical contacts to the upper caste people. Therefore, the lower caste people restricted to use the public well and compel to use exclusive well defined for the lower castes and untouchables. In the process of social hierarchy, the Dalits are most excluded people from the mainstream of the society and the social life. When the upper strata of the caste hierarchy enjoy the privilege, the lower caste people and the Dalits have been denied what the upper caste people enjoy. The unequal distribution of properties and the different treatment in case of rights is the highlight of caste practice. The practice of caste brings serious inequality in the society. The essence of political consciousness of Dalit community has expressed in an obvious way through Dalit literatures. This helps to make a better picture of socio-political and cultural condition of the lower caste community, especially the Dalit community and transformation of Dalit movement in a visionary way. It also emphasizes on the transmission of knowledge from one generation to other so as to build capacities of the future generations for an exploitation free society. Therefore, it has been learned that political consciousness among the Dalits has gradually evolved its autonomous political space and challenged upper castes' hegemony in all spheres of life: social, political, economic, cultural and literary. In fact, it is due to the political changes taking place at the grassroots level, which are making Dalit politics and literature progressive and literature becomes best tool for the expression of not only of the feelings, emotions, torture and exploitation but also empowers Dalits to rise against exploitation and contributing for the establishment of an equal and equalitarian society.

Third chapter is case study chapter entitled “Political consciousness in Jalaun district”. This chapter is based on an empirical study to gauge the political consciousness among Dalits in Jalaun district. It has also discussed how Dalits are being socially excluded in active participation in political activities in the state.

Since the adoption of the constitution of India, there are many provisions have been added to the constitution to protect the rights of lower caste people including their right for vote, reservation for job and education and the political participation. Many such efforts have been taken in the present days also. The Dalit consciousness and their political visibility made many changes in the law and advocacy and also in the decision making process for their rights and privileges. Thus, the political awareness and participation of Dalit in social activities are significant area of study.

The interesting fact is that the 21 percent of the population of the state Uttar Pradesh is Scheduled Caste and this magnitude SC population is a capable number to make notable changes in the state. At the same time, the assertion of Dalit politics and the presence BSP is an example of strong Dalit political assertion. Along with this, it is significant to bring the pattern of political participation in the limelight. For that, voting in the election is not the single political activity but many other social activities are taken part in the larger political activities as an indicator of political participation. Participating in political activities conclude in various forms of activities including the participation in rallies and work as a pressure groups and in different forms of political parties, bringing up various socio-political issues which has wider political significance and scope through different forms of communication mediums such as radio, television, newspapers and so on or participating directly in election and election process including voting, campaigning and contesting. The Dalit political activities and the political activities of the lower caste people in the state of Uttar Pradesh have not yet been explored by any of the researcher. By considering the significance of the Dalit politics and considering the significance of the facts, here is an attempt to analyze the Dalit and the Dalit political consciousness in the state Uttar Pradesh.

The political leadership of Dr. Ambedkar was a commitment to the development of the weaker sections of the society. The social order of Indian society had deprived the Dalit communities to attain a dignified life. It was the dedication of Dr. Ambedkar, Dalit communities has enabled to represent in the democratic institutions in the post-independence era. Today the issue of Dalit consciousness has widely spread in every corner of our country. A feeling is growing within the community that caste-based



discrimination cannot stop the Dalit leaders to enjoy the political rights along with social and economic rights in the society. In the field study, it has been learned that that Jalaun district is one of the backward districts in Uttar Pradesh and the population size of Dalits are comparatively lower than the other districts. But the political consciousness of the Dalits has consolidated them to look forward to establishing identity politics not only in the state but also at the national level. Three issues have clearly emerged from respondents view after the field study in this district that in order to have political consciousness Dalits need to be educated, organized and look forward to strengthen for identity politics.

The fourth chapter is also a case study chapter entitled “Political consciousness in Etawah”. This chapter is also gauged the political consciousness among Dalits in Etawah district. This chapter discusses political consciousness among the Dalits in Etawah district. In modern society, due to the impact of progressive social and economic forces, the old caste structure is crumbling though somewhat slowly and lost its rigidity. Caste discrimination is very much manifested in the district. In this caste discrimination, the Dalit consciousness is also very much progressive in post-Kanshi Ram era. As Dalit political consciousness spread all over the Uttar Pradesh state, the similar has also been manifested in the Etawah district. The present chapter have a detailed take on the Dalits and their political consciousness in the district.

India is one of the world’s largest democracy and the second most populated country. For centuries, Dalits have been victims of gross human rights violations. In fact, Dalits have been considered the most degraded, downtrodden, exploited and the least educated in Indian society for various reasons. They are considered to be ‘untouchable’ because their touch to upper caste people is considered polluted and unclean. The caste hierarchy has excluded these people from the caste system and therefore they are branded as ‘outcaste’. Dalits have suffered for ages. However, they have become conscious and have realized their potential. They are no longer want to be subjugated to the upper castes. They have the torch of Ambedkar to take them forward. Ambedkar’s social reform movements carried a significant place for the Dalit community. Phule also played an important role in the emancipation of the Dalits. When English education was

introduced in India and the Brahmins of Pune opposed education for Dalits, Phule came out strongly in support of the Dalits. With educational awareness created in the Indian constitution, Dalits became socially conscious about the circumstances and social problems of untouchability and caste discrimination. The education that the Dalit youths received in the post-independence period gave them the idea for revolution and voice for protest. Now, the Dalits realized what is good and what is bad for them. Because of education, the Dalits became more conscious and now they cannot be deceived by the upper caste people.

Untouchability is one of the serious social problems in India. Even today Dalits are treated as untouchables but untouchability has declined somehow since the 90s. Discrimination and harassment were taken up against Dalits due to their social and educational backwardness. The social problem is that even today Dalit castes are treated with untouchability. Dalits are getting exploited because of the existed caste system. The caste system has so much deeply rooted that it cannot be easily uprooted. Dalit wants to have fully freedom from caste exploitation, they should leave Hinduism and adopt some other religion as Dr. Ambedkar's embraced.

There is caste-baised discrimination at the time of elections. Discrimination will be practiced as long as caste remains in India. Especially among Dalits, except Chamars other sub-castes are being exploited. In the electoral process, caste discrimination is common in Indian society. If there is a caste, definitely caste discrimination would be existed in society. There is discrimination with non-Dalit castes as well. From the village level to the state level, there is large scale discrimination with Dalit leaders. Even the Chief Minister is accompanied or called as Dalit leaders like the Minister and the President

This is a sin to get birth in the Dalit caste where caste system does not allow Dalits to acquire different occupations on the basis of their talent. Even though Babasaheb has made provisions to protect the Dalits from caste exploitation in the Constitution, but still Dalit society is socially and economically backward. They are being beaten up in every day. Dalit sisters and daughters stop to get into schools due to harassment by upper caste in the villages. When the BSP was in government from 2007

to 2012, law and order was in favour for the Dalits. The present scenario is not favourable for Dalit society. Dalits are being intentionally harassed at the bureaucratic setup of the state. In the present political scenario the identity politics has plays dominance role both in state and national politics. All political parties are doing identity politics. In the process political parties are active in dividing the Dalit vote bank to gain political power.

Kanshi Ram has played a big role in creating Dalit Bahujan. He worked day and night to bring all people at one stage. How the upper caste people are maintaining their hegemony with Dalits vote. "*Vote Hamara Raj Tumhara*", this slogan had developed social and political consciousness among Dalits. Kanshi Ram sacrificed his entire life to fulfill the dreams of Dr. Ambedkar. He considered Bahujan society as his own family until the end of his life. Bahujan Samaj Party is not a Dalit political party at this time. It is a party of all but works for the interest of the Dalit community. Previously BSP used to follow the path of "*Bahujan Hitay*", "*Bahujan Sukhae*", but for the last 15 years it is pursuing the path of "*Sarvajan Hitaye*", "*Sarvajan Sukhaye*". Due to which the upper caste people have become more dominant in the BSP, the Dalit community is not getting the respect that was being received during the time of Kanshi Ram. The Dalits mostly exploited in the absolute majority government in 2007. They did not get employment, as well as people; do not get tickets to those who are working for the party for the last 20 years at ground level. Distribution of tickets to wealthy persons rather than honest leaders who are working at ground level has become a challenge for better performance of BSP in electoral politics. That is the reason Dalit vote bank shifted to other political parties

The caste identity of the candidate plays a very important role in Indian politics. Identity politics started in Uttar Pradesh and all political parties field their candidate on the basis of their caste. Caste proportion helps to get success in elections. Presently, people are not getting a chance to contest in the elections those who are really working at ground level. It clearly shows that working at the grassroots level do not get a chance to contest elections. Therefore the political consciousness Dalits towards identity politics has not been strengthen in the present political scenarios of the state.

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## Questionnaire for field visit work Jalaun

### Respondent details.

Name..... Sex..... Age.....  
Place..... Occupation.....  
Qualification..... Caste/Category.....  
Monthly Income..... Land.....  
Contact Number..... Signature .....

#### 1. Respondents view on political inspiration from different sources.

- A) Inspired by Ambedkar philosophy      B) Before formation of BAMCEF  
C) After formation of BAMCEF      D) After formation of Mayawati  
government      E) Others

#### 2. Respondents views on close relative active in politics.

- A) Yes      B) No

#### 3. Respondents views on being politically active at different levels politics.

- A) Village level      B) District level      C) State level

#### 4. Respondents views on political consciousness among Dalits.

- A) Group discussion      B) Political participation      C) Support to Dalit  
leaders      D) Concern for Dalit issues      E) Support to BSP  
F) Identity politics

#### 5. Division of sub-caste wise support to political parties.

Chamar (@), Dhobi (#), Katheriya (\*) and others (\$)

- A) BSP      B) SP      C) BJP      D) Congress

#### 6. Concern of various political parties on development issues of Dalits.

- A) BSP      B) SP      C) BJP      D) Congress

#### 7. Which political party raised most cases Dalit issues?

- A) BSP      B) SP      C) BJP      D) Congress

#### 8. Different parties government initiative in development of Jalaun district.

- A) BSP      B) SP      C) BJP      D) Congress

#### 9. Respondents views on under-development of the district.

- A) Political leaders are not much interested      B) Bureaucraces corruption  
C) People are not much interest in larger issues      D) Others

**10. Respondents views on Dalits suffering discrimination/ untouchability at the village level.**

- A) Hand pump      B) Marriage & others program      C) School level

**11. Abolition of the caste system from the Hindu social system.**

- A) Motivation in education      B) Conversion to religion

**12. Respondents views on kind of problem that scheduled caste political leader face.**

- A) Discrimination within political party      B) Control by non-Dalit people  
C) Dalit women leaders are exploited      D) All leaders try to satisfy non-political people

**13. In your opinion which of the community get major support of Dalit leaders during election?** Mostly scheduled caste      B) Equally both

**14. Do you think the scheduled castes should have a separate political party to represent their interests?**

- A) Empowerment of Dalits community      B) Development of Dalit society  
C) Decision making process      D) Action for all Dalit issues

**15. Kanshi Ram's initiatives for socio-political consciousness among marginalized groups.**

- A) Work at ground level      B) Generated Dalit consciousness among marginalized community  
C) Emphasized on identity politics  
D) Roll of BAMCEF

**16. Caste-based atrocities during Mayawati government.**

- A) Public place      B) Job market      C) Religious institution

**17. Caste-based discrimination in electoral politics.**

- A) Caste based discrimination in polling booths      B) Threats to election campaign of Dalits candidate  
C) Not getting support from

**18. Need of identity politics for the political empowerment of Dalits.**

- A) Necessary in the political empowerment      B) Socio-political consciousness in Bahujan society  
C) Empowerment of Dalit Political leaders.

**19. Discrimination and exclusion of Dalit political leader at Village/District/State level.**

- A) Inauguration and entry into Hindu temples      B) Caste based  
discrimination and exclusion in election period      C) Taking decisions      D)  
Dalit women leaders are exploited

**20. Respondents views on Dalit Political Consciousness.**

- A) Education      B) Identity Politics      C) Organising Dalit Political leaders



**9. Respondents views on Dalits facing the problem of untouchability at the village.**

- A) Use of Hand pump    B) Marriage & other programme    C) School level

**10. Respondents views on the abolition of the caste system in Indian society.**

- A) Education                      B) Conversion to religion

**11. Kind of problems that Scheduled Castes face in their constituency.**

- A) Discrimination within political party                      B) Control by non-Dalit people

- C) Exploitation of Dalit women    D) Always tries to satisfied non-political people

**12. In your opinion which of the community get major support of Dalit leaders during election?**

- A) Mostly Scheduled Caste    B) Both equally

**13. Respondents view on the role of a Dalit political party for the interest of the Dalit community.**

- A) Empowerment of Dalit community                      B) Development in Dalit society

- C) Decision making process    D) Action for all Dalit issues

**14. How BSP represents Dalit as known for a Dalit political party: Dalit perception**

- A) BSP represented Dalit political party                      B) BSP Bahujan party

- B) BSP Sarvjan Party

**15. Incidents of atrocities during the Mayawati government if any and if yes, places that the incidents of atrocities have been committed of reported.**

- A) Public place                      B) Job market    C) Religious institution

**16. Factors attributed to the failure of the BSP in 2012 Vidhan Sabha election.**

- A) Confusion in ticket distribution    B) Division in SC/OBC vote bank  
C) Upper caste didn't support of vote    D) Political worker unhappy at ground level

**17. Caste-based discrimination in the electoral process?**

