

**Interlocked Nature of Caste and Occupation:
An analysis of Balmiki Community in Delhi**

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PAYAL VIDHURI



Centre for the Study of Discrimination and Exclusion

School of Social Science

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi-110067(India)

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Centre for the Study of Discrimination and Exclusion (CSDE)
 School of Social Sciences
 Jawaharlal Nehru University
 New Delhi - 110 067, India

Date: 26-7-17

DECLARATION


I declare that the dissertation entitled "*Interlocked Nature of Caste and Occupation: An Analysis of Balmiki Community*" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.


Payal Vidhuri


CERTIFICATE

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


CHAIRPERSON
(PROF. Y. Chinna Rao)

 **CHAIRPERSON**
 नवायु एवं समावेशन अध्ययन केंद्र
 Centre for the Study of Discrimination & Exclusion
 नवायु एवं समावेशन (School of Social Sciences)
 जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय (Jawaharlal Nehru University)
 नई दिल्ली-110067 (New Delhi - 110067)


SUPERVISOR
(PROF. Kaustav Banerjee)

 **Assistant Professor**
 Centre for the Study of
 Discrimination and Exclusion
 School of Social Sciences
 Jawaharlal Nehru University
 New Delhi - 110067

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Introduction

Debate on caste in India is significantly linked with occupation. It has been argued that caste system emerged out of Hinduism. This relationship of caste and occupation has been interlocked with each other. Various scholars like Louis Dumont, M.N Srinivas, Andre Betteile, Ambedkar, Dipankar Gupta have discussed the relationship between caste and occupation. They all have argued in some way or other way about hierarchy, discrimination, exclusion and inequality which exist in Indian Caste system. The caste system in India is primarily based on idea of 'pure and impure'. However, it seems caste and occupation has interlocked with each other especially for the Dalit community. The research is based on assumption that caste has an interlocked relation with occupation. It explores the ways and manners in which the particular community

has been excluded. Dalits are excluded from various aspects in life by because of the strong link with particular occupation. In this way Dalits are excluded from alternatives occupation in society. This research attempts to locate the interlocked nature of caste and occupation in Dalit community. I would like to show how Dalit communities are struggling to redesign an alternative space in society. In this context, it would be pertinent to see the interlocked nature of caste and occupation in Indian society. The history of caste is historically inextricably linked to occupations.

The changing pattern of caste occupation has been central issue of Indian Caste system which needs to be understood. There are certain reasons in Indian society where people are still sticking with particular occupation. First we need to understand the interlocked nature of Caste and occupation in Indian society. There are many castes whose members are engaged in caste occupation. The study begins with assumption that caste and occupation has inter-related nature and it affects their life, especially who are marginalized in society. Thus, study empirically investigates how caste and occupation interlocking affect the Balmiki community in Delhi, how caste plays a role in their everyday life.

Gupta(1991) in his book '*Social Scarification*' says the caste system, as it understood, separates and hierarchies Hindus. However, it is not sufficient if this separation and hierarchization are wholly internalized. It is only when hierarchy and differences are externalized and socially demonstrated that we can truly talk about social stratification. Rituals, dress, tonsorial styles, marriage practices, and a host of other such phenomena help in socially separating one caste from another. It is not just stratification but social stratification. Caste has divided in a manner in which member of same community follow a common occupation and common culture. If person born in particular caste he remains to be a member in the same caste forever.

Gupta(1991¹), says Hierarchy and difference not only add to our understanding of concepts like caste and class but also help us to get a deeper reading of the various received theories of social stratification. Weber's formulation of the three axes of stratifications, namely, class, status, and partly, has many interesting possibilities from our point of view. Of the three 'status' received far greater attention, for Weber was always keen to delineate the alternative ways by which men

¹ Dipankar, Gupta, (1991), '*Social Stratification*' New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

gave meaning to their different life styles. Status centered around the concept of social prestige, and the crucial variable behind the partly was power. As can easily be seen, rewards, prestige and power can be hierarchized and measured along univariate axes and this is probably why weber despaired that all changes were only superficial.

Sociologist has been described as the study of society. But for the most part, it remained a past-time of a few privileged sections of people for their own enjoyment. It has seldom been the study for society, especially for those sections of society who are marginalized, and exploited. Sociology has always remained the hand-maiden of the rich, of the big industrialists and multi-nationals. To the extent that sociology studied the problems of society, the finding have largely been used to control people rather than to help them to grow. Vivek² (2016), says that even after many years Indian sociology is practiced in the locating of domination. British, European and American domination has been well accepted while the domination of the twice-born castes has not been analyzed. The early sociologist Emile Durkheim and Max Weber were preoccupied with the problems of a social order that was breaking down. Ferdinand Tönnies described this concern in his *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*(community and society). Auguste Comte, presented programme of social development in his philosophy of positivism, but he never tried to implement the scheme. An important tradition of sociology has conceived society as a living organism. Individuals who do not fit in this organism are regarded as deviants who need to be socialized. Naturally, the privileged few, who control power and who decide and define the central value system also decide who the real members of society and who are the deviants. There has been another tradition in sociology which is called the conflict theory. Although this tradition which can be traced back to Karl Marx, takes into account the plight of the marginalized and the proletariat, the theory has to large extent remained an ideology in the hands of politicians more to build up power for themselves than to give power to the people.

Ambedkar and Gandhi on Caste and Untouchability

The caste system justified caste hierarchy and the practice of untouchability by referring to religious scriptures. The higher caste Hindus believed that lower caste people were untouchable and were part of the non-Aryan races. They were of low origin and were part of non-Aryan

² Vivek, Kumar, (2016), 'How egalitarian is Indian Sociology? Economic political weekly, Vol. 51, Issue no.25, June 18, 2016.

racess. They are less than of Aryan and they did not have capabilities. Ambedkar scholars refused these stereotyped explanation of caste hierarchy. He gave a new interpretation of the caste tried to create self-respect among the untouchables in a rational way. His significant works like “*who were Shudras?*” and “The untouchables” have dispelled all kinds of misconceptions about the untouchability.

For Ambedkar, caste system is not only a system of the religious principle of purity/untouchability, but also a system of marked inequalities. In his view, the caste system is also a gradation of right, privileges and opportunities (Ambekar1989:72; Srivastva 2007:28). In his word “*the higher the grade of a caste, the greater the number of these rights and the lower the grade, the lesser their number*” (Ambedkar 1989:72). The caste system is thus explained by him as a system including both the principle of purity/ pollution and the graded inequalities.

He also explains class as the ‘father’ of the caste system and caste as an ‘enclosed class’ (Ambedkar 1989:15). That is, caste system is not all about rituals and values, more importantly; it is also about material interest. To quote him “*the problem of untouchability is a matter of class struggle. It is a struggle between Caste-Hindus and the untouchables.....this is a matter of injustice being done by one class against another*” (Ambedkar 2004:9).

Ambedkar points out the differentiation between inequality and graded inequality which we have in our Indian caste system. Graded inequality as equal to the hierarchy found in our Indian Caste system. This graded inequality in India exists in middle of Varna system. This graded inequality benefits those who belong to high caste in India. Those who are in lower strata of society called untouchables are totally experience the inequality. Ambedkar used the term graded inequality which inherent in Indian caste system. But there is difference between graded inequality and hierarchy which need to be understood. Gupta (1991) explains about hierarchy and he says “hierarchy is only one kind of stratification where the strata are ranged vertically. This is appropriate only when this vertical arrangement is along a variable that can be measured on a continuous scale, as in the case of numbers. But one can measure the proletariat, or the capitalist, but one can measure income. Likewise, one cannot measure languages but one can measure the prestige accorded to a certain language in a certain region”.

Shah 1988) says that “caste and class both bring to our minds inequality and hierarchy. And yet only certain operationalizations of these terms justify the implication of inequality. One can in fact talk of various castes, both rural and urban, without directly implying inequality of caste, wealth or status. It can be argued that each caste has place on nature of hierarchy and inequality”.

It has become almost a commonplace understanding that caste refers to inequality, difference, discrimination, in the both theory and practice. It is, therefore, hardly contested when one speaks of caste system as a system of unequal distribution of privileges or disprivileges. Caste becomes a social reward for some and a punishment for others, where the mode of rewarding or punishing is strictly based on birth.

However, the question of the nature and the intensity of the caste privileges and disprivileges often produce visible disagreement on among the student of caste. Scholar continue to ponder over the larger, and ever elusive, issue of how caste manages to produces inequities in different setting even today, despite the constitutional provisions to curb its evil effects on the ‘marginalized’. In short, who gets what, and how by virtue of one’s location still remains the all-important questions, even today.

Needless to say, caste cannot be understood in total isolation. Of course, caste is not reducible to class and vice versa. But these are not exclusive entities either (Gupta 1996:4). More important, therefore is to understand the caste-class nexus. In this context, the observation of K.L.Sharma (2001) is quite instructive when he argues that there is a caste- basis of class and also a class-basis of caste, and hence both are inextricably inter-related (Sharma 2001:11). In short, class can function in the context of caste and vice versa.

However, the focus on caste-class nexus is not denying the relevance of other kinds of productive resources (social, political, cultural and symbolic) in perpetuating caste inequalities in a specific context. Wealth, income, occupation, prestige, esteem, speech, dress, manner, appearance: all of these can prove to be the resources that determine the materiel outcomes in the context of community.

Gandhi was continuously and deeply preoccupied with the problem of untouchability. He said that I regard untouchability as the utmost flaw on Hinduism. He clearly and categorically affirmed. His writings in Young India and Harijan are full of such strong and unqualified denunciations of untouchability. There is one passage from a speech that he delivered in Trivandrum on 20 October 1927 that I would like to quote:

“Untouchability in its extreme form has always caused me so much pain, because I consider myself to be a Hindu of Hindus saturated with the spirit of Hinduism. I have failed to find a single warrant for the existence of untouchability as we believe and practice it today in all these books which we call as Hindu Shastras. But as I have repeatedly said in other places, if I found that Hinduism really countenanced untouchability I should have no hesitation in renouncing Hinduism itself. For I hold that religion, to be worthy of the name, must not be inconsistent with the fundamental truths of ethics and morality. But as I believe that untouchability is not part of Hinduism, I cling to Hinduism, but daily become more and more impatient of this hideous wrong”.

I take it that Gandhiji, as a discerning action realized that a change in attitude towards the untouchables was necessary to deal with the problem of untouchability. Associated with these brethren of ours was the first step and then helping them grow to be better human the next. Ambedkar however was a bitter critic of Gandhi ideas and actions regarding the problem of untouchability. Ambedkar points out that that there was to prove Hindus had enough helpful strength towards the untouchables and that they would show it by their generous contributions towards their uplift. The second, was to serve up the untouchable by helping them in the many difficulties with which they were faced in their daily life. The third, was to create in the minds of the untouchables a sense of confidence in the Hindus from whom they were estranged in matter political. But none of them objects has been realized.³ This was an attack that Ambedkar made to the futility of Gandhi’s ideas which he considered inadequate for the eradication of untouchability.

Social exclusion, caste and discrimination: towards an Analytical Framework

³ B. R. Ambedkar, ‘Gandhi and Gandhism’, P.59.

The concept of social exclusion has emerged relatively recently in the discussions of caste, discrimination and injustice in the context of social and economic changes in India. Fraser⁴, Young and Honneth⁵ provides the conceptual basis of this study. The debate between the politics of recognition, redistribution is relevant to address the question of identity and politics, or to be precise, the politics of the marginalised. This debate addresses the question of culture and matter debate. The term “recognition” comes from Hegalian philosophy, which stands for ideal equal relation between subjects where they see the other as equal and as separate form it. Recognition has become one of the most important words in our times. This notion is often associated centrally to conceptualize any struggle related to identity or difference. Whether the issue is related to indigenous land claims, women’s identity, Muslim, headscarves, homosexual marriages or the struggle of subaltern to assert their identity and distributive justice. Across the world we can see struggles going on over nationalities, religion, gender the question of recognition is impossible to ignore. If recognition is a central aspect, its relation to redistribution is relevant too.

In democratic welfare states, whose national bases were largely taken for granted, the conflicts revolved around resources, were disputed in distributive terms, by appeals to universalistic norms. Economic inequalities today are growing as forces of globalization and neoliberalism are at pace and the irony is, with this scenario only post 1990s there were a hyper mobilization of ‘politics of identity’ globally. Fraser and Honneth both share this one aspect that understanding of justice must incorporate- struggles over distribution, and struggles over recognition. But Honneth sees recognition and sees distribution as derivative. Whereas Nancy Fraser, denies that distribution can be subsumed under recognition. She conceives redistribution and recognition as co-fundamental and co-primary both are independent to each other but interrelated nevertheless, one cannot be reduced to other. Thus, Fraser⁶ (2003), purposes a “perspective-dualism” she claims of social justice and to overcome social inequality are divided today into redistributive claims which seek justice in just distribution of resources and wealth. The second type of social justice claim can be seen in ‘politics of recognition’. This seeks to create a difference friendly

⁴ Fraser,,Nancy, “*Recognition or Redistribution? A Critical Reading of Iris Young’s Justice and the politics of Difference*’ Journal of Political Philoshpy, Vol.3, Issue, 2, 1995, pp. 168-180.

⁵ Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2003), *Redistribution of Recognition: A Political philosophy of Exchange*, London, New York, Verso.

⁶ Ibid.

world, where the incorporation into the majority and dominant culture is not necessary to gain equal respect. This includes claims of racial and sexual minorities and gender difference. She argues the two kinds of claims are often disassociation with each other. For example, in movements of feminism, those who took to redistribution and economic equality as solution to male dominance are disassociation from those who look at recognition of gender difference to assert their identity. Those who believe in egalitarian redistribution conceive of recognition “as false consciousness”. Conversely advocates of recognition say redistribution is blind to differences and cannot assure justice for minorities and women. Both these claims are currently contested in public spheres. She argues we are not in era of post materiel phase but what explains the replacement to cultural identity demands. We need to recognize both are two dimensions of justice both have different structures and exist independently but area interrelated.

For economy the structure is based on appropriation of surplus and wage labour this structure keeps reproducing the inequalities and the process of surplus value is not dependent on cultural valuation. Parallel to this is recognition the structure is about interpretation and value ordering. Cultural valuation is not completely vanished even if we provide economic stability to the people. So cultural valuation enters the economy they are inter related but independent structure. Even materiel economic institutions have an indispensable, irreducible cultural dimension and vice-versa. The economic weakness hinders equal contribution in the creation of culture, in public sphere. This leads to culture also economic subordination. Institutionalized patterns of cultural value prevent one form participating as a peer in social life. But she distinguish the kind of injustice analytical and proposes that the remedy of economic injustice in political-economic restructuring (redistributive income, reorganizing labour etc). The solution of cultural discrimination is some cultural symbolic change.

Recognition claims call attention to specifically of some group, and assert the value of that specificity they promote group differentiation it is about reciprocity and recognizing the difference. The basic elements of recognition are reciprocity, mutuality and differentiation. Whereas claims of redistribution focus at not asserting but “abolishing” economic arrangements that promote group specificity they promote group and class de-differentiation. All those who have similar economic status form a class not differentiated by cultural norms. Now there are groups who face recognition-redistribution dilemma. There are people who suffer both sorts of

injustice and need remedies for both. Fraser calls these groups “bivalent collectivities”. The disadvantage they suffer can be located in both political economy as well as cultural roots. Misdistribution and misrecognition both gender and races are Bivalent Collectivities. Gender for example, on one hand there is division between paid male dominated professions and female dominated ‘pink collar’ less paid and unpaid domestic service occupation. This creates gender specific exploitation and marginalization. On the other hand they suffer culture valuation differentiation as well; mainly androcentrism-constructions of norms which privilege traits related to masculinity and undermine those coded as “feminism”. Therefore we need a mechanism but they cannot go hand in hand because of the social tension between both remedial strategies.

Fraser has also asserted the difference between affirmative and transformative strategies. Affirmative remedies are those which keep the structure intact but within the structure provide space for new group to enter. It tries to fix the unequal outcomes of social arrangements without touching the framework that generates them as adopted by welfare states the reservation policy. Redistribution of economic opportunity do not change the structure of capitalism where inequalities grow, somebody is benefitted somebody is being depositional. Affirmative policies do redistribution but create misrecognition and stigmatization. Transformative remedies are aimed at correcting the outcomes by restructuring the very framework which generates them. For cultural injustice also Fraser give affirmative remedy associated with multiculturalism where there is need to revalue unjustly devalued groups. It leaves the group as differentiated as before but revalues their practice and do not stigmatize the group. Whereas transformative remedy here include approach of ‘queer theory’ to deconstruct the homo hetero distinction and destabilize all fixed sexual identities and introduce fluidity. Fraser concludes the scenario that best fits the redistribution-recognition dilemma is socialism in the economy plus deconstruction in the culture.

Honneth is of the opinion that economic inequality is created by cultural valuation. He differs from Fraser and denies that capitalism is an enclosed economic structure; it is the structure of cultural valuation which provides basis for capitalism. Capitalism across the globe feed on existing social hierarchies, the normative ideal of differentiated treatment feeds into creating economic inequality. Even to understand mobility in capitalism and nature of redistributive

strategies can be analysed by imperatives of recognition. He critiques the idea of abstract structuralism, culture is very much part of the structure itself. Idea of class is itself constructed in cultural terms. He argues, an attempt to conceptually clarify the normative objectives in a rather diffuse and mostly implicit way by various social movements, a moral standard is to be formulated that can demonstrate the goals of public justifiability, while improving their political prospects. He differs from Fraser on her conviction that theory of recognition leads to neglecting of demands of redistribution that once formed heart of the theoretical tradition that can be traced back to Marx. Fraser views Honneth's investigation of 'struggle for recognition' as recognition theoretical turn.

What exactly is recognition? Recognition tends to be conceived of as a single interaction between you and me. It is a confirmation by others of the idea that I have my own value. The idea of recognition can be applied to institutions and society only as an expressive concept. Institutions express a denial of recognition when they hinder such relation. Next, Honneth believes that there is human dependence on inter-subjective recognition which is always shaped by the particular manner in which the mutual granting of recognition is institutionalized within a society. He notes, at the heart of class lies the cultural realization of self, now the self has three dimensions; 1) self-confidence 2) self-respect 3) Self-esteem. And these three dimensions of recognition are imperative to meet the claims of recognition.

Self-confidence includes care and love from primary relations, without which a personality cannot develop at all-as separate form of recognition through which acquires trust in her own value, a sense of completeness, a sense of being our own selves. We as body and minds have to be convinced that we can be loved and recognized. Second aspect is self-respect, which can be claimed as a right through mutual recognition, having the same autonomy as other members. One cannot ask to be loved but certainly to be respected, not being respected can lead to claim of recognition. The legal respect and self-esteem which were earlier conferred on people from the honour and status they enjoyed in society broke down with the emergence of capitalism. The person could now not in practice but normatively know that she is respected as a legal person with same right, while being caught still in her social esteem to a hierarchical scale of value which also undergoes a change. The esteem now is decided by 'achievement' of the individual within the structure of industrially organized division of labour. So, social hierarchy was in a

sense democratized with equal respect to all normatively, and influenced where each other one was to enjoy social esteem according to her achievement as a 'productive citizen'. But the problem is there is hegemonic one sided valuation of achievements. It would be wrong to say that capitalism is a 'norm-free' system of economic process since material distribution takes place according to temporarily established value principles are evaluated by investment of intellectual preparation in specific activity. Therefore, there is possibility of referring to one's achievement as 'different' since it doesn't match the hegemonic value structure. The self-esteem leads them to understand themselves as possessing talents that are valuable for societies. He contradicts Fraser and argues, we must consider the cultural values involved in institutional constitution of economic sphere through revisiting achievement principle, through which distribution of status is decided. Secondly in contradiction to Fraser, Honneth notes that a moral experience of 'disrespect' must be seen as motivational basis for all social conflicts.

Caste in India is bivalent collectivity. It is rooted in economic disadvantage group and religiously excluded and segregated. In India lowest castes are associated with the most stigmatized occupations. Caste embodied in several forms of devaluation of groups which are associated with lowest caste. Caste legitimates various forms of injustice including physical harm. Within the caste system any kind of touching, dining, marriages are inherited in higher caste being a pollutant. Within the caste system the lowest caste people are segregated and are at an economic disadvantage.

The difference between economic and culture disadvantage is inter-related. Different forms of injustice are embodied in where economic and disadvantage groups are exists. There is economic gap between advantage and disadvantage groups. Disadvantage groups are likely to mobilize for their *interests* and to formulate their demands in terms of *redistribution*. Where disadvantage groups are likely to mobilize for their *question of identity* and to formulate their demands in terms of *recognition*.

The Caste system in India is related to different occupation done by different caste. It is generally accepted that caste creates different hereditary groups in society. Caste is related to social stratification in Indian society. Caste is entirely stratified system in Indian

society.⁷ Scavengers in India are the lowest amongst the lowly and the untouchables amongst the untouchables. As outcaste and rejects of Indian society, scavengers have suffered myriad human indignities throughout ages. They have been treated as 'impure' and have been consequently been ritually avoided. By more than many, they have been accepted shunned as less than human. While their services have been accepted as highly valuable, often necessary for the survival of society, the poor people have been treated like a dreaded contagious disease calling for disdainful distance and the minimal social contact. They have been restricted from entering Hindu temples and from offering prayers in the places of worship. Because of their social degradation, scavengers have been compelled to live life as socially disadvantage persons. They have been forced to accept their social degradation, discrimination and disadvantaged position as part of their fate, despite the great importance of the work they do for the health and hygiene of the people whom they serve. Many social reformer have in the past voiced their serious concern for the plight of scavengers, and even worked for their liberation from human bondage. Their efforts for the liberation of scavengers however did not produce much gainful results merely because the very idea of the liberation of scavengers militated against well-entrenched value of the caste-ridden society. Mahatma Gandhi too had a dream for the liberation of scavengers but his efforts too produced no tangible results. After independence the Central and State Governments started programme for liberation for manual scavengers with a view to suggesting ways for improving their lot. The following Committees deserve special mention:

1. The Scavenger's Living Conditions Enquiry Committee constituted by the Government of Bombay in 1949, Headed by B.N. Barve (1949-51)
2. The scavenging Condition Enquiry Committee, Constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India in 1957, Chaired by Prof. N.R. Malkani (1957-60).
3. The Committee on Customary Rights to scavengers, 1969, Headed by Prof. N.R. Malkani.
4. Committee on Conditions of Sweepers and Scavengers appointed by the National Commission on Labour, Chaired by Bhanu Prasad Pandya (1967-69).

⁷ Dipankar, Gupta, (2002), *Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society*, Penguin Books.

The report of these committees did good work and made valuable recommendations of the consideration of the Governments both at the Centre and State levels. But the total help rendered by the state only made to fulfill the provisions provided in the Indian Constitution, have not yet brought the desired impact on Manual scavengers. These measures resulted more in achieving political and personal gains by all the political parties as compared to the benefit derived by the population under study. Even 30 years of such welfare programmes could not achieve the target of utter ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and traditional rooted inferiority complex in Manual Scavengers themselves. The fulfillments of the real task involve honest efforts on the part of the state, its machinery and social workers.

In India, Dalits are placed lowest in the caste hierarchy. People who belong to lower caste are forced to do unclean jobs. The practice of manual scavenging in public and private dry toilets and open drains continue in several parts of India. India's central government has approved legislative policy efforts to end manual scavenging. Because these policies are not implemented properly, people who are engaged in this job they face serious social pressure. They are threatened by upper caste people. They face the risk of violence and expulsion from their village. People who work as manual scavengers that work is not accepted as designated work, which is associated with particular caste and it, carry the social stigma that they are unclean or 'untouchable'.

In India scavengers and sweeper still carry out the basic sanitary services in cities and town. Indian society has been exploitative, unfair and unjust to the weakest among the weak. Caste is a prominent base of inequality. The Dalits are at the lowest in Hindu Caste hierarchy. They are the most oppressed people in India.

The practice of human wasteremoval and construction of Dry pit latrines were banned in 1993. Women are the worst victims of work force of manual scavengers. Also, in different regions they are Known by different names like Balmiki, Dhanuk (Uttar Pradesh), Bhangi, Mehtar (Assam), Mehtar (Andhra Pradesh) Paki (Coastal Andhra Pradesh) Lalbegi, Chuhara, Mira, Balashahi (Punjab), Hadi (West Bengal), Thotti (Tamil Nadu), Bhangi, Balmiki, , Mehtar, Chuhara (Delhi), Balimiki, Bhangis, Mehtar, (Rajasthan, Mhadya Pradesh and Haryana) etc. The practice of manual scavenging persists in most states of the country. Scavengers remain marginalized in

Indian Society today. They remain backward because they are still engaged to degraded job. It is very common that person belongs to lowest strata always compelled to take on this profession especially due to economic necessity. The name of scavenging caste suggests that they are a marginalized community in our society. They face discrimination because of work they are in engaged. Existing policies of government is inadequate to deal with the problems which scavengers faced.

Many of national leaders have expressed their anguish on the problems of scavengers and sweepers. For want of space the opinions of all them cannot be reproduced here. However, one of the most important ones is quoted below:

“I may not be born again, but if it happens, I would like to be born in a family of scavengers, so that I may relieve them of the inhuman, unhealthy and hateful practice of carrying night-soil”.

Gandhi

Origin of scavenging

The need for the disposal of waste and rubbish in the Indian cities and villages has resulted in the creation of the special castes, the scavenging castes.⁸ It is really difficult to say when exactly this profession of scavengers took its origin. In ancient India when the pressure of population was very much less and when there were only a few cities worth the name this profession did not assume any serious proportions. Only when the population grew and big cities came to existence. The problem of maintaining the sanitation of towns and cities arose. It becomes necessary to keep the towns and cities clean. The removal of dirt and garbage and human excreta was a very dirty job. The so called upper castes of Hindu society consider this job not only below their dignity to do but also a job not to be done by the upper caste. Since the so called upper castes of Hindus Society were not supposed to do the job of sweeping and scavenging, they naturally assigned the filthy work to the ‘untouchables’ who were socially and economically oppressed. It is understood that these people who took to the profession of sweeping and scavenging had no other alternative because all other profession were closed to them. The only profession which they could easily take up without competition was that of sweeping and scavenging. Society at

⁸ Fuchs, Stephen, 1981, *At the Bottom of Society: The Harijan and other Low Castes*, New Delhi, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal Publications.

large also wanted that this filthy work could be done only by these unwanted people. The caste Hindus in order to maintain their superior position in the hierarchy exercises various restrictions on religious and ritual functions. It is believed that people who do filthy work that they are impure and if they enter at worship places it will impure the places of worship So to keep them pure people from scheduled caste were not permitted to enter temples. They were kept away from the so called pure places. Government has made law to abolish the practice of the society and government has made law to abolish the practice but this does not mean that the traditional practice has been done away with now.

In some areas there were Muslims and converted Christians also working as sweepers and scavengers. The Muslims have adopted an attitude of friendly tolerance towards those who have taken up this profession which the caste Hindu also should adopt. The Muslims have set an example to other communities because they alone have given a decent and correct name appropriate to this profession. The sweepers and scavengers are called as '*halalkhor*' which in fact mean 'a person who earns his livelihood in a righteous manner'.⁹

During the medieval period, it was the time when scavenging became a greater necessity to Islamic Sanction of *pardah* for Muslim women. There was need of a special class of persons who could clean dry toilets. Initially the captives of Muslim invaders were forced to do scavenging. Many of these captive scavengers embraced Islam. They were forced to do scavenging. They were called Halalkhors. The usage of term 'Bhangi' in its modern connotation has been a matter of an intense debate that remains unsettled still. Some earlier writers like Crook (1886) believe that term 'Bhangi' is derived from Sanskrit root Bhang (hemp) and thus the term Bhangi means a hemp addict. Bhangis are those who are broken away from society and therefore the term is derogatory itself. Syamlal (1984) in his book *the Bhangis in Transition* has disputed many popular myths and beliefs about the origin of Bhangis as an particular unit of social organization. He dismisses the statements contained in Dharma Shastras as speculative. He also disputes the view that Chandalas were Bhangis.

Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak (1991) writes in his 'Road to Freedom' that "according to the scriptures and other literatures, scavenging, especially the disposal of night soil by a particular caste or castes of Indian society has been in existence since the beginning of civilization with the emergence of towns."

⁹ Shyam Lal, (1984), *The Bhangi in Transition*, Delhi: Inter-India Publication.

According to myth, current among the older generation of the Bhangis, they are descendants of Valmiki Rishi, the first Sanskrit poet and famous author of Hindu epic the Ramayana. Their supposed connection with Valmiki rests on occupation and caste identity. Valmiki's story, as it prevails among the Bhangis, represents him as a low caste person making a living as a robber.¹⁰

“The manual removal of human and animal excreta using brooms, small tin plates, and baskets carried on the head. The allocation of labour on the basis of caste is one of the fundamental tenets of the Hindu caste system. Within this system dalits have been assigned tasks and occupations which are deemed ritually polluting by other caste communities -such as sweeping, disposal of dead animals and leatherwork. By reason of their birth, dalits are considered to be "polluted", and the removal of human and animal waste by members of the "sweeper" community is allocated to them and strictly enforced” (United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 2002)

“The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act,1993”. The Act, 1993 is aims to keep protect and re-establish the dignity of manual scavengers. The main purpose of this Act is to prohibit employment of manual scavengers, construction or continuance of dry latrines. Since sanitation is state subject, therefore it came into force in six states (Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tripura, and West Bengal) and all the Union territories under clause (1) of Article 252 of Indian constitution. Despite these prohibitions, the law did not succeed in ending manual scavenging. Despite the Act the employment of manual scavenging this practice still continues in India.

Living conditions of manual scavengers

The caste system in India has been the root cause for many social evils. It is difficult to say when the practice of untouchability originated. The ‘untouchables’ were segregated from the main stream of social life. They were forced to live outside village and town limits well away from other castes. After the country became free from foreign domination it was hoped that many of the evils that were existed in social structure of India would disappear and that there would be a better and more acceptable mode of life for oppressed communities and sections of the society.

¹⁰ Sachchidananda, 2001, “*People at the Bottom: A Portrait of the Scavengers*”, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

But unfortunately this has remained only a dream. Those who have taken up the profession of sweeping and scavenging belong mostly to the Scheduled Castes community. Who are untouchables in the eyes of the sections of Hindu community, the sweepers and scavengers themselves are considered 'Untouchables' by the other sections of Scheduled Caste. In many parts of the state the sweepers and scavengers are forced to live separately away from other sections of Scheduled Caste because of the stigma attached to the profession. Unwanted and undesired by their other community the sweepers and scavengers have given up all hopes. The social segregation from rest of communities has made them develop a diffident outlook on life.

Scavenging: A Caste Occupation

The association between caste and occupation is not a new phenomenon. Caste is linked with Occupation that together exists in traditional societies particularly among Hindus society. It exists since ages and it is there in the beginning of the Hindu Varna system. The Varna system clearly divides the different castes that have specific duties and role to play. Caste system in India has survived for hundreds of years. It is system in which people are classified according to their birth in the society. Scavengers are the lowest among the low. They suffer from discrimination. They carry the stigma of untouchability since ages. Scavengers are discriminated by orthodox Hindus. The Brahminical origin of caste system has been greatly emphasised. The whole caste system as it has come down to us, bears unmistakable evidence of Brahminical origin. The priests were therefore strongest advocates of caste system. They applied the principle of exclusion/inclusion vigorously to strengthen their position in society. Such a process of selection/ rejection resulted into diversification of caste, occupational and ritual structure, caste is being considered to be a tyrannical system. The British Government did not discourage the malfunctioning of the system but rather encouraged its distorted continuity by according higher status to certain group, granting titles, land etc. In the British period social mobility particularly among the lower castes were so weak that they could not be considered an attack on the atrocities of the caste system. The system was never based on universalistic principles of division of labour, justice, equality and dignity of work. The British in India discouraged the continuity of the functions of the caste system. The mass-poverty, mass-illiteracy and mass-unemployed/underemployment are distinctive characteristics of an underdeveloped society. The dalit condition is that of destitution and dehumanization. Dalits have been treated as out castes

declared ritually unclean hence, untouchables: and pushed out for fear of pollution to live on the outskirts of villages, hence segregated.

In traditional society a particular section is ordained to do scavenging work. It has been a hereditary occupation and everybody born in the sub caste of scavenger (Bhangi) male or female is destined to take up this sub-human profession. Manual scavenging has not been seen as employment in our society it is a hereditary occupation. Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar had said that “our society is like multistoried pyramid and there are no stairs or doors for entering into these storeys. One has to die in the storey in which one is born.” The members of a particular community would continue to engage in occupations of their ancestors a far cry from any modern notion of decent employment.

There is notion of purity and pollution in caste system. There many reasons in Indian society that particular caste is discriminated by other caste in the name of purity and pollution. There are many ways to explain purity and pollution. Notion of purity and pollution is very complex. The notion purity and pollution only exist in Hindu society. There are other societies which have the same notion in different forms. One of the greatest problems that have to be tackled in our country is sanitation. In the process of socialization, the feeling of ‘inferiority and superiority’, upper and lower’ have been internalised right from the beginning at home as well as outside. The label of purity and pollution is attributed to occupations as well as people. The social, economic and ritual factors are adopted in the determining the prestige of an occupation, particularly in India. This concept of purity and pollution is deeply entrenched among different caste, religious groups, and regions. In Indian society high status is associated with purity and low status with pollution. Even some sociologist has described caste system on the basis of pure and impure binary. For example Dumont (1980)¹¹ believes that the notion of purity and pollution are two main fundamental binary oppositions which described the structure of caste system in India further legitimized this distinction to wider social ordering and meanings in the society. A sweeper caste on the contrary considered to be born inherently polluted. It is believed that his touch and shadow will defile the status of an upper caste or more precisely Brahmin caste. They are traditionally associated with the occupation of cleaning removing of the human excreta from the latrines, cleaning public places and lanes and gathering all the waste materiel and dumb it in

¹¹ Louise Dumont(1980), *Homo Hierarchicus; the Caste System and Implications*, University of Chicago.

the garbage heap. Garbage dumping worker play a vital role in our life. They are the one who cleans our shit and make our city beautiful and hygienic. It is they who bear all the torturous and unhygienic life and in return they do not get anything. They are seen as untouchables and sometimes people embarrassed them for their work. Thekaekare (2003)¹² while referring to Ambedkar, argues that scavengers and Bhangis are at the bottom of the heap. They are placed at the lowest in the system of graded inequality. They are called different names in different states such as Bhangis, Valmiki, Totthi, Paki, Madiga, Mahter and Chuhar. They are doing this work for centuries and held the monopoly over this work. But when it comes to government job, they are raising voice for their reservation. There is as such no development in this area. They used to clean the waste with crude and most primitive tools, mostly a stick broom and a tin plate. They have to carry garbage sacks on their shoulder and head to the dumping ground. Now days they get wheel-barrow and cart. They usually settle in the outskirts of villages and while in the city they live in Jhuggi jhopdi (JJC). They also face a different kind of exclusion within the Dalit community as the other Dalit belongs to non sweeping castes do not interact with them. These communities are struggling from both the side for example from the mainstream and from their own Dalit community itself. This caste is suffering from every conceivable form of harassment, socio-political discrimination, economic exploitation and social exclusion.

Review of literature

Ghurye (1969) discussed caste as a product of Brahmanism of Indo Aryan culture¹³. Ketkar (2002) discussed caste through discussing the varna and jati system¹⁴. He asserted on the presence of sub caste. Hutton (1951)¹⁵ encapsulated the consciousness of legal right of citizenship amongst the people from the exterior caste and primitive religion. Hutton described that devadasis as caste which was actually the profession. Hutton also described that caste is fixed by birth that dictates custom related food, purity, occupation, marriage etc and controlled the behavior of members of the community. Occupational groups that migrated from one part to another part of India formed a new caste of sub caste. Ketkar opined that “a caste is social group having two characteristics: (i) membership is confined to those who are born of members and

¹² Thekaekara, Mary.Marcel (1999), *Endless Filth; The saga of Bhangis*, publication: London New York.

¹³ Ghurye.G.R (1969),”*Caste and Race in India.*” Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

¹⁴ Ketkar, S.V (2000), “*History of Caste in India*”, Delhi: Low price Publication.

¹⁵ Hutton.J.H (1951), “*Caste in India*”, Bombay.

includes all persons so born. (ii) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group". C.H. Cooley says "when a class is somewhat strictly hereditary, we call it a caste". Andre Beteille states that "Caste may be defined as a small and named group of person characterized by endogamy, hereditary members and a specific style which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system based on the concepts of purity and pollution". In the words of M.N. Srinivas, "Caste is a hereditary endogamous usually localized group, having a traditional association with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed among the other things, by the concepts of pollution and purity and generally maximum commensality occurs within the caste".

Omprakash Valmiki in his book 'joothan' discussed the pain of his caste which is interlinked with their identity. He narrates that during his childhood he was badly treated because of he was a Dalit. He was forced to sweep the school floor. The caste based discrimination faced by chuhra or Chamar community. Dalit life is extremely painful. Dalits were dependent on left over foods and were engaged in dehumanizing work. He also mentioned that they were responsible to do all the cleaning and sweeping work in society. They were entirely depended on the upper caste mercy. Dalit writers themselves describe dalit autobiography as "narratives of pain". It is pain of which is connected one incident to next incident. It is pain that binds individual Dalit together into a one community who suffers. Joothan(1997) by Omprakash Valmiki through this book untouchability is expressed within narrative specially regarding the construction of Dalit subjectivity and the flow of narrative events.

S.K. Thorat and A. Deshpande (2002) also seek to examine that economic function of caste in Indian context. They argue that caste system has produced large scale economic inequalities in ownership of resources, income, employment and education between the castes, particularly between high castes and low caste. Thorat in his work 'caste and labour: Aspects related to discrimination and deprivation' (2006). He relates caste and labour on the basis of available data on various states in India. He demonstrates that magnitude of wage labour among the SCs is almost two times higher than the non-SC groups. He also that employment rate and wages

among them are low. It suggests that caste produce economic gains for some and discriminates others.

Malkani.N.R. in his book 'Clean People and Unclean Country' discussed that India is the only country in the world only a particular section of the society is traditionally responsible for removing human excreta. This is a disgrace to country. Some people are compelled to do such type of inhuman and dirty work in the society. They are neglected sections of the society and remained under heavy bondage. The country which won freedom from slavery of the British people but could not liberate from human bondage more than half of million people who are called Bhangis, Mehtars, Balmikis etc. and still engaged in their traditional occupation of sweeping and scavenging. This traditional system gets precipitated them with limited job opportunities.

Shyamlal (1984) in his book *The Bhangis in Transition* states that the wife of a Bhangi plays a significant role in economic activities of the family. She plays many roles at her home. She look after children, cook food arranges marketing of daily requirements. Besides she also manages to do work of scavenging. Their duties are quite heavy. She generally leaves home early in the morning and returns in the afternoon. She plays a role of bread-winner of the family. Among the scavengers it is observed that women are more engaged in profession of scavenging. The status of women is clearly defined in his family.

According to Iravati Karve in her book "Hindu Society- An interpretation" (1965) the Indian Caste is a society made up of independents units, each having their own traditional pattern of behavior. This has resulted in a multiplicity of norms of behavior, the existence which has found a justification in a religious and philosophical system. According to C. Bougle (1991:65), three features of repulsion, hierarchy and hereditary specialization define the caste. Sociologists like Hutton and Bougle gave Descriptive analysis of the system. Bougle tried to explore the notion of hierarchy and difference. It not only define the pattern of complicated religious and secular culture but has fixed the psychology of the various social groups and created a social distance among the people and graded into the hierarchy of superior and inferior relationship.

Dipankar Gupta (2002)also questions the Dumontian notion of pure hierarchy. He remarks "where there was once seeming tranquility of caste relation plethora of assertive caste identities,

each privileging and angular hierarchy of its own". He has discussed about multiple hierarchies where each caste values itself very highly and may not fully confirm to the brahmanical notion of pure hierarchy.

Béteille (1969) observes the caste as well as other aspect of stratification such as economic position, styles of life, and educational, political and occupational status in his study of 'caste, class and power'. His study explains that the hierarchy of caste, class and power are independently noticeable in rural society. It's not necessary that a Brahmin which is considered as upper caste in the society cannot be a poor, or the one who belong to lower caste can economically sound. In this circumstances, the one is superior by caste may be inferior in class or inferior in caste can avail power due to their class position. Here he argued that now-a-days higher caste group may not have higher rank in class and power hierarchies. It seems that caste structure in India is changing with class and power. Despite the fact in many situation class may cut across the caste, and also keeping into account the prevalent mobility within the caste system; there is still a considerable overlap between caste and class. Various scholars such as Thorat, Barbara Harris Whyte and others have pointed to this overlap resulting in and arising out of continued caste oppression and inequality.

Gail Omvedt (1982) also underlines the strong relation between caste and class. She argues that caste is a '...material reality with a material base and important economic results'. She suggest that the system of caste has historically shaped the very basis of Indian economy and constitute to have crucial economic implications even today. She insists that caste and class were heavily interlinked under the colonial rule and this connection rule and this connection even continues today. In British period, she suggests, the educated elite was overwhelmingly drawn from the higher castes. Men from peasants and artisan castes of shudra status constitutes the large majority of factory workers; while davits could find some jobs in factories or on roads and railways, generally they filled the lowest and most unskilled jobs. Merchants and moneylenders were mainly drawn from the vaishya castes and it was from their ranks that an industrial bourgeoisie began to take shape.

The caste-class nexus finds a sufficient treatment in the work of Andre Beteille titled '*Caste, class and power: Changing pattern of stratification in a Tanjore village*' (1996). In his study of Sripuram village, he argues that class overlaps to a considerable extent with caste, but also cuts

across it at a number of points. Beteille maintains that the association between caste and class was the maximum in the traditional village structure, but things have changed significantly over time. In course of time, landownership, occupation and education are becoming 'caste free'.

Joan Mencher (1996), in her work 'The caste system upside down', discusses the economic conditions of the untouchable labourers. The discussion here deals primarily with the untouchable labourers in the Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu. He argues that the point of view of people at lowest end of the caste hierarchy, the caste system functions and primarily as one of economic exploitation and not one wherein every caste has its special privileges.

D.L Sheth (2005) also seeks to analyze the way caste constitutes a limit to the class location of an individual. Here he examines the class implications of the traditional caste system in modern times. He argues that while the traditional high status of higher caste groups has become an asset for them in the modern setting, the low status of the lower caste works as a liability for the latter. This is because; the occupational functions of the lower castes in the traditional society have lost the relevance in the modern occupational system. Also, the denial of education and wealth to the lower castes in the traditional caste system has acted to their disadvantage in their entry into the modern sector. In short, they have become an 'underclass' in the modern sector. They remain at the bottom of the both the caste and class hierarchies.

Root cause of scavenging in India

In his study "*Road to Freedom: A Sociological Study on the Abolition of Scavenging in India*", Dr. Bindeshwar pathak has shown that some form of removing night-soil has existed in different countries, but that it has also fast disappeared. He says "Before the coming water closet, the sewage of European cities was disposed of by scavengers, men who made nightly rounds of the cities collecting the contents of privy vaults and carting them to nearby farming areas. Often the farmer who brought his produce to the city returned home with a load of fertilizer. This was also the customs in America, where the widespread introduction of water closets and the sewerage system occurred only late in the century". With the development of higher technology and the possibility of water supply in sufficient quantity in all places, the practice of scavenging came to an end in these countries. In India, however, this practice has continued to exist unabated, till

today. A questions we should address ourselves why is it the practice of scavenging, which has disappeared in other parts of world is still being carried in this country.

Scholars continue to ponder on Indian's caste system and its dehumanizing practice especially in with the so-called 'untouchables' of Indian society. Some of writings make reference to Bhangis(scavengers) their social status and their marginalised position in the Indian society. In India, Occupations like sweeping and scavenging are not merely economic activities. They carry with them social stigmas. A Bhangi is not an individual who happens to take up scavenging as an occupation; he is the member of a community that has been relegated to the lowest status in society and upon which job of scavenging has been thrust upon for centuries. Scavenging became hereditary and all the male and female members born in the family of Bhangi were bound to take up scavenging. The real problem for Bhangis is not the Occupation of scavenging. The occupation of scavenging is the result of centuries old caste discrimination in which they were marginalized in society. They were oppressed by other caste groups. They were relegated to lowest status in society and were forced into an occupation which was degrading and dehumanizing. The legislation against dry latrines and against the employment of people for cleaning dry latrines can only succeed by providing alternate employment or unemployment benefits.

The issue of the emancipation of scavengers is in fact tied up with caste system. The social group recognized as *Shudra* has the peculiarity that it embraces a whole range of sub-group. It has different role and status in Indian society. The four fold division of society *Brahmin*, *Kshtriya*, *Vaisya* and *Shudra* has been described as the *Chaturvarnya* system of social organization. It is believed that the invading condemned the vanquished original inhabitants as *Shudras*. The *Shudras* was the only provider bodily labour and hence condemned to a position of servitude forever. It seems that those who had easily accepted the subjugation of the Aryans are known as backward classes. But those who had put stiff resistance before giving up were branded as *Dasyus* and were put in the category of untouchables. Besides the aforesaid fourfold division of society there were other groups of persons who have come to described as '*Antyajas*', '*Pariahs*', '*Atishudras*' i.e. untouchables, and in modern context as 'Depressed classes' and 'Scheduled Castes'. The untouchables formed the fifth Varna or 'Fifth Caste' in the society. They were assigned a position much worse than that of the *Shudra*. They were considered outcastes. Their

main occupation sanctioned by the system was that removing skins from dead animals, street-sweeping, shoe-making, scavenging and preparing leather articles. They were condemned to more arduous and hateful tasks even carrying the night-soil on their head. People in upper strata of society discerned a need for the continued existence of this class rendering them an essential service. So that the scavengers may continue to provide these services, they were deprived of all and every opportunity of social and economic upliftment and earn their livelihood only by their hereditary profession. And these sanctions as finally evolved and established were supported on the two planes of rebirth and fatalism popularly known as transmigration of soul and predetermination respectively. This had made the redemption of these unfortunate millions impossible. They were born as untouchable; they lived and died as untouchables. These communities do not constitute a socially homogeneous single group. This group is a conglomeration of a number of different castes and communities. Among all the traditional lower or untouchable caste in India the 'Bhangi' (scavengers) occupies the lower or untouchable caste and communities. The upward mobility is closed for the lowest stratum the Untouchable.

Reforms for liberation of scavengers

In the recent times of study has made proved in many field. After the country became free, India has been able to achieve technological and industrial progress of high order. India has successfully become democratic country. In spite of all these achievements it is a matter of shame and regret that no strict action has been taken to improve the lot of sweepers and scavengers who have been engaged in these services and they are continue to be where they were. In spite of all scientific and technological progress the country has made, scavengers are still carrying human excreta on their head. Due to continuous efforts of Dr. Ambedkar, the society, as well the Government became aware of their duty towards this much exploited section. It was the government of Bombay who in 1949 took major steps in ameliorating the situation of scavengers. It was the government of Bombay of 1949 which constituted the first ever committee in the country to go into the question of improving manual scavengers. Shri V. N. Barve headed the committee which studied the problems of sweepers and scavengers in detail. The Barve committee submitted its report and recommendations in 1952, which contained references to the conditions of sweepers and scavengers employed in the district of Bijapur, Belgaum, Dharwar and karwar which were the parts of Bombay state at that time.

Since independence the three levels of government have lacked interest in implementing the provision of the constitution. This has been demonstrated that several enquires have been conducted into scavenging conditions throughout India. The government of India began to efforts to improve the working conditions of scavengers by seeking to abolish the practice of carrying night soil on head. The first was conducted by Government of Bombay in 1949. This was followed by the scavenger's conditions enquiry committees of 1960, which was established by the Ministry of Home Affairs, government of India.

Earlier we referred to the manual scavenging and liberation strategies to eradicate the scavenging from this country. It is assumed that we are aware of the causes of this problem. I would I like to focus on the causes of persistence of the practice of scavenging. In order to answer this question why scavenging is still carried on in our country, we must first look at nature of this practice.

In other countries, scavenging was an economic activity just as farming, garbage clearing, sweeping roads, and serving in restaurants. But In India occupation like sweeping and scavenging are not merely economic activities. They carry with them social stigmas. A Bhangi is not an individual who happens to take up scavenging has been related to the lowest status in society and upon which the job of scavenging has been thrust upon centuries. Scavenging became hereditary and all the male and female members to born in the family of a Bhangi were bound to take up the scavenging work. Under traditional mythological sanctions, it was a religious duty or dharma of bhangis to take up scavenging. Therefore lower caste fall into two categories first ritual functions and second economic activities. Ritual functions consists beating of drums, preparations of funeral pyres, messengers of bad news, sweepers. In the ritual context they do not participate in the various rituals. Though they do not eat with others, they are not allowed to enter temples.

State polices for liberation of scavengers

The century old traditional practice of manually cleaning and carrying human excreta on heads by scavengers continues to this day. The notion of 'purity' and 'pollution' has been operative in Indian society. Thus certain occupations of vulnerable castes such as scavengers and sweepers are considered to be unclean. Therefore mobility is constrained by their traditional occupation of impurity. Since the notion of 'purity' and 'pollution' is deeply rooted in collective consciousness

of the people. The improvement in social status of these is a social change in the values and attitudes of the people. This can be done not only through education campaign to be launched by self-less social workers and dedicated voluntary organization.

Government of India in 1968 made effort by promoting a special campaign for conversion of dry latrines into water-flush ones with the objective of relieving the scavengers. Yet another attempt was made in the fifth Five year plan (1974-78) by Government of India for converting dry latrines into water-flush units by providing septic tanks. During the sixth Five year plan (1980-85) the Government of India (ministry of home affairs) realized the basic fact that unless all the buckets/dry latrines are replaced by water flush toilets, it would not be possible to remove scavenging in the country.

The constitution of India provides Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India in which Article (15) emphasises 'prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. In order to make constitutional provision effective a number of committees and commissions had been constituted by Governments of both Central and States for the welfare of scavenger's community. There are many recommendations of some of the main committees are referred to below:

The protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955: initially the Untouchability Act, 1955, had been enacted to abolish the practice of untouchability and social disability arising out of it against members of the Scheduled Caste. It was amended in 1977 and is now known as the protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. Under the revised Act, the practice of untouchability was made both cognizable and non-compoundable offence and stricter punishment was provided for the offenders.¹⁶ This Act became base for implementing of different schemes by the Central and state Governments for manual scavengers, sweepers for their social and economic development.

In order to make constitutional provisions effective, a number of committees and commissions had been constituted by the government, both the centre and states, from time to time, for the welfare of scavenger's community. The suggestions and recommendation of some of the main committees are referred below:

The scavenger's Living Condition Enquiry Committee by B.N. Barve (1949)

¹⁶ India. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Instruction Manual, February, 2013.

The problem of scavenging and improving the conditions of scavengers has persistently been engaging the attention of the Government since independence. The erstwhile Government of Bombay, appointed a committee known as the Scavengers Living Condition Enquiry Committee in 1949 with Shri V.N. Barve as Chairman to study and enquire into the living conditions of scavengers in the state of Bombay and to suggest ways and means to improve their conditions of work and to fix their minimum wages. The Committee submitted its report to the Government of Bombay in 1952. In 1955 the Ministry of Home Affairs circulated a copy of the major recommendations of the Barve Committee to all the state Governments requesting them to adopt these recommendations.¹⁷

It examined the problem of abolition of scavenging in Gujarat and issue of customary rights. It also dealt with the problem of the working and living conditions of scavengers and sweepers as well as suggested different measures to improve their working and living conditions.

The Scavenging Conditions Enquiry Committee (Prof. N.R. Malkani Committee) (1957):

The Malkani Committee was first established on 12, 1957. The committee made comprehensive study of the problems and submitted its report in 1960. The recommendation of Malkani committee were concerned about improvement of working conditions of scavengers by introducing mechanical tools such as wheel borrows, scrappers, rubber gloves and boots etc. as well as construction of houses and infrastructure facilities like water supply, electricity in their localities. It also suggested that the scavengers should be paid wages according to Minimum Wages Act and other allowances and benefits should be given to them by local authorities.

The Committee on the Customary Rights to Scavenging by Prof. N.R. Malkani Committee (1965): This committee was set up to find out the problem of the Jagirdari System or Customary rights for scavengers which were prevalent in various cities and towns. Customary Right is a system where private scavengers by their tradition used to serve number of households from generation to generations. The committee studied the problems associated with this system.

Prof. N.R. Malkani (1960) in his book 'Clean People and Unclean country' suggested that to improve the present condition of Bhangis and it is essential to provide them residential accommodations at the clean places. He suggested that to develop various institutions for the socialisation and development of their children.

¹⁷India,(2013), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Instruction Manual, February.

Committee on Condition of Sweepers and scavengers by Bhanu Prasad Pandya (1967):

The National Commission on Labour constituted by the Union Ministry of Labour appointed a sub-committee (1968-69) under the chairmanship of Shri Bhanu Prasad Pandya to look into the working and service conditions of sweepers and scavengers. One of the important recommendations of the committee was that “the Central Government should undertake a comprehensive legislation for regulating their working, service and living conditions which should also provide for adequate inspectorate and enforcement machinery”.¹⁸

We cannot deny that much work has done in the post independence India to liberate scavengers from manual scavenging but it is still continuing in the country.

Bindeshwar Pathak’s (1991) study suggested that holistic approach to the problem of scavenging, aimed at a total liquidation of the system. The author seeks to give scavengers a new life and hope by providing a technology an effective low-cost and appropriate alternative to scavenging.

Distinction between Manual Scavengers and Safai Karamchari

*Safai karamcharis normally include persons engaged as ‘Sweepers’ or ‘sanitation workers’ in Municipalities, government and private offices. They may be contract employees who work with these organizations. Safai karamchari are not manual scavengers.*¹⁹ (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Instruction Manual)

On the basis of census data, Risley, the commissioner for 1901 Census, classified castes into seven main categories according to their social standing and ranked the jatis in the local hierarchy and varna affiliation of each. The ranking of jatis and castes by the census created an unprecedented situation. Whatever their *de facto* status, most of the communities at the lower rung of the caste ladder felt that it was a good opportunity for social climbing by laying claims to higher status and registering a higher ranking in the census documents to have an official stamp, indicative of their higher social origin. A number of caste association were formed.

¹⁸ India,(2013), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Instruction Manual, February.

¹⁹ India,(2013), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Instruction Manual, February.

In 1997 report, the National Commission for Safai karamcharis claimed that manual scavengers are “totally cut off from the mainstream of progress” and are “still subjected to the worst kind of oppression and indignities. What is more pathetic is the fact that manual scavenging is still largely a hereditary occupation. Safai karamchari are no doubt the most oppressed and disadvantage section of the population.”²⁰

Safai Karamchari is those people who are engaged in manually cleaning human excreta or any sanitation work. They also face social discrimination in the society. This is lowest occupation in the society. This is done by the community which occupies the lowest status in the caste system. Even the other scheduled caste people treat safai karamcharis as untouchable. There is question of untouchability within the untouchable. This has to be question which needs to be taken up.

SCHEMES FOR WELFARE AND REHABILITATION

In view of the existing hereditary obnoxious and inhuman condition of manual scavengers, the Government has formulated various schemes/ programmes for their Social and Economic upliftment:

The first Scheme, namely Valmiki Malin Basti Awas Yojna (VAMBAY) was financed by Government of India for Welfare and Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers:

This scheme was launched by Government of India during 2001 with the aim to provide shelter and upgrade the existing shelter for people living below poverty line in urban slums which helps in making cities slum free. The scheme is shared on 50:50 basis with states. Preference is given to women headed households. The Government releases subsidy on a 1:1 basis with loan.²¹

Another attempt was made in 1999 by Government of India named as Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) for lack of proper sanitary facility: The Total Sanitation Campaign is a comprehensive programme to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with broader goal to eradicate the practice

²⁰ National Commission for Safai Karamchari, *The Role of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis in Liberation and Rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis and their Dependents* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1997), P.1.

²¹ <http://ncksk.nic.in>

of open defecation. TSC was initiated in 1999 when Central Rural Sanitation Programme was restructured making it demand driven and people centered. It follows a principle of ‘‘low to no subsidy’’ where a nominal subsidy in the form of incentive is given to rural poor households for construction of toilets. TSC gives strong emphasis on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), Capacity Building and Hygiene Education for effective behavior change with involvement of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs), Community Based Organisation (CBOs), and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) etc. The key intervention areas are Individual Household Latrines (IHHL), School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE), Community Sanitary Complex, Anganwadi toilets supported by Rural Sanitary Marts (RSMs) and Production Centers (PCs).²²

Legislation on Abolishing Scavenging

Parliament passed the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry-latrines (prohibition) Bill, 1993 to abolish scavenging and ban the construction of dry latrines. This was a major decision taken by government of India without any time limit. In which problem of manual scavenging would be totally abolished but the purpose of the bill failed. The Government of India has constituted a seven- member National Commission for Safai Karamcharis under the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993 In August 1994. The tenure of the Commission is to recommend to the Central Government specific programmes of action towards elimination of inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities for Safai Karamcharis under a time-bound action plan. The implementation of the programmes and schemes is related to the social and economic rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis. In spite of many commission and committees including the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis set up in 1997 but degrading practice of manual scavenging is still continues.

Commissions and Committees

After Independence the Government of India paid attention to this problem. In 1953 the Backward classes Kaka Kalelkar Commission was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Commission observed that manually cleaning of night- soil should be obviate by mechanical cleaning of latrines and provision of sewers, drains etc. on a large scale training in cleanliness

²² <http://nhrc.nic.in>

and hygiene and provision of better housing would improve their living standard and help them absorption in the society. A similar approach was suggested by Scavenging Conditions Enquiry Committee (Malkani Committee 1960) which observed that “as long as dry latrines continue, the problem will exist and it is a story of the far distant future to think of all the towns having underground sewers.” The problem of scavengers was also examined by the various working groups constituted by the planning commission for the development of Scheduled Caste and Tribes during successive Five-Year plans. The recommendation of all these working groups was that a time bound programme should be taken up to convert all dry-latrines in the country within a period of 4 to 5 years. The question of providing low-cost sanitation was also discussed in the committees. In 1967 with commencement of the Gandhi Centenary Year the emphasis was on emancipation of scavengers. The Government provided 25 percent subsidy and 75 percent loan to be accounted for in easy installments for converting dry-latrines into a water flush toilet and its connection to public sewer line. The Government of India made another effort in 1968 by promoting a special campaign for conversion of dry-latrines into water flush units with the objective of relieving the scavengers from their present occupation.

- (i) It was suggested that no new building should be allowed to be constructed without water flush latrine.
- (ii) Where sewers are available the dry latrines after conversion should be compulsory connected to them and this should be legally enforced.
- (iii) In the unsewered areas, septic tanks or leach pits should be provided for converting dry-latrines into water flush units.

Efforts of Social Organisation

The movement for conversion of bucket latrines into water closets has in the Indian conditions by and large derived its motive force from the classes of social workers who were deeply concerned for the exploited scavengers who have been for generations engaged in the occupation of manual handling and removal of human excreta.

Harijan Sewak Sangh, Gujarat

The pioneering work done by Harijan Sweak Sangh in Gujarat to promote the emancipation of scavengers during sixties provided a catalytic influence and laid the foundation for the latrine conversion programme in Gujarat during the Gandhi Centenary Year.

Sulabh International, Bihar

Bihar provided another instance of a more dynamic nature. The Bihar Gandhi Centenary Committee gave top priority in 1967 to the Bhangis Mukti Programme and also identified latrines conversion as the quickest and the most effective way of achieving the objective. With the initial pioneering and demonstrative work and the emergence of Sulabh Shauchalaya Sansthan having a trained workers let to a dynamic programme of latrine conversion in Patna City and other municipalities from 1973 under the leadership of its founder Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak who was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the president of India in 1991 for his commitment and dedicated work to the Nation. The activities of Sulabh International have now spread in almost all the states in India.

Liberation of Manual Scavengers

The Sulabh International has developed the programme of liberation of scavengers by providing the low-cost sanitation system which replaces the traditional service latrines. If the scavengers are to be liberated, if the demand of social justice is to be met and if this demeaning work is to end for achieving the ideals of 'Welfare State' in our democratic civil society, the traditional service system cannot be allowed to continue. The liberation of scavengers means the breaking up of the traditional bondages and developing new relations. The degree of commitment and loyalty to traditional values and the intensity of willingness to break away from traditional bondages matter a lot in the liberation of scavengers.

Over the years several laws have enacted and crores of rupees have spent to eradicate the practice of manual scavenging in India. Despite the implementation of Employment of Manual Scavengers and construction of Dry Latrines (prohibition) Act in 1993. Also Bezwada Wilson, national convener of Safai Karamchari Andolan notes how it took another decade for some state to remove this practice of manual scavenging. State refuse to adopt the law by saying that they don't have manual scavengers and claimed that most of them had been rehabilitated in alternative profession. Safai Karamchari Andolan is a national

movement committed to the total eradication of manual scavenging and the rehabilitation of all scavengers for dignified occupation. Safai Karamchari Andolan was initiated in 1955 by children of those engaged in Manual Scavenging. Safai Karamchari andolan is also committed to working with all those engaged in 'unclean' occupation such as sewage workers. Those are called 'Safai Karamchari'. This andolan mobilized the workers for this purpose. Large number of people joined this programme. This campaign mobilized communities of scheduled caste who are facing discrimination in every sphere of their life helped to rehabilitate former manual scavengers.

The municipal scavengers who are liberated from scavengers do not require any training as they are absorbed in the municipality itself in alternative employment. The private scavengers and their dependents as well as the dependents of municipal scavengers require training. The Scheduled Caste Development Corporation set up in various states play role of catalytic agents in providing training and rehabilitation of liberated scavengers. There is no separate training programme for the liberated scavengers in most of states, but the exiting training institution like Industrial Institutes or the training Centers run by other departments are utilised for this purpose. The Government of Maharashtra has set up a separate institution known as "Sakar" for providing training to the liberated scavengers in various trades and occupations with boarding and lodging facilities. The training programmes have been organized in collaboration with the Mahatma Phule Backward classes Development Corporation and other agencies. Similar training programme for liberated scavengers was launched by the Government of Bihar in collaboration with the Sulabh International, Patna. After completion of training, the candidates are provided with subsidy, margin money loans and bank loans for setting in various trades and occupation. The liberated scavengers who do not require any training are given financial assistance directly. The work of rehabilitation of unemployed scavengers and their dependents is done by the department dealing with the welfare of Scheduled Castes in the State Governments through the Scheduled Caste Developments Corporations. The scheme for the rehabilitation of scavengers varies from state to state. In some states like Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar pradesh, shops have been constructed at market places and allotted to the liberated scavengers. The government was very concerned about the need to rehabilitate scavengers and to put an end to the obnoxious system of carrying night soil on head or shoulders. It has

been decided by the Government to eradicate this system within five years. The government has decided to bring in a central legislation for the abolition of manual scavenging from the country and necessary steps have taken to introduce a Bill in this regard in parliament. The legislation provided banning the construction of houses with dry latrines within specified timing and no new constructions without provision of appropriate arrangements of human disposal. The goal of liberation of scavengers to be achieved also calls for development of their living conditions by integrating various development programmes such as education, health, infrastructure and environmental upgradation of scavenger localities. It should be borne in mind that liberation of Scavengers does not mean merely a change from traditional occupation of carrying night-soil to other occupations but also overall improvement in their living conditions in term of economic, social and psychological parameters to be formulated in the state Action plan.

The Prohibition of Employment As Manual Scavengers And Their Rehabilitation Bill,2012

The “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012” was introduced in Lok Sabha on 3 September 2012. It was also felt that the existing laws were not effective to eradicate manual scavenging. There was need a comprehensive and stringent provision for the prohibition of insanitary latrines and employment of persons as manual scavengers, rehabilitation of manual scavengers and their families and to discontinue the hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks by the use of technology and for the matters connected therewith.²³

The salient features of the Bill are as under:

- i) *Prohibition of manual scavenging and rehabilitation of manual scavengers.*
- ii) *Prohibition of insanitary latrines, which include such latrines where human excreta need to be cleaned or other-wise handled manually.*

²³ “The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012” Statement of Objects and Reasons”.

- iii) *The definition of manual scavengers has been widened to include a person engaged or employed in manual cleaning of human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit, railway tracks etc.*
- iv) *Express provision for identification of manual scavengers and insanitary latrines.*
- v) *Prohibition of hazardous manual cleaning of septic tanks and sewer so as to ensure that health and safety of such workers is not compromised.*
- vi) *More stringent penal provisions for contravention of the Act; and*
- vii) *Vigilance and monitoring Committees at the sub-division, district, state and Central levels.*²⁴

The elimination of dry latrines and manual scavenging and the rehabilitation of manual scavengers in alternate occupation has been the high priority for the Government. Despite the concerted efforts made in the past to eliminate the dehumanizing practice of manual scavenging, the practice of manual scavenging the practice still persists in various parts of the country. Existing laws have not proved adequate in eliminating the twin evils of the country. These evils are inconsistent with the right to live with dignity which an essence of Fundamental Rights is guaranteed in part III of the Constitution.

When the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came into power in 2014, it restructured the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA) of the united Progressive Alliance (UPA) into Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). Prime Minister started this initiative on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Eventually the purpose of this policy is the derivative from philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. In order to implement it efficiently and to make it most important task for India, this policy has been designed as a mission and is carved out into parts. These are Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) and the Swachh Bharat Mission (urban). The Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation and Ministry of Urban Development have mandate to handle these two sub-mission of clean India. All the necessary departments and their officials have been installed in a pyramid shape bureaucratic structure to implement the mission. This mission also includes elimination of Manual Scavenging (removal of Human Waste from Unsanitary toilets). But this mission did take in account of manual scavenging. Another issue of the people who are working as manual

²⁴ Ibid.

scavengers largest of them are engaged in Indian railways. Wages of safai karamchari workers should be raised, appropriate with the hazardous nature of their work and the skills required for doing these operations. They should be treated as semi-skilled and skilled workers. Besides, promotional avenues, opportunities for skill improvement employment benefits, prevention against occupational hazards and diseases, social security, family welfare, should be made available. Channel of promotion for safai workers should be defined and they should be helped through informal education. They should be trained and educate to divert to technical- profession jobs in industry and services.

The scavengers are not only required to do the dirty work for the society but they are also subjected to various forms of exploitation and disabilities. Their work remains menial in the eye of society. Their wages are lowest of all employed people and they are generally not acceptable on equal footing in society. A new form of exploitation exists in the recent practice of non-scheduled castes securing job of scavengers, pocketing the salaries and earning promotion and the benefits, and managing to get the work done by the hereditary scavengers. It is a credit of Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak who has made contribution to cause of social amelioration and reform in the status of the scavengers through improvement in the traditional ways of human scavenging. This profession is violation of human rights. Human rights violation is global phenomena. India is country of 'unity of diversity' witness of violations almost every day. Scavengers are discriminated because of their profession with all facilities. Employing manual scavenging is illegal under the law. Manual scavengers themselves do not speak out of this because of shame and losing his main source of livelihood.

This section analyses the issue of representation of one of the most marginalized sections of Indian society. The term Dalit has been used as ex-untouchables in Indian society. They are constitutionally known as scheduled castes. They are excluded sphere of their life. Hence they occupied different status in society. The status of Dalits stigmatized with their traditional occupation which they serve to other caste. Social exclusion is multi-dimensional process in which Dalits are excluded in various stages of their life. They are excluded in employment, political participation and culture process. Dalits have long history of social exclusion in India. They have been excluded from various reasons. We can argue that poor may be economically and politically excluded but not excluded from social and culture spaces. But Dalits are excluded

from in all three section; social, economic and political realms. If Dalits attain social and political recognition and representation, it is not accepted by upper caste. Their social identity never gets away. They are always stigmatized by their identity.**Chapterisation**

Chapter: 1- As the starting point of chapter would locate my study in tracing the socio-cultural history of Bhangis. The identification of scavenging communities in different region of the country is needed to get an idea of the size of the population involved.

Chapter: 2- this chapter would examine the situations of socio-culture and economic life of historically marginalized group like Bhangi, Balmiki. I will analyze the profile of scavengers, providing the socio-economic condition of the scavengers in the Jarodha village. The living and working condition of the Balmiki still engaged in their profession in Municipalities in Jarodha village may be studied at length.

Chapter: 3- I will examine the nature of interaction between the caste Hindus and the Balmiki. The psychological impact of such interaction on the minds of scavengers may be analyzed at length.

Chapter: 4- In this chapter I will examine the political aspects of caste and mobilization of Dalit community in elections, how caste politics and caste identity affects the political organization. I will try to explore the political life of community. This chapter would also assess the perceptions and aspirations of voters of Balmiki community. Compared to some of the large Scheduled Caste like Chamars, the numerical strength of the Balmiki is small. They have poor representation in the elected bodies. When voice is raised in the interest of Scheduled Caste their point is missing. This will include a study of their Caste council.

Conclusion: - Based on finding of the study, this chapter would analyze the data and would seek to explain the use and implications of caste in the Jarodha village.

Research Questions

1. What is the Nature of interlocking between Caste and Occupation in contemporary India?
2. Why it is Difficult to break the interlocking relation of Caste and Occupation?

3. What is the Role of State and Polices? What are impacts of those policies on problems of Scavengers?
4. What is the role of political representation of Balmikis and does it change the situation of Balmikis?

Chapter-1

Tracing the socio-cultural history of Bhangis

This chapter maps the Socio-culture history of Valmiki communities and would begin by tracing the position of the Valmiki caste in Hindu society and the changes brought to it by the colonial administration and the freedom struggle. The census exercise taken by the British played important role in assigning the Hindu identity to a large number of marginal-outcaste communities, Valmikis being one of them. Further, expansion of cantonment towns, introduction of modern education and job opportunities enabled the Dalits to improve their economic status. During the freedom struggle, both the nationalist parties and the British government tried to win over the Dalit sections to their sides by competitive programs and initiatives e.g *achutoddhar*, *Harijan Seva* etc initiated by Indian National Congress and steps like communal award initiated by British. Not all Dalits castes gained out of this competitive process and some were left out, having lost a historic opportunity to move upwards; Valmiki too missed these gains. In this respect, the formation of the Bhangi identity is a story of double exclusion. Over last couple of decades, attempts were made to derive meaning and significance to the Bhangi identity through spiritual endeavors as well. This chapter will engage with the histories of all these attempts and counter attempts.

Indian social structure has been historically marked with rigid hierarchies in the form of caste system. Valmiki which were form the lowest rungs in the caste hierarchy have encountered severe discrimination and perpetual exclusion at the hands of dominant upper class Hindus. Consisting mainly of mehtars or sweepers and bhangis, the Valmiki community has been branded ‘untouchable’ by the caste observing society. Thus, while attempting to trace socio-cultural history of this community, one comes across numerous instances of social injustice perpetrated toward its members. Such instances have often been the cause of resistance on the part of this community and a defining factor in the political participation.

Valmikis contribution in political matters is noticeable when we study their position in the colonial period. To trace their political origins in terms of their active mobilization, one can begin by looking at the late nineteen century strike by the sweepers against the Delhi Municipal Committee (DMC). The 1870s strike closely follows the capacity of the sweepers to organize them in order to extract for themselves a few concessions from the high caste and rich population. For example, as Vijay Prasad²⁵ explains that sweepers/ Dalit Valmiki community,

²⁵ Vijay, Prasad,(2000), “*Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community*”, Oxford University Press.

exhibited some degree independence given that they chose to work in bands. This enabled them not only to have their own set of rules but also fight any injustice that arose (as these bands would collectively refuse to work in their colonies every time some injustice was being done to even one sweeper). They were definitely not completely free given the feudal factors and caste biases in spite of enjoying such independence.

The 1870s strike was one such move by these groups to save whatever remained of their independence as the British government hired overseers that were to supervise these sweepers. Prior to such a rule the sweepers would exchange waste as ore with farmers, get daily food from their respective *mohallas* or colonies, as well as gifts in cash and kind on occasions like death and birth of someone. They lived in miserable poverty yet managed to follow a set of unwritten rules amongst themselves which gave them relative independence and an organizational capability. There was a bond, explains Prashad, which helped these sweepers save themselves from any kind of mistreatment or non-payment.

Sadly, despite various organization efforts of this community that was earlier called as Bunno or Allarakhi, the British (DMC) passed in 1884 the resolution that ‘enforced their right to monopoly of all the night soil and sweepings of the British proper’. The British now had complete authority over this helpless group that had fought with them with such resilience. This rendered them working under a sanitation supervisor called as the jamadar, the overseers or jobber. In between 1892 to 1912, the contractors and Jamadar were Hindus or Ashrafi Muslims. And till 1912 there was no conflict between these overseers and DMC. The system was a profitable one and the Britishers did not want to give up on it. Perhaps this is the reason when the contractors went on strike in 1915 the British fired the all, punished some severely and introduced a new group of contractors and sweepers.

The valmiki introduced themselves in mainstream politics in the post-independence period as a part of the Hindutva movement. The context to this are the studies conducted on 1984 Sikh riots. The reports and studies, like PUDR (People’s Union for Democratic Rights) in their Pamphlet

published after the Sikh riots took place in Delhi, asserted that it is the Bhangis or sweepers who through their organised efforts attacked the Sikhs, bribed as they were with money and alcohol.²⁶

Among the Dalits, several young men of the Balmiki community seemed to lead the way in the conflagration. If the Balmiki offered to adhere to the Congress in the early 1980s, by the end of the decade most indications showed that a set of them had begun to work closely with the Hindutva movement, first in anti-Muslim actions in Delhi and other places subsequently as part of the caravan of Ayodhya to participate in 6 December 1992 destruction of Babri Masjid. It is by the end of eighties that they were seen as organizing themselves with the Hindutva movement evidenced from their participation in the Sikh riots and later in destruction of Babri in 1992.²⁷ By the end of 1980's a set of people of Valmiki community started to work with the Hindutva movement. The answer can be the sort of promises the VHP made to Valmiki that they would construct a Valmiki temple in Ayodhya and the latter saw hope and spirit in such promises that when once fulfilled would offer them emancipation from decades of servitude and low life.²⁸

A social history of the Balmiki reveals the institutional roots of the alliance in the colonial municipality where these dalits were hired as clients of Hindu overseers who exercised inordinate control over their lives. This institutional connection was given an ideological framework in the 1930s when these dalits, hired exclusively into the municipality as sweepers, adopted and refined an anti-Muslim Hindu Identity proffered in the first instance by militant Hindus. Therefore Dalits have a long history within the ensemble of Hindutva.²⁹

Vijay Prasad explains that Valmiki community has been presented in these days is not a homogenous entity. It was during 1920's and particularly after Indian Council Act (1909) the 'numbers' became the medium of political struggle. And it was only then Valmiki has been identified as Hindu. The most important thing which Indian Council Act did was that it opened the question of the 'franchise' which in terms of representational democracy proved to be an anxiety

²⁶ PUDDR, who are the Guilty? Report of a joint enquiry into the causes and impact of Riots in Delhi from 31 October to 10 November, New Delhi, 2nd edition, December 1984, p.3

²⁷ Pradip K. Dutta, Understanding Communal violence: Nizmuddin Riot, Economic Political Weekly, 10 November 1990.

²⁸ Vijay, Prasad, (2000) "*Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community*", Oxford University Press.

²⁹ Ibid.

over numbers. Hence forth census became to play an active role in pre independence Indian politics. Religion, to the oppressed is a means to articulate their dreams for freedom (Prashad). But with the beginning of census, the religion is seen by the British in the form of either Hindu or Islam or Christianity. As a result, several outcastes were included under the Hindu fold. Prashad writes that “Census return of Hindus are misleading as they include millions of people who are not really Hindus and who are denied the support of Brahmans and are forbidden to enter Hindu temples and who in many cases as regarded as so unclean that their touch or even their nearness causes pollution”.³⁰ Therefore in order to make Hindus numerically strong to gain political strength the outcastes were identified as Hindus. This would further add to the simplification of the working of British government as they can directly identify the numerical strength of Hindu and Muslims.

Further adding to this, the study also makes an attempt to understand the process of Hinduization of Valmiki community. The role played by the enumeration exercise done by the British government through the census plays a very significant role in this context. As mentioned previously, the Census increased the numbers of Hindus by classifying many castes and communities as Hindus, despite the fact that they were not considered to fall within the chaturvarna system, and were treated as outcaste by the Hindu clergy. The reason for the same was the very objective of Census, which was aimed at simple classification of the subjects and initially the colonial administration were not willing to go deep into the complexities of the Hindu society by opting for sub-categories to do justice with the actual state of affairs. Hence, the identity of a specific community got misrepresented due to the manipulations done for the sake of simplification, motivated by the objective to rule.³¹

Until the twentieth century, the Dalits found their everyday salvation in the arms of various powerful religious tradition. The Chuhras organized their dreams of freedom around the figure of Bala Shah Nuri, who came from heaven for the sake of the truth. Bala was the prophet of the Chuhras who taught them honour neither secular nor theological intermediaries. This tradition of Bala Shah Nuri allowed the Chuhras to retain some dignity their hard lives and their immoral overloads. Culture autonomy does not mean that the Dalits’ culture universe was not made from

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Vijay prashad, (2000), “*Untouchable freedom: A social History of the Dalit Community*”, Oxford University Press.p65-111.

the fabric of the ideas which surrounded them, but it drew from such tradition in creative ways. The autonomy of Bala lay in the realm of values and in the theory of emancipation which was embedded in his stories. The colonial ethnographers marked out the genealogies of Bala Shah, the professing 'guru' of Chuhras and find out four out of ten manifestations to establish a link between chuhras and Hinduism. The four manifestations are Bala Rikhi (4th), Bala Bamrik (9th), Ishwar Bala (6th) and (Balmki). This became the different position of constructing the Hindu Identity of Chuhras which with the due course of time came to be known as Valmikis. Though there were other narratives regarding Rishi Valmiki but the dominant one prevailed as the Valmiki as the 'Valmiki, the author of Ramayana belongs to the lower caste. "the statement which is made from taking the four men as representative of the dominant strand in the worship of Bala Shah is that the Chuhras have misdirected their worship, for their real deity, we are told is none other than the Rishi Valmiki the author of Ramayana. Temple lists the various names of the incarnations which sound like Valmiki including Bala Shah, and then points out that they are not incarnations but 'variations of the name of a scared personage in the scavengers's hagiography. That scared personage is 'without difficulty and beyond all doubt to be identified with Valmki, the low –caste author of the Sanskrit Ramayna Vijay Prasad". (2000).

Vijay Prashad highlights this phenomenon in the context of Valmiki community. It has already been discussed that India Council Act and number in census started to shape the course of pre independence Indian politics under British raj. It should also be noted that the communities which are included under the Hindu fold during that period are not definitely Hindu. For instance, the narrative of Valmiki community in the Hindu fold was established during the late 1920's.

Not only the Britishers but the Congress also played the role of constructing the Hindu identity of Chuhras/Valmiki. Prashad is of the opinion that colonial picture of the social as political situation; the congress was instructed to take these communal divisions, a theory that interlocked with that of militant Hindus. Furthermore, these were the people who also occupationally associated with sweeping. The municipality in Delhi hired the sweepers who came to rely upon the jamadars and the clerks in city. And this institutional incorporation of Balmiki turned into ideological campaign remunerated by militant Hindus who were also the municipal officers and congresses workers. The work of Prasad informs us that from 1920s onwards the anti-colonial

national movement continued with including congress workers in to Dalit, Gandhi desired to join them in protest. But the entry of these cadres in Dalit residing space needed to mobilize them ideological and hence the mobilization in the national movement of the Valmiki community took place against the Muslim, who were created as ‘other’ of the Hindus which was nothing but a simple number came as a result of census.

“Modern Indian historiography returns repeatedly to the colonial state principally because the colonial project by its very presumption of universality transformed the categories by which we can know Indian society. Those who were governed, the colonial state intervened in every aspect of its subjects’ lives. This knowledge was to enable the colonial regime to make the colonized more productive and more pliable to the will of the state, for, as Bernard Cohen argues, ‘conquest of India was a conquest of knowledge’.³² The census provided information on the basis of categorization done by colonial administration for political representation. In the enumeration process they included Chuhras as Hindus and recognized as Hindu. Colonial administration ignored personal religion but they did census to organized Chuhras on religion in its communal aspects. Despite the Chuhras were regarded as outcaste among the Hindus. In spite of Census Chuhras documented as Hindus but it was an attempt to include them in Hindu militant.

“The significance of the colonial context is that its ethnographers and officials unearthed the hidden transcript of the Chuhras and elaborated their autonomous traditions in the vocabulary and cultural history of Brahmanism. Ethnographers did not accept the Chuhras’ articulation of their own terms; they constantly translated these desires into the tradition of the oppressors, who would shortly use them to their own ends. The autonomy of Bala Shah was shaken; in time, his memory would be virtually killed’.³³ Further it was tussle between Dalits and other Hindus in which Dalits were included as Hindus for communal electoral. The whole process was anti-Muslim project. Census included Dalits who are not really Hindus and denied by Brahmins and are forbidden to enter temples.

³² Bernard Cohn (1996), “*Colonialism and its form of Knowledge*”, Princeton University Press, p.16.

³³ Vijay Prashad (2000), “*Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of Dalit Community*”, Oxford University Press.

Prasad³⁴ explains Balmiki in the cities worked as sweepers and they were forced by colonial administration to work as sanitary workers. Later on, other political parties organized them as sweepers. In urban areas all sanitary functions performed by particular groups called Valmiki later on they were called Bhangis. The traditional occupation first performed in villages and carried out in cities and towns. Prasad uncovered the social-history of valmiki community of Delhi. Prasad explains the social and political identity of Balmiki from encapsulating the history of Balmiki community in the 1860s to 1960s. The study also deals with the fact that the state played an imperative role in determining the role of Churhas as sweepers in the cities, nevertheless they were not sweepers by caste occupation but established as sweepers. Churhas worked as agriculture labourers before the twentieth century. He further demonstrated 'hinduising process converted Balmiki into Hindu fold.

Vijay Prasad narrates the perception of his respondent who relates the emergence of scavengers in Indian society to the Muslim rule. "It is said that there were no sweepers before. They came into existence when the Mughal entered this land. As Muslim women observed seclusion, the muslims needed sweepers. Therefore, they made others into sweepers. It is obvious that the Muslims forced them to become sweepers and to do such menial work".³⁵ Further Prasad explains in 'Untouchable Question' now it is the duty of the Hindus to uplift them and to include them in other caste.

Shyamlal quoted "some controversy surrounding the Mughal period. A few argue that scavenging came in with the Mughals. Prisoners of war were forced into manual scavenging, and their descendants became the Bhangis. During the medieval period, when Mughals came to India and when scavenging became a greater necessity owing to Islamic sanction of Purdah for Muslim women, there arose the need of a special class of persons who could clean bucket privies. Initially the captives of Muslim invaders were forced to do scavenging. Many of these captive-scavengers embraced Islam and were called Halalkors. During Akbar's times these Halalkors were called Mehters."

"The practice of Manual Scavenging expanded phenomenally under British rule. The British both legitimized and systematized it, while setting up army cantonments and municipalities.

³⁴ Vijay,Prasad,(2000), "*Untouchable Freedom: A social History of a Dalit Community*", Oxford University Press.

³⁵ Vijay,Prasad, 'The Untouchable Question' Economic and political weekly, 5 may 1924.

They created official posts of manual scavengers. All British institutions-the army, railways, courts, industries and major towns- were equipped with dry toilets instead of water borne sewerage. The upheavals caused by commercialization of land, destruction of artisan trades and frequent famines, pushed people out of traditional occupation and frequent famines, pushed people out of traditional occupation and agriculture-related activities to sweeping and scavenging. This is not to say that the British invented caste or manual scavengers; rather they invented specifically to institutionalize it. Technology is supposed to remove social prejudice; however, the technology of sanitation was structured to deepen social prejudice in India.”³⁶ The British Government did not discourage the malfunctioning of the system but rather encourage its distorted continuity by according higher statuses to certain groups, granting titles, land etc. the mobility movement particularly among the lower castes were so weak that they could not be considered an attack on the atrocities of the caste system. The system was never based on universalistic principles of division of labour, justice, equality and dignity of work. The British in India never discouraged the continuity of the functions of the caste system.

Manual scavenging is disrespectful occupation existing in India. Manual Scavenging an inhuman practice from ancient times has been enforced on marginalized communities labelling them manual scavengers. Further the state apparatus denies the existence of this inhuman practice. The position of the *Jajmans* (patrons), has been stratified as these communities have traditionally only engaged in sweeping and carrying the human excreta. The cultural constructions have codified this inhuman practice by the changing what Galtung³⁷ called Moral colour, where it has become normalized and acceptable. According to Galtung the ‘hegemonic relationship’ has been constructed between gender, caste and culture which has in turn oppressed women based on caste based occupations.

This culture construction legitimize that some caste group are destined to work in inhuman practice of carrying or sweeping human excreta. The Brahmins are at the top of social hierarchy and the Dalits are the lowest rungs of society. This culture construction of caste discriminate

³⁶Gita,Ramaswamy,(2005), *India Stinking: Manual Scavengers in Andhra Pradesh and their work*, Navayana Publishing.

³⁷ Shahid, Mohd,(2015), *Manual Scavenging: Issues of Caste, Culture and Violence*, Sage Publication.

particular group of society and exclude from society. Manual scavenging is traditional occupation in which specific caste group belonging to Balimiki community are engaged in caste based occupation. They are called with different name in many places for example Bhangi, Chuhras, Halalkhor, Lal Begi, Jamadar and Metar.

Structure violence, a term coined by Johan Galtung (1969) describes social structures namely economic, political, legal, religious and cultural. The concept of culture violence represents progression in Galtung's typology of violence from the concept of structural violence. The word violence itself conveys a physical image. According to Galtung violence is avoidable insult of basic human needs which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible. Galtung elaborates on operationalism of direct and structural violence to the violence triangle (1990) with culture violence as the legitimiser of both direct and structure violence. Galtung described how cultural violence contributes the moral colour, legitimising the manual scavenging and making its reality. Galtung described four classes of basic needs which are survival needs (negation: death, mortality); well-being needs (negation: misery, morbidity); identity, meaning needs (negation: alienation); and freedom needs (negation: repression). Both direct and structural violence could violence/negate any of the basic human needs. In the case of direct violence, it could be traced to an actor and a factor, but structural violence is discreet and without any apparent actor. Direct violence is visible. Apparent and makes news; structural violence is silent but could be more severe. Structure violence is in built within the structure. Direct violence can be endangering the life of every individual. Direct violence is seen as brutalization of the individual through physical injury and threat of coercion. It includes exploitation and discrimination of individual facing direct violence.

Culture violence is the third super-type which is relegated to the third place in the violence triangle. When the triangle is looked at from the 'direct' and 'structural' violence part, cultural violence legitimizes the other two. Galtung complements the triangle image as violence strata image.

Galtung's definition of Violence: "*Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization*".³⁸ In

³⁸ Galtung(1969), Violence, Peace and Peace Research, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 167-191

Galtung statement about violence traces that violence is the cause of human being to feel less by others. Further culture violence can influence that particular individual or group regarded less than human by other people. In the case of Indian caste system, violence can be seen as the physical assault and threat of oppression by dominant caste groups. It includes discrimination and exploitation in this system. According to Galtung, the somatic or physical violence is “violence that works on the body” on the other hand psychological violence is that “violence, that works on the soul”. There is somatic violence when individuals are well structured physically than they ought to be.³⁹

Every day, in the cities and towns across the length and breadth of India, a few million men and women are seen holding on their heads baskets and large pans laden with night soil. These they collect from private dwelling and open spaces and carry to municipal filth depots. Yet more of their kinds are engaged in removing and transporting the filth to the dumping grounds situated away from human habitation. These men and women are the hereditary scavengers, the outcaste of Hinduism, and reflect, perhaps, the inner darkness of this great religion. In the north-west India these scavengers are called Bhangis.⁴⁰

Historical background Bhangis in Delhi

Shehri Bhangis, are congregated in the Walled city, Sadar Paharganj, in part of of Old Delhi (Karol Bagh, and in Kashmiri Gate near Civil Lines), and in a small area of Shahdara, across the river. Bhangis are not an anthropologically isolate, but a small community which is an excluded part of a larger society. They live segregated in ‘Katras/Bastis’ distinct from the urban mainstream. Shehri Bhangis katras/Bastis’s distinct from the urban mainstream. Shehri Bhangis in katras/bastis are mostly confined within the boundary of walled city of Delhi and parts of Old Delhi. Most of the other Bhangis of Greater Delhi are recent migrants from the neighboring states. The population of Bhangis in Delhi is large (134,987, according to the 1971 Census). As Stated above, Shehri Bhangis are living within the boundaries of the walled city and parts of Old Delhi. Administratively also their area of habitation comes under the Delhi Municipal

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Rama,Sharma,(1995),“*Bhangi Scavenger In Indian Society, Marginality, Identity and politicization of the community*”, M D Publications private limited, New Delhi.

Corporation is 85,188.⁴¹ Bhangis are living in the most crowded parts of Delhi. They are physically and socially segregated from fellow people. *Basti* is residential places for Bhangis called Mohalla. It seems as social organization of particular community. Bhangis are migrated from various places to Delhi and built colonies which commonly called *mohalla*.

Most occupations in India, whether manual (skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled) or non-manual, are substantially based on caste traditions. This is particularly so regarding occupations which are hereditary and low manual, especially in the rural context. Examples and are, with corresponding caste names in parentheses: weaver (joolaha), washerman (dhobi), Barber (naai), potter (kumhaari), leather worker (chamar), Sweeper/scavenger (chuhra/Bhangi). Industrialization of the country and the resultant migration of sections of rural labour to the cities, has somewhat weakened the customary hold of caste occupations and the stigma that is attached to some occupations.⁴² However the occupation of Bhangis is traditional hereditary occupation are called scavengers. Scavenging is most dirty and polluted jobs in India, where this task performed by some specific community. And no other caste is willing to do this dirty job.

Bindeshwar Pathak in his book '*Road to freedom*' the importance of liberating scavengers in Bihar from the demeaning practice of carrying night-soil on the head assumed importance during 1974-84. In the traditional Indian society, a particular section is ordained to do scavenging work. Manual Scavenging continues to be a hereditary occupation and everyone born into the sub-caste of scavengers (*Bhangi*), male or female, is mandated to continue this inhuman profession. Traditional obligations and customary rules have forced this sub-caste practice this profession, mythological sanctions have also ensured that they carry night-soil physically for disposal. As per the traditional social order, *Bhangis* (scavengers) were forced to carry the night soil in buckets on their heads. This is the worst kind of atrocity committed in the traditional Indian society.⁴³ This throws lights on the problem of scavenger's community and the setback of scavenging as a profession. Scavenging is still existing in our society and person engaged in carrying and disposing of night soil are known as scavengers or *Bhangis*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Pathak, Bindeshwar(1991), "*Road to Freedom: A sociological Study on the Abolition of Scavenging in India*", Motilal Banarsidass publishers, Private Limited, Delhi.

With the aim of total liquidation, a holistic study of scavenging has been carried out by Bindeshwar Pathak. The author aims to provide an low cost and appropriate alternative to scavenging.

According to Ghurye, the tradition features of the caste system are; a) Endogamy b) Hierarchy c) Restrictions on commercial relations between castes, d) Restrictions on choice of occupation. and e) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of certain groups and untouchability.⁴⁴

Srinivas expressed that when a caste enjoys all the elements of dominance it may be said that dominance is not common, but frequently the different among the caste in a village. Thus a caste which is ritually may be poor and lacking strength in numbers, while a populous caste may be rich and ritually low.⁴⁵

Shayamlal focused in his finding that according to narrative handed down from generation to generation and at present current in the older generation of the Bhangis, they are descendents of Valmiki Rishi- the first Sanskrit poet and famous author of the Hindu epic Ramayana. Their supposed connection with Valmiki rests on occupational and not on racial identity, as it prevails among the Bhangis, represents him as a low caste and as such as having taken to the living of a robber. Owing to this abhorrent activity of Valmiki, he was designated a sweeper. The relics of this mythological narrative are still prevalent among the Bhangis.⁴⁶

Shaymlal has disputed many popular myths and beliefs about the origin of Bhangis as an identifiable unit of social organization. He challenged that origin of Bhangis hided in mystery as there is no credible sociological or anthropological theory as to why the group started performing the filthy work. Prasad(1957) dismisses the statements contained in Dharma Shastra as speculative. He also disputes the view that Chandalas were Bhangis. After having critically examined several mythological, historical, anthropological and ethnological sources, he concludes that what has been said about Bhangis regarding their origin in Hindu society may be believable and not be accepted as a conclusive proof and evidence.

⁴⁴ G.S.Ghurye(1961), *Caste, Class and Occupation*, Popular Book, Bombay.

⁴⁵ M.N.Srinivas(1987), *the Dominant Caste and other essays*, Oxford University press, Bombay.

⁴⁶ Shyamlal(1992), *The Bhangi A Sweeper Caste: Its Socio-Economic portraits*, Bombay Popular Prakashan.

Mary Chatterjee⁴⁷ in her study of an urban low caste community argued that kinship is still a primary principle of social organization in Indian towns. Extended observation of a municipal sweeper locality in Varanasi reveals kinship patterns very different from those often assumed to be general in North India. Chatterjee has clearly stated in her study that socio-economic conditions of Bhangis of Varanasi city have been improving yet its speed is slow.

Malavika Karlekar⁴⁸ (1979) has shown in her study of Bhangis of Delhi that there exists vast difference in pay, income and facilities of working women sweepers in Public sector and private sector.

In an interview given by Roma Valmiki, who became celebrity in 2013 when she gave up manual scavenging, becoming one of the 50-odd people to be given a central government grant to find an alternative occupation to the caste-based practice of cleaning excreta by hand. "I still remember the day my photograph got published in a newspaper. It was a petty amount but my family was happy as after 16 years, I was freed from the profession," Roma recollected. She was given Rs.40,000 as part of a drive launched to eliminate manual scavenging and provide for the rehabilitation of mostly Dalit workers. But her dream of a new life turned into nightmare. She opened a makeshift shop selling vegetables but no one, not even local residents, turned up because they didn't want to buy food from a Dalit women. "It was a setback as our locality is densely populated but nobody turned up, barring our community," said Roma. The vegetables got spoiled and the shop had to be shut down in few days. "It was then I decided to close the shop and to switch back to my old profession as society was not ready to accept us," she added. The 30-something women is not the only one. Most of the 53 people given the government grant in Lucknow haven't been able to make alternative livelihoods because of pervasive casteism and have been forced back into manual scavenging. Roma said she made the switch because she would earn more. "On an average, we get 20rs per person in a family," she said. She hails from Valmiki Puri, a locality of manual scavengers in old Lucknow. And says manual scavengers are treated no better than outcaste. The Akhil Bhartiya Safai

⁴⁷ Mary, Chatterjee, Mary (1981), "Reversible Sex Roles: the Special Case of Banares Sweepers", Pergamon Press.

⁴⁸ Malavika, Karlekar, (1979), "Poverty and Women's work: A study of Sweepers Women in Delhi", Shakti Books, New Delhi.

Majdoor Sangh (ABSMS)- a Union of manual scavengers-says social discrimination and administration apathy forced the workers to go back the banned practice “Is possible to start a business in just 40,000rs that too given over four installments?” asked Shyam Lal Valmiki, national general secretary of the ABSMS. Lucknow chief development officer Prashant Sharma has now ordered a re-survey of manual scavengers after demands by the ABSMS.⁴⁹

In an interview by Shyam Lal Valmiki, secretary, ABSMS, When Mayawati became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1995, a dingy slum in a densely populated part of Lucknow was ecstatic. This was the office of the Akhil Bhartiya Safai Majdoor Sangh (ABSMS)- a union of manual scavengers, mostly Dalit men and women who lift and clean human excreta by hand. The union organized a grand meeting in Mayawati’s honour and said India’s first Dalit women CM was a new beginning for the millions of manual scavengers, who are a victim of India’s millennia-old caste system. But the hopes were quickly snuffed out when the workers realized their leader Mayawati-whose party stormed to power on the back of the Dalit vote-wasn’t interested in solving the manual scavenging crisis. “In our memorandum to the state government, we demanded freedom for manual scavengers from the dirty job. But surprisingly, the CM didn’t react to our plea,” said Shyam Lal Valmiki, national general secretary of ABSMS. Their other demands such as the abolition of privatization in sanitation work in municipal bodies and the establishment of schools exclusively for Dalits also went unheard. Shyam said the Bhaujan Samaj Party counted the dalit vote as its strongest pillar but manual scavengers faced the utmost discrimination during Mayawati’s tenure as CM. “In her last tenure from May 2007 to 2012, the BSP government opened 114,848 posts of safai Karamcharis. At that time, we approached her again demanding jobs for manual scavengers, but to no avail,” Shyam said. He said the present Samajwadi Party (SP) government had also done little to rehabilitate manual scavengers. In 1993, Parliament banned the employment of manual scavengers as well as construction of dry latrines. In 2013, another act was passed to curb the menace. But activists say the state has more than

⁴⁹ Hindustan times, 24 Aug 2016, by Oliver Fredrick.

10,000 manual scavengers as implementation of the law has been lax. In 2014, the UP social welfare department identified 53 manual scavengers in Lucknow and gave them 40,000 in four installments under a central government-run welfare scheme. The Lucknow administration also identified 4,149 houses that used dry latrines but only a third of them were finally converted into toilets with flush.⁵⁰

In this chapter I will explore cultural discourse of Bhangi community in which Dalit Religious practice will be discussed. Dalits have their own religious practices in Dalit community. Generally they worship all Hindu god and goddess but they consider Valmiki Muni as their community god. It reflects that still there is difference between Dalit and Non- Dalits in their religious practice. It will explore that how the Dalit community has developed their alternative discourse. This chapter delves into the social relationship between Dalits and Non-Dalit.

In north India, scavengers or sweepers is known by various names, for example, Mehtar, Chuhras, Lalbeg, Halalkhor, Khakrobe, and, most recently, Balmiki and Harijan. The simple fact that there is no single accepted name for sweepers shows the ambiguity of their origin and of their position in contemporary India. Analysis of these names unveils in some cases a slanted attitude of the caste Hindus.

1. Chuhra is a corruption of Chura meaning beautiful. Chura-Mani is applied to Kalidasa the great Sanskrit poet and dramatist of fourth century AD. Chura Bangles are worn by every bride.
2. Mehtar is a word of Persian origin, which means prince or leader. Mehtar. It could be Mah tar which in Persian means Moon saturated or very beautiful. Mehtar could be derived from Mu-attar, the latter in Persian means sweet-smelling. The use of this word for a sweepers is ironical.

But according to another theory, the name of 'Mehter' is derived from the Sanskrit Meh which means urine, tar of Persian origin means saturated. Since this caste's work is with 'night soil' this theory described the obvious.

3. Bhangi is a Hindi word meaning 'one addicted to drinking Bhang'. Bhang is an intoxicating drug prepared from hemp leaves. Since the word Bhangi in no way denotes

⁵⁰Hindustan times, 24 Aug 2016, by Oliver Fredrick.

their profession, sweepers may have acquired this name due to their once common use of Bhang. Local versions give a different interpretation. Bhangi is a name for God.

4. Lal Beg as the name of the sweeper's caste has several interpretations. Lal beg was Turkish saint who exercised a considerable authority in the socio-religious life of the caste. The name Lalbeg was, perhaps, given to them by Muslim.⁵¹

The atheistic mode of Bhangi religion consist variety of god and goddesses of the little Tradition of Hinduism. Bhangi worship various local regional deities, of whom one is Bhairon. Bhairon or Bhairava is a deity of ambiguous personality. Some Bhangi families are devoted to mother goddess Kalka or Kali, the terrible. The temple is no is situated at Kalkaji, in South Delhi and is visited by other Hindus too. There is no separate day for worship of Bhangis, as at Mata Masani temple in Gurgoan. Bhangis worship goddess Maha Mai or Sitala, the smallpox goddess. The temple of Maha Mai is situated in Shahdara, across the Yamuna River, east delhi city. This temple is exclusively for the Bhnagis and was built with their own contributions. The priest of temple is from Bhangi catse.⁵²

According to Dumont, "caste is an institution unique to the Hindus, and he is very critical of scholar, who regard it as yet another form of social stratification, a particularly rigid one." Dumont further states, "the purest example of 'hierarchy' though it is intriguing that there is no distinct word for hierarchy in any Indian language". Ancient Brahminical formulates Dumont's basic understanding of caste, he points out that at times the rules devised by Brahmins run counter to the prevailing hierarchy.

One of the interesting aspects of Balmiki community is the value of religious practice. There is visible celebration of the Hindu religious tradition among Balmiki Community. One of respondent summarized the self image of Balmikis well in the following words: Most of the people are very religious. They are scared of god. They worship every god in Hindu temples. All the Devi and Devtas of Hindu religion are worship by Balmikicommunity. But people hardly ever visit big temples. Most of the Balmikis are regular visitor in Valmiki Mandir. Which is famous among the Balmikis.

⁵¹ Rama,Sharma,(1995), "*Bhangi Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginality, Identity and Politicization of the Community*",M D Publications.

⁵² Rama,Sharma,(1995), "*Bhangi Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginality, Identity and Politicization of the Community*",M D Publications.

Chaptepr-2

Methodological framework

Literature review of methods

Keeping in view the nature of my work, I would argue that the most effective way of understanding of the issue is through ethnography. Ethnography, Clifford Greetz (1973) maintains, is a thick description is to understand the meaning of actions. Greetz also argues that an important characteristic of ethnography is interpretation: ‘we begin with our interpretations of what our informants are up to, and then systematize those (Greetz 1973:15). Therefore, the observation and interpretation would be two important tools in this study. The actors’ subjective point of view would also be seriously considered.

During the study I participated overtly, in the everyday lives of people in the community, observed men, women, children and workers and take in-depth interviews on issues relevant for the proposed research. The research consists of informal and semi-structured interviews with the people of balmiki community. The interview was semi-structured as there were set of topics to be address to specific people or group. These specific topics was related to their culture and religious practices, inter-caste relations, perceptions of one’s own identity, employment strategies and marriages. Participatory approach was only the first step towards bringing research closer to social research. Participatory process can help objectivity of the study.

Sample method has been used in the present study to obtain measurable and creditable data. Two kinds of Data interests’ social scientists: Individual attribute data and Cultural Data attribute. Different methods of sampling are used to ascertain the data. Individual data is about individuals in the collective. Each individual has different age, income; and preferences for things such as characteristics of a mate. If the idea is to estimate population parameters-then a scientifically drawn, unbiased sample is required. Cultural data is different. We accept cultural factors to be shared and as such processing cultural data requires experts. Individual attributes data require probability sampling; cultural attributes data requires non-probability sampling. This chapter is

about probability sampling, which will discuss probability theory, variance and distribution. The questionnaire survey method was developed by sociologists but this method is used by everyone.

It is important to choose sample for interview people of community. It is better go with the sample than with whole population. It is necessary to take sample and stick to it. It is important to collect reliable data systematically from the fieldwork. It is important to know that why some people worship particular god in some culture and why more men work in public places. That is how can get some knowledge about their community. It is important to test those theories on field. All we need to do test those theories on data we have collected.

Not so much data was available about the life of Balmiki and exact information about their life. It was very much required to be studied. Therefore I chose an exploratory research design for study on multi-dimensional questions.

“Exploratory design intends to formulate a more precise research problem or to develop hypotheses. By Comparison to other designs, it I flexible, allowing researcher to navigate the area where they would later to conduct a lengthy, more structured study. It acquaints researchers with the possibilities and problems of studying real life situations and clarifying various concepts. Insight gained from an exploratory study may provide a solid base for planning a descriptive study” (Srivastva,2004⁵³).

The present study intends to analyze and evaluate the socio-economic condition of the Balmiki community. The data obtained is from 50 respondents living in Balmiki Basti with the help of structured questionnaire, which included 30 questions.

Data Collection and method used

The main purpose of the survey was to identify and locate the residential localities where the safai karamchari lived. The survey identified approximately 50 respondents living in one mohalla where largely Balmiki community lived. This survey consisted of recording household particulars like demographic details, their religious and caste identity, their marital, educational, occupation and income status.

Tools and Techniques

⁵³ Vinay Kumar, Srivastava (ed.), (2004), *Methodology and Fieldwork* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Interview scheduled: interview scheduled was applied to gather factual and quantitative data's from the respondent. Out of 200 household 50 respondents were interviewed.

In depth interview: In depth interview were carried out with selected respondent.

Focus Group Discussion: Focus Group discussions were done with the head of Household. It was very helpful to gather information about the issue of their socio-economic condition.

Case Study: Case study method was used to bring the hidden side of their life. This method revealed the factors responsible of their situation in society. The data collected was about their living condition and about their present occupation from the first. Another thing, which was observed from case study about the relationship with the other community.

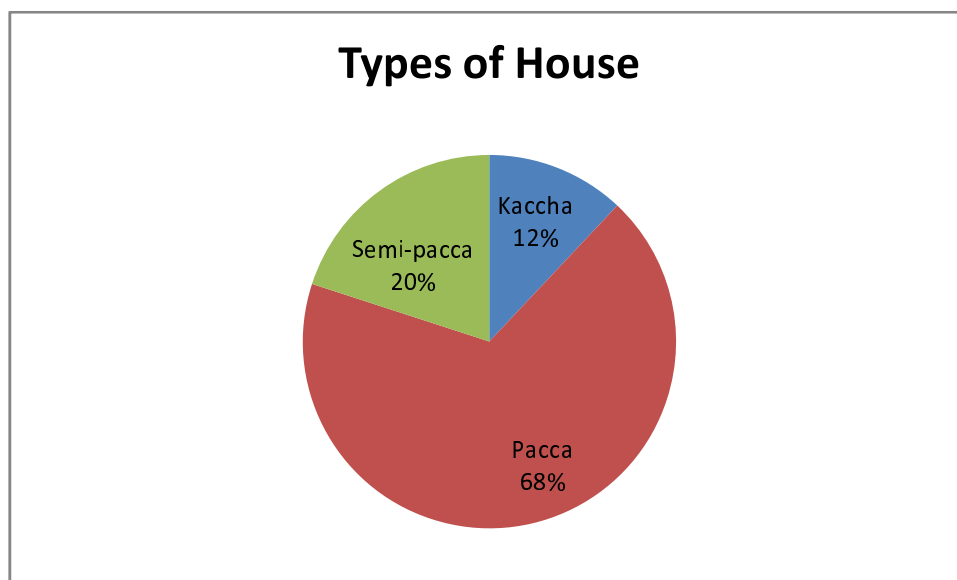
Sources of Data: The research study is based on both primary data collected in the field and secondary data such as various government reports, books, journals, magazines, newspaper clippings etc.

Profile of the Sample

Table 1: Types of House

Sl. No.	Types of House	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Kaccha	6	12.00
2.	Pacca	34	68.00
3.	Semi-pacca	10	20.00
	Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork



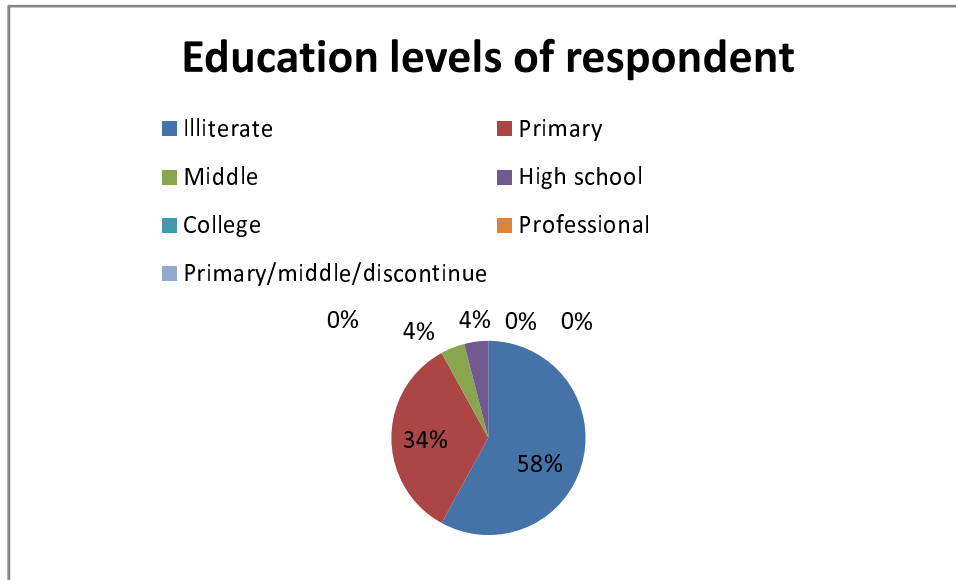
The data shows that majority of respondents lives in *Pacca* house, 20 percentage respondents lives in *semi-pacca* house, where as 12 percentage respondents lives in *Kaccha* house.

Table 2: Education levels of the Respondents and their Children

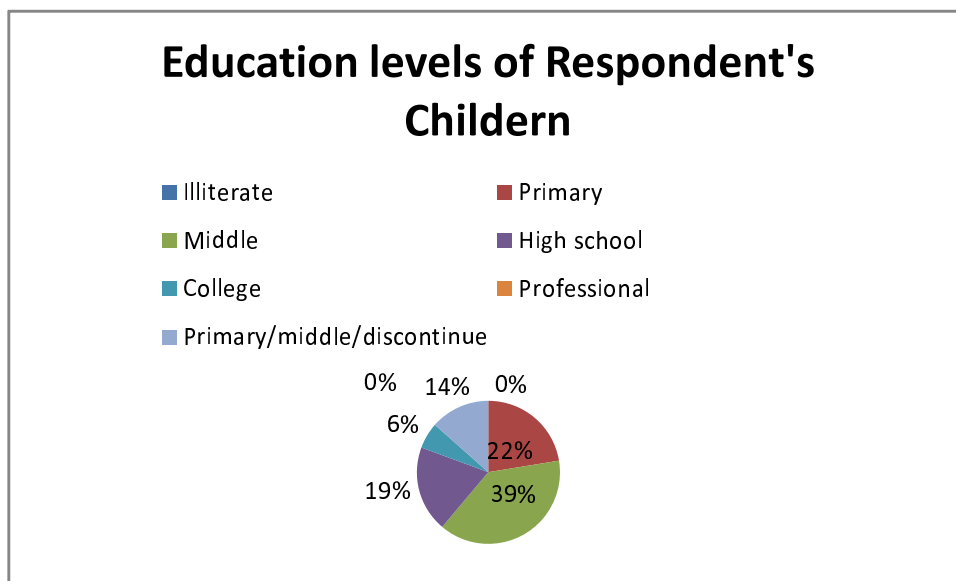
SL. NO.	Education qualification	Respondent	Percentage of respondent	Children	Percentage of children
1.	Illiterate	29	58.00	-	-
2.	Primary	34	34.00	15	22.38
3.	Middle	2	4.00	26	38.80
4.	High school	2	4.00	13	19.40
5.	College	-	-	4	5.97
6.	Professional	-	-	-	-
7.	Primary/middle/discontinue	-	-	9	13.43
	Total	50	100	67	100

Source: Fieldwork

Education levels of respondent



Education levels of respondent's Children



Education: Awareness about the importance of education has been evolving among the Bhangis. Although, a large 58 percent of the grown up among them have either no education or have low educational attainments, they are sending their children to schools. The 22 percent of their children are pursuing their studies in primary schools. And some of them are studying in high schools and colleges. What is surprising to note is that only 13.43 percent of the respondent's children have dropped out from the schools at primary and middle school level. When we asked the respondents to state whether they are in favour of the education of their children, all the respondents answered in affirmative and considered the indispensability of education in shaping their future career. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents expressed their desire to educate their children, all the respondents their desire to educate their children up to high school and college level, some of them (12.0%) desired to send them to professional courses. A few respondents 58 percent were reluctant to answer this question on the ground that it depends on also the interest shown by their children towards studies, and they have an interest in educating them as much as they can study. The answers given by the respondents 8 percent about the aims of providing education to their children relates to making them qualified to acquire government jobs and to make them aware of what is happening around. They believe that their children will remain in darkness without education (the details pertaining to the educational aspiration and the reasons for providing them education are indicated in Tables 2 and 3). The education of the parents and their occupation are very important factors 34 percent to understand the imparting education for their children.

Table 2: Aspiration of Respondents Towards their Children's Education

Sl. No.	Levels of Education	Number	Percentage
1.	High School	4	8.00
2.	College	9	18.00
3.	Professional	6	12.00
4.	As much as they study	27	52.00
5.	NA	4	8.00
	Total	50	100.00

Note: NA means that 4 respondents do not have children.

Source: Fieldwork

This data shows that 53 percent said that they want their childrens as they want to study. 12 percent said that wants their children only professional education so that they can get job other than what they are doing. Only 8 percents respondent shows their interest towards their children’s education in higher studies.

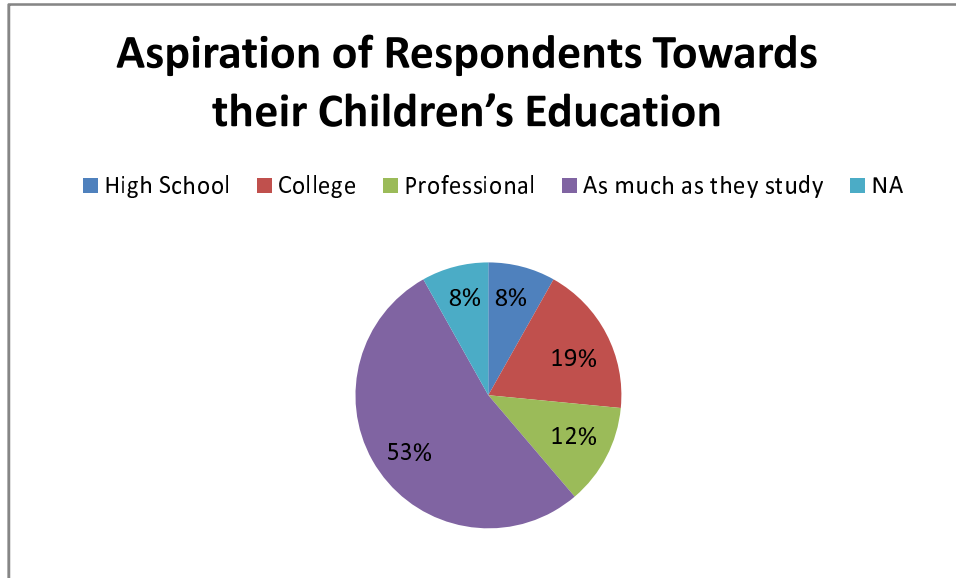


Table 4: Reasons for Imparting Education for their Children

Sl. No.	Reasons	Number	Percentage
1.	To make Independent	13	26.00
2.	To understand what is happening around	7	14.00
3.	To move anywhere	5	10.00
4.	To Possess Govt. Job	16	32.00
5.	Future Career	9	18.00
	Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork

Table 5: Occupational Background

Sl. No.	Occupations	Parents				Children	Percentage
		Father	Percentage	Mother	Percentage		
1.	Daily labour	11	22.00	13	26.00	-	-
2.	Sweepers	22	44.00	26	52.00	13	28.26
3.	Work in private firm	17	34.00	11	22.00	16	34.74
4.	Bussniess	-	-	-	-	12	26.08
5.	Driver	-	-	-	-	3	6.52
6.	Government service	-	-	-	-	1	2.17
7.	Teacher	-	-	-	-	1	2.17
	Total	50	100	50	100	46	100

Source: Fieldwork

Occupation: Occupation contributes to the social status of a person and reflects his economic position. Representing in certain ways a mode of life, it is also a fair index of a person's class position. Accordingly, occupational status of parents is one of the most significant factors associated with the educational attainment of the members of his family. The data reveal that although, we may come across a change in the occupational background of the parents, only 12 among them sanitary workers and the remaining were engaged in daily labour. Majority of them children are engaged in similar low paid occupation, such as peons, attenders, drivers etc. one is working as constable in government job. One of female is a teacher in higher primary school. It is important to note that the respondents prefer their children to take up occupations other than sanitary workers (see Table 4). This shows that the Bhangis have realised that they may not be able to improve the position of their children if they encourage them to follow their occupation. The sweepers are mostly work as temperory basis. Other than working as sweepers are permanent employ in MCD.

Working condition: In Balmiki Basti due to flush out system of toilets, the problem of night-soil or removing night soil does not exist. It is observed that sweepers are provided with the necessary facilities like bathing and washing hands after their work, clothes, soaps, sleepers etc. All the sweepers have to work for seven hours; 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. During public holidays they work only from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. All the permanent employees get more holidays.

When asked to state whether they are happy in their present job, 88 percent said that they are happy in their present job and 12 percent of them expressed their unhappiness. And further, more than half of them said that they do not regularly to the work. The reason pointed for their irregularity is less pay and ill health.

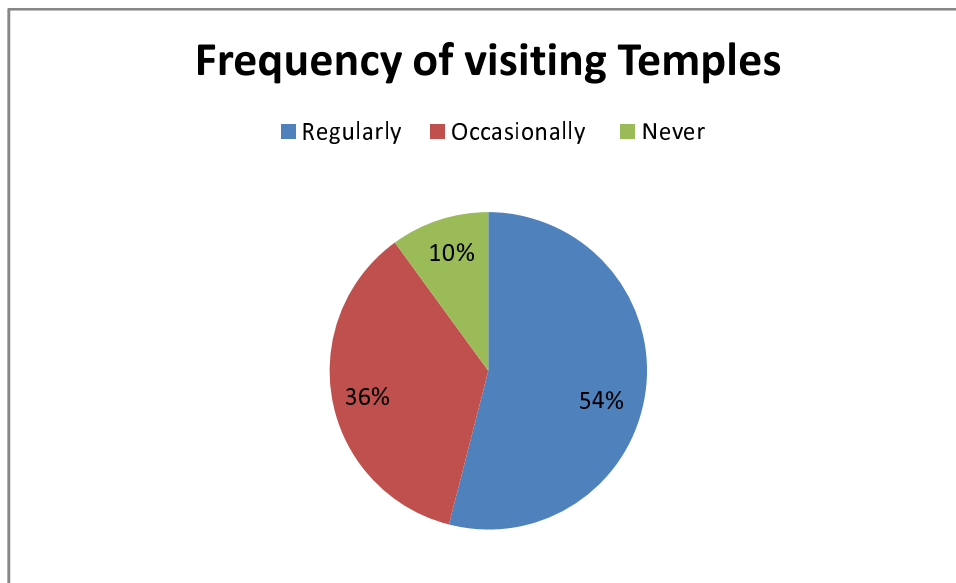
Drinking: Alcoholism is a major barrier for their development. Consuming alcohol has been a part of their everyday life. It is observed that most of the male members consume alcohol. The use of alcohol/ intoxicant could numb the sense while working. Although only 72 percent of them admitted that they consume alcohol and the remaining 28 percent respondents said that they do not consume. Further, a majority of them are aware that consuming alcohol affects their health and waste money. They did not even show a sign of giving up the habit of drinking. As they pointed out that they cannot work without drinking, they feel relaxed only if they drink. The absence of contact with other, their ignorance and illiteracy are some of the factors contributed for their addiction to alcoholism.

Contact with other caste: Absence of contact with members of other castes and communities leading to not only the addiction to alcoholism but also the feeling of frustration develops among the people. The Bhangis are considered as untouchables even today because of the fact that they remove night-soil and all the dirty things. However the introduction of flush-out system of toilets, the problem of carrying the night soil is not prevalent today as the government has also taken various welfare measures in ameliorating of their progress and to abolish the practice of untouchability. In the light of this, it would be interesting to examine their present situation as far as the practice of untouchability is concerned, whether do they interact closely with the member of other castes and communities, if yes, what the factors which influenced in bringing about transformation among them?

Table6: Frequency of visiting Temples

SL. No.	Visting temples	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Regularly	27	54.00
2.	Occasionally	18	36.00
3.	Never	5	10.00
	Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork



Entry into temples: Caste is major factor in considering in the arrangement of social statuses as inferior and superior in India. The lower castes have no access to temples because of their inferior ritual status. The improvement in their economic position, the abolition of the practice of untouchability allowed them to Sanskritize their behavior. The term “Sanskritization” was coined by M.N. Srinivas (1965) in his book *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*. He describes “Sanskritization is the process by which a ‘low’ Hindu caste, or tribal or the other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, ‘twice-born caste.’”⁵⁴ Generally such when brought together are both annihilated. The existing social structure has therefore to be replaced by a new one in tune with the India constitution. It is wrong to think that the aforesaid restructuring can be brought about merely by

⁵⁴Srinivas,(1966), *Religion and Society among the coorge of south India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing house.

retaining the existing good traditions and discarding the bad ones. An example of this approach is the attempts made in all these years for improving the lot them rooted in the social, cultural and religious ethos of Indian society. I take it when Srinivas refers Sanskritization is the process by which a 'low' caste changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life means that improvement in their economic position, the abolition of the practice of untouchability allowed them to sanskritize their behavior.

As result of this, denying into the temples would be difficult. It is observed in this study that the practice of untouchability is in the process of disintegration. 10 percent of the respondents of my sample pointed out they do not only visit the temples outside balmiki basti. They proudly said that they have no inhibition in visiting temples. But they only visit in their mohalla temples. Moreover, all of them mentioned that they are aware of the provision of Untouchability Act. Data in Table 4.14 shows that only 54% of Balmiki visit temples regularly, 36% of them occasionally visit temples and 10% out of them seldom visit. When asked about their visit to temple. One of respondents said their when we go to big temples we have different entry system. If we go to haridwar to visit temples we have secluded ashrams. One of other respondents shared that we do not go temples for no reason.

Finding and Conclusion

A significant majority of the Bhangis in Balmiki Basti, Jaroda village in Delhi are working as sweepers. Some of sweepers work in MCD as permanent and other sweepers works on contractual basis. They are aware about the importance of education emerging among them. Although, a substantial proportion of the sample respondents are illiterate, they are sending their children to schools. Even though, the respondents 48 % expressed satisfaction in their present occupation, but they preferred occupations other than 'sanitary workers' for their children. They have access to temples and also move closely with the members of other communities. Only few male members are addicted to alcoholism. The practice of carrying night-soil on head loads is officially abolished, the flush out system of toilets has also enabled them to improve their status. The most striking feature is that all the Balmikis having house in Bakmiki mohalla are engaged in lower degrading occupation. This community is traditionally is involved in polluting jobs.

They have been doing labour-based earning jobs. During the field work it is observed that they children of Balmikis don't go school. This was found that while during study that in the balmiki mohalla children of Balmiki caste collect garbage on daily wages. This is mohalla of scheduled caste communities who are also mainly engaged in different daily based earning jobs.

This study attempts to map issues of Balmiki Community called as Bhangi, Chuhra in Delhi. This had not been an economically powerful. The Balmiki is jati of Sweepers, pig-breeders and pork Butchers. Bhangi is the Hindi word meaning "one who is addicted Bhang". Bhang is an intoxicating drug prepared from hemp leaves. Since the Bhangi is no way denotes their profession, the sweeper may have acquired this name due to their common use of Bhang at one or other time. According to Rana, my informant, once upon a time there was a Bhangi whose name was Kaliya Bhangi. His main occupation was pig breeding. Women from the same community used to work as *dai* who helps in delivery of pregnant women.

One of informant narrates that we fought for replace the name of Chuhra into Balmiki in Scheduled Caste certificate in 1970s after many years government realized that why their caste written as Chuhra not Balmiki. He said if people will call us Bhangi we will mind if they will call us Balmiki we won't mind. If we reach at good position. People call they we are Chuhras. Those who are educated in Bhangi community they do not want to call them Bhangi. Both Chuhra and Bhangi are derogatory words if we call as Balmiki we won't get mind.

The aim of this chapter is to locate the cause of alternative religious discourse of Dalit communities in public sphere. It is also aimed to analyze their social relationship in context of Hindu religion. What is the nature of their religious practice? What are their religious patterns?

After taking some interviews there are some incidence took place where Hindu religion imposed some restrictions on ritual practice on Dalit communities. Balmikis those are very lower among the Dalit communities have their different temples. Some of villages in delhi have no huge temples. They have their alternatives temples. It also seen that Balmiki community worship Maharishi Valmiki as their God. Balmiki term is itself a respectful identity for them. They fought for their identity to replace the term of Bhangi or Chuhra. They are traditionally known as 'Bhangi' or 'Chuhra'. They are currently registered as balmiki in case of Chuhra.

Sheetla Mata mandir

In some places in Delhi Balmiki community worship 'sheetla mai' is worshipped. Where other communities are rarely worship. Sheetla Mata Mandir in Jaroda village in Delhi is place of worshipping by Balmiki community. Some temples shows that they are the replacement of main stream god.

Violence against Bhangis

One month and five days have passed since 175 scavengers of Broach municipality went on strike, and public sympathy is daily growing in their favor. A couple of days before April 9, when the strike began, the scavengers were planning to place certain demands before the municipal authorities. Learning of this, the authorities communicated with other towns and cities to get the services of outside Bhangis and receiving hopeful replies. The chief demand of the Bhangis are that they be given a responsible increment in salary and they will be declared municipal servants and be allowed all the service regarding leave, pension and provident and fund.⁵⁵

The Delhi based caste survey undertaken with 50 respondents. The sweepers were employed mainly in MCD. Some of them are contract workers. Women also work but not paid as equal to men. Municipal sweepers have security of employment but contract workers are laid-back. In Delhi, sweepers are lower than other caste in Balmiki Basti. Bhangis are considered more polluting than other caste. There were few houses of non-Bhangis. Bhangi condition is more pathetic than Chamars. Their social aspirations are low. They do not complain if anyone do discrimination with them. They considered it their *karma*. Sweepers also participate in political system. In last election 2015, 100 percent have claimed to vote for Aam Admi Party. The main reason to vote AAP is the fondness toward the symbol of *Jhaadu*. The majority of them voted in previous election to Congress. Many people 90 percent of respondents express that caste system will never end. They are working as sweepers generation to generation. Some of their previous generation was in Army. Now they are working as sweepers. It is seen that if member of this community remain illiterate then certainly can be in sweeper occupation. In present time, they are working generation to generation in sweeper occupation.

⁵⁵ The times of India 1861, May 1936, Proquest Historical Newspaper: Times of India, p.11.

The result of Delhi election in 2015 hardly surprised many. All the pre-poll surveys and exit poll surveys and exist polls had already indicated that congress would remain in power in Delhi. But Aam Adami party won 67 assembly seats with 54.3 % vote share. And BJP could manage to win only three seats with 32.2 % vote share. Ramvir singh Bidhuri contesting as BJP candidate was runner up from Badarpur assembly constituency. The Bhaujan Samaj Party (BSP) could not manage to open its account with 1.3 % vote share. AAP candidate Sanjeev Jha in Burari constituency won by 63.82 vote share.

Shah says “Dalit do not constitute a homogenous category, rather they are hierarchically differentiated”. Bharati has contested this by arguing that “the word Dalit signifies a unity of oppressed people.” Shah⁵⁶ and Bharati⁵⁷ observe on the social reality from different perspective. Bharati articulates that there should be unity in the identity of Dalits, Shah on the other hand, emphasizes that we should look into hierarchy among Dalits. In this regard Shah has a realistic view, which have tremendous implications for the recent discourse on Dalit identity. What has remained unexplored, unnoticed and unanalyzed is the relationship between this hierarchy and social transformation among Dalits. Once this aspect of the discourse on dalit identity is taking into consideration, one may find that within the Dalits too, there are ‘oppressor’ and ‘oppressed’.

Caste in urbanization process

The term urbanization refers to the process of interaction between town and country may be studied in terms of rural urban realtions, that is, in terms of participation of villagers in social and culture life of the town and vice-versa, and in terms of inter-personal relations between villages and town dwellers.⁵⁸

Viewed from ‘below’, the most critical features of caste is the experience of untouchability. The line of pollution, which divided the ‘untouchables’ from the rest, has been historically a critical point of distinction. The idea of the ‘line of pollution’ has also been an important category in the official discourse on caste. In most cases it was used as the boundary line for identifying the ‘Scheduled Castes’ (SCs) and for institutionalizing politics of affirmative action for their ‘welfare’. This administration classification and grouping of different caste communities has,

⁵⁶ Shah, M A, ‘The Dalit Category and its Differentiation’, EPW, April,6,2002.

⁵⁷ Bharti, Sunita Reddy, ‘Dalit : A Term Asserting Unity’, EPW, October 19-25, 2002.

⁵⁸ Rao, M S, Urbanisation in a Delhi Villages: Some Social Aspects, EPW, February 7, 2017.

over the years, begun to shape the popular notions of caste-related distinctions in social and political life. In some sense, the idea of untouchability is an obvious extension of the idea of pollution, or of the notion of purity and impurity. However, untouchability is also much more than what the notion of pollution suggests. Nowhere in the line of hierarchy is the rigidity of caste as sharp as it is around the line of pollution. For examples, for those above the line of pollution, including those designated as Shudras, in the traditional scriptural system of hierarchy, impurity was relative. In villages those above the line of pollution could contest their position in ranking order, either through the use of force and power or by gradually Sanskritizing themselves by adopting the lifestyle of those considered above them. However those located below the line of pollution, the so-called untouchable communities, impurity was absolute. Only rarely could an 'untouchables' community move up and overcome their 'low' status while living within the framework of tradition. For them, caste indeed was a closed system of inequality.⁵⁹

Chapter-3

Occupation and occupational changes

This chapter deals with pattern of intergenerational occupational changes among Dalits and across four generation. It is observed that caste is associated with occupations. The changing pattern of occupation will reflect the socio-economic status of Dalit community. Balmiki community is known by their occupation and it almost related to caste. This chapter is examines

⁵⁹ Jodhka, Surinder S,2012, Caste, Oxford University Press.

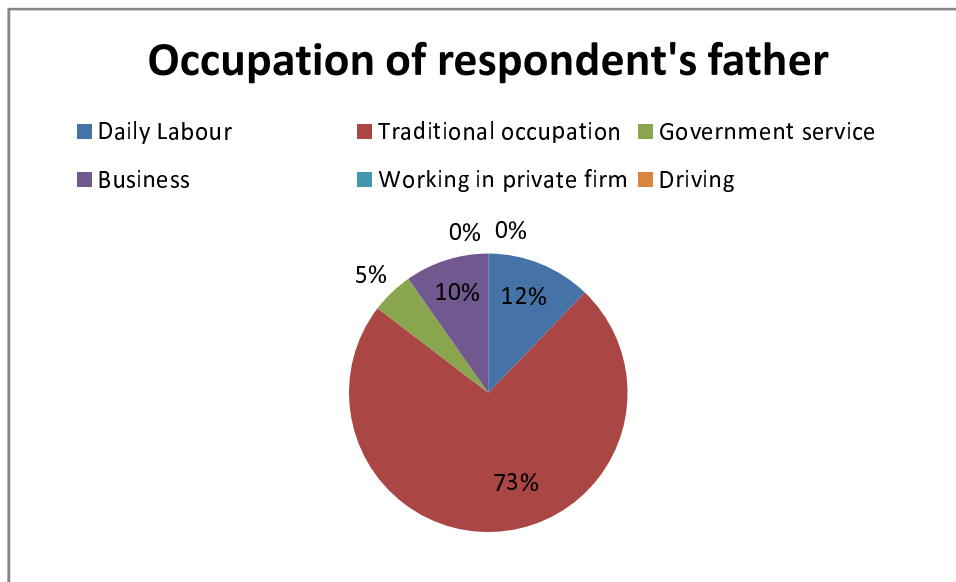
the occupations and changes occur in their occupations. In what ways and to what extent occupation affects their everyday life. It is observed that in bhangi community is dominant in scavenging occupation.

Tables 1: Occupation of respondents' Father

Sl. No.	Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Daily Labour	5	10.00
2.	Traditional occupation	30	60.00
3.	Government service	2	4.00
4.	Business	4	8.00
5.	Working in private firm	9	18.00
6.	Driving	-	-
	Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork

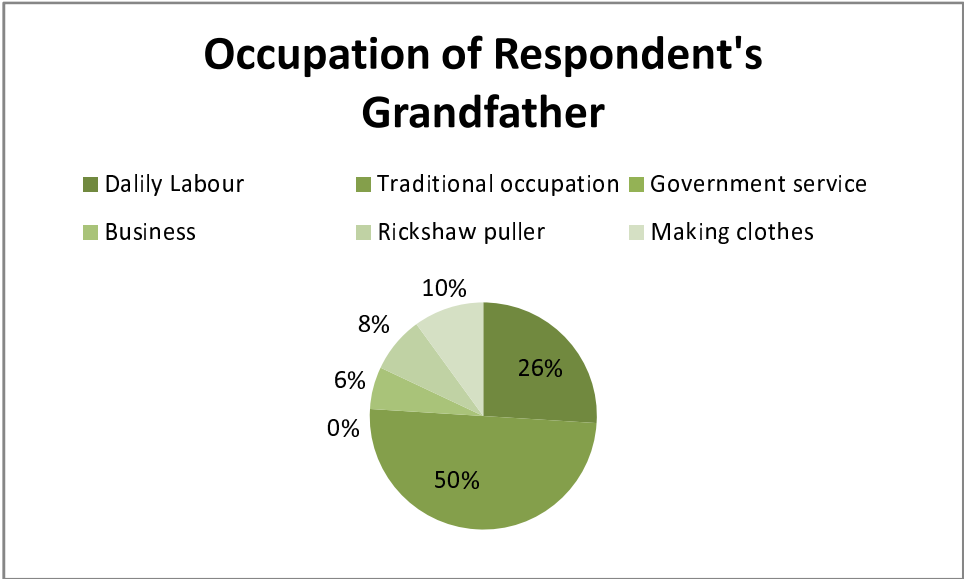
Data shows that 60 percent of respondent father's were in the same occupation which they are doing now. 10 percent of respondent's fathers were in labour work. 4 percent of respondent's fathers were in government jobs like Army and MCD.



Tables 2: Occupation of Respondents' Grandfather

SL. No.	Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Dalily Labour	13	26.00
2.	Traditional occupation	25	50.00
3.	Government service	-	-
4.	Business	3	6.00
5.	Rickshaw puller	4	8.00
6.	Making clothes	5	10.00
	Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork



The data arranged in following section on various dimensions of occupational changes among the respondents. These dimensions are explored on the basis of occupational history of respondent and occupation history of family of respondent. The tables 6 and 7 present the occupational changes Balmiki community. The higher percentage of the respondents' father has occupation in sweepers. Some of sweepers work on temporary basis. The respondents who worked in MCD, their children are also in the same occupation. This chapter attempts to explore the occupational changes among dalits. In balmiki batsi there were very less family who were engaged self-employed. Large majority of families works as sweepers. One of respondents said that we are destined to do this job -we do not have other alternative.

Occupational shifts over generations

Large number of family migrated to balmiki basti. Most of them are in safai karamchari occupation. They are working as safai karamchari generation to generation. Some of them are working in informal sector. Member of third generation are in all engaged in safai karmchari occupation. One of respondents father-in-law and husband are also in same occupation which his father's occupation.

Occupational History of Respondent

Ram kishan is retired MCD Karamchari. He completed his schooling from Delhi. He started worked in hospital as cleaner. He said that my father was in Army in Haryana. But I could not get higher education because of my surroundings. When I went for interview in hospital for cleaning job they said that I do not look like calling bhangi. My wife is also working in MCD as safai karamchari.

As per the traditional norms governing life in rural Punjab, Dalit settlements were to be located on the side where the sun sets. This norm has perhaps never been very strictly followed here. There were several villages where dalit houses have traditionally not been located on the west. However, in a majority of the villages, dalits houses were indeed constructed on the outskirts of the main villages settlement.⁶⁰

Involvement of Dalits with 'unclean occupations' has often been viewed as the primary reason for the practice of untouchability. Dealing with dead cattle, scavenging and other occupations that were considered polluting in the Hindu culture were left to be done by the Dalits. Though not all dalits would have been employed in the 'callings' of their castes, every caste group was identified with a specific 'polluting occupation'. Many radical changes have taken place with regard to the involvement of dalits with such occupations. The only 'unclean occupation' where a degree of continuity exists is that of scavenging work are the balmikis and mazhabis (earlier known as chuhras), the caste which it traditionally identified, only a few families from these

⁶⁰ Jodhka, Surinder. S, Caste and untouchability in Rural Punjab, Feb,2017, EPW.

castes actually worked as scavengers.⁶¹ The occupation of cleaning and sweeping has been associated with the caste of Dalits. In case of balmiki basti in delhi some of dalits family engaged with other work. At some places cleaning and sweeping is done by commercial bases. But this work is mainly done by specific caste.

Table 3: Monthly income of respondent

SL. No.	Monthly Income	Respondents	Percentage
1.	1000-2000	8	16.00
2.	2000-10000	22	44.00
4.	Above 10000	4	8.00
5.	Above 25000	10	20.00
6.	Not specific	6	12.00
	Total	50	100

Sources: Fieldwork

Table 8 indicates the montly income of Respondents. The data shows that maximum respondents do not contribute in regular income in the family per month. However 16 percentage respondents are there whose income lies in between 1000-2000 and 20 percentage respondents are able to earn more than above 25,000. The data analysis of clearly shows that maximum respondents do not contribute in regular income.

The one of Safai Karamchari shared that everyone is working on contract these days. In Balmiki Basti mostly Balmikis are employed in unclean occupation. Most of the Balmikis employed as sweepers in municipalities, hospitals and at homes.

One of my respondents said that I don't like this occupation. But this occupation is very easy to get. I am not that much educated to get better job. I get very less pay in this occupation.

Case Study

⁶¹ Ibid.

One of respondents shared that he worked 30 years as sweepers in Hospital. My wife is also in the same occupation. My two sons and one daughter work in the same occupation. Our family couldn't get any other job. We didn't get educated person's work. I have two granddaughters both of them are school going. This work has no respect in society. People call us Bhangi which is associated with polluting occupation.

Socio-economic profile of Balmiki Basti

The social economic profile of the respondents is based on a baseline survey conducted among the selected residential from the Balmiki Basti. The survey consisted 50 respondents from Balmiki mohalla of Jharoda village in Delhi. It provide the comprehensive profile of Balmiki community.

The Balmiki of Delhi has large population among Dalits. Although large population of this community lives in specific mohalla. The majority of them are engaged in sweeping and cleaning occupation. The majority of people are working as safai karamchari on temporary basis. The sweepers working on temporary basis are not sure how long their employment under a particular labour contractor would last. They can be terminated anytime if their service does not make others satisfied.

Ramesh, who has been working as private sweeper since 20 years in the city. He cleans streets and front of every shops of other mohhala. His wife is also working as sweepers. He narrates that every morning we work from morning and sweep streets. *I have seen my parents to working as sweepers. I have studied up to 6th standard and left my schooling. It was my own decision to discontinue studies and started worked as sweepers. I could not get job other than sweeper.*

Today, bhangis are known as Balmiki, Chuhra, harijan etc. This specific caste community traditionally works as scavengers. While talking to respondents there were some encounters. In one of housing societies respondents said, that we are Balmikis. All the respondents said that we are Balmikis. One of respondents stated that we are known as different names like Bhangis, harijan. They prefer to call themselves 'Balmikis'. People in the community are consciously making efforts to get out of the traditional and derogatory names by addressing themselves as 'Bhangis'. It is noted that respondents prefer to call them as Hindus not Dalits. The self-

perceptions of the respondents confirm that the member of Balmiki community traditionally associated with the caste community.

Based on survey, some people stated that balmikis are capable to do other occupations but do not have opportunities. This is not our choice to work as safai karamchari. We are bound to do this occupation by all communities. Their dignity is not as considered as other caste. This occupation made them excluded from all other communities. We do not have much spaces like other caste have. The member of Balmiki community are generally employed in Municipal corporations in cities. They work whole life as a sweeper and retired with improving their social and economic status. Some of respondents shared that they do not want to pursue this occupation but the lack of opportunities leads them to this occupation.

Findings

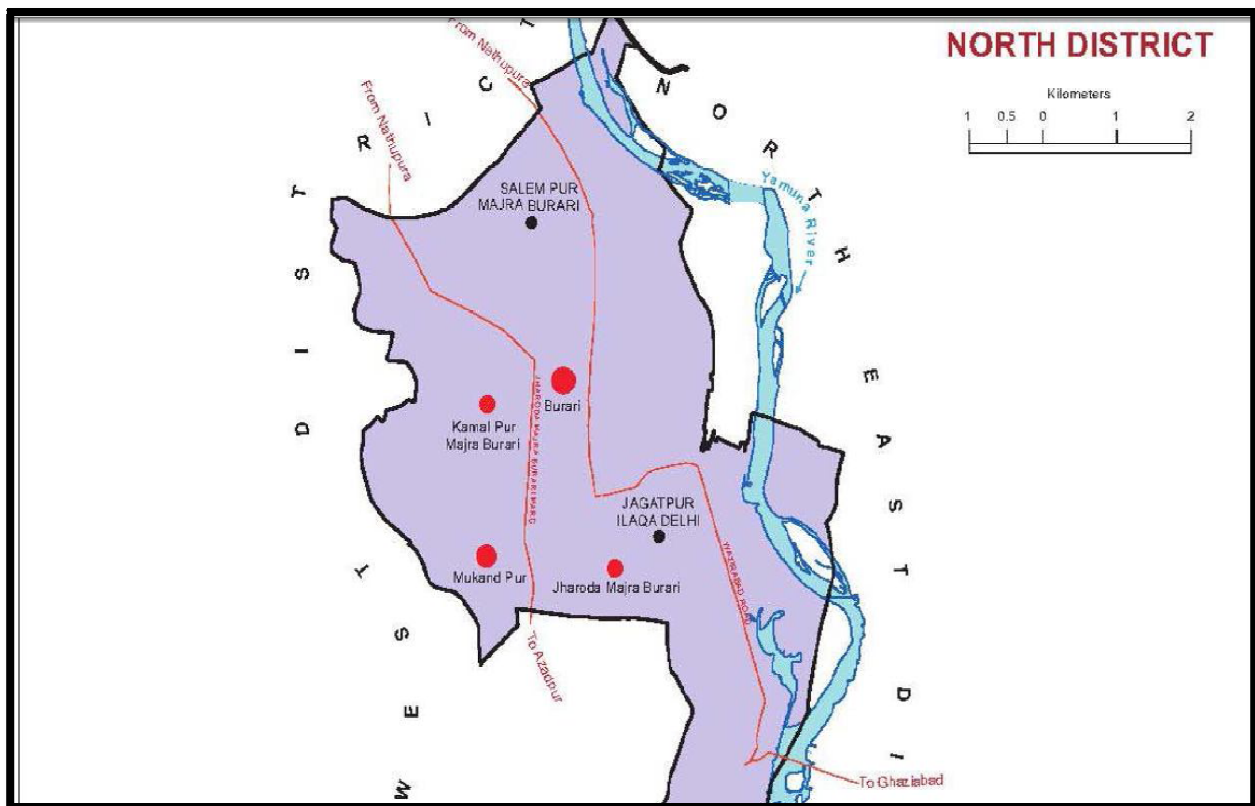
From social and economic point of view the Bhangis of Balmiki basti are homogenous. For instance out of 50 members in the sample household majority 58 % of them are illiterate however higher among the old population than among the younger. More than 50 percentages of respondents are engaged in caste occupation.

The stigma is attached with this occupation makes them to exclude in other community. The stigma attached with this occupation exclude them to adopt new occupation. They face discrimination to get other occupation other than sanitary work. Most of the sanitary jobs are done by Balmikis or Bhangis. The reason behind this discrimination is the very stigma attached to the occupation of manual scavenging itself is the reason of oppression. Caste is the dirty secret behind the manual scavenging-and caste based notion of 'swacch'(pure) and 'Aswacch' (impure) are the key to the wide prevalence and persistence of manual scavenging in India.

Balmiki of Delhi has not been able to improve their social and economic status by opting for other occupations. Chamar cannot make substantial use of their traditional occupation which is more polluting in nature in comparisons to the balmikis. In this context one can see how the degree of occupation varies from one group to another group within the Dalit Caste.

Profile of Jharoda village in delhi

Jharoda Majra Burari is in North district of Delhi. It is known as Jharoda Majra Burari. According to census jharoda village has a population of 22,878 of which 12,214 are males while 10,664 are females. Population of children with age of 0-6 is 2095 which is 12.70% of total population of jharoda Majra Burari. It constitutes 14.32% Schedule Caste Population. Jharoda Majra Burari currently does not have any Schedule Tribe population.⁶²



Occupational changes Among Balmikis

In Jharoda village most of Balmikis is dependent on menial work for their livelihood and survival. Therefore they reside in Balmiki Basti. Balmikis who are highly dependents on their traditional occupations have very less alternatives for other opportunities. The existing exclusion and discrimination and social setting does not allow them to adopt in a new opportunities. They

⁶² <http://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/63958-jharoda-majra-burari-delhi.html>

deal with social, economic and political stress and change. The study tries to show if there is any caste based exclusion and discrimination in getting job. Jharoda villages has majority of Scheduled Caste population as per census. But their social and economic conditions of Dalit's are low in comparison to the other dominant caste. Illiteracy is extensive among Balmikis.

In the previous chapter, I have discussed that how particular community is engaged in traditional occupation. Sweeping and scavenging in particular basti are pursued by some particular caste. Majority of sweepers belongs to particular caste.

This chapter examines the trends of occupational mobility and its social and psychological consequences. The broader objective of this discourse is to find out the trends of inter and intra-generational occupational mobility and its consequences on the Balmikis. The study was conducted to find out the trends and intra-generational occupational mobility.

Living condition

Most 68 % of Balmiki in Balmiki Basti or Harijan Basti live in Pucca houses. 20 percent balmiki live in semi-pucca house. The Balmiki Basti is called as Balmiki Mohallas. Now they have all the facilities in their area like drainage, water, electricity, streets and shops. These mohallas have proper electricity and water. Their colonies are properly constructed with drainage system. Despite the pucca houses and drainage system, cleanness and hygiene is missing in this mohallas. Drains are full of filth and overflow with waste.

In the village of Jharoda sweepers mostly belongs to Balmiki community. The sweepers of Balmiki community came from different places of Delhi. They have traditionally taken up this occupation. In Jharoda village Balmikis are dependent on sweeping, scavenging and other occupations.

Balmiki Basti which has developed as an urban area of delhi. It has 44,181 populations which include 39,156 males and 5,025 females within a span of 60 years.⁶³ A number of families have come from different places in the city. The study shows that among the balmikis occupational mobility is more frequent than among the other caste. The term 'Balmiki' has been used in the

⁶³ Census of India, 2011, Directorate of census operations, Delhi.

same that a group of people who have been engaged in the same occupation. For present study 50 respondents were selected.

The some of Balmikis of the household who are young and educated have altogether left the caste occupation. They left it because of availability of jobs coupled with the social and cultural stigma attached to these work. But majority of Balmikis are engaged in manual/ physical work and the rest of working as driver, labour. However, none of the college degree holder is engaged in manual jobs. But 95 percent of the respondents are almost illiterate. They have also been engaged in the caste occupations.

Most of the studies on social mobility have focused on intra-generational or inter-generational mobility by comparing the occupations of father and sons. As Blau and Duncan explain in their book, the American occupational structure (1967), whether the father's occupational status does or does not influence the status and mobility of the son, they found that both father's education and occupation had an influence the status and mobility of the sons, they found that father's education and income had an influence the status and mobility of the sons. However, in the context of manual scavengers again this index of inter and intra-generational mobility does not seem very effective as there is a perpetual continuity of occupation from the father to the sons and subsequent generation.⁶⁴

In this chapter one can see how particular occupation varies to generation to generation which further determine the pattern of social mobility and interpersonal relations among them. In delhi Balmiki or Bhangi are the mostly engaged in sweeping and scavenging which is called as manual scavengers. In delhi Chamar avoid marriage with balmiki caste unlike non-scavenging Scheduled Caste.

The Balmiki who are engaged in sweeping and scavenging unlike the non-scavenging the scheduled caste, manual scavengers in general cannot think of self-reformation not only because the task they perform is polluting but also because their traditional occupation does not provide them the skill to engage in other occupation.

The main occupation of these castes before coming to balmiki basti was agriculture besides which they were also engaged in their traditional caste-occupations. The area was long back ago

⁶⁴ Blau, M.Peter and Duncan, 1967, the American Occupational structure, New York: Joan Wiley & Sons, P83.

exposed to agriculture, which brought in changes in the caste bound occupations to certain extent. Balmikis besides depending on agriculture also used to work in pig farming. The Rajput families who are supposed to be warrior by caste only used to cultivate.

Most of the balmikis were temporary and permanent basis sweepers in MCD and other places. Persons belonging to above 25 to 50 were generally interviewed except some cases where individuals of less than 25 years or higher 50 years were interviewed to get a picture of changing attitude towards the occupations. Most of the respondents are working as sweepers.

In balmiki community the occupation has great impact on the family members together. Most of the families work in same occupation. Some of families do not want to pursue the forefather's occupation.

Balmikis of Delhi are basically depending on their traditional occupation. They prefer to call themselves as Balmikis. There are around 400 household in balmiki basti. Majority of the sweepers or scavengers are Hindu-Balmiki who are also known as Chuhras. Chuhra or Balmiki is the caste name which they fall under the Scheduled caste category. They do not interact themselves with other community. There is no inter-religious marriage or any other kind of association.

With the change in occupational pattern and the economic condition of balmiki families have changed to great extent. Enquiry into the annual income of the sample families shows that 19 families who has their income between 10000 to 25000 rupees. 27 families can earn about 5000 to 10000 rupees. Most of the balmiki families are now depending on the work of daily wage earning which decreased their income.

Occupational change and its other Effects

After taking sample of the families show that most of families dependent on their traditional occupations. They were mainly dependent on the sweeping work, usually the head of family. Being sweeper minded for generations these families could not give you up their past occupation immediately. But due to scarcity of opportunity as mentioned that families of balmiki communities engaged with sweeping work away from other occupations. The probability of getting work is also tempting them to be nearer to the contract basis jobs in cleaning and

sweeping. On the one hand they are still continuing their past occupation in whatever scales it, while other hand new opportunities of getting job not coming to them. They are sending their children to schools but most of their children have quit their studies. Children are settling down in same locality with same occupations.

Experience of Balmikis

One of respondent explained that he does not want to do these works which he is doing now. But he didn't get any other job other than this. He expected as his destiny. This leads him in unbearable situation like he has to engage himself in garbage picking occupation. He explained that he started this work for earn some money to feed his family. Now he has two girl children now he wants to educate them. He does not get enough income to serve his family. He started work in garbage picking from marriage banquets halls. He picked garbage from morning and through all the garbage into big dumping yards. Through all this work he is able to earn more to serve his family.

Ramesh, who is sewage worker live in Balmiki Basti explained I work in very bad situation because of sewage cleaning I started having alcohol. I generally drink before sleep so that I can forget what I have done today. I am not privileged of having good clothes unlike other. Sometimes I get fed up what I have done through my life. Is there any other opportunity in my life? We do not live life like other live since I do not have any options other than this menial job. I have to entirely depend on the sweeping work. Our community suffered on several counts due to suffer from health hazards.

It is well known fact that the dalits have not many options available to improve themselves. Poverty is one of the causes to make them life better. Majority of childrens are not going schools in Balmiki Basti. Those who struggled to get an education in school face unfriendly environment from other caste and society at large. Balmikis are forced to perform a variety of menial job because there is no alternative available for them. Illiteracy among them is common. Even if they try to get education they face problems.

One of the respondents narrates his experience he lives near dump yard in balmiki basti which is very unhygienic and stinking in Balmiki Basti. He said I am living in this Balmiki Basti since 40 years. I didn't get married due to some issues. Then I started work as sewage worker in MCD. I

used to clean sewer whenever and anytime people call me. After doing my work people get leftover food for me. I used to clean and disposed the dead animals. Sometimes I took the meat for cooking and eating. I didn't get any education. I do pig rearing in free time now days. Sometimes people call me with derogatory names. People never forget nor did they let us forget, that we are Bhangis. Our lives have not changed yet.

One of respondent said that we clean everyone's streets but no one comes to clean our streets. We have complaint many times. At last we strated clean our roads. Because the main authorities are not concerned about our mohallas.

One of respondent said that I started this work when she was young age. After my marriage she continued this work. my husband was also permanent worker in MCD. He died ten years ago. He had last stage of cancer. Then I joined as safai karmi in MCD. My children are living in other part of delhi. They are doing private jobs.

Traditionally, the different Scheduled castes were employed in different occupations. They are assigned by their social and economic position with different rank in social hierarchy of caste system. There is not a single town in country where scheduled caste does not exist. Only a small section of these communities has achieved higher education and employed in white collar-job. Most of them not able to enjoys better social status. There are several reasons in which social inequalities among them not to getting social and materiel achievements. The sweepers from Balmiki community in jharoda village are downgrade by both caste Hindus and other Scheduled Castes. Jharoda village is dominated primarily by the Hindus with Brahamans, Rajputs, Baniyas and Balmikis. Balmikis are single largest Scheduled Caste in Jharoda village. From the community point of view, the Scheduled Caste in this district has been included by the census. The majority of Balmikis live in residential enclosure but clumsy and unhygienic area which is set aside from other colonies. More specifically the Balmiki usually live in spate mohallas. For instance, the Balmiki basti is dominated primarily by the Balmikis while other castes live at different places. They are socially and economically not as good as among all the Scheduled Caste even if they are in permanent jobs.

This study reveals that balmikis are more into sweeping in work where they are employed both permanent and temporary workers by their local bodies. Rest of balmiki earn from sweeping and scavenging on contract *dehari* basis.

Social Mobility among Balmiki

The study of social mobility is an indispensable part of the study of any section of society. Data about inequalities in income, marriage, job and education, tell us how much change have come between and among the ladder of stratifications. How many people are moving upward? How many downward? How many are standing still? From where have the upward moving people risen? From where have the downward moving people descended? What kind of people are standing still?

The answers to these questions tell us about the changes that occur in a society. If we have such data we can compare their upward and downward mobility.

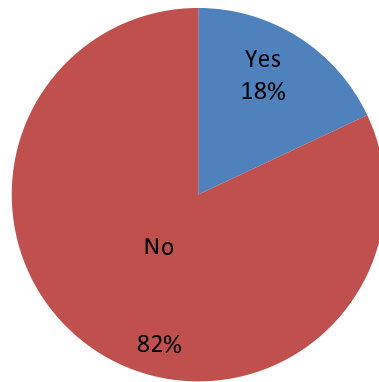
The social mobility of balmiki in Jharoda village delhi was studied across a number of variable. Some of the important variables and the reflection of the mobility there in is analysed hereafter.

Table4: Shift in job other than sweeping

Caste	Yes	No	Total
Balmikis	9 (18%)	41 (82%)	50

Source: Fieldwork

Shift in job other than sweeping

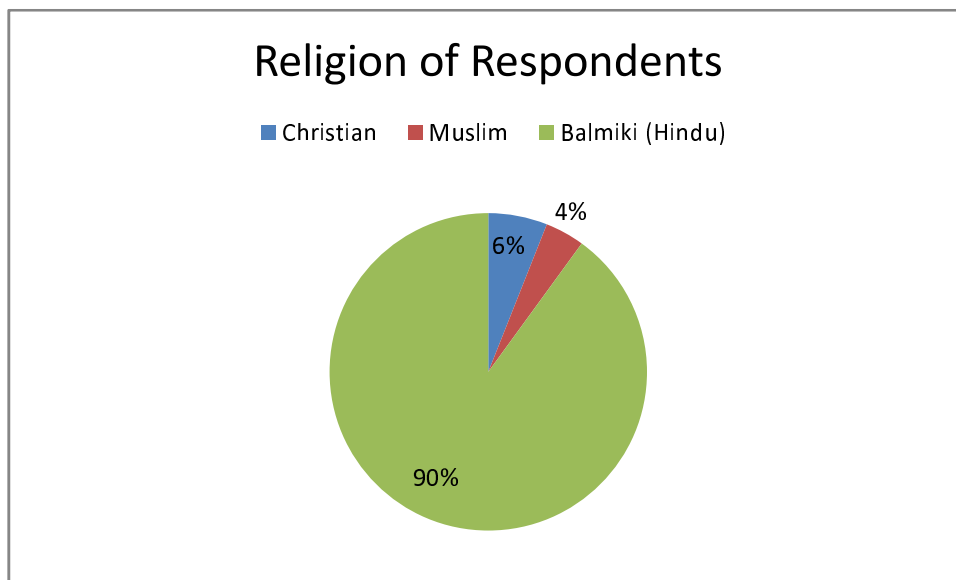


The job shift is definite indication of mobility especially when shift is to jobs other than sweeping. The data indicates a very slow mobility as 18% balmikis have shifted their jobs, which shows that there is small but very much visible effort to move out of traditional job of scavenging.

Table: Religion of Respondents

Religion	Respondent	Percent
Christian	3	6%
Muslim	2	4%
Balmiki (Hindu)	45	90%
Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork



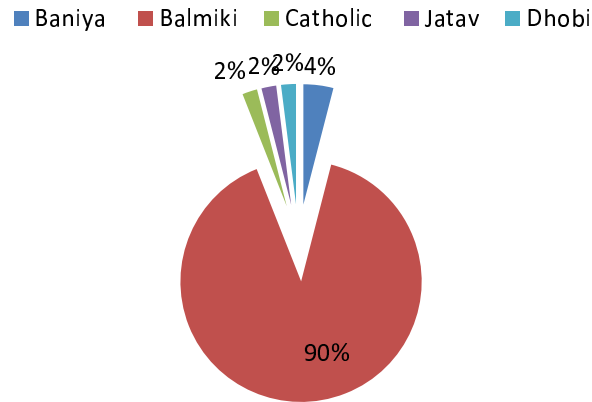
Religion is an important variable in the study of Balmikis. Like many other Indian cities, jammu also has scavengers who have converted to Christianity and have become follower of Balmiki. The sample comprised of 90 percent of Balmiki (hindu) respresenting the majority group.

Table6: Distribution of Caste Organization

Caste Name	Respondent	Percent
Baniya	2	4%
Balmiki	45	90%
Catholic	1	2%
Jatav	1	2%
Dhobi	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork

Distribution of Caste Organization

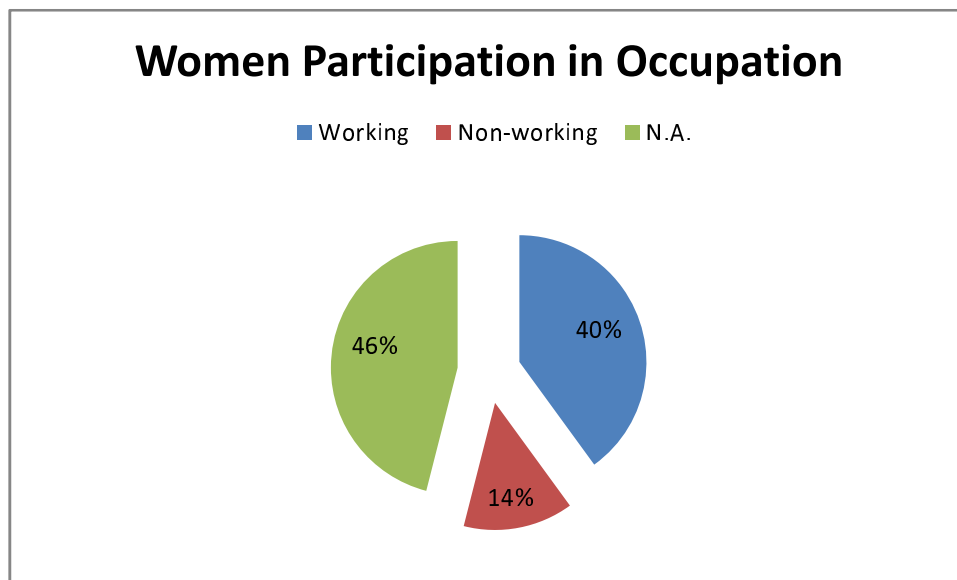


In balmiki basti the dominant caste is Balmiki caste. They are the caste of Chuhra and they are the ones who call themselves balmiki. In the caste certificate the Balmikis have the name of balmiki instead of Chuhra. There are some other castes but majority of them were Balmikis.

Table 7: Women Participations in Occupations

	Respondents	Percents
Working	20	40%
Non-working	7	14%
N.A.	23	46%
Total	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork



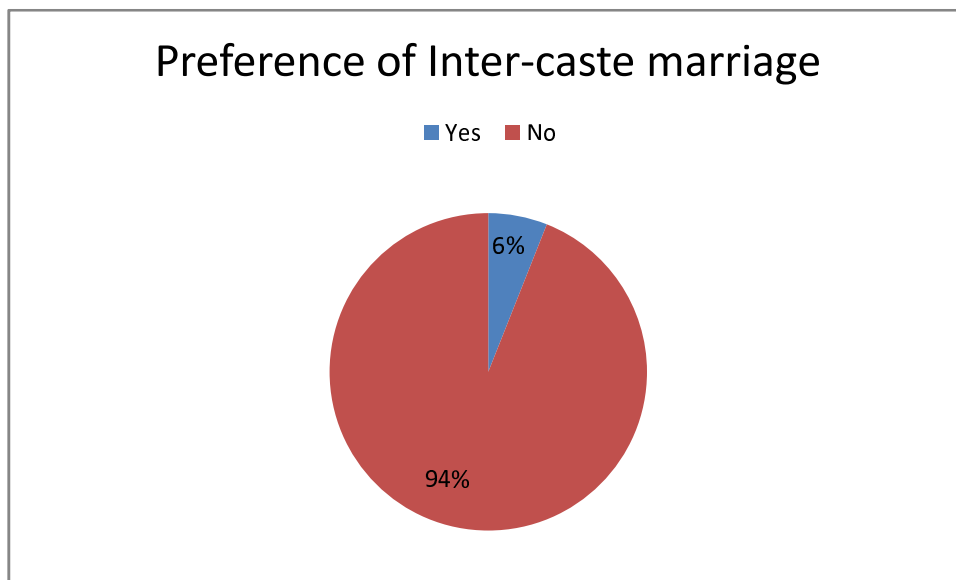
As mentioned earlier that sweeping and scavenging is dominated by womens. Women work in both public and private sphere. They work as domestic worker, cleaning and sweeping. They also work in municipality. 40 percent of respondent work in sweeping work. most of them were not working as full-time scavengers but as domestic cleaners on private basis.

Women have very important role in economic activities of family. In balmiki community most of the women are working. Women are also engaged in sweeping occupation. Women employment helps to increase household income. Womens employment increases her decision-making in family.

Table 8: Preference of Inter-caste marriage

Inter-caste marriage	Respondent	Percents
Yes	3	6%
No	47	94%
Total	50	100%

Source: fieldwork



Inter-caste marriage is very common among balmiki but only few marriages have taken place among Balmiki community. 3 respondents said that inter caste marriages had taken place in their families. Balmikis shows their opinion that they don't object to inter-caste marriages. Though 94% of them do not believe in endogamy but as the above table 6% of respondent tied the knot with other caste group. These figures ask many questions, as why do they believe in such preference? While they don't have absolute faith in caste endogamy, the reasons which were acquired from the respondents are; first of all, due to the caste difference they could not communicate with other community. The reason can't be cited out as cultural difference among balmiki and other caste groups. One respondent said because of engaging in sweeping work I couldn't find a guy for his daughter. The marriage among balmikis and other caste can take place but there are few people who got married beyond their caste.

Table 9: Social Distance maintained by other caste and religious groups

	Respondents	Percents
Yes	40	80%
No	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork

Social Distance maintained by other caste and religious groups

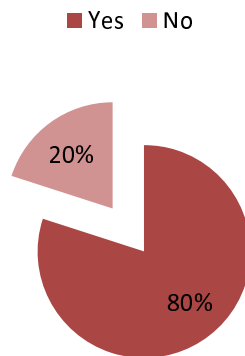
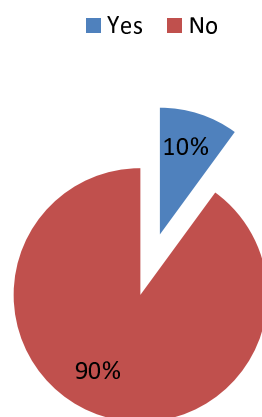


Table 10: Job other than sweeping

	Respondents	Percents
Yes	5	10%
No	45	90%
Total	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork

Job other than sweeping

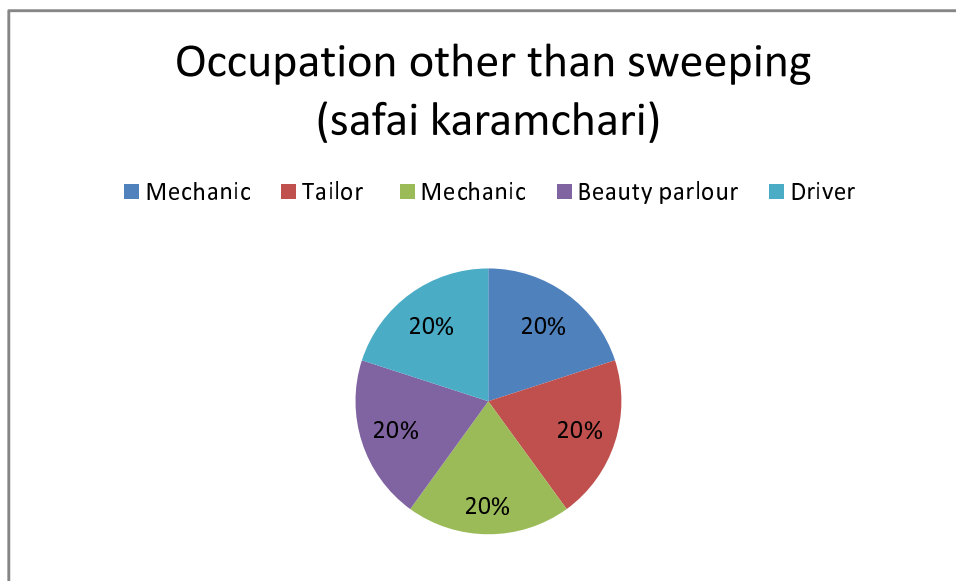


This information is very important as it reflects the mobility among the balmikis. Only 10 percent respondent said they have taken job other than sweeping. 45 percent respondent replied that they are job of sweepers. They said that it was very difficult to take another job. The stigma of being a sweeper carries with sweepers that other job is difficult to get it. Although some change have come where some people have taken up other job like driver, mechanic.

Table 11: Occupation other than sweeping (safai karamchari)

	Respondents	Percents
Mechanic	1	2%
Tailor	1	2%
Mechanic	1	2%
Beauty parlour	1	2%
Driver	1	2%
Total	5	10%

Source: Fieldwork



This data reflects the occupation changes among balmikis. 90 percent of balmikis are still in the sweeping occupation. There were 10 percent of the total respondents who are in other jobs. These jobs ranked in tailor, mechanic, beautician and driver. These data shows that there are

changes have come where acceptance of these people in other jobs as well. Although the changes have very less and transition is very slow but it reflects their aspiration of doing other jobs which move beyond their traditional occupation.

The last occupation of respondent father, mother, grandmother and grandfather clearly shows that there has not been any changes in occupation mobility which restraint them to achieve social and economic development of Balmiki community. There are changes in job temporary into permanent but they remain in the same occupation like sweeping and scavenging. Some of balmikis work in different occupation but still depending on sweeping and scavenging. In balmiki community women are mostly working which makes women shows their space and status in their community.

Among balmiki who are in permanent jobs their household income is good enough to educate their children. But there are many instances that show that children have give up their studies in the middle. Despite the household income is improved but they still remain in the edge of society.

Sweeping or scavenging is not a job or occupation which anyone chooses willingly. But it is imposed occupation upon the particular community who belongs to lower strata of Scheduled Caste communities in India. They are discriminated because of their Caste and the job which they are engaged. They are easily identified as they do sweeping. They are subject of exploitation by others. They are humiliated everyday of life. These people are treated with disrespect. The whole society only look for them when there is need to clean roads, septic tanks, removing dead animals and collecting the garbage. Most of their settlements are situated in the corner of towns where the garbage is dumped.

Balmikis of Delhi are a low caste, Untouchable community whose traditional occupation is cleaning and sweeping. They are also known as Chuhras and Bhangis. I will proceed by answering the following questions: Who are the Balmikis?

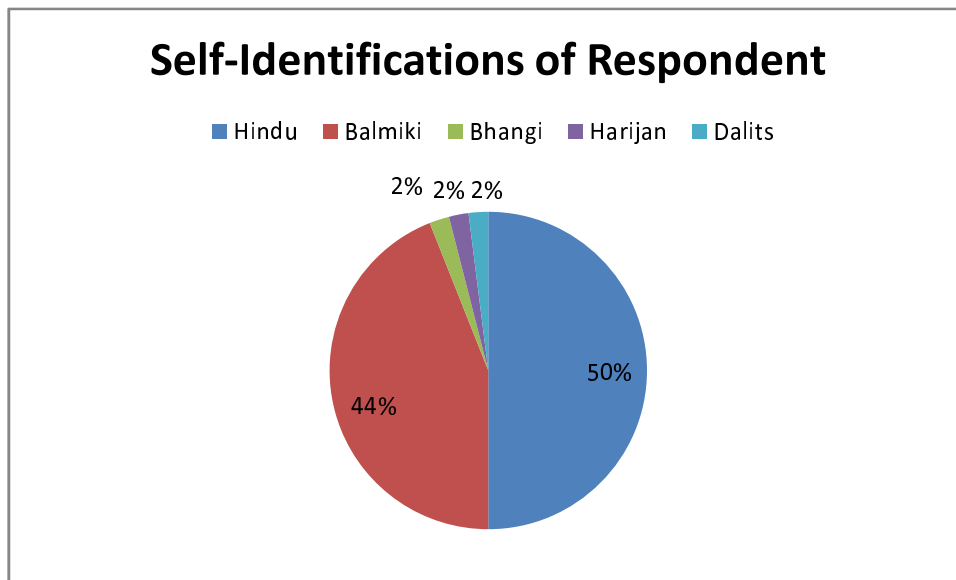
Within the caste system the Balmikis are Untouchables. They are bottom of the caste hierarchy. They are considered as low caste. They are remained illiterate, poor and almost powerless. They are part of scheduled Caste.

Bhangis are mostly settled the most crowded parts of Delhi called *mohalla, Basti, katra* etc. the bhangi caste is lowest in the social hierarchy. The sweeper will consider himself as superior to scavengers. Even they both belong to same Bhangi Caste. The one who cleans private houses will be consider inferior to one who works in Muncipal Corporation. There is a feeling of superiority and inferiority even among the Bhangis. Those who left the sweeping job they consider themselves superior to those who are still engaged this job. Most of women work in houses on private basis. Male members also help his wife in her job. Bhangis.

Table 12: Self Identification of Respondent

Titles	Respondent	Percent
Hindu	25	50%
Balmiki	22	44%
Bhangi	1	2%
Harijan	1	2%
Davits	1	2%
Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork



These self-perceptions of respondent shows that members of Balmiki mohhala prefer to call themselves Hindus or Balmikis. The traditional identity Bhangi, Harijan and dalit is not as much

as popular among Balmikis. 50 percent of respondent prefer to call them as Hindus and nearly 44% of them prefer Balmiki title. Few respondents have said that they would like to call themselves as Bhangi, Harijan and Dalit.

Conclusion

Balmikis are known as different names in society. This specific caste community in Delhi associated with different names like Bhangi, harijan and Dalits. The entire respondent officially states their caste as Balmiki. One of respondent said that *Didi, We are Hindus. Luck made us low, but we are not surrendering to fate or tradition.*

Case study

Vamchand is retired Safai karamchari sitting at his house in Balmiki Basti. He narrated his journey of tough life. He tries to count his years of life. He used to work in rajpura road. He is Hindu who rarely goes to the temple. Remembering his days of work he recalls that he used to collect food from leftovers. He says that his father was also worked in same occupation. He says that life is same as previous people call us with different names like Bhangi, Jamadar and practice untouchability in all possible forms. Nobody wants us to stand outside their houses and people keep maintain distance from us. He considered that the work of scavenger is lowest in the society although this work is very important for society's betterment. He says that 'I have cleaned drainage my whole life'. But people do not forget what we do. We have never get appreciated by our work. the label is attached with this work that we are do polluted work which other cannot do.

Case study

Bala is 54 years old. She lives in Balmiki basti, jharoda village. She does house cleaning job in two houses. Her husband is safai karamchari in municipality. She has two sons. Both are in sweeping job. She married when she was 21. She used to do same work before marriage. On being asked about her experience related to household cleaning work, she narrates, we get this job very easily and we do not have other option to do work. We have to do work as we have some economic problems. She does not work in kitchen only does sweeping and mopping.

Case study

Kamla is 47 years old. She is cleaner of roads and other filth. In her youthful days when she walked with a full of night-soils on her head, nobody cared for her stink but all were eager for her glance. She was a buxom beauty, built proportionately. She is talkative and full of expressiveness for she has never cared for their rot, but always for her family. She said, to be brief, her family earns from pig exports that bring in pork. She is being paid by the municipality.

Conclusion

The observation and argument from this chapter are derived from experiences shared by Balmiki community. They are still living and working within the dehumanize situation. Through this chapter I have discussed the ground reality of everyday experience of people who are engaged in manual scavenging through their life. People from Balmiki community are still engaged with their traditional occupation.

Chapter-4

Perception of caste voting among Balmikis

Theoretical framework of caste and politics

It is important to understand the discussion of any aspect of the caste-politics relationship. Caste provides the extensive basis for organization of democratic politics. In India caste remains important basis of electoral politics. Caste identities are important factor in mobilization of political support in electoral politics. Role of caste in Indian politics is very imperative in Indian politics. Caste provides the major vote bank to political parties. In India where caste remains mobilization has impact on electoral politics. Caste identities became important to political and electoral support. Rajni Kothari in his book 'politics in India' says it is not politics that gets caste-ridden; it is caste that gets politicized'. In Indian society caste groups can be distinguish by their social and economic condition. It has been major role in mobilization of caste communities in electoral politics. In India each caste groups has different education, occupation and life style. Political parties find easier to mobilize caste groups on the basis of caste identity, ideology and occupational interest.

Emergence of Dalit politics can be traced back to the British rule in India in general and introduction of separate electorate for different communities by them in particular.⁶⁵ Although it is became a part of Indian politics that dalits leadership have taken politics as their profession. Nowadays dalits are joining political parties. Mainstream politics has come changed now. The political processes led by Dalits leader themselves mobilize Dalits. They have different nature of politics. They mobilize people with different slogans. Mobilization of people belonging to different castes has been conceptualized by Rudolph & Rudolf (1987)⁶⁶ as vertical, horizontal or differential. Therefore the caste mobilizations in India need to be understand. In fact that in Uttar Pradesh BSP tried to Mobilized Dalits under the slogan of 'Bahujans'. Now it is also mobilizing Muslims and Brahmins as well. It shows that BSP does not fall in the category of vertical, horizontal and differential as given by Rudolph & Rudolph (1987).

The 'Dalit' is now commonly used in India to designate groups, which had earlier been given many names, including 'Harijan' (literally sons of god) in Gandhian parlance. The other usual expression is 'Scheduled Castes', an administrative category that the British introduced in 1935 when they established the lists of those who were entitled to benefit from special programs of positive discrimination. But the oldest name- Untouchables is still employed because of its

⁶⁵Vivek, Kumar,(2002), Dalit leadership in India, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication.

⁶⁶ Rudolph, I and Rudolph, S, (1987), The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India, New Delhi: Orient Longman.

power of evocation. Indeed, the notion of untouchables immediately calls to mind one of the mainstays of the caste system, the notion of ritual purity/impurity. In oldest Sanskrit texts dealing with castes, including the Rig Veda, Hindu society is divided into four varnas (colours): Brahmins (the literati-including priests); Kshatriyas (the warriors); Vaishyas (crafts and tradesmen) with whom ends the dvijas (twice-born) category; and the Shudras, servants of categories earlier mentioned. The untouchables are not part of this society- hence the other name they were known by in the past of 'out castes'.⁶⁷

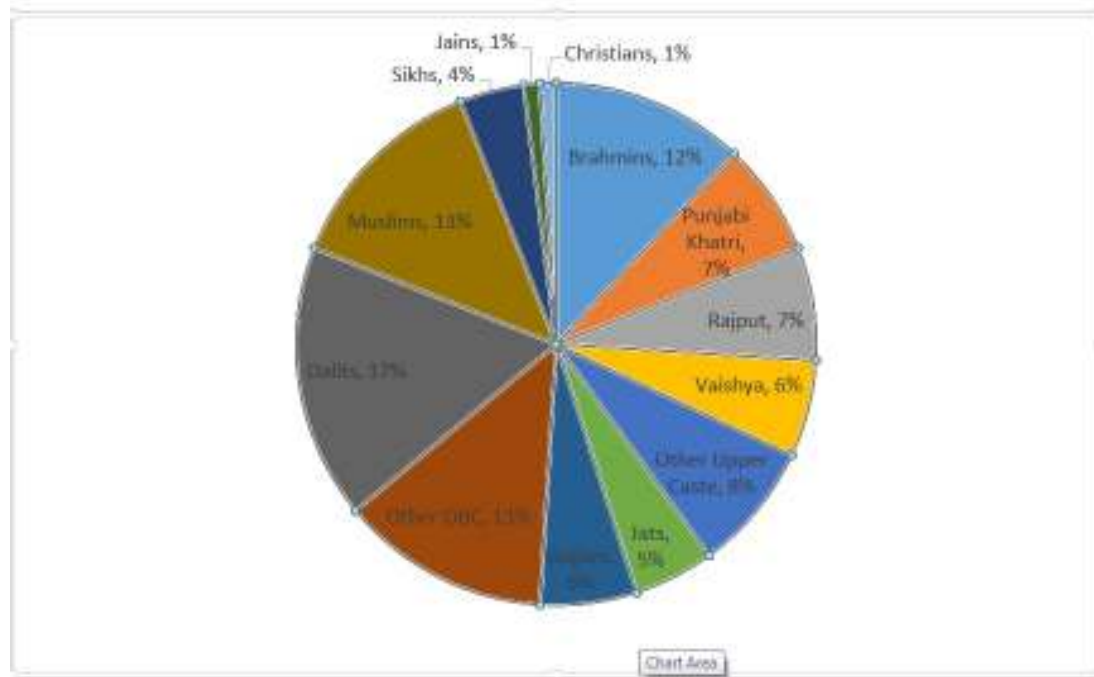
In Indian democracy voting behaviors is influenced by Caste identities. In electoral process in India, caste does matter. In India Dalits votes matters for all political Parties. The Congress has history of supports of Dalits votes. BSP is also popular among Dalits.

I have interviewed to former head of balmiki basti. That this place has established in 1970s. He and his family came to this place in 1983. In this place different family come different caste like Tyagi, Rajput and Balmikis. But majority of families from Balmiki community remain in this Basti.

Delhi Municipal Elections in April 2007 defines the democratic shift in urban context. Delhi safai kramcharis are the big vote bank in coming delhi Municipal elections. Delhi MCD elections witnessed the several campaigns among several parties. While people some votes shows their social mobility. There are certain behaviors of castes to cast their vote. Most of safai karamchari/sweepers in Delhi tend to vote for more than one party. There is difference in voting behavior of people of particular community. In Jharoda village balmiki voters are divided between the two parties one is congress and other is Aam Adami party. In last assembly election the community overwhelmingly voted for Aam Adami party. Voters from upper caste communities are more in favour of BJP. Jharoda village is Sedulded caste populated area. This area is known as Balmiki Basti or Harijan Basti. In India caste based identity politics is continued in India democracy. In India upper caste are traditional voters of BJP and Dalits and muslim voted for Congress. AAP has become famous among middle class.

⁶⁷ Christophe, Jaffrelot ,(2010), Caste and Politics, India Centre Quarterly, Vol. 37. N0.2, pp. 94-116.

Caste Wise Break Up of Delhi



Source: CSDS Reports

It is also observed that balmikis have been organized under different trade unions, but their representation in the state's political structure is very weak. The Balmikis another sweeper caste in north India rank very low among the sheduled caste in this region. Both male and female sweepers clean the raods and public places. They also remove dead animals from the public places. The sweepers go to the houses and collect daily foods. Balmikis are considered as untouchable caste who resides outside the village and their touch is polluting the caste Hindus.

Bhangis in Delhi were supporters of Congress party but now they support BJP. They equate Congress party with Mahatma Gandhi who, they believe was the first leader in modern times to have worked for their welfare. Gandhi had chosen the Bhangi, the scavengers caste of north India, represent the problem of untouchability in the country. He said that scavenging was an essential and an honourable occupation. He practiced what he proclaimed and his Ashram inmates carried out the sanitation work themselves. In later years he lived among Bhangis. In Delhi he stayed in Panch kuyian Road Bhangi colony. This barrack like single room tenement colony was built by New Delhi Municipal Committee. Gandhi's room was at one end of tenements. In the middle is Balmiki temple. In 1969, the Gandhi centenary year, Gandhi Memorial was erected near the temple. Delhi Bhangis feels proud that Gandhi lived among them.

Parties other than congress have only small following among Bhangis. But that does not mean that candidates of these parties have no chances of winning in reserved constituencies as in these constituencies in Delhi, the higher caste voters greatly outnumber the scheduled caste voters. But in the event of higher caste voters equally divided for the several scheduled caste candidates put up by the parties, the scheduled caste electorate can influence the winning chance of the candidates. For the reasons, the political parties contrary to the election laws encourage bloc voting by the past performance, the congress party has succeeded in the getting a large proportion of the bloc votes of Bhangis.

In 1930, M.K. Gandhi began to refer to the dalits as 'Harijans' meaning the Children of god. The question of name, itself the start of the self-conscious Gandhian intervention into the lives of Dalits, was superseded by a drive to transform the perceptions of the Dalits. Gandhi intervention in Dalit politics began almost from the start of his leadership of Indian National Congress in 1917, for he was a central character in the pact by which the Hindu militant claimed dalits as their domain. By the early 1930s, however Gandhi took charge of dalitudhar himself and he controlled the dynamic that disallowed the sweepers' struggles to take a radical direction. Reform was central to the personal Gandhian view of sweeper emancipations so, that freedom instead of being emancipation from the bondage of sweeping became a revaluation of sweeping itself. That is, rather than removes the prejudice against sanitation and urge others to join the sanitary corps, the Gandhian solution, for the most part, entailed a valorization of the dalits as sweepers, not now to be seen as the 'lowest occupation' but indeed as the 'highest'.⁶⁸

In Jharoda village nine candidates from ward No. 8 in 2017 North Delhi Municipal Corporation elections. This ward is reserved for women. They include contenders from BSP, AAP, BJP, INC and SWARAJ INDIA. None of them have a criminal case against them. Jharoda village is reserved constituency. In municipal election had to choose between the BSP, AAP, BJP and INC. In Jharoda ward the BJP won with 66 seats. AAP got 20 seats and INC got 15 seats. Most of people interviewed, said that we have only voted for congress party. INC candidate in Jharoda was the stronger candidate. The respondent said that he was a traditional voter of Indian

⁶⁸ B.R Ambedkar, 1946, 'what Congress and Gandhi has done to the Untouchables', writing and speeches (Bombay: Government of Maharashtra, 1991).

National Congress. In MCD election vast majority of people shifted to BJP First time. In 2014 lok sabha polls people switched to Arvind kejriwal.

I asked to respondent that what he thought about the AAP. He said that he voted for jhhadu. But *Kejriwal ne to kuch nahi kiya hum logo k liye*. Now we are expecting from BJP. That it will do something good for us.

BJP established a huge number of seats in JHaroda ward. It leads into complete clean sweep in the terms of seats. It was simply the contest between BJP and AAP. People choosed PM over CM. it was clearly modi waves which helped to get the vote in MCD elections. After the demonetization harsh effect, Kashmir terrorism issue and Romeo squad in UP people voted BJP whole heartedly in Delhi elections. People voted not for BJP but they voted for Modi.

Municipal Election in Delhi

The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) emerged as the clear winner in the Municipal cooperation of Delhi (MCD) elections with 181 seats in its kitty, bettering its exiting strength of 138. Ahead of MCD elections, BJP had given out the tickets to new candidates instead of sitting candidates. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) came a distant second with just 48 seats in all the three Delhi Municipal corporations, while congress could just managed to win 30 seats others got 11 seats.

General elections of MCD- Party wise vote share percentage comparison with 2012

Party Name	2012			2017		
	Seats won	Votes polled	% share (votes polled)	Seats won	Votes polled	% Share (votes polled)
		Total	615582		Total	7136863
Aam Aadmi Party				48	1871964	26.23
All India Forward Bloc		0	0.05		5865	0.08

All India Majlis-E- Itteahdul Muslimeen	0	0	0	0	18438	0.26
Bahujan Samajh Party	15	614116	9.98	3	316688	4.44
Bhartiya Janta Party	138	2261358	36.74	181	2575116	36.08
Communist Party Of India	0	7138	0.12		2661	0.04
Communist Party Of India (Marxist)	0	9132	0.15		9093	0.13
Independent	24	875529	14.22	6	602145	8.44
Indian National Congress	77	1880279	30.54	30	1504964	21.09
Indian National Lokdal	3	73424	1.19		58	
Indian Muslim League	0	798	0.01		58	
Jammu And Kashmir National Conference	0	126	0		0	0
Janta Dal (Secular)	0	7429	0.12		0	0
Janta Dal (United)	1	42842	0.7		46497	0.65
Lok Jan Shakti Party	1	40579	0.66		4862	0.07
Nationalist Congress Party	6	139311	2.26		23828	0.33
Rashtriy Janta	0	8923	0.14		3632	0.15
Rashtriya Lok Dal	5	58918	0.96		10717	0.15

Samajwadi Party	2	118867	1.93		27910	0.39
Shiv Sena	0	4678	0.08		16263	0.23
Nota	0	0	0		49235	0.69
Total	272			270		

SOURCE: NEC 2017

The result of the Delhi Municipal election hardly surprised many. All the pre-poll surveys and exit polls had already indicated that the BJP would retain power in Delhi. The remains why did the BJP come back to power in Delhi? The question was how many seats the BJP would win in the MCD elections.

The media's projection that the BJP's victory in Delhi was the result of victory in assembly election. Dalits have been mobilized by different parties in recently MCD elections. The Aam Aadmi Party has effectively managed to huge vote in MCD elections. For instance, why has only BJP been successful in successfully building a Dalit Brahmin equation? One can argue that the BJP did not earlier welcome Dalits as it does now. But the question is why Dalits earlier not supported the BJP. We can argue that the Dalits came to BJP because the BJP could give them a sure victory. Moreover, its younger generation have been stand still in the congress and BJP. Dalit will stay with the BJP as long as the party has power and they do not have space for development in other parties. This time BJP gave tickets to dalits from reserved seats. Political mobilization of Dalits is not new in Indian democracy. In Delhi Municipal Cooperation Elections BJP came with clear Majority. Caste Mobilization can be seen in MCD Elections. In Assembly Election BJP came as single largest party. Victory of BJP affected MCD election of Delhi.

In jharoda village Rekha Sinha from BJP won the seat and Yashwant from Aam Aadmi Party came second. There are differences in voting behavior of different caste. This time the Balmiki long considered traditional voters of Congress voted for BJP. BJP always has been party of upper caste. FCongress always has been its traditional support from the Dalits.

In India Caste and community which decide voter's electoral performance. In Jharoda village Balmiki voted overwhemly in favour of the BJP. In 2017 BJP and Congress invested enormous

effort in the campaign. Most of Balmiki were traditional supporter of Congress but they voted BJP. The congress defeated no doubt, but its performance poor across the city. However AAP won 47 seats. The BJP seems to have popular among the Dalit voter in Delhi. Congress managed to win 30 seats.

It is interesting to see that none of the candidate comes from Balmiki community in MCD election of Jharoda village. There is very low representation of Balmikis in Municipal Election of Delhi. those candidate stand for election they are not the resident of Balmiki Basti.

In MCD election of Delhi those who works in MCDs are huge vote bank. Most of them are intimately connected to their employment and their permanent recruitment in MCD. The BJP which has consistently won in democratic set-up of Delhi, which appears better organized and more willing to respond to people's demands than congress and AAP. The Recent MCD worker strikes are also make peoples to think again. The BJP has continued its dominance in the Municipal cooperation of Delhi election by winning 138 seats.

The recent Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections supposed an extraordinary impact among local body elections. the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) won third time continuously, wining more seats than previous time despite the poor performance in previous term. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which won the 2015 assembly elections defeating the congress was strong party in face of BJP. The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) won outstandingly in MCD election on 23 April 2017. BJP won 181 wards out of the 270. These ward are divided into sub-corporations with north, south and East MCD. BJP again retained in power in all three wards. BJP improved its seats with 150 to 181. MCD elections show its popularity of PM Narendra Modi and his policies. Modi's swach Bharat Abhiyan was also best slogan to affect the people's mind. Arvind kejriwal called vote for BJP and get dengue and Chikunguniya.

Municipal Corporation election of Jharoda village

One of the respondent of Balmiki community was general secretary of the resident welfare association, was the congress candidate from Jharoda village. He is active member of RWA delhi's Bhagidari scheme. He tried to get ticket this time from congress but couldn't get it.

This ward is reserved for women. Rekha Sinha from Jharoda village stood for MCD election and won. Rekha Sinha, 48 contested as a BJP candidate. She is graduate and worked as social worker. Another candidate kiran devi, 38 contested as independent. Suman Chaudhary, 36 contested from INC. Yashwant, 50 contested from AAP professionally is businessman.

Dalit mohhala are segregated from other mohhala. People come for vote but no one comes to clean our roads. One of respondent said that '*humare mohhale me safai koi nahi karta*'. In dalit mohhala people are still lives in unhygienic area.

A political activist of Congress party from Balmiki community who was aspiring to contest in last MCD elections also stated. In response to repeated inquiries about the significance of caste in local political life. He said *jati ke karan vikas nahi ho sakta*.

The BJP is supposed to the ideology of Hindutva, is basically an upper caste party. In MCD election BJP is succeeded in mobilize the Dalits through different strategies. The BJP has its image of regressive image of Hindutva. Besides the image of regressive image of BJP balmikis voted for upper caste Hindu in Municipal elections of Delhi 2017.

In MCD election BJP's candidate projects Modi as bold and honest prime minister in action. The municipal elections of Delhi were also influenced by BJP's significant victory in Uttar Pradesh's assembly elections. The most popular slogan 'Sabka sath sabka vikas' was invoking among peoples of Delhi though these were the reasons where voter got influenced with the candidates of BJP. Although it was common that BJP voters did not know the name of party's candidate.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan shines over the issue of caste, which is widely linked with sanitation problem of across the India. This is also related with the rights of sanitation workers. In India where manual scavenging is still prevent, that is to be discussed in this issue. Prime minister of India which promised the target of making Clean India by 2019 on the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was launched on 2 October 2014. The campaign of swachh Bharat Abhiyan has few things which went unnoticed and need to be discussed. There is need to be discussed the rights of sweeper who worked in the disgust situations. The campaign of Sawchh Bharat Abhiyan completely ignored the rights of sweepers. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

did not produced result to accommodate the specific needs of sanitation workers. Those marginalized and excluded communities engaged in sanitation related works, who have sacrificed their lives cleaning sewers and septic tanks throughout their life. The swachh Bharat Abhiyan do not accommodate with the struggle of Balmikis.

As far as Gandhi's approach and methods with regard to manual scavengers are concerned, he was sympathetic to the plight of Bhangis, and even called himself a 'Bhangi' and appeared to glorify what was considered to be the Bhangis dreadful work. He protested against their legitimate right to strike to have their demands met their grievances addressed (Gandhi, M.K, 1946).⁶⁹ In the face of strike called by sweepers of Bombay (presently Bombay), Gandhi announced: "In spite of my close attachment to sweepers, better because of it, I must denounce the coercive methods they are said to have employed. They will thereby be losers in the long run. City folk will not always be cowed down. If they were, it would mean the collapse of municipal administration. Coercion cannot but result in the end in chaos. A Bhangi may not give up his work even a day. And there are many other ways open to him of securing justice. Refusal is sign of weakness (Gandhi, M.K, 1946). On the other hand, Babasaheb Ambedkar was very critical of the Gandhian approach and methods to address the problem of the untouchable, in general and of Bhangis in particular. He was aware of the limitations of Gandhian tactics with regard of Bhangis and unlike Gandhi, he supported the sweeper's strike. Gandhi's thinking was not about the cleaning and sweeping of public places. He was more concern about caste and untouchability that exist in India. The stigma attached with particular community. he was concern with stigma attached with caste occupation. He stayed in Balmiki colony in Delhi with Balmikis who were engaged in caste occupation in 1946-47. Modi's used this Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for cleanness of Public spaces.

The Sawchh Bharat Abhiyan campaign impact on sweepers community that sweeping and cleaning is not necessarily caste occupation. Anybody can clean the roads and public places. Cleaning roads and public places does not need to come from balmiki community or Bhangi. The 'clean India' slogan made an impact on peoples that every individual should keep their neighborhood and public places clean.

⁶⁹ Gandhi, M.K, Sweeper's strike, Why Bhangis Quarter? Vol. 90:25 February, 1946-19 May, 1946.

These sections of people are continuously neglected by media. Media has been constantly ignored the situation of marginalized section of society who are engaged in sanitation occupation. Their problems have not been talk about by media. Media is totally neglected the problem of manual scavengers, which has been widely a problem in across the country. People like Bejwada Wilson, founder of Safai karamchari Andolan continuously working on emancipation of manual scavengers and also discussed the issue on TV channels. However media has not been very effective on these issues.

In Delhi Balmiki are still engaged in caste occupation and struggling for their identity. One of respondent said that “No one think about us. If we will not do our work properly the people will get panic. Government has not done anything for us. Our salary does not come on time. But there are no sympathies for us. But our condition has not changed yet. We still face discrimination people are calling us Bhangis and Jamadar etc.” Balmikis are also victim of untouchability because of the social stigma attached with work they do. Most of the children are left their school. They are forced to do the same work in which their parents were engaged.

The swachh Bharat Abhiyan must contribute the people who are engaged in dirty occupation through their life. It is necessary to keep them away from dirt and disease. There is need to understand the condition of marginalized community. Government and all section of people understand the need of this community. The swachh Bharat Abhiyan cannot be complete without the eradication of culture of caste in India. Those particular castes who are engaged in caste occupation cannot be getting rid of root of untouchability without the removal of culture of caste in India. Government should give the recognition for those who worked their whole life in this occupation of cleaning. India cannot be clean until the culture of caste eradicate from the society. The idea of clean India can be only successful when the problem of untouchability will abolish from the society. In India caste occupation has come as a culture which is major problem as poverty in India.

Anand Teltumbde explained in his article that the PM’s theatrics seem unstoppable. Within the last six months that he has been prime minister, he has engaged in too many of them but achieved very little of the *acche din* he promised the people. On Teacher’s Day, he cancelled the customary holiday for school kids and made them come to school to listen to him on television. On Gandhi Jyanti he again cancelled the commemorative national holiday and made people

wield *jhadoos* to launch the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Probably because Modi was doing a Gandhi here; because he anticipated some of the scepticism and quashed it; because the issue was too important for the image of India as a ‘great nation’ to create controversies. But beyond all this, the main reason for the silence was the collective ignorance of the causality of the unclean India being rooted in the caste culture and, more so, the need for its eradication through the annihilation of caste.⁷⁰

The constitution of India abolished untouchability but did nothing to change the conditions that reproduce it. The safai karamcharis, who had marched to Delhi, suffer untouchability in its worst form. They are untouchables not only to the caste Hindu but even to other Dalit castes. Gandhi, notwithstanding his regressive views on the matter, had rightly identified Bhangi (caste indentified with manual scavenging) as the representative of Dalits and posed himself as one to make his point. He lived in a Bhangi colony to show his love for them. It was imperative that the state swearing by Gandhi should have given top priority to outlawing this dehumanizing work and rehabilitating people engaged in it. But it chose to dodge the issue with its pet strategy of launching committees and commissions which while exhibiting concern about manual scavenging also deferred dealing with it for 46 years.⁷¹

Mahatma Gandhi got the inspiration for the use of human excreta or night-soil as manure in Tolstoy Farm in South Africa in 1909. He, therefore, initiated first battle for scavengers in a prayer meeting on November 5, 1917 in Godhra, a small town of Gujarat State. In this town, he got constructed the first Ashram for the uplift of Harijan (Bhangi) community under the supervision of Appasaheb patwardhan. He further emphasized that the night-soil should be disposed of by everyone and not only by scavengers, who followed this practice from generation after generation. But this idea was not at all accepted till 1918, when Mahatma Gandhi started his Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat. He gave advice the inmates of the Ashram to dispose of the night-soil them and not to engage professional Bhangis for that work. After this experiment Mahatma Gandhi propagated this idea all over the country, with an emphasis on liberation of scavengers from their traditional occupation. Once he said, “I may not be born again, but if it happens, I would like to be born in family of scavengers so that I may relieve them of inhuman, unhealthy

⁷⁰ Anand Teltumbde, *No Swachh Bharat Without Annihilation of Caste*, Economic political weekly, November 8, 2014.

⁷¹ Anand Teltumbde, Dalits Cry on the Eve of the Ambedkar Festival, Economic Political weekly, May 7, 2016.

and hateful practice of carrying head-load of night-soil". Thus, the movement for liberation of scavengers so that the movement of liberation of scavengers started by Mahatma Gandhi all over the country created an impact for a revolutionary change in the attitude and value system of the Indian society. Several conferences were formed to study in-depth the problem and issues associated with scavengers for their liberation and emancipation.

Besides Mahatma Gandhi, the contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Jyotir Phule and other social thinkers to develop the social awareness of the people for upliftment of the weaker section of Indian society and down-trodden castes or 'Dalits' like scavengers, sweepers etc., are of great significance. Dr. Ambedkar is well-known for his versatile genius, His interpretations, particularly of Indian Philosophy, religion and its historical analysis as expressed in his writings, throw light on his thought. The Indian society is deeply indebted to his humanitarian and radical approach in suggesting solutions to the problems of new social order based on secular and democratic traditional values. Throughout his life and till his demise on December 6, 1956 he struggled for the cause of liberation of the oppressed backward classes/castes and advised them to get themselves converted into Buddhism for graceful living in Indian society. Following his advice, many of them were converted, who were later known as Neo-Buddhists. As a Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar laid down the principles of liberty, equality, justice and universal brotherhood very impartially for all religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth without any inequity.

The level of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) victory in MCD elections of Delhi was expected least of all by academics and intellectuals. Voters were driven by Modi's wave. This optimism was based on many reasons. Modi was extremely popular and everywhere on television. The media indicated him as an agent of change who dared to take on the old guard. BJP has said it won't levy any new municipal taxes and existing rate will not be hiked. The party said it will start a new scheme under which meals will be offered by the civic body start from Rs 10. The BJP wants to ensure regularization of sanitation workers, while putting pressure on the AAP state government to regularized unauthorized colonies. Exemption from getting building plans approved for plots measuring up to 105 square metres will now be extended to plots measuring up to 500 square metres. Rs 10 lakh insurance cover for students studying in MCD schools and health cards for Delhi's citizens.

Politically too, scavengers are little organized as compared to other Dalit sub-castes and the disadvantage. While in the recent years there has been some change in the traditional occupational structure of the scavengers, a large majority of them is still given to traditional hereditary occupations.

In 2013-14 scavengers' rehabilitation fund is down 100 times. While the government claims the upliftment of dalits in society. According to the Budget allocation the share of Dalits in last UPA government was 2.49% of the total, but it came down to 1.72% in 2015-16, and 1.96% in 2016-17. The allocation for the current financial year is 2.44%, but expenditure is expected to be lower than the allocation.

Budget for Dalits (spend as percentage of total Budget expenditure)

Five year plan	Percentage
Five year plan (2013-14)	2.49%
Five year plan (2014-15)	2.82%
Five year plan (2015-16)	1.72%
Five year plan (2016-17)	1.96%
Five year plan (2017-18)	2.44%

Source: Union Budgets

Budget for Safai Karamcharis (Self-employment Scheme for Liberation ad Rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis, in Rs crore)

Year	Rs Crore
2013-14	557.00
2014-15	47.00
2015-16	10.01
2016-17	1.00
2017-18	5.00

Source: Union Budget

During the 2013-2014 the allocation of funds to the tune of 557.00 crores for the whole country was however too meagre to make any dent in the problem. In 2017-2018 the eradication of scavenging and rehabilitation Government of India provided only 5.00 crore under the central sector. The cuts in the Budget shows for schemes and programmes for scavenger's rehabilitation meant to address discrimination in society. The five year plan document mentioned that the liberation and rehabilitation of safai karamcharis as one of the objective of the plan. But the Estimate for 2013-14 was as high as Rs 557 crore. The present Budget 2017-18 provides less than 1% of it. The Planning Commission has provided funds under the Ministry of Social Justice and Welfare, which also shows the cuts in the Pre-Matric Scholarship Programme. The evaluation studies made to assess the impact of these governmental programmes that the effort fell far short of what is really required to scavenger's rehabilitation, mainly because of the absence of priority to the programme in the Government's planning process. The studies have revealed that despite the emphasis by all political leaders and efforts made by the Government since Independence and scavenger's rehabilitation is the revised programme of 2013, no tangible improvement has yet been achieved in a period of more than five year. The extent of scavenging in the country perhaps stands at the same level or may have been increased.

Conclusion

The study shows the condition of Balmiki community who are mainly unskilled and sanitation have been deprived of opportunities from the ages. The present condition of Balmikis is that they are suffering from unemployment and illiteracy. The study shows that nature of women in the sweeping work as an economic activity. There is no emancipation of Balmikis from a profession to which they became linked from ages.

The male members of the households who are relatively young and uneducated have altogether still engaged in caste occupation. They are still engaged in caste occupation because of lack of availability of jobs. Most of them are engaged in manual / physical work. None of them are in white collar jobs. Those who are college degree holders are engaged in manual jobs. But the parents of 95% percents of the respondents are almost illiterate. They have also been engaged in the caste occupation and their sons, irrespective of their engagement in blue collar jobs, have always assisted and are even today assisting in caste occupation. So far as children of the families are concerned most of them are engaged in caste occupation. However few parents opined that caste job is the safest one and if the employment opportunities are not available, their children must join the caste occupation. There are households where either one or more than one person engaged in the caste occupation. One of the important reasons engaged in caste occupation is economic reason although lack of alternative employment led them in caste occupation. In Balmiki Basti illiteracy and habit of drinking since long are also some other reasons. It is also observed that there is interrelationship between marital relation and caste occupation. 2 percent of males and 4 percent of girls were married in recent years in sample households. Out of total percent of wives, wives of 90 percent males were engaged in caste occupation before marriage. 45 percent of wives have now left it. Those who left it are illiterate and their mother in laws and parents are also engaged in the caste occupations. Thus, it is apparent that marriages in recent past have not broken the linkages between caste occupation and illiterate boys and girls of the Bhangis.

In order to establish superior status among the caste members, neighborhood and friendship the Bhangis besides their occupational mobility also adopt variety of ways. For instance, they change their traditional dresses, living style, language and so on. They also imitate names and

surnames of the higher castes, establish relationship with members of outside of caste, purchase new material goods, and also change food habit. They provide more respect and honour to the visitors of the other castes than their caste fellows. Also, they are very much particular in their dress and language when they visit the houses of any friend from among the higher castes. These things were observed in the case of all households although it was more obvious among those who are in white collar jobs or whose per month income is more than Rs. 2000 than the houses of poor Bhangis. None of the respondents feared that a time may come in their life when they will be compelled to re-enter in the caste occupation. But majority of them, irrespective of their social-economic background reported that caste occupation is safer during the contemporary phase of high unemployment.

There are different terms used to refer to Bhangis. But the Bhangis of Delhi like to be called by the term 'Valmiki'. They treat the saint Valmiki as their 'Guru'. Although majority of the respondent are indifferent on the question related to the caste occupation and persons engaged in it partly because their family members and relatives are still engaged in it. But 75 percent said that they will not hesitate to marry their children with those who are still engaged in the caste occupation or whose parents are still attached to it. The reasons they provided was partly social and partly economic. They neither perceive the occupation in a bad sense nor accept that it is less secured. They also speak out that it is difficult to find an employed bridegroom outside the caste occupation. If they were available due to dowry, it is difficult to negotiate with them. The remaining respondents however replied in the negative. They perceive caste occupation degrading particularly from marriage point of view.

Eventually, it observed that the view of the Bhangis in relation to the promotion of occupational mobility. The views of respondent were indifferent. But the remaining suggested that promotion of education, generation of social awareness, provision of more and more employment generating opportunities can definitely promote inter or intra-generational occupational mobility among the Bhangis.

Scavengers are not a single caste in Indian social system traditionally and instead is a product of the urban social system as an occupational group. Agrarian society was largely based on self-reliance and mutual cooperation and did not condemn any one to an inhuman status. Those who did dirty jobs lived outside the village and were considered non-citizens. Scavenging, i.e.

cleaning of latrines, roads, public places and carrying of night-soil are a need of an urban society and hence the scavengers as an occupational group emerged in cities. Gradually, the occupation became hereditary and later it degenerated into a socially condemned out caste-caste group.

Bhangi's function was an ingredient part of occupational structure of the medieval city. The work had to be done manually with a few crude implements and night-soil, dirt and filth had to carry on head. Hence, these practices condemned the workers to a sub-human subsistence.

Gandhi was concerned with the uplift and emancipation of all people in the lower rung of the society. These included the manual workers, service functionaries and those engaged in low occupations. Bhangis as the lowest amongst the low were his first concern. Gandhiji said the function of the Bhangi is similar to the function of the mother who cleans and sweeps the house, cleans the soiled clothes and body of children and is always ready to clean all that is unclean in the house.

In modern society there is a complete change in the concept and technology of civic sanitation. We have flush latrines (even with auto-wash facilities), underground sewers with pressure water to flush the drains and sewers, machines to eject dirt and filth from sewers, automatic sewerage disposal plants, water-recycling units and sewerage drying, packing and reprocessing plants for making them useful reusable material. This is no more manual, dirty, sub-human work or occupational in technologies societies. It has become a highly technical job employing high level of technology, modern equipments and gadgets and qualified personnel. But in Indian society it is condemned as a caste occupation those who are have doing this work through generation. First, this requires elimination of the need of manual scavenging and instead introducing technology and automation in tasks relating to scavenging and sewerage disposal. Secondly, to raise the socio-economic status of the scavenger's caste/class for which purpose their educational and skill levels should be improved and they should be encouraged to enter into alternative occupations.

The sweepers in north Delhi named as Bhangi, Balmiki and Chuhra. The most common name is the Bhangi, which is regarded most despised caste in northern India. They provide the necessary work in society but in the eyes of Hindus they considered as untouchables. There are various factors have been responsible for exclusion them from all the dimensions of the society. First, the

nature of their work has been always major reason of exclusion for them from the society. They are not treated as equal as the other people do their work. They are not respected as much as is expected as an every citizen.

The study would definitely remain an important attempt to bring out the change in their socio-economic conditions that has taken place. This would remain an important attempt to gather some information on this particular community and highlighting them through this discourse. The scavengers of Delhi are marginalized but are a heterogeneous including of three religious groups namely Christians, Hindus and Muslims. They trace their origin from Hindu who were follower of Rishi Valmiki. The safai karamcharis of Delhi because of their occupation have been considered as polluted by society. Although the untouchability is illegal and should not be practiced but these people face practice of exclusion in everyday life. They have no alternative left but they are compel to do the dirty work. Although the living condition of Balmiki in Delhi have improved but they still face social exclusion. The colonies of Balmiki community which are almost segregated from the rest of the communities. They have very low socio-economic conditions. Their family income is very low as their salary is not very much high since now they have not been taken in as permanent employees but have been hired as contractual labour only. Those who are in this sweeping and scavenging occupation do not have other alternative due the stigma attached with occupation. the present younger generation now going to school which making their family awareness about the necessity of education. Women in this occupation have dominant status in houses. They also take part in decision making and do work outside the home.

It is interesting to see that the practice of untouchability has been disappearing. The data show that 94 percent respondents said that they interact and move with members of other castes, and also that they have no inhibition in contacting with members of other castes and communities. This result shows that modernity and urban setting of Balmiki have weakened the caste bondage. It allows breaking the certain caste rigidities.

If the above analysis of the casue of the continued existence of scavenging in India is acceptable, it is also throws light on the correct strategies both for the abolition of scavenging in this country for the rehabilitation of the liberated scavengers. The real problem for bhangis is not the occupation of scavenging. But the occupation of scavenging is the result of centuries old caste discrimination in which they were marginalized in society, were oppressed by other caste groups,

were relegated to the lowest status in society and forced into an occupation which was degrading and dehumanizing. An effective solution to this problem would, therefore, require that they are not tied up in social bondage. This would require some drastic steps. If we are serious about liberating and rehabilitating the people who have been condemned to scavenging, the first thing that must be done is to ban the use of dry latrines and to attach heavy penalty for the offenders. If such legislation would create difficulties for those having dry latrines, it is not the responsibilities of the Bhangis. Neither should it be our priority. As a matter of fact, one is inclined to believe that when Bhangis become not available for scavenging modern techniques and even country-wide sewerage system will crop up in no time. Now we do not have the money for building a sewerage system or even for improving the system of removing the night-soil, because we have the Bhangis.

The legislation against dry latrines and against the employment of people for cleaning dry latrines, however, can succeed only if the people who are now condemned to this occupation can be provided alternate employment or unemployment benefits. Here the real problem starts. The problem is not of creating employment or finding the money needed for it. A country which is willing to spend thousands of crores of rupees for campaigning on Swachh Bharat Mission can definitely find enough money to help to give back dignity to people who suffer from dehumanizing treatment. There is need to allocate enough funds for scavengers within the programme for the Scheduled Caste and start special development programmes for them with immediate effect. These programmes should include housing, employment-oriented training program, inclusive of stipend for dalit students and loans for income generating self-employment.

Set aside a certain percentage of the jobs from the reserved quota for the Scheduled castes exclusively for the Bhangis. It has been observed that the quota of jobs and seats in educational institutional reserved for the Scheduled Caste often goes to few Scheduled Caste groups depriving others. This is not true. The quota of reservation for the Scheduled Caste has never been filled. The problem always has been to find not enough qualified candidates to fill the posts. What is actually happening is that only some groups are able to benefit from the reservation of jobs. This is because most of the groups are economically and educationally too low to aspire for any job that requires educational qualifications. Reserving a percentage of jobs for Bhangis will

not automatically give them jobs, because there may be many in the community qualified to take up the jobs.

Education is the foundation of all development. The dirt and squalor in which most of the scavengers live has made it impossible for them to appreciate the value of education for their children. In Bhangi colony where I had the opportunity to work, it was noticed that people gave more attention and care to the pigs they reared than to their children. Lack of education facility leads them to remain in the same occupation. Most of Balmiki are illiterate and thus educationally backward. In spite of their free education, children are not sent to schools in an overwhelming number of cases, and female education is not considered to be at all important.

Finally an important aspect of the problem needs to be considered. Due to various reasons, sewerage facilities have not been built in many parts of the country. Immediate attention needs to be given in this regard not merely to liberate scavengers but to develop basic and hygienic facilities for the people at large. Various studies have been conducted on this subject and different solutions have been put forward by different people. The low cost sanitation programme put forward by Sulabh International is one of the best. It is agreed by all that some form of sanitation programme needs to be taken up for whole country. Such a programmes like Sulabh International would benefit not only the scavengers but also the adopters and the whole community.

The vast number of people has suffered various forms of social and historical discrimination and disabilities. They followed occupations and performed functions which were considered degrading and accorded a low status in society. The notion and practice of untouchability, accompanied by the declared unclean occupation, acute material poverty, and denial of social and economic opportunities aggravated their social and economic opportunities aggravated their social and personal deprivations and sufferings. Linkages of the caste system with birth meant that one had to choose a particular occupation not because he happened to be born into a particular attitude or innate endowment for it, but simply because he happened to be born into a particular family or caste. The hierarchical caste system determined the social status which was extremely low for these groups of people. Caste determined not only occupation but also the customs and rituals regarding birth, marriage, death and in fact a whole way of life. The caste system did provide for various kinds of essential functions ranging from priesthood to

scavenging. The sanction of religion and the doctrine of *karma* rendered the inequitable distribution of status and function acceptable. Whatever may have been the justification for this obnoxious practice in the past, this system has no place after the passage of our Constitution which has declared all people as equals without any difference on the bases of caste or creeds.

The study shows that most of the balmikis are illiterate. The information about literacy condition in the family leads to the inference that most of the members of the family leads to the inference that most of the members of the family are illiterate, in few cases, some literate and semi-literate. In this way the educational, economic and social backwardness has placed them at the lowest stratum of society. In spite of the constitutional safeguards and legal provision in favour of equality against all types of discrimination, the unliberated scavengers still suffer from the evils of social injustice and exploitation. It is also observed that community has been excluded because of employed in the sweeping and scavenging work. This occupation has been the reason of exclusion of Balmikis from other communities.

Caste and residential segregation of balmikis can be seen in Jharoda village. To the large extent Balmikis are excluded physically in Jharoda village. Although caste factor in election have been changing in the city. In order to mobilize balmiki the leading party has been giving tickets to balmikis.

The occupational History of respondent and their family shows that there is insignificant change in their occupation, from scavenging to non-scavenging. It is generally observe that city is place employment can get with the exception of caste. But the Data shows that caste-relation still exists in Balmiki community. The study confirms that Balmikis are still in dominant in scavenging occupation from the time they came to the city of Delhi. Scavenging is very much disliked by the scavengers themselves due to the social, economic, hygienic and psychological problems faced by them in doing work. They are conscious of the fact that several diseases are caused to them because they carry night-soil and perform scavenging. They are not willing to do scavenging, but they are compelled to do it as they have no alternatives.

One very important aspect of the social life of Balmiki they constitute an underprivileged social group treated as 'Impure' and consequently ritually avoided. They are socially not accepted because of their ritual impurity and certain peculiar objectionable habits and ritually polluting

profession. They have been treated like dreaded contagious disease calling for a disdainful distance and the most minimal social contact.

Due to urban setting level of social interaction with other communities is increasing. This observable fact leads to a positive change in this society. But practice of untouchability still continues in the lives of these people. To sum up it can be argued that the scavengers are an important part of society who perform an important task. On the basis of study on scavenging and scavengers there emerges a very pathetic picture.

Manual scavenger play very important role in the society. Their situation must be better improved and protected. Without their help society will falter. They are ignored by government. After six year of prohibition, manual scavenging still persist in India. The real issue is that manual scavenging has not been addressed till now. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan must be dedicated for those people who are still engaged in this dehumanizing work. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan can succeed only when people from this community get emancipated. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan should be centred on those people who are marginalized and excluded. There are people in the Balmiki community who have remained oppressed through centuries due to the rigid caste system.

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Annexure

Interview Schedule

Questionnaire no:

House no:

Name of household	Age	Sex	residence	Education status:	Marital status	Occupation	Religion	caste	Sub-caste	Monthly Income
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										

1. Dwelling pattern _____
2. Which is your birth place? _____
3. Number of years living in present house _____
4. What was your native place? _____
5. When did you come to the city? _____
6. Do you have children? If yes, are they studying? _____
7. What was/is occupation of your father? _____
8. Did you find any difficulty to get this job? If yes then why? Narrate some experience. _____

Occupational history

Member	Nature of occupation	Member	Nature of occupation
Grandmother		Grandfather	
Mother		Father	
Wife/husband		Daughter	
Son		Daughter-in law	
Son		Daughter-in-law	

9. When people ask your community what do you say? _____
10. What is nature of your job? A) permanent B) Temporary
11. What is your mechanization of cleaning and waste disposal? _____
12. For how long have you been engaged in your current job? _____
13. Why did you choose this work? _____
14. Do you ever encounter sexual assault at work place? _____
15. Do you consume alcohol before work or after work? _____
16. Does anyone make jokes or embarrassed you at workplace? Please narrate some experience? _____
17. Did anyone frighten you or hurt you physically? _____
18. Have anyone prevented you to taking part, entering, talking, touching? _____
19. Are there other caste communities living in the same localities where you live? If yes which caste groups? _____
20. If yes do interact with them? _____
21. Do you attend any function with them? _____
22. Have you ever had food with them? _____
23. Do other Dalit caste members come to your locality or residence? _____
24. Do other Dalit caste groups consider you as a part of Dalit community? _____
25. Do you visit temple? _____
26. Which temple do you visit generally? _____
27. Do you go for pilgrimange? _____
28. Where do your community members perform their religious rituals? _____

29. Did you cast your vote during last elections? If no, what are the reasons? _____

30. Are there instances of inter-caste marriages in your family or community?
