BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR WELL BEING IN FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF JATAVS OF AGRA

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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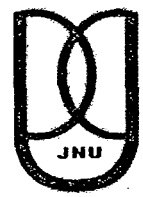

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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled **BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR WELL BEING IN FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF JATAVS OF AGRA** is submitted in partial fulfillment of six credits for the award of the Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this university or any other university and is my original work.

(Prashant Kumar Kain)

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

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Dedicated

To

The Jatavs of Agra

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the barriers to social mobility among the Jatavs who are engaged in footwear industry in Agra. Footwear industry is categorised into unorganised sector. This study brings about the problems and issues that the unorganised sector is facing due to high competition from the capital and technology intensive big industries. The development and processes in this industry shows how the global changes at Marco level affects the patterns of operations at micro level.

This study adopts a conflict perspective developed by Marx and Hegel. Within any process of change involves tension between incompatible forces. The Dialectical perspective therefore represents a struggle for opposites, a conflict of contradictions; conflict proves the dynamic principle as the source of change. Therefore in my view the struggle in Indian society is dialectical in nature, every caste tries to come up in the social hierarchy, which involves tensions with the upper castes. The upper top always tries to suppress and dominate the lower ones. This cycle continues for indefinite period of time. Indian history is marked by caste oppressions and struggle. The emergence of Jainism, Sufism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and anti-caste movement in south against the dominance of certain castes are some of the examples.

Most of the literature available has analyzed the footwear industry in terms of the structure, operation, and scale. But do not pay adequate attention to the social dynamics of the workforce and it's complex interaction with the structure. The available literature on footwear industry has treated footwear industry at core and caste at periphery. This understanding has not focused upon caste as a force in institutionalizing and operationalising those inequalities within factories. This understanding treated footwear industry as an independent unit where caste discrimination is seen in terms byproduct of some malpractices of market forces. This understanding has undermined a big reality In Indian context that is caste system.

This study places 'caste' at core and industry at a 'periphery' for its enquiry. Caste created inequalities existed even before the establishment of this industry and capitalism in India is the byproduct of those caste-based inequalities. Caste has changed its form in new changed conditions but it operates in industrial set-up, be it interaction between different caste groups, dining, believes etc. The caste structure

has remained intact although its forms may have changed. The upper, lucrative, non-manual white-collar jobs are kept by upper castes whereas physical, menial blue-collar jobs are left for lower castes. There is caste continuity in terms of role allocation and role fulfillment in industry. The caste based hatred and antagonism can be seen in the owner and workers relationships too. The exclusion of lower castes from high paid jobs shows structural rigidity that is in accordance with the caste system. The monopoly on lucrative and reputed jobs by upper caste shows how modern ownership patterns are replacing the traditional ownerships patterns. The traditional caste-based hierarchies are parallel to the class based hierarchies in industries. This is also evident in the interaction patterns of different communities in the industries. The interaction patterns among different groups are still governed by Caste based beliefs and practices. The traditional social structure is very much identical to the industrial structure and there is similarity in terms of functions and roles of different castes. Any deviance to these caste-defined roles is corrected by caste discrimination.

The globalization has increased easy access of markets across countries. Global capital is shaping the policies of government and this is evident from government's roll back from welfare, which created space to be filled by market forces. Now even basic human needs are seen as commodity be it health, water, sanitation, electricity or other goods. Human values are left to the forces of markets. Markets determine the quality of services one should get, which depends upon the purchasing power of individuals.

The structural changes in favour of global capital interests have undermined the autonomy of the countries. The changes, in favour of markets and capital at the cost of welfare state are creating a big divide between poor and rich. The shrinking public sector, technology advancement, flexible labour laws are affecting the structure and operation of production of units' world over. The emphasis for competitiveness, cost reduction, labour cost reduction; uniform policies and tariff plans, global standards are now guiding the priorities of governments and private sector.

Globalisation and Mechanisation has a very different meaning for the people who are dependent on small sector for their survival. The patterns of interaction is changing between different classes of people, it has huge social, economic, cultural

implications for a vast majority of people. The space for negotiation is shrinking due to Mechanisation and commodification of labour. In this advanced capitalism human being are being replaced by technology. The interaction patterns are changing between human beings, which are guided by forces of markets. Now markets are more important and ones status largely seen by her/his purchasing power.

The global capital is undermining the social, historical, and cultural context of different sections across countries. There is an assumption that Globalisation and capitalism will benefit all the sections in the society. But this assumption does not take into account the already established inequalities within groups across countries. The already prevalent imbalances are further reinforced and retained in the favour of dominant sections across countries. The already privileged sections are benefiting more by it, thus creating further inequalities. The changes at global level are devastating for a vast majority of people who are living on the edge. Global changes and policies have negative effects on the poors and marginalised section of poor countries.

These changes have vast effects on the different sectors in countries. The unorganised informal sector is affected directly and indirectly from national and international changes. The encouragement to bigger sectors in terms of technology import, infrastructure, exports, tariff reduction, export concessions etc affects the competitiveness of small sector against bigger sector. Due to lack of technology and capital these sectors do not sustain longer without any government help. The dilution of government sector in favour of private sector means that the government support in terms availability of safety nets like subsidy, infrastructure, finance and concession would not be available for this small sector. The dilution of safety nets means that smaller sectors productivity and demand cannot be sustained for long and eventually close down due to high competition from big private sector. Welfare state is diluting in favour of markets the policies are guided by Darwinian's notion of 'survival of the fittest'. Private sector is marginalising the government and smaller cottage sector world over.

The hunger deaths of farmers in Vidarbha region of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Tribal belts despite surplus food grains are some examples how socio-economic inequalities are increasing. People are dying due to

hunger and poverty and lack of treatment. All these incidents have its roots in the commodification of human values and roll back of government from its responsibility to provide basic life securities and welfare to its people. Everything is becoming a commodity that has a sale value in the markets. Markets determine what quality of services one should be provided depending upon his purchasing power. Therefore those who are already marginalised and living on the edge cannot survive in this competitive world.

It is shown from Indian examples how the unorganised sector especially the smaller one are dying due to high competition from the capital and technology intensive industries and cheap goods imports from foreign countries. The loss of opportunities due to lack of creation of new jobs, changes in technology led to unemployment. There are numerous examples where workers are loosing jobs due to technology and foreign imports etc.

The silk industry suffered due to cheap imports from china and Korea, Beedi workers lost good number of opportunities due to change in demand, the women agricultural labourers in paddy cultivation, Mechanisation of operations like weeding, combined operation of harvesting, threshing and winnowing and shelling affected women labour, women workers in tanning industry lost work due to excessive Mechanisation in Tamilnadu, small fishermen lost employment due to large fish vessels in the sea, the garments factories in Ahmedabad downsized it work force due to technological upgradation etc. The technology and international changes are affecting the employment patterns across countries.

In this background it is important to locate the effects of global changes on the footwear industry. Footwear industry is a largely an unorganised industry. The global changes like exports, imports, technology, informalisation of workers, cheap goods from china, and raw material supply from Taiwan have already affected large number of people especially Jatavs.

Leather industry is one of the major industries in India and footwear industry is one segment of it. This industry is one of the major foreign exchange earners through exports. It gives employment to more than 2.5 million people across in India. It has great growth potential due to the availability of cheap labour and raw material

in India. The forces of urbanisaton, migration, markets, industralisation and tougher international competition and gradual changes in the technology has compelled this industry to change its nature of production i.e. from labour oriented to capital and technology oriented.

The particular changes which have largely affected footwear industry are the division of it's old export market USSR and the opening of Indian markets for the cheap foreign goods. The division USSR has shrunken the base of Indian footwear industry and it has crowded the already weak cottage sector. There are large number of people who have lost their jobs and employment due to shrinking cottage sector. The government policy of promoting exports though active support to big factories has further marginalized the already shrinking cottage sector. The cheap goods from china and cheap imported foam have replaced leather and leather shoes in the markets. Which has negative effects on the employments of Jatavs.

One of the very important questions to answer is what is the significance of these changes for the low caste people in general and *Jatavs* or *Chamars* in particular in these conditions. How they perceive these changes and what is the meaning of these changes to them. How they are reacting to these changes, how their life is affected by these changes. Do they see any parallel in traditional caste based exploitation by upper castes in traditional economy replaced by caste-based exploitation in factory set up? They are untouchable caste and there is a value associated with them of being impure and polluting. Whether changed conditions have resulted in changed means of exploitation?

Jatav is a community whose main source of income is their traditional shoe making skills. These changes at global and national level have widely affected their sources of livelihood. The significant aspect of these changes has been a marginalisation of these people from upper castes. It has further increased caste-based antagonism and has widely affected the interaction patterns across groups. Control over this lucrative trade has already created antagonism between different groups. The competition between different groups has increased and they are trying hard to maintain their positions in this trade. The frequent religious and caste based tensions are just the examples how the changes at global level and national level affects the interaction patterns at micro level.

All these changes have different meaning for different sets of people; the meaning of Globalisation for a non-jatav factory owner is high demand, high margins, high purchasing power, and high consumption and high status. But on the other hand it has a different meaning for the jatav workers who are not able to manage two times food for them due to high poverty. This change for them is their increased dependence on upper castes for their survival, insecurity of incomes and jobs due to shrinking cottage base, technology for them is another way of replacing Jatavs with their means of survival. Technology is largely seen by Jatavs as a means for exploitation and deprivations by upper castes.

These changes are resulting into poverty due to job loss and greater social sufferings. The implication of these factors can be seen in the frustrations, stress, guilty, anxiety, hunger, ill-health, more degradation of living and working conditions etc. the carrier for this change are upper castes therefore Jatavs largely perceive it as another way of caste based exploitation by upper castes.

There are two sets of problems for Jatavs first is the marginalisation by the global capital and second is marginalisation due to caste discrimination. Both these factors play significant role in deprivation of opportunities for Jatavs. Global capital and upper caste in India have collaborated together to strengthen their position against already marginalised communities.

All these changes have multi-dimensional effects on the lives of Jatavs. The meaning of these changes for them are, loss of opportunities, job insecurity, hunger, wage and income insecurity, poor living and working conditions, low consumption, degrading living standards, poor health status etc. it is further marginalisation and deprivation of opportunities to them.

Well being is a related to these factors mentioned above. Their definition of well-being is also taking a shift now it is restricted to managing some job and managing two times meals which is becoming highly difficult in such a competitive environment. They are just witnessing changes, which are going against their interest. This is a caste-based silence as the oppressors are again the upper caste people, in hand with global capital. Any resistance may symbolize revolt against their authority.

Jatavs are the silent spectator with little power to influence the policies of government.

All these changes have various effects on their lives, they are suffering from inferiority complex, guilt, jealously, self hatred, frustrations, anxiety, stress, loss of harmony with self and others etc. it is evident from chapter later on how these changes are creating a lot of problems. Self-harm, conflicts, suicides, self-injuries, are just few examples to show the effects of these factors on their lives.

Although this study is undertaken on Jatavs but its implications can be generalized to other industries too. As footwear industry is one of the segments of large unorganised sector. The global changes have affected and shaped other unorganised segments too. The difference here is that traditional owners have become workers due to structural set up of Indian society.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research broadly refers to the search of knowledge. It is the systematic and scientific search for pertinent information on a specific topic. The *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* lays down the meaning of research as "A careful investigation or inquiry specifically through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge" (Kothari, 1999:1). Research is a careful study of a subject; especially in order to discover new facts or information about it (Oxford Dictionary, vol. 7) Research is undertaken to explore any topic to the fullest to understand its dynamism in its contexts. It is the interpretation and reinterpretation of the previous studies based on the empirical evidences and also a quest to know the unknown. Through it we acquire information regarding anything following the scientific procedures involved. It becomes very important when we are dealing issues that are important for the larger society. As an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge, it is the systematic approach concerning generalisation and the formulation of a theory.

There are various kinds of research and one has to choose the various methods, techniques and tools that suit the conceptualization of the problem under study. The various kinds of research are descriptive and analytical research, applied and fundamental research, quantitative and qualitative research, conceptual and empirical research, ethnography among others.

Statement of the Problem

The topic of the current study is **'Barriers to Social Mobility and its Implications for Well Being in Footwear Industry: A Case Study of Jatavs of Agra'**. In this study we seek to explore the socio-economic barriers faced by the Jatavs in the footwear industry in Agra. Here the barriers to social mobility among the Jatavs is an outcome of a complex interrelationship between the position occupied in the caste hierarchy and the socio-economic changes that the footwear industry has witnessed during the last five decades. Globalisation and Mechanisation has actually increased the pace of those changes. The footwear industry has undergoing segmentation and the position of Jatavs remains largely restricted to the cottage industry.

Rationale of the Study

The main factor which motivated me to undertake this research work was the deplorable conditions of Jatavs who live in acute poverty and misery. They are still considered to be polluted and second-class human beings. They have various problems other than poverty that so far have not been studied properly.

The marginalisation due to Liberalisation, Globalisation, or capitalism, etc. is well known but everyone has not been benefitted uniformly from it. The social context of India i.e. caste system has to be kept in mind while defining these changes.

Third reason was the frequent communal clashes between Muslims, Jatavs and upper castes. These clashes somewhere have its roots in footwear and leather industry. These are badly affecting social fabrics of society

The final reason, this area is located close to my hometown; therefore it was overtly not an unknown area.

Conceptual Framework

For this study the conceptualization draws from an understanding that well-being is influenced and shaped by the material conditions in which people live and work. It recognizes that in stratified societies there is a variation in the notion of well being – both at the level of perceptions and objective parameters. This study focuses on a socio-economically marginalized community that occupies the lowest position in the caste hierarchy. Well-being is a socially constructed concept and includes various components like wages, income, housing, sanitation, safe drinking water, food, security etc. It is this broad conceptualization that informs the inquiry of this study where through in-depth interviews with workers from the jatav community in the shoe industry in Agra, the researcher explored the perceptions and experiences of well being as well as the constraints and opportunities faced by them for socio-economic mobility.

There are two concepts to be understood with regard to this study, one is 'social mobility' and second is 'well being' and how social mobility is related to well being and how well-being is affected due to changing structure of the footwear

industry. One has to be clear that we are not measuring social mobility or well being using scaling techniques, but through in-depth interviews delineate how well being and social mobility are interlinked with the socio-economic context in which people live and work.

The concept of social mobility in general deals with the movement of an individual's or group's social position in a social hierarchy (Sharma, 1986:37). The concept of well-being refers to the state of complete healthiness, it has objective and subjective components to it. It includes standard of living, levels of living and quality of life components (Park, 2003:14). According to WHO, well-being incorporates income, occupation, standard of living, standards of housing, sanitation, nutrition levels, provision of health, education, recreation and other services (Ibid).

Social well-being and mobility are closely linked to the social background of the individual and the kinds of opportunities they have for acquiring education, skills and jobs. This in turn determines where they get employment and the wages that they are likely to earn. This clearly has an impact on their access to basic needs. For the purpose of the study we recognize that there is variability in social well being depending on where the workers are employed even while belonging to the same social group. we acknowledge that the footwear industry not a homogenous industry. It has various levels of operation like very big, big, medium and cottage. While majority of the jatav are working in the labour intensive cottage industry, a very small proportion has been absorbed into some relatively well-paid processes in factories. The bigger factories are flourishing at the cost of smaller cottage sector which is resulting into loss of opportunities and income for Jatavs. This study purposively focuses on the Jatavs working in different settings in order to capture their notions of well-being and barriers that they face for mobility which in turn has a negative impact on their well being.

Research Design

A research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research question or problems. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data (Ranjit Kumar 1999:74).

A research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. According to Jahoda 'a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure' (Ibid).

This research is descriptive and analytical in nature yet at the same time explores various aspects of jatav lives observed in the field. It has tested some hypotheses formulated after literature review. Different methods have been used to collect data depending upon the nature of data required.

Study Area

Footwear industry is a major industry in Agra and it generates highest employment in the city followed by tourism. The number of dependents on this industry cannot be estimated because of its being largely unorganised. This industry is largely unorganised and provides employment only for few months (3-4 months) in a year. There are various issues related to this industry i.e. unemployment, underemployment, child labour, caste discrimination, food and wage insecurity etc.

Footwear industry is located in Agra due to many factors like means of communication, proximity to markets, availability of markets, cheap and efficient labour and easy access to raw material. Though the factory-based shoe industry has been bestowed with many privileges and facilities yet the cottage-based industry is lagging in many respects.

We can divide this industry into 5 categories on the basis of per-day production, capital utilisation, labour force etc. The very big export factories employ large number (thousands) of people in factory setup and are basically capital intensive in nature. Here production is done with the help of large and expensive machines with trained and untrained work force. The Second type includes big factories who also use expensive machines and trained and untrained labour force. Third is small scale organised *Karkhanas* with 30-35 work-force. Fourth is home-based small *Karkhana* units that are largely labour intensive with limited Mechanisation, and lastly the home-based cottage industry which is labour intensive with small capital investment.

Home-based cottage units manufacture footwear and other leather goods with little capital and traditional tools with the help of family labour.

The shoe industry in Agra dates back to medieval time when it was ruled by the 'Moghul' emperors. Before the Moghuls it was a scattered industry wherein the workers basically the Jatavs popularly known as 'Chamars', (which is a derogatory reference for Jatavs) used to make shoes through the indigenously prepared leather and traditional tools and sold them in the markets. This was totally based on the *Jajmani* system wherein the role and work of every caste was fixed and lower castes were bound to give services to the higher castes for their survival.

The structure of the industry has changed over the past 60-70 years due to a number of factors, i.e. international trade, change in demand and supply, fashion, knowledge, quality control, technology and migration, etc. The traditional monopoly of Jatavs as factory owners and Muslims as factors[1] (middlemen) has ended. The lucrative upper segment is now monopolised by upper castes and the less lucrative bottom is left for to Jatavs. Muslims have been outnumbered by upper caste from marketing. These changes have created caste-based antagonism between different communities. The upper castes have created job insecurity for the Jatavs by monopolizing industry. It has taken Jatavs only source of livelihood. Therefore lower castes have again become dependent on upper castes. The upper castes have taken Jatav's role of factory owner but lower castes have not been successful to encroach into upper caste domains.

The large factories are privileged due to government help and are prospering at the cost of cottage sector. The change in the structure of the industry has also resulted in unemployment and poverty among some section of both Jatavs and Muslims. Since it is their traditional occupation for centuries, they are dependent on it for their livelihood. The higher castes have created severe problems for their employment, as they are loosing their own occupation on the one hand and wages on the other. It has started penetrating into the social fabrics of the society. The resources at the bottom end are getting scarce and the competition has risen to the extent of

[1] They are middlemen whose role is to organise markets, distribute credits and goods. They are popularly known as *Arhati*.

creating frequent communal tensions in the city. The high police presence in Jatav and Muslim areas round the clock shows the deteriorating conditions in the city.

Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to explore the socio-economic barriers to social mobility of the Jatavs in the footwear industry. Specific objectives are to:

- Explore the structure of footwear industry in Agra city;
- Explore whether the changes in the industry have affected the mobility patterns of Jatavs,
- Explore the socio-economic barriers to social mobility and the underlying dynamics of caste system in the footwear industry.

Hypotheses

As the major research question was to analyse the problems faced by Jatav community in this industry hampering its mobility, following hypotheses were formulated:

- The ownership of traditional shoe making business of Jatavs is shifting to higher castes.
- Social hierarchy matches the occupational hierarchy in the industry.
- There is institutionalised caste discrimination in the footwear markets against Jatavs.

The validity of the above-mentioned hypotheses was tested by an empirical study.

Conducting a Pilot Survey

The researcher went to the field for a pilot visit in the month of August 2005. It was slack season for the workers, so finding people in the factories was a problem except in the case of cottage industry. Researcher contacted and discussed problems with the workers, key informants in the industry and some local politicians. In a way it was fruitful in giving further insights of this industry and it's patterns of operating. Since the pilot survey was conducted, researcher did not faced problems later on when the actual research started.

Universe of the Study

The universe of the study was Agra City in Uttar Pradesh (India). The Footwear Industry is a significant segment of the leather industry in India. India ranks second among the footwear producing countries next to China. In India, Agra is a major center for producing leather goods including footwear. All the major and big footwear factories are located in Agra. Jatavs are doing this work not only because it is their hereditary occupation but also as shoemaking making is not an occupation for the Jatavs but a way of life (Lynch, 1969). Since Jatavs are found in large numbers in Agra city, it was justifiable to select this area for research.

Agra is situated on the bank of Yamuna River. It is located between 27°11' North latitude and 78°0' degree to 78°2' East longitude and is at 169 meters above sea level. On the north it is bounded by Mathura, on the south by Dhaulpur, on the east by Firozabad, and on the west by Bharatpur. Agra is the third biggest city in Uttar Pradesh. The population of the city in 2001 was 1,316,177, out of which the population of males was 705,953 and female 610224 (Census 2001).

The specific areas selected for fieldwork in Agra City were *Nala Kaji Para*, *SunderPara*, *Panchkuiyan* and *Meera Hussani Chaurah*. These areas have high Jatav presence and almost every house is directly or indirectly engaged in footwear making or leather related works. The *Meera hussani chaurah*, *SunderPara, Panchkuiyan and Nala kaji Para* are predominantly a residential-cum-manufacturing centers. These areas have small number of medium and a large number of home based cottage factories. Therefore it was easy to get data related to my work there.

A brief profile/description of these areas is given below.

Nala Kaji Para

Nala kaji Para is located near Collectrate and *Rawali* area. On the one end there is railway line and on the other end is a *Bijli Ghar* market. It is a low-lying area with one big drain dividing it into two parts. This area is considered to be the dirtiest area in Agra City. The jatav people predominantly inhabit it. On close scrutiny spatial stratification also was found. The Jatavs reside inside the area and as we move towards the road the concentration of these people dilutes and some more polluting

castes like Valmiki, Koli etc residences begin. Besides jatav, there is Muslim community living in *Nala kaji Para* as well but is separated by a railway bridge. A drain and railway bridge separates the Muslim and jatav localities. At the closest of the road we find some trading high castes have set up their shops of daily needs commodities. There is no shop of high caste in Jatavs' locality.

SunderPara

SunderPara is a small basti near the Collectrate. On the one side it is surrounded by *EIdgah* and on the other hand is railway line. It is located at the road-side. Like other jatav *bastis,* it is also a low area as it is situated 25 to 30 feet below the normal surface. The depth increases as we move inside it and find more degraded caste segregation like the *Valmikis, Ghiara* tribe or *Kanjar* community etc. It is observed that Muslims and all the polluting castes have been living together in these areas from time immemorial due to their similar marginal position. The houses are old and small with high density per household. There are very few older people in the *basti.* Very few people have latrine facility otherwise most of them use nearby open fields or railway tracks for relieving. Drinking water supply and water accumulation is a big problem here as water is most dirty and there is high voltage fluctuation and frequent power cuts throughout year.

Meera Hussani Chaurah

This area is popularly known as M*eera hussani chaurah* because of the sizeable presence of Muslim population. The Jatav locality is just next to it and other lower castes resides nearby areas. Compared to Muslim locality, the Jatav locality lacks shops inside it's area but in *Muslim Mohalla* there are a lot of shops without name on the shops, (to escape identification and prevent damage due to communal tensions). In the most deep inside, we can find some of the shops owned by some Muslims. Apart from them, Sindhis or Bania caste dominated area in terms of shops ownerships. The Jatav area has no shops inside it but it has lot of factories where they are working almost in every home. The smell of glue or pasting solution or sound of making shoes or *Chappals* or foul smell of leather, which are typical of all jatav localities, can be sensed in these areas.

Panchkuiyan

Panchkuiyan is a small basti located on the road to *Tehsil.* There are some 80-100 houses out of which some are new. There is a market on one end and some government flats on little far away. A Muslim graveyard is located behind this *basti* and in front a government school. Earlier Jatavs used this school space for relieving but now it has been boundaried. Behind this basti is Muslim *Mohalla* where Jatavs go for relieving which is a conflicting issue with Muslims. It is a jatav basti and all the people reside here are engaged in shoe and *Chappal* making. Although this basti was known for making shoes some time back but now it is known for making *Chappal.* The density is very high as all households have big families. There is no sanitation facility and water tabs are located outside their houses.

Selection of the Sample Population

The term 'population' refers to all those people who could be included in the survey. It may require decisions to who would be included and who would be omitted from this process. Therefore it becomes important to select the population to be studied with care and precaution. The Jatav people in the Agra city predominantly engage in footwear making work. Although there are some Jatav people who are also at the same time engaged in other occupations, but here the study is confined to those Jatav people that are directly engaged in the footwear industry. As the localities of all these people are scattered in Agra city, the researcher visited most of the places where Jatav people live.

All the factories are scattered in Agra city, especially, the cottage and medium factories. As various age-group workers are engaged in all these factories, therefore case studies were selected matching these characteristics representing different segment of various levels of factories i.e. big, medium, small, cottage and so on. For example there are plenty of children working as child labourers in these factories so a case was selected from it. At the same time, those women who did not go to factories but do the work in their home were also selected.

Methods

The case study and ethnographic method were used to collect the data. These were used so as to gather rich qualitative and desired information. These methods suited seeing the complexity of the situation as the community is studied was marginalised historically.

Ethnographic Research Method

The origins of modern ethnography are to be found in the work of the classical social anthropologists such as D.T. Evans Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Margaret Mead (Mcneil & Chapman, 2005:90). These anthropologists generally adopted what Tedlock calls the "sympathetic method" which involves gaining the trust of the natives that were being studied by sympathising and participating in their way of life (Ibid).

This method was extensively used both by the sociologists and anthropologists while studying the various groups in their context with regard to day-to-day life, culture, life-style, habits and other aspects of their life. This particular method gives very qualitative information regarding the social groups in their "original" setting.

Ethnographical research is very informative in terms of the quality of data with regard to any group or community's daily life, rituals, beliefs, practices, social and religious functions etc. So, this technique is more suitable for getting qualitative information of my population study.

I have used ethnography research method, as it would give a lot of qualitative data on jatav people. Although it does not follow a strict criterion of ethnographic research like (long duration) of stay in the community with full participation in their daily life. I lived with these people in their locality. I participated in their daily life so that I could observe facts more closely. There is hardly any distinction in livings and working place for workers therefore by living among made it possible to see their life closely. They also invited me in their marriages, their social functions, and I was in constant touch with them. I tried to participate in their life as much as possible to build a rapport. I used to sit with them while they were working and exploring their lives. Sometimes I used to help them in little processes to gain informality and trust.

Although I was a participant observant but it took a long time to understand the context of their interaction. A lot of information was gathered by direct observation and contextualsing it's meaning. I did keep in mind the objectives and tried to collect as much data as possible through formal and informal talking. Although most of the time I was a participating observant yet it was kept in mind that doing so should not dilute my role as a researcher.

Case Study Method

The case study method was used to collect data on workers' life in relation to their occupation and industry. It gave us insights of their subjective experiences and change observed and experienced by them. Several case studies were done from each category so to get a representative case giving clear and valid picture of the situation. Extended case study method was adopted to collect the data. As it was difficult to get information in one attempt, so repeated attempts were made to get the required information.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling technique was used along with the stratified sampling technique to collect sample. The footwear industry is structured in five categories i.e. very big, big, medium, small and cottage. Sampling was done accordingly so to get a representative sample. Various techniques used in data collection were focused group discussion, case study method, and participant observation among others.

The researcher collected 20 case studies. These were purposively selected representing various segments i.e. very, big, medium, cottage etc. Purposive stratified sampling technique to get 1 case study from very big, 2 from big 4 medium, 6 from small and 7 from cottage was used. In case of cottage industries, family as a production unit was considered. Some case studies were collected from various areas of Agra city on children, women, and elders.

Various case studies were selected according to the proportion of the each segment in the industry. Majority of case studies were collected in cottage sector, as it is a large proportion of the footwear industry. In medium and small, a large number of Jatavs are engaged as workers therefore case studies are selected from it also. The

proportion of Jatavs in big factories is comparatively very less compare to cottage therefore few case studies were selected from it.

Data Collection

The study is descriptive in nature and at the same time it seeks to explore the various aspects of jatav lives. It tested some hypotheses formulated through review of literature of previous studies in this context. Therefore this study explored their life in relation to the footwear industry. The data was collected through various tools like interview schedule, case study, ethnographic method, group discussion, narratives, field note etc. Secondary data was collected through previous studies, books, reports, articles, and web sources etc.

Tools and Techniques

There are various methods used to collect the data. Various tools and techniques were used depending upon the situations. Besides these techniques data was also gathered through informal talking and observing certain things.

Participant Observation

Participant observation method was used for data collection as I stayed in the jatav community and observed their life very closely. I used to interact with them regularly. This particular method was used to get acceptance and trust in the community so that people could share their life experiences with me. The psychological fear of other caste is so much in them that whenever they talk of other castes they lower down their voice. Caste antagonism and caste affinity works both negative and positive. Through this method I could validate their argument. This technique was used to substantiate and validate the findings collected through various techniques.

Focused Group Discussion

In case of contract workers in big and medium factories, focused group discussion was done. They were encouraged to enter into discussions in order to gather insights into the study. It also gave us some issues that person at times found

difficult to respond. The time and place considerations were kept in mind so as to get authentic information without any hesitation from the workers.

Field Note

Field-note method was used to record any interesting and significant aspect related to their life. There were so many things which the workers did not told but were observed; like their behaviour when referring about higher castes etc. This method captured in-depth information which otherwise could not be recorded.

Interview Schedule

Both unstructured and structured interview were used to gather data. The checklist was used to ask questions relating some aspects. Moreover, questions were also framed depending on their responses.

Narratives

Various case studies were penned down in own language. Besides this, some brief observations were also made and later on explained a little.

Strategy for Approaching Community

The community was approached through a systematic plan. I started living with jatav people in their own locality. The first concern was to break the 'insider and outsider' image. The acceptivity among the community was an important concern. They resisted initially by remaining passive, but gradually they started opening up. I got myself introduced to some factory owners in the locality. I befriended with many workers by talking to them informally. I started playing with them and slowly started talking about their lives. I also helped them in the small processes so that an informal relation could be developed with them.

To gain more familiarity I visited many workers houses and talked to their family members. I became a regular visitor and they made it a habit to see me quite often. They become used to of my presence and did not shy talking about themselves. I used to visit factories for informal talks. I told them that I am a student therefore

there was no, with (meaning incomplete) this assurance they stopped to see me as a threat.

I also used some more ways to enhance interaction with more families, like playing with their children, or flying kites, or simply talking to them in an interactive manner. I also attended two marriages of workers. These gave me insights about their socio-cultural life. There was enough confidence and trust developed between the community and me. They felt free to talk certain issues, which otherwise they never talked to anyone.

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Chapter 3

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present chapter analyses the relevant literature on social mobility primarily focusing on understanding what is social mobility and analyzing major theoretical perspectives on social mobility. This involves issues like causes of social mobility, consequences of mobility, changes in hierarchy, and change in place in hierarchy among others. This task has multiple dimensions and layers. The foremost concerns of this chapter are to locate the classical or to say the most significant theoretical concerns on the issue of social mobility. These writings deal with the origin of the concept 'social mobility' and its various ramifications.

Another layer of inquiry will take in to consideration the writings that are somewhat based on empirical studies i.e. studies having the base of fieldwork. The third layer of enquiry will shift its focus to the writings dealing with some of the cases/studies done in the Indian context. These studies again can be categorized into two categories i.e. those dealing with the community and those taking the geographical area into consideration. (However, the paper accepts that such a categorization is only to make the study easier). Broadly speaking, the notion of social mobility is intractably linked with another theme known as social stratification. The question here is why there should be mobility at all of what so ever nature? The answer lies in the theoretical as well as empirical realities of social stratification. In a very brief, social stratification is the hierarchical positioning of the individuals in any given group, community or to say in any society.

> "By definition, stratification is a common feature of systems of shared social inequality-of ranked social categories-whether birth-ascribed or not. Where membership in those categories is birth ascribed, the ranking is based on traditional definitions of innate social equivalence and difference linked to a concept of differential intrinsic worth, rationalized by a myth of the origin, effect, and legitimacy of the system, perpetuated by differential power wielded by the high and the low, expressed in differential behaviors required and differential rewards accorded them, and experienced by them as differential access to goods, services, livelihood, respect, self-determination, peace of mind, pleasure, and other valued things including nourishment, shelter, health, independence, justice, security, and long life" (Berreman).[1]

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[1] *Race, Caste, and Other Invidious Distinctions in Social Stratification*. Gerald D. Berreman Web source: http://sociology.ucdavis.edu/dgokamoto/soc230/pdf/race_caste_stratification.pdf

Another perspective defines social stratification as:

> "... the division of people into layers or strata which may be thought of as being vertically arranged, in the same way that layers of the earth are arranged above or below other layers. Social stratification manifests itself typically through differences in styles of life among members of the same society .... Such differences relate to both the material and the non-material sides of life and may manifest themselves in gross or subtle ways ..." (Béteille 1996: 846-848).[2]

In other words social stratification is an institutionalized system of social inequality. Those at the bottom do not share the same degree of social prestige and status compared to those at the top. Such feeling of 'relative deprivation' gives birth to the tendency on the part of the lower strata to move up in the social ladder and thus the issue of social mobility becomes important and relevant.

As discussed above, the issue of social mobility in connected with social stratification, a brief understanding of the latter and its various dimensions is important for the study. Social stratification is the hierarchical positioning of the entities (be that individuals, groups, communities or for that matter greater collectivity) in a comparative framework with others. It has various dimensions like class (economic position), status (social position), caste system, age, sex and gender among others. The functionalist theory of social stratification by K. Davis, W. Moore, T. Parsons and others see it as integrative and useful for the effective functioning of the society. On the other hand conflict theory by Marx sees it as an instrument of systematic exploitation.

In the literature on class the thinkers who standout in their contributions are Marx (focused on property) and Max Weber (focused on power and prestige). Although both wrote on the same theme i.e. class yet they shared fundamental differences on the mode of analysis. For Marx, human society has evolved through various stages. In every stage, there has been a fundamental division between two broad social groups. These groups are; one group has always owned and controlled the fundamental material resources that are necessary for the maintenance of social existence (he termed it as mode of production) and other group has not owned or controlled the production of such things (they primarily survive by selling their labour in return for wages to the former class). So for Marx, the various stages of human

[2] Béteille, André (1996) "Stratification" in Kuper, Adam and Jessica Kuper (eds.) *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, 2nd Edition, London: Routledge: 846-849.

society are characterised by two groups like in ancient societies - Master and slave, feudal societies - Lord and serf and capitalist societies - Bourgeoisie and proletariat (employer and employee).

Although Weber addressed many of the same concerns addressed by Marx yet the former had substantially different conclusions in comparison to the latter. In similar attempt of Marx, Weber agreed that 'class stratification' had a clear and important economic dimension. Further more he added two other related dimensions of stratification, namely status and party (or political power). Thus, Weber's stratification theory had three dimensions of class, status and party.[3] For Weber, the notion of power was important in any discussion on social stratification as social relationships based upon domination i.e. superior and subordination i.e. inferior. Power can be broadly understood individual's ability to control various 'social resources' i.e. those resources that are important in any given society. The individual's class position is reflected in 'unequal access to material resources' due to his/her market position. Status group consider themselves superior from others on the basis of their consumption practices. The power concept is then linked to the political parties as they involve in make laws in accordance to their vested interests.

Social Mobility in Class/Industrial Societies

After a brief theoretical understanding on class as a base of social stratification, we can now move towards understanding the nature of social mobility in modern, industrial class based societies. Such societies are characterised by high level of education, economic position as well as capitalist technological oriented work ethics. With the advent of industrial revolution in the late 16th century and the gradual emergence of fordism i.e. mass production gave birth to a new form of social order that had multiple class positions rather than dual as seen by Marx. This was also characterised by meritocracy whereby the traditional bases of employment and status seekers diminished. In this period of constant change, the study of social mobility became more significant.

[3] Gerth, Hans and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958.

The basic premise on which the studies on social mobility in industrial societies came to be more important in the context of social mobility was that these are more open than pre-industrial societies. The reason being so was the rise of 'meritocratic society'. In here, positions in the occupational structure are filled on the basis of merit and achievement and not on traditional ties. At the same time, increased mobility tends to dilute the sharp class distinctions of the pre-industrial societies. The cause and impact studies on social mobility where industrialization was the former and the social mobility was the latter variable gave rise to two different sets of understanding. The first one sees a significant impact of industrialization on social mobility and sees the former as catalyst for the latter. On the other hand is the perspective which does not sees any such causal relation between these two variables. A brief discussion on both perspectives is given below.

The first perspective argues that the trend of industrialization and urbanization will keep on going at aggressive speed. This is due to the dynamic nature of industrialization. In this process technology as well as the skills required will be continuously changing. This will lead to emergence of new classes to manage these tasks and thus the classes will multiply. The mobility of individuals will increase, as they will continuously look for new occupational avenues. At the broader level, the economic structure and social structure will change due to technology-oriented occupations. The labour force will become more technocratic and achievement oriented. Thus, new classes will emerge due to social mobility in this industrial society.

On the other hand is the perspective arguing that the pattern of social mobility remains the same in industrial societies. Consequently it does see any causal relation between economic development i.e. industrialization and social mobility. The most important proponent of this perspective is known as the Lipset-Zetterberg hypothesis (Lipset and Bendix, 1959).[4] This hypothesis broadly works on the 'saturation point thesis'. It states that the process of industrialization and consequent class proliferation is found all across the industrial societies. In the first stage of industrialization, there

[4] Lipset, S. M. and Zetterbeg, H.L. Social mobility in Industrial Societies in S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix (eds.) *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (1959). Pp. 11-75. Also see his Social Mobility and Urbanization, pp. 220-228. *Rural Sociology*. September-December (1955) and Social Structure, Mobility and Development, in Neil Smelser and S.M. Lipset, (eds.) *Social Structure, Mobility and Development*. Chicago: Aldine Publishers (1966) pp. 1-50.

is a rapid fragmentation of erstwhile classes but gradually such fragmentation loose their speed due to similar socio-economic conditions found across the society. All the industrial societies have a high rate of social mobility at the beginning, which declines later on as it touches its threshold or optimum level.

Social Mobility and Caste System

The literature on social stratification has also given enough space to another form of institutionalised inequality termed as caste system. In traditional Brahmanical sense, *Purusha Sukta* in Rig Veda explains the nature of caste system.[5] Later on, the society having the *Varna* base became caste based.

> "A widely applied and frequently contested model for systems of birth-ascribed rank is that of "caste," deriving from the example of Hindu India where the *jati* (almost literally, "common ancestry") is the type-case. *Jati* in India refers to interdependent, hierarchically ranked, birth-ascribed groups. The ranking is manifest in public esteem accorded the members of the various groups, in the rewards available to them, in the power they wield, and in the nature and mode of their interaction with others. *Jatis* are regionally specific and culturally distinct, each is usually associated with a traditional occupation and they are usually (but not always) endogamous" (Berreman).[6]

Another perspective defines caste as:

> "...a small and named group of persons characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less district ritual status in a hierarchical system" (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 46).

Caste has also been seen as wider kin group closely netted in blood ties. The following observation attests to this understanding:

> "The caste is the descent-group with a special role by which it is integrated into a traditional local or regional system of inter-dependence and interchange with other groups – a caste system. The caste may or may not have a distinctive sub-culture" (Kolenda, 1978: 9).

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[5] For extensive commentary on this aspect see, Shaping of the Traditional Pattern of Stratification in India by S. Indradeva in K.L. Sharma (ed.) *Social Inequality in India: Profiles of Caste, Class, Power and Social Mobility*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications (1995). Pp. 13-37.

[6] *Race, Caste, and Other Invidious Distinctions in Social Stratification.* Gerald D. Berreman Web source: http://sociology.ucdavis.edu/dgokamoto/soc230/pdf/race_caste_stratification.pdf . Also see Berremen, Gerald D. 1962. 'Caste in India and the United States,' *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 10, pp. 386- 394. The same perspective can be found in Mencher, Joan. 'The Caste System Upside Down, or the Not-So-Mysterious East.' *Current Anthropology* 15, 1974, pp. 469 - 493. On a different perspective see, Bose, N. K. (1951) 'Caste in India,' *Man in India*, 31: 107-123.

The major four *Varna* or castes are *Brahman* i.e. priests and teachers, *Kshatriya* i.e. administrators and military personnel, *Vaishya* including traders, merchants etc. and *Shudra* i.e. servants. There was also another category that of untouchables who was outside the purview of caste system. Then there is concept of 'twice-born' caste. The twice born are divided into two sub-groups: the *Brahmins, Kshatriyas* lie in one group and *Vaisyas* in the other. The once-born group is divided into *Sudras* and the Untouchables.

Another influential figure in the caste discourse is Louis Dumont in his *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970).[7] Many a times, his notion of inequality is different from that existing in the western society. His discussion on inequality begins with discussions on Rousseau and Tocquvellie's notion of inequality. The concepts of purity and impurity not as elements in a system, but as a structure and the relationship between hierarchy and 'Varna' are two important considerations for him. For him the notions of pure and impure and the fundamental opposition between these two are very important. According to him,

> "....this opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate, and underlies the division of labor because pure and impure occupations must likewise be kept separate" (Dumont, 1970: 43).

Broadly understood, ritual pollution of individual of upper caste is the result of contact e.g. touching, accepting food from, or having sex with a member of a lower caste. This can be seen as one of the reason as to why castes are always endogamous. A purification rite only can remove the pollution. An important tenet here is that only the higher caste person is ritually polluted by accepting food from a member of a lower caste and not the vice-versa. Dumont here argues that:

> "It is the principle of purity-impurity which operates to keep the segments separate from one another. Each jati closes its boundaries to lower jatis, refusing them the privilege of intermarriage and other contacts defined as polluting to the higher jati. Each jati, in turn, is excluded by the jatis ranking above it in a local caste hierarchy. Thus, differences in degree of pollution create closed segments, as each segment tries to preserve its own degree of purity from contamination by lower castes. It is, in turn, excluded as a contaminator by castes above" (Dumont, 1970: 59-60, 197).

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[7] Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications.* University of Chicago: Chicago Press (1970). For a critic, see Barnett, S., L. Fruzzetti, et al. (1976). "Hierarchy Purified: Notes on Dumont and His Critics." *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXV (4): 627-638.

His discussions on element and system, place of ideology in caste system and notion of structure are important to understand caste system. His further discussion on the theory of the 'Varna' involving power and priesthood taking into account the hierarchy and power relocates the debate of caste. He also explained '*jajmani*' system in caste system. For him, the caste-based society has the structure of hierarchy according to which the castes are ranked in a hierarchical manner. Sacred notions of ritual purity govern this hierarchy.

Broadly understood, social mobility occurs whenever people move across social class boundaries, or from one occupational level to another. The unit of analysis in studies of social mobility can be both, individual as well as group i.e. collective mobility. The multiple dimensions are prestige, income social class and status grouping. It can be both upward mobility and downward mobility. In vertical mobility, the transition of an individual takes place from one social stratum to another. In relation to this is horizontal mobility where the structural position of the individuals or group does not changes rather there is only positional change. In here, transition of an individual takes place from one social group to another situated on the same level.

Then there is a geographical dimension of social mobility known as spatial mobility, which is most of the time reflected in migration studies, covered both by demographers as well as in context of rural-urban and vice-versa migration in sociology. Another perspective on mobility takes 'time frame' of mobility' into consideration. Here, intergenerational mobility compares parent's levels to that of their children. On the other hand, intra-generational mobility plots career shifts within a person's lifetime. The pioneer study on social mobility that takes into account social stratification has been done by Sorokin (1959).[8] For him,

> "By social mobility is understood any transition of an individual or social object or value--anything that has been created or modified by human activity--from one social position to another. There are two principal types of social mobility, *horizontal* and *vertical*. By horizontal social mobility or shifting, is meant the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated on the same level. By *vertical* social mobility is meant the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another. According to the direction of the transition there are two types of vertical social mobility: *ascending* and *descending*, or *social climbing* and *social sinking*. According to the nature of the stratification, there are ascending and descending

[8] P. Sorokin. *Social and Cultural Mobility*. New York. The Free Press (1959).

currents of economic, political, and occupational mobility, not to mention other less important types. According to the nature of the stratification, there are ascending and descending currents of economic, political, and occupational mobility, not to mention other less important types" (Sorokin, 1959).

Sources of Social Mobility

There are various sources of social mobility. Significant among these are the socio-cultural and political participation of the concerned collectivity or individual. At the same time, any positive or upward movement in the economic status of the group also affects the degree of social mobility. Many a times it has been seen in the empirical analysis that these appear in intricate internal dynamics to propel the speed of social mobility. Regarding the multiple perspectives on social mobility, it has been said that:

"....two sets of methodological approaches have been suggested in the theory to measure social mobility. In the first set, it is suggested to compare (i) the present status with that of the past; (ii) the mobility in one area or country with that of another; and (iii) one model of mobility with another expressing equal opportunity. In the second set, it is envisaged that we adopt the conventional method of ascertaining mobility by comparing father's and son's positions. Social mobility is caused by (i) the supply of vacant status, and (ii) the interchangeability of ranks. Finally, the theory winds-up with findings regarding the political consequences of social mobility" (Nandu Ram, 1995: 442).[9]

After a brief theoretical introduction of various bases of social stratification and its relationship with social mobility, the paper now shifts to some of the major events and respective studies documenting the social mobility among caste groups and communities.

One of the parameters through which British colonial administration understood Indian society was the caste system. The following observation attests this fact:

"In view of the interest taken by the British administrators in the subject of ethnicity and the institution of caste, it was not surprising that the first universal census questionnaire adopted for the census of the 1870s included separate items on 'religion' and 'caste or class', besides 'race or nationality or country of birth'. In 1881, a separate item on 'mother-tongue' was added and the question on caste was modified to re ad 'caste, if Hindu, sect, if of other religion'. The question on caste, in fact, received more attention in 1891, as there were attempts to get more details by providing for a separate item on the sub-division of caste or race in addition to the question on the main caste or race. The schedule adopted for 1901 Census, in addition to items like 'religion, and language ordinarily used', provided for the first time recording

[9] Social Mobility and Status-Identification among the Scheduled Castes: A Synoptic View by Nandu Ram in K.L. Sharma (ed.) *Social Inequality in India: Profiles of Caste, Class, Power and Social Mobility*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications (1995).

> of 'tribe' and the relevant question was amplified to read 'caste of Hindus and Jains, tribe or race of others'" (Padmanabha, 1978: 2-3).[10]

The British colonial authorities conducted the first census of India in 1881. The third general census of India was conducted in 1901 under the guidance of Sir Herbert Risley. It adopted principle of "Classification by Social Precedence as Recognized by Native Public Opinion". Seen as the beginning of caste politics of census, its main objective was to classify various castes into four *varna*. It defined caste as:

> "A collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, which usually denotes or is associated with a specific occupation; claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same calling, and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. A caste is almost invariably endogamous, in the sense that a member of the large circle denoted by the common name may not marry outside that circle, but within the circle there are usually a number of smaller circles, each of which is also endogamous." [11]

The 1911 census laid down ten tests to distinguish castes from each other. These were:

> "(1) denied the supremacy of the Brahmins; (2) did not receive the Mantra from *Brahmana* or other recognised Hindu Guru; (3) denied the authority of the Vedas; (4) did not worship the great Hindu Gods; (5) were not served by good *Brahmanas*; (6) have no Brahmin priests at all; (7) have no access to the interior of the ordinary Hindu temple; (8) cause pollution; (9) bury their dead and (10) eat beef and do not reverence the cow."[12]

The Census of 1921 and 1931 repeated the procedures. The Census of 1941 was conducted during the World War II. It was a sort of a rough measure to fulfill the formality. The last census based on caste categories was conducted in 1951 giving the population of the Scheduled Castes in India as 513 lakhs.

The initial assertion of the lower caste and class and its gradual crystallization into the formation of caste *sabha* can be seen in the Mertonian framework of manifest (intended) and latent (unintended) functions (Merton 1957: 60-69).[13] The manifest function of British initiation of caste enumeration was to increase the administrative

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[10] *Indian Census and Anthropological Investigations*. Xth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. P. Padmanabha, Registrar General, India (1978).
Web Address: http://www.censusindia.net/library/anthro.pdf
[11] Source: http://10.1911encyclopedia.org/I/IN/INDIA.htm.
[12] Source: http://10.1911encyclopedia.org/I/IN/INDIA.htm.
[13] Pp. 60 – 69. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Merton, R. K. Glencoe, IL: Free Press (1957).

efficiency. The latent one was the effort of castes to enumerate themselves at the higher index of social hierarchy. The initial purpose of the caste census was to enumerate the respective caste population but gradually it became a potent source to improve the social position of respective caste[14] as "getting the names recorded in the census was part of the struggle to achieve a higher status than before" (Srinivas, [1962] 1970: 18). It 'livened up' the caste consciousness as:

> ".....various ambitious castes quickly perceived the chances of raising their status. They invited conferences of their members, and formed councils to take steps to see that their status was recorded in the way they thought was honorable to them. Other castes that could not but resent this 'stealthy' procedure to advance, equally eagerly began to controvert their claims. Thus a campaign of mutual recrimination was set afoot" (Ghurye 1979: 278).

The process of social mobility within caste system can be seen from the following observation:

> "Going by K. S. Singh's Foreword to the 1986 reprint of Hutton's report, in the 1931 Census, 175 claims to higher rank were registered, out of which 80 were to Kshatriya status, 33 to Brahmin, and 15 to Vaisya in the four census regions (United Provinces, Bengal and Sikkim, Bihar and Orissa, and Central Provinces and Berar). There were similar claims in the rest of the country as well, many of them since the 1871 Census itself" (Radhakrishnan, 1998).

Social mobility in caste system became more visible a pattern to be ignored and was defined by Srinivas as sanskritisation process which is "the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other groups, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community" (Srinivas, 1987:6).

Another potent means of social mobility in the caste system is the political mobilization of the respective caste in the broader framework of Indian democratic politics.[15] Such tendencies/instances or for that matter empirical evidences have

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[14] "As far back as 1867-1871, when the first census operations were conducted in India, two peasant castes of Madras Presidency wanted to be classified as high castes, one as *Kshatriya* and the other as *Vaishya*. The tendency to claim Kshatriya or Vaishya status by low status groups increased significantly in 1881 and1891 censuses." *Divide and Rule*, M N Srinivas, The Times of India, May 7, 1998. Also see section on Some Expressions of Caste Mobility, pp. 95-124 in *Social Change in Modern India*. M.N. Srinivas. First published 1966 by the University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles. Indian edition in 1972 by Orient Longman Limited: New Delhi.

[15] For details see, section on Competing Castes: The Assertion of Identities in *Mistaken Modernity: India Between Worlds*. Dipankar Gupta. New Delhi: HarperCollins (2000). Pp. 107-134.

become more visible in Indian democratic setup. The earlier form of such groupings was caste Sabha or association that later on gave way to the 'vote bank politics' discourse.[16] Some of the significant studies dealing with this broadening of the political sphere in the context of social mobility are now discussed.

The study done by Yogendra Yadav describes this phenomenon as 'second democratic upsurge'.[17] He broadly defined it as 'a participatory upsurge among the socially underprivileged, whether seen in terms of caste hierarchy, economic class, gender distinction or the rural-urban divide. They do not lag behind the socially privileged as they did in the past; indeed in some respects they are more active today than the former' (Yadav 2000: 120).

Another noteworthy attempt to document the upward social mobility based on political mobilization of the lower caste segment has been done by Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao (Frankel and Rao 1989, 1990; Frankel 2000: 233-245).[18] These edited versions include separate chapters on the respective Indian states. The basic thrust and argument of the authors is that there has been a gradual decline of the Brahminical social order in the sphere of Indian politics. The lower backward castes have become too assertive to be ignored. And gradually the latter are becoming coalition partners in the government making process or at the extreme are replacing the age-old Brahminical social order. For them, the earlier upper caste/class dominance has been effectively challenged by the emerging middle and lower caste/class thus heralding a 'political and social transfer' of power.

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[16] "The caste association, a voluntary organization composed of members from a single caste, was also viewed by political scientists as a potentially important political instrument. The caste association could demand candidacies or concessions in return for support by the caste. Also, through the association the urban politically-literate elite were linked with the less literate villagers belonging to the same caste." Pp. 121. *Caste in Contemporary India: Beyond Organic Solidarity*. P. Kolenda. California: The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company, Inc. (1978).

[17] Yadav, Y. (2000) 'Understanding the second democratic upsurge: Trends of bahujan participation in electoral politics in the 1990s', in Francine R. Frankel, Zoya Hasan, Rajeev Bhargava and Balveer Arora (eds.), *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 120-145. Yadav, Y. and S. Palshikar. (2003) 'From hegemony to convergence: Party system and electoral politics in the Indian states, 1952-2002', *Journal of Indian Institute of Political Economy*, XV (1&2). January-June.

[18] Francine R. Frankel and M.S.A Rao (eds.) *Dominance and Social Order*. 2 Vols. Delhi: Oxford University Press (1989, 1990). Also see Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-77: The Gradual Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1978). Frankel, F. R. (1991) 'Middle classes and castes in Indian politics: Prospects for political accommodation', in Atul Kohli (ed.), *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*. 2nd Edition. Delhi: Orient Longman. Frankel, F.R. (2000) 'Decline of a social order', in Zoya Hasan (ed.) *Politics and the State in India: Readings in Indian Government and Politics -3*. New Delhi: Sage Publication. Pg. 233-245.

At the micro level, Sudha Pai has analyzed *Bahujan Samajwadi* Party (initially a *dalit* movement culminating as a political party of Uttar Pradesh).[19] She is of the view that the movement has given a serious blow to the Brahmanical social order. At the same time she has apprehension about the success of this mobilization as the movement has been an 'unfinished democratic revolution' due to its gradual dilution in the broader body politic. According to her, '..... party once eulogized as a social movement that would introduce social revolution and transformation' has not been up to the optimum as '...the party leadership has used it for short term electoral gains and capture of power for brief periods, rather than for substantial long-term gains, such as Dalit upliftment and social transformation' (Pai 2002: 2).

In the same line of argument is the notion of 'silent revolution' in the context of north-Indian (primarily Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) political scenario.[20] This is characterized by the increased representation of erstwhile lower castes (*Yadav* community) in the Indian polity reflecting the altered form of political discourse. The author sees it as revolution because 'power is being transferred, on the whole peacefully, from the upper caste elites to various subaltern groups; it is 'silent' as 'the whole process is incremental: the upper castes are still in command, with the OBCs forming a second line of leadership, a new generation is waiting (Jaffrelot 2003: 494).

Social Mobility, Caste and Economic Factors

The economic factors many a time lead to the process of social change with in the caste system. It sometimes leads to the social mobility.[21] The category of class becomes relevant here for our study. Some of the major studies dealing with these issues are now briefly discussed.

An important figure in this context is British anthropologist F.G. Bailey and his 38 months of fieldwork between 1952-1959 on local and informal politics of

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[19] Pai, S. (2002) *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.

[20] Jaffrelot, C. (2002) *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India.* Permanent Black.

[21] There have been numerous studies on this aspect. For details see Caste in Itself, Caste and Class, or Caste in Class by Ramkrishna Mukherjee. *Journal of World-Systems Research,* VI, 2, Summer/Fall 2000, pp. 332-339. Special Issue: Festchrift for Immanuel Wallerstein – Part I. Also see Indian Castes: Old and New. Michael M. Ames. *Pacific Affairs,* Vol. 44, No. 1. Spring (1971), pp. 81-91. Web Source: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-851X(197121)44%3A1%3C81%3AICOAN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4

everyday life in Orissa.[22] The basic argument of the author is that the caste mobility of the respective caste is reflected in the corresponding changes in the ownership of land. He begins by discussing the distribution of land among the castes in his fieldwork (Bailey, 1957: 48-49).

Another important figure in the Indian Sociology among others who tried a synthesis between western classical sociological theories and the Indian empirical reality is Andre Beteille. "He almost alone among the Indian sociologists has acknowledged Weber's influence explicitly"[23] in his study in the *Sripuram* village in *Tanjore* district of Tamil Nadu State in South India. Following Weberian notion of social stratification based on class, status and party, the study was later on documented as book titled *Class, caste, and power: Changing patterns of stratification in a Tanjore village* (1965).[24] As the study analysed the social mobility in the caste system, a brief discussion on this is important for the purpose of our study.

The book "discusses three important aspects of the social structure of Sripuram i.e. its caste structure, its class system, and the distribution of power within it" (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 184) a village "situated on the north bank of the Kaveri, in the Tanjore taluk of Tanjore district.....about eight miles north by northwest of Tanjore and is adjacent to Thiruvaiyar on the western side" (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 20) having 42 endogamous castes. These castes are later on divided into three groups i.e. Brahmins (12 castes), non-Brahmins (26 castes) and Untouchables or '*Adi-dravidas*' (4 castes). Following the 'purity and pollution' logic which most of the times had spatial dimension also, the above groups live in their respective area of the village. As a result, untouchables are not allowed to enter the streets or public places used by Brahmins.

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[22] *Caste and the Economic Frontier: A Village in Highland Orissa.* F.G. Bailey. Manchester: University of Manchester (1957). Other significant study is *Tribe, Caste and Nation: A Study of Political Activity and Political Change in Highland Orissa.* F.G. Bailey. Manchester: Manchester University Press (1960). Also see *Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1960.* F.G. Bailey Berkeley: University of California Press (1963).

[23] Pp. 105. Sociologists and Inequality in India: The Historical Context by S. Saberwal in K.L. Sharma (ed.) *Social Inequality in India: Profiles of Caste, Class, Power and Social Mobility*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications (1995).

[24] Béteille, A. (1965). *Class, caste, and power: Changing patterns of stratification in a Tanjore village.* Berkeley and Los.

After a brief socio-economic profile and caste structure, the author then proceeds to empirically elucidate Weberian bases of social stratification i.e. class, status and power. Describing the traditional economic power structure while discussing the "organisation of production" and "class as a system of social relations" (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 102), the author states that traditionally the village economic power was in the hands of the Brahmins. The Brahmins owned most of the land. The non-Brahmins were either tenants or labourers on the Brahmin's land. And finally, the last ring of the social hierarchy, the untouchables were labourers on the former's land. Thus,

> "....the basic cleavage within the class structure is between owners and non-owners of the means of production. As far as agriculture is concerned, this reduces essentially to ownership or non-ownership of land" (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 110-111).

This stratification also had an element of authority. Broadly understood, authority refers to the legitimate form of power i.e. when the bottom voluntarily accepts the power of those at the above. In the village, such authority of the Brahmins had bases like sacred myths reflected in the sacred scriptures justifying their claim of superiority. Along with it, there was a ritual dominance in the form of rituals as the Brahmins were the only one who were accorded the high status roles in religious ceremonies. This further consolidated their power on the village affairs.

The author has discussed the political domain in "political processes....mainly in their relations to group structures such as panchayats, parties and local elites" (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 143). The political process in *Sripuram* village has three statewide political parties. These are Congress Party, *Swatantra* Party and *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham* (DMK) that is an anti-Brahmin party. Here author discuses traditional panchayat named *cheri* and modern statuary panchayats (Beteille, [1965] (2002, 161-165). . The traditional one had all the members of the council from Brahmin caste. Although the village decisions were taken by consensus yet it only made the Brahmins stronger. The modern panchayat on the other hand had to have representation of all castes, provision of one woman in it and the members to be elected on the basis of their respective population. Following these rules, in 1965 there were 14 members of the panchayat: 3 Brahmins, 6 non-Brahmins, and 5 untouchables.

At this point of time, the Brahmins did not attend the meetings. Among the non-Brahmins the largest group was *Kalla* caste from which the Panchyat president was elected. The untouchables were denied entry into political discussions. The author argues that the President of the Panchayat is an ideal type of Weberian notion of social stratification. He controls the resources as he owns the land and does not depend on the Brahmins. As the Panchayat President, he has the authority. The charisma of being an aggressive person is also there.

Here after the author proceeds to depict the transition-taking place in the village social structure. He terms these transitions as shifts from caste to class. These transitions are manifested in three spheres that are economic, structural and ideological changes. In the economic sphere, the changes too significant to be ignored were the impact of affirmative actions giving birth to an economic assertive individuals in non-Brahmin castes. The urban-based occupations also altered the traditional form of social stratification. The author argues that social identities are increasingly being based on economic rather than caste distinctions.

Among the structural changes the author has discussed the rise of the non-Brahmins on the cost of the Brahmins. The major cause of such decline is the considerable loss of land by the latter.

> "....there has been three phases in the career of the old landowning class in Sripuram. The first phase was one in which it was tied more or less firmly to the village and relations between landlords and tenants were of a fairly close and durable character. In the second phase, which commenced towards the beginning of the present century, the old landowners began to look beyond the frontiers of rural society and many of them moved out, becoming absentee landlords. A third phase seems to have set in recently, in which the old landowning families, already much depleted, have become keenly aware of their insecure positions and are gradually beginning to dispose of their land" (Beteille, ([1965] 2002, 116).

Also, due to the aggressive political mobilization by the non-Brahmin political parties has led to changes in the beliefs and values of the non-Brahmins and untouchables. The practice of 'self-respect' marriages not requiring Brahmin priests was also there. These changes are not in the resonance with the earlier form of domination. The democratic nature of politics based on numbers also had its impact on the clout of Brahmin power. Since the number of votes depended on the number of caste members, the Brahmins could never control more than a minority of votes.

Earlier there was a restricted number of power resources i.e. land and ritual status. Later on, there were many avenues of power resources like links to political parties outside the village, holding of legitimized authority positions in state machinery among others. The ideological changes are visible in opting for the egalitarian social structure practiced by populist political parties. The author concludes by arguing that

> ".....the processes of economic change and political modernisation have led the productive system and the organisation of power to acquire and increasing degree of autonomy. In the concrete, the overlap between the caste, class, and power has been progressively reduced. A new economic order is emerging in the towns and cities which is not based upon caste in the same way in which the traditional order was. The economy of the village is drawn increasingly into the orbit of this new economic order. Similarly, the new political order is at least formally independent of caste, and it too has an important effect on the social life of the village" (Beteille, ([1965] 2002, 225).

Another note worthy study dealing with the social mobility within the caste system by the respective caste is by M.N. Srinivas. His notions of 'sanskritisation' and the 'dominant caste' are very much useful in understanding the internal dynamics of the caste system. It can be safely observed that with the colonial contacts, a natural tendency to compare and contrast the social system of colonial power i.e. west and colonies i.e. east or primarily India emerged. The west characterised by open system of stratification reflected in class system came face to face with the closed system of stratification termed as caste system. Later on, there were many efforts by the Indian social scientists to belie this notion and thus changes in the caste system became an important aspect of study. Srinivas's study is a significant step towards this.

The term sanskritisation appeared in the literature in his book *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952). Here he argues that

> "The caste system is by far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and specially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by sanskritising its rituals and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahmanic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called 'sanskritisation' in this book, in the preference to 'Brahmanisation', as certain Vedic rites are confined to the Brahmins and the two other 'twice'born' castes" (Srinivas, 1952: 32).[25]

[25] *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. M. N. Srinivas. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1952).

At another place author provides a more comprehensive definition of sanskritisation as:

> "...the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other groups, changes its customs,. ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, 'twice-born' caste./ Generally, such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community. The claim is usually made over a period of time, in fact, a generation or two, before the 'arrival' is conceded" (Srinivas, [1966] 1995: 6).[26]

After giving a clear understanding of the process itself, now we can move further for some observations on it. As it can be seen, that this process is a means and tool for the mobility within the caste system. Here, any comparative lower caste under the given circumstances and chances indulges in this process and its social position moves further up. Here one thing is important to say that the change of the respective caste is positional in nature and not the structural change. There is no or little change in the structure of the caste system itself. This idea can be related at the macro level with the notions of change in structure and structural change. All the more, sanskritisation deals with the change in structure rather than structural change.

With such an undue emphasis on the Brahmins, the criticisms were mostly on the source of the mobility. Srinivas himself acknowledges this limitation. Adding theoretical and empirical dimensions are social scientists like Pocock who talked about Kshatriya model of Sanskritisation and Milton Singer focusing on three models of sanskritisation based on the Varna model. Again, the nature of the change is also brought under scrutiny. If it only provides the positional change and not the structural change, then what is the significance of such change in the caste hierarchy? To the change to happen, it should be structural and radical in nature, a total breakup with the past is required. Obviously, Sanskritisation does not provide such breakup.

Moreover, as the 'sacred' source of socials mobility, Sanskritisation may have its relevance but with the gradual changes in the broader body socio-politic threw various 'secular' alternatives to social mobility. The affirmative action of state in the arena of politics and employment, green revolution, gradual, steady and aggressive political mobilization of the lower castes resulting in their becoming the part of bureaucratic set up significantly underlined the importance of Sanskritisation. Even

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[26] *Social Change in Modern India*. M.N. Srinivas. First published 1966 by the University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles. Indian edition in 1972 by Orient Longman Limited: New Delhi.

after such criticism, Sanskritisation did provided a glimpse at the changes occurring at micro levels.

Another notion closely related to Sanskritisation is the notion of 'dominant caste'[27]. The notion of dominant caste was the product of the fieldwork in *Rampura*, having a multi-caste population. The village is situated 22 miles southeast of Mysore city in South India. Here the dominant caste is *Okkaligas* which is from the peasant community. The author argues that

> "Whether analysis is to be made of the hierarchy of a multi-caste village, the settlement of a dispute at the level of village or caste, or the pattern of sanskritisation among the several castes of an area, the study of the locally dominant caste and the kind of dominance it enjoys is essential" (Srinivas, 1994: 96).

Then the author defines dominant caste as:

> "A caste may be said to be 'dominant' when it preponderates numerically over the other castes, and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power. A large and powerful caste group can be more easily dominant if its position in the local caste hierarchy is not too low" (Srinivas, 1955: 18).[28]

At another place, author argues that:

> "However, the above definition omits an element of dominance which is becoming increasingly important in rural India, namely, the number of educated persons in a caste and the occupation they pursue, I have called this criterion 'Western'" (Srinivas, 1994: 97).

At this place Srinivas talks about two spheres of dominance i.e. ritual and secular. The first one ritual dominance is related to the Brahmin community as the whole due to their ritual dominance over others. Since they are the only one who are conversed in Sanskritic texts and can perform any rituals, they are dominant over the population in the sacred areas. On the other hand is the dominance wielded by those who are economically and or politically powerful than the Brahmins. The former

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[27] The concept of 'dominant caste' first appeared in the essay, 'The Social System of as Mysore Village', in MacKim Marriott (ed.) Village India. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1955). The concept was later elaborated in 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura' becoming a part of *The Remembered Village*. Delhi: Oxford University Press (1976). Also see *Social Change in Modern India*. M. N. Srinivas. Bombay: Allied Publishers (1966).

[28] 'The Social System of as Mysore Village' by M.N. Srinivas in MacKim Marriott (ed.) Village India. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1955).

exercise their dominance in day-to-day life activities. It is by these two spheres of dominance, the caste system at micro and macro levels maintains its equilibrium.[29]

The social mobility among the castes in the framework of Sanskritisation as well as dominant caste is reflected in the following observation:

> "Occasionally we find castes which enjoyed political and economic power but were not rated high in ritual ranking. That is, there was a hiatus between their ritual and politico-economic positions. In such cases Sanskritisation occurred sooner or later, because with out it the claim to a higher position was not fully effective. The three main axes of power in the caste system are the ritual, the economic, and the political ones, and the possession of power in any one sphere usually leads to the acquisition of power in the other two" (Srinivas, [1962] 1977: 45).[30]

The above brief discussions throw sufficient light on the social mobility in the caste system. The paper accepts that this is not an exhaustive list of studies rather some of the prominent studies dealing with the broader aims and objectives of the study. The studies attest the fact on the basis of empirical studies that far from being static entity, respective castes have gone for the upward movement process given the chances. Thus, there have been many changes in the local caste hierarchies, which are region specific. The broad generalizations from these studies are like visible changes in the local caste hierarchy, transfer of power form upper castes to the erstwhile lower castes, intense influx of caste, class and status categories, interaction between caste and politics as tool foe such upward social mobility, among others.

The study now moves toward the studies done on the Chamar/Jatav community keeping the research questions in to consideration.

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[29] "The disparity between the ritual and economic or political position of a caste is often considerable. In the Mysore village of *Rampura*, for instance, the Brahmin priest is accorded every respect by the village headman who is a peasant (*Okkaliga*) by caste. But the headman is the richest man in the village and in the area, the biggest land-owner and money-lender, the official headman of the village, and generally a very influential man, and one of the managers of the *Rama* temple at which the Brahmin is the priest. In secular matters the priest is dependent on the headman." Pp. 68. *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*. M.N. Srinivas. Delhi: Asia Publishing House (1962). Another observation in the same context is relevant. "We need to further distinguish the ranking and movement of castes as corporations concerned with ritual dominance and pollution from the ranking and movement of individuals or groups concerned with wealth, power, or prestige, for a given act may relate to either or both kinds of units in mutually denying ways". Pp. 59. Multiple References in Indian Caste Systems by McKim Marriott in Dipankar Gupta (ed.) *Social Stratification*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press (1996).

[30] *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*. M.N. Srinivas. Delhi: Asia Publishing House. (1962). For a analytical critic on the notion of dominant caste see, Power Elite in Rural India: Some Questions and Clarifications by K.L. Sharma in K.L. Sharma (ed.) *Social Inequality in India: Profiles of Caste, Class, Power and Social Mobility*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications (1995). Pp. 369-387.

A brief introduction about the community,

One of the most prominent literatures in this context is *The Politics of Untouchability: Social Change in a City of India* by Owen Lynch (1969).[31] The city mentioned here is Agra city (Uttar Pradesh) and the community studied is that of Jatav (erstwhile known as *Chamar* i.e. who indulges in leatherworks). The account is based on the sixteen months of fieldwork carried out from January 1963 to June 1964. The work can be located into the anthropological discipline as "a contribution to the burgeoning field of urban anthropology" (Lynch, 1969: 2) owing to 'thick description' of the specific community. It can be also located in the framework of the caste and politics school as the social mobility in this community was the fallout of its interaction and intense political mobilization of the community. The basic observations can now be discussed.

The methodological issues and concerns are based mostly on the broader framework of the social mobility. The theoretical set up at the macro level is taken from Merton's reference group theory "for the purpose of defining the social situation of a group aspiring to be mobile" (Lynch, 1969: 8). The middle layer of enquiry is based on Srinivas's concept of Sanskritisation process. The micro layer deals with the Lynch's own study of the Jatav community. The author then traces the historical roots of the birth of the Jatav community primarily employed in leather works. Constitutionally, the Chamars are included in the Scheduled Castes list. Thus, they have certain degree of state protection due to their historical disadvantages.

One of the characteristics of the caste system is more or less closed nature of occupation or fixed occupational calling of the respective caste. This notion becomes all the more clear when Lynch analyses the shoe industry in Agra city. Here he finds that due to their traditional occupation as the leather worker; the Jatavs are dominant in this industrial process as "one survey, made in 1960, with the sample of 1,251 workers in factories found that 85.5 percent were Jatavs and 14.2 percent were Muslims" (Lynch, 1969: 35). This complete control over the industry lead to some degree of affluence in Jatav community and there was the emergence of "the minority

[31] *The Politics of Untouchability: Social Change in a City of India* by Owen Lynch. New York and London: Columbia University Press, (1969).

of 'big men' (*bare admi*) or wealthy Jatavs, and the majority of craftsmen (*karigars*) or poor workers" (Lynch, 1969: 35).

The event of partition led to the influx of the Hindu refugees known as Punjabis. It resulted into the tension between these two, as Punjabis became the factory owners. The exclusive monopoly over the leather industry by the Jatavs was threatened and they resisted it very much. On the other hand, the Punjabis considered the former as untouchable or degraded caste, thus they maintained their superiority by controlling the factories. This point is very significant in the context of 'politics of untouchability'.

The leather market has four key players apart from the producers (Punjabis) and the craftsmen (Jatavs). These are producer, commission merchant acting as middleman, retailer and then there is the supplier of the raw material. The work is given in advance with some amount to carry it out. Even in the arena of economic transaction i.e. market; author argues, "...the market emphasizes caste differences. The Jatavs are factory owners or craftsmen and the Punjabis and Muslims are factors and retailers. The economic advantages that attach to higher caste status are thus apparent and are increasingly resented by the Jatavs" (Lynch, 1969: 44).

The core of his study is to contextualised the politics of untouchability. He does so by tracing the history of untouchability and in process divides it in to three distinct phases. These phases are the pre-independence period, the transitional period and the post-independence period. Discussing the pre-independence era, he argues says that the economic mobility coupled with the emergence of a minority section of affluence in Jatav community holds the key to understand this. At the same time the community came into contact with the *Arya Samaj*. It is pertinent here to know that at that time there was a fervor of religious movement aiming at 'purifying the Hindu religion and to abandon the highly Sanskritic way of life'. In between came the Jatav community. The latter influenced by the former gave a thought to 'upgrade' themselves and to get into the Hindu clean castes by claiming Kshatriya caste. In this process they invented their mythological ancestry. Gradual solidarity in the caste group came by forming of the caste association as:

> "....in 1917 they banded together and formed the Jatav Men's Association (*Jatav Vir Mahasabha*). Later (1924) the Jatav Propaganda Circle (*Jatav Pracharak Mandal*)

was formed. These societies were intended to motivate the Jatavs towards education, sanskritisation of their way of life, and change of their identity. Education was considered of primary importance" (Lynch, 1969: 69).

Coming to the reference group theory, the reference group of the Jatavs was the *Kashtriya Varna*. They claimed entry into this caste fold on the basis of similar rituals practiced by both the communities as shooting of guns at wedding and bow and arrow ceremony at the birth time. The invention of their history took *Parshuram* as the significant figure and then the survival of the community long time back was defended and presented to the rest of the population. Here, what we witness is the negation of the 'legitimation crisis'. The Jatavs needed a rational explanation, which will accord them a place in clean caste. At the same time they were aware of the nuances of this demand. Thus, the educated and the rich minority played its crucial part in spreading this through by writing books on this issue. Some significant books were *Gyan Samudra* (1887), *Jatav Jivan* (1924), *Yaduvansh Ka Itihas* (1942), etc.

"In this way the Jatavs tried to solve the two identity problems faced by a mobile group in India (and in my opinion by a mobile group and individual anywhere). First, there was the problem of legitimation or proof of their new identity. They attempted to solve this problem by appealing to the authority of scriptures in the *Lomash* Ramayana, of myth in the Yadav genealogy, and of custom in the bow and arrow ceremony, and so forth. Second, there was the problem of explanation or proof of how their present identity was a mistaken one; this they attempted to solve by appeal to the *Parasuram* myth" (Lynch, 1969: 72).

In the due process of assertion, the Jatav community increasingly sought the interplay between cast and politics. Their numerical strength along with economic status came handy in this demand. The importance of education was further reiterated in the construction of schools, colleges and hostels for the Jatav children learning. A very significant act by Jatav community was to follow Ambedkar as their leader rather than Gandhi in 1930s. At the same time, the colonial authority was conducting the census. This provided another fertile ground to launch for the improved status for the Jatav community. As already discussed in this chapter that census activity was a potent tool for the lower castes to get recorded as higher caste in the local caste hierarchy. The following observation by the author makes it more understandable.

"The first attempt to have the caste listed separately in the Census was made in 1931 in the form of a letter to the Viceroy and the Census Commissioner. Later, when the Jatavs were not listed separately in the 1936 list of Scheduled Castes, the movement went into full operation with three demands: 1) that in all government papers the caste be listed as Jatav and not as the part of the Chamar group of castes; 2) that the caste be listed separately as Jatav in the census; and 3) that the Uttar Pradesh

> government recommend to the British government the acceptance of the Jatav community as a separate caste in the list of Scheduled Castes" (Lynch, 1969: 82).

The second stage of the politics of untouchability is in between 1930s and early 1940s. The formation of the Scheduled Castes Federation of Agra, the violent and aggressive protest of the Poona Pact of 1935, emergence of a more consolidated and organised Jatav community forefront, and completely immersing into the Ambedkar philosophy marked this stage.

The third stage was the post-independence era. Along with independence from the foreign rule came adult suffrage according everyone as the equal citizen of India. At the time of independence India committed herself to the egalitarian, socialist and secular country. To make the egalitarian social order a reality of life, various measures were formulated. These were Article 17 of the Indian Constitution making practice of untouchability punishable by law, Untouchability Offenses Act of 1959, appointment of a Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes for their welfare and protection, etc.

An event of considerable importance was in 1956 when majority of the Jatav community followed Ambedkar into Buddhism. It was due to the more egalitarian nature of social order in Buddhism compared to Hindu caste system. A very close link between the caste and politics became visible whereby the former can be invoked to get entry in to the political sphere. The result was the formation of the All India Republican Party in Agra in 1958. At this place it is necessary to note that now the Jatavs were not into Sanskritisation process in the sacred sense as to aspire for the *Kshatriya* status in the Varna. All the more they were more critical to the Brahmanical mode of life. This can be seen as the availability of secular mode of social mobility i.e. modern education, political participation, jobs in bureaucracy, etc. As the author also has argued,

> "It is easy to understand that the switch from Sanskritisation to direct and overt political participation occurred, because in independent India the latter was more useful for achieving access to the strategic resources of wealth, power, occupation, and education" (Lynch, 1969: 98).

The following of Ambedkar by the majority of the members of the Jatav community resulted in a new identity formation in the community. The community now was more assertive in its nature and the programmes of action were clearly

defined. The author argues that Ambedkar was accepted in the Agra city due to his earlier experiences of the city. The life events of birth, conversion and death of Ambedkar have become cultural events for the Jatav community. The community in full fervor celebrates these events. The gradual spread of these events celebration has now become a means for more effective political and social mobilization to fight for the equal share in the broader body politic as well as in the social sphere.

In the final section of the book Lynch gives a 'thick description' of the Jatav life at a settlement of the community. The section primarily deals with the day-to-day life chores, family life, the relation of Jatav with other communities, and most importantly the impact of Buddhist philosophy on the individual. This impact is mostly seen in the sphere of marriage interrelated with the education. The shared feeling is that of early marriage due to Brahmanical customs became an obstacle in the education process. Another significant change visible is the increase of age at marriage both of the boy and girl and simplifying the marriage rituals. Getting before attaining puberty is now marginalized activity. At the macro level is the decline of the traditional form of Panchyat due to the emergence of administrative courts and other legal institutions.

Summarizing the entire gamut of observations made by Lynch, it can be safely concluded that the changes in the Jatav community are too significant to be ignored. At the same time, the process of social mobility earlier manifested through Sanskritisation has now given way to a more secular mode of interaction. The education and political participation are more important. Yet, author argues, ".....my analysis of Sanskritisation does not mean that I advocate abandoning the term. It has been and will continue to be useful, at least in India" (Lynch, 1969: 222).

Another significant social scientist who studied the Chamar/Jatava community/caste in Uttar Pradesh was B.S. Cohn. He studied this community over a period of time. More importantly, his studies focused on the various dimensions of the community studied. His first encounter with Chamar community was during his university days while pursuing his Ph.D.[32] Later on, it became his lifelong academic concern.

In his first account of the Chamar caste, his broad objective was to "...describe attempts by the members of one 'untouchable' caste in one village to raise their social status" (Cohn, 1987: 255).[33] This caste is one of the lowest in the social hierarchy for ages and "are regarded as defiled especially because of their repugnant traditional occupations of skinning, tanning, and midwifery, and because of their reputation for eating carrion beef" (Cohn, 1987: 264). The study area was Madhopur village "located in *Kerakat tahsil* in the south-eastern part of Jaunpur district, U.P." (Cohn, 1987: 255) and the fieldwork period was September 1952 to August, 1953.

This village is characterized by the spatial differentiation of the villagers, as "the dominant Thakurs and other high castes tend to be located at the center, while others circle the peripheries" (Cohn, 1987: 256). The prime source of survival is the agricultural practices. Like the rest part of agrarian India, here also the landlords are of the upper caste group while the lower castes supplied (in this case, Chamars) the essential labour force in terms of being tenant. The most important aspect of such an economic relation was that "...while a man may farm the lands of several Thakurs, he has a primary and lasting socio-economic tie with the Thakur on whose land he had originally built his house" (Cohn, 1987: 258).

Regarding the kinship organization, Chamars are generally encircled around male lineage. One can trace the elements of Sanskritisation process in this community via religious elements. They trace their mythological descent from Saint *Raidas* who was a shoemaker hence the term '*Raidasis*'. An important ritual/religious component is the *Siva Narayan* sect whose basic tenet is the worship of one God. Another source of the community's Sanskritisation process is the adherence to *Panchon Pir* cult combining Hindu-Muslim elements.

Due to such efforts, "Chamars of Madhopur prefer to be called by the name of their subcaste, '*Jaisvara*' which according to the local reckoning, are the highest sub

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[32] Cohn, B.S. (1954). *The Camars of Senapur: A Study of the Changing Status of a Depressed Caste.* Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Cornell University.

[33] Cohn, B.S. (1955). The Changing Status of a Depressed Caste. In *Village India: Studies in the Little Community*, (ed.) M. Marriott, pp. 53-77. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Also Bombay: Asia

caste of the Chamars" (Cohn, 1987: 264-265). In accordance with the Jajmani system, Chamar caste performs many of its functions for the patron upper castes. The political power excluded the Chamars and they "followed the political leadership of their Thakur landlords" (Cohn, 1987: 270).

The changes brought about in the village in general and Chamar community in particular has to be seen in multiple dimensions. The reasons of the change were many; important being increased urbanization leading to linking with towns, increased political activities via elections at local levels, etc. The following paragraphs briefly touches upon these changes observed by Cohn. The foremost change was visible in the family structure of the Chamar community.[34] The author notes that this is more interesting in the context of women in both the upper castes and Chamar community as "...while the Thakur wife is coming out of seclusion, the Chamar wife is being put into seclusion" (Cohn, 1987: 272) due to latter's observance of orthodox 'Hindu' family.

In the political realm, the Provincial elections in 1937 won by Congress party hinted changes in the power equation. The aggressive political mobilization became a tool for the Chamar community to exert their pressure on the dominant Thakur community. It was reflected in the 1938 as the former supported another lower caste, Noniyas in the village dispute rather than Thakurs. Passing of the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act of 1947 soon followed it. In the classic case of caste and politics, "elections for the new panchayats in 1948 provided for the successful organization of all the lower castes of Madhopur against the Thakurs" (Cohn, 1987: 276). Although, the lower castes political party won the elections but could not sustain itself due to its economic dependence on the Thakurs.

A more visible signs of religious changes reflected in the efforts by the Chamar community to raise its social status. The educated Chamars and followers of the *Siva Narayan* sect were detrimental in such efforts. They refused to work as beggars in Thakurs land and their women "refused any longer to make dung cakes for

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Publishing House. (1961). Also see *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. B.S. Cohn. New Delhi: Oxford University Press (1990) pp. 255-283.

[34] In this context see, Cohn, B.S. (1961). Chamar Family in a North Indian Village: A Structural Contingent. *Economic Weekly*. XIII [July]: 1051-1055. Also see *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. B.S. Cohn. New Delhi: Oxford University Press (1990) pp. 308-319.

the Thakur's households" (Cohn, 1987: 278). At the same time, the community denounced beef eating. Although there were attempts by other lower castes to wear 'sacred threads', Chamars did not joined this effort.

More importantly, the ceremonies of the Chamar community have become more sanskritised and Hinduised in its nature. An interesting observation made by Cohn in this regard is worth mentioning. According to him, "Chamars have become more sensitive about such matters as accepting food from castes whom they consider to be their inferiors, while at the same time some of the Thakurs are relaxing their conformity to commensal prohibitions" (Cohn, 1987: 280).[35]

Another study by the same author focuses on the changing traditions of a Chamar caste. However, there is a difference of the location of the field study i.e. *Senapur* in Uttar Pradesh.[36] Observing the traditional occupation of the Chamar community, Cohn states that they "...derive the principal part of their livelihood through farming small plots of land as tenants, and hiring themselves out as a agricultural workers to work on the land of the Thakur landlords" (Cohn, 1987: 287).

There are various factors, which led to the changes in the traditional calling of the Chamar community. Significant among these are gradual spread of literacy thereby resulting in urban employment howsoever low in hierarchy; the outward urban migration to the nearby towns thus giving a new experience of mobility and lack of untouchability; and the Sanskritisation process via the *Siva Narayan* sect. With the increasing literacy, some of the members of Chamar community are now enabled "...to learn aspects of the great tradition which formerly had been closed to them because of their low status and their illiteracy" (Cohn, 1987: 292).

It is shown from above literature review that social mobility as a phenomenon dependent on various forces in the society i.e. economy, polity, culture, education etc. The structure of any society largely determines ones chances of mobility from one strata to another. In highly stratified society like Hindu society where the status of

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[35] In this context, see Cohn, B.S. (1959). Madhopur Revisited. *Economic Weekly* [July]: 963-966. Also see *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. B.S. Cohn. New Delhi: Oxford University Press (1990) pp. 299-307.

[36] Cohn, B.S. (1958). The Changing Traditions of a Low Caste. *Journal of American Folklore* 71: 412-421. Also in *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, (ed.) Milton B. Singer. Philadelphia: American

individuals is fixed, it is difficult to achieve social mobility taking into account its rigidity. It can be argued, that social mobility is the outcome of the interaction of various forces in the society.

Social mobility is a process rather than an end. It is the outcome of individual's negotiation with its social environment. One can have social mobility in positive and negative sense. One tries to negotiate and maximise it's status in the society through social mobility. Wealth, education, occupation, lands, jobs, occupations are the vehicles for mobility. The material and social position of any individual directly affects her or his social standing within society.

The social mobility is a relative concept. Social mobility is measured in relation to 'others'. One's mobility will always result in change of status it can be negative or positive. The positive mobility will add on the comforts of life and therefore increases the state of happiness. The availability of options like education, occupation, jobs, lands for self-realisation will largely determine ones happiness or well-being. Therefore the maximization of opportunities also leads to maximization of well-being. After these conceptual and theoretical positions we move on to some more specific micro studies.

One study was done among the shoemakers by the Haryana state leather industries, with particular emphasis on karnal district (Haryana) due to it's having large leather industry. The major findings are as follows.

It was found that 60% of the respondents were living in *Mochi Mandi* the remaining 40% were living in various other areas of karnal city. Very few were living in kutcha mud dwelling. 19.04 have semi-Pucca houses and 76.98 were living in *Pucca* houses.

The workers who own the house they form 66.66 % of the total workers. Out of these workers 21.42 % have single room accommodation. Those who had rented houses, among them the number of single room were 78.57 %.

Folklore Society (1959). Also see *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. B.S. Cohn. New Delhi: Oxford University Press (1990) pp. 284-298.

One of the most important parts of a house is kitchen. There are only 43.65 % houses having separate kitchens. Apart from this 56.34% of the respondents cooked their food in their living rooms, and in the small courtyard of their respective houses. There were not enough utensils. The water was not available in the kitchen only 19.84 % had this facility in their houses. Rest 80.15 % either fetch water from the municipal taps or from the well in their locality or in certain cases from hand pumps installed in others houses in the neighbourhood.

There was high dissatisfaction with the conditions of their living among the workers. There were 32.53 % and 23.8. % Of the workers have bathroom facility and latrine facility respectively. Whereas 63.73 % and 75.84 % od the respective go without these facilities. (Source: Sharma 1986)

In another study done in Utter Pradesh which was later extended to Bihar, west Bengal, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. The study included secondary sources and primary data was collected through field studies. The major findings are as follows.

Data collected on landholding patterns among the 408 leather artisans shows that 72.71 % were landless and only 27.29 has some landholding. Out of this 44.27 % had landholding in the range of 1-2 *Bigha* and 3-5 *Bigha* of land. Only 15.27 % possessed more than 5 *Bighas*. The landlessness was higher in the state of Gujarat with 93.75 % followed by Bihar with 71.43% and Rajasthan with 60.89 %. In education it was found that 40.62 % were illiterate, among the literates as many as 27.71 % were literate without any educational standard and 18.96% obtained education only up to primary level. Similarly 18.96 % and 11.25 percent had received education up to secondary and higher secondary level. There were no graduates and postgraduates among them and only 1 artisan in Bihar was found to have received technical education. Illiteracy was found to be high in Bihar with 51.85% followed by Rajasthan with 43.02% and Gujarat with 17.86%. It was found that 43.75% artisans were in indebts. Out of this 35.71 had taken loans less than 500 and only 7.14% artisan had taken more than 3000 loans. The incidence of indebtedness was found maximum 63.81% among the leather artisans of Bihar followed by Rajasthan with 24.29%and Gujarat 11.9%.[37]

[37] Source: R.R. Prasad and G.Rajanikanth, 1991.

A study in Tamil Nadu by T.K.Sundari on health status of SC population in 1992 reveals that 65% men and 71% women wage labour were earning 15 rupees and 7 rupees respectively, 75% lived in one room tenements and only 5% had toilets. As high as 90% dependent on public wells and taps for water. A large percentage of 56% men and 78% women were illiterate. 75% of the women had home deliveries. There was 28.4 miscarriage per 1000 pregnancies. Reproductive health problem were noticed in 31% Sc women against 22% for others. 60% did not seek did not seek treatment.

Out of 209 deaths, under 5 category, 48% were new born infants and 36% were children between 1-12 months. The reasons were Diarrhea, Measles and Jaundice, and chest infections.

A study by national council of applied economic research (NCAER) in 1994 collected data from a national wide sample survey of rural households covering 33230 households spread over 1765 villages in 195 districts and 16 states. The various finding are as follows.

An overwhelming majority 81.3 percent of SCs and 92.6 percent of STs in this country still live in rural areas. The population proportion of SCs and STs have increased. The literacy rates among them have increased significantly but there is vast disparity among various groups in India. There is high discontinuation and non-attendance rate for both SCs and STs. It is specifically high in Andhra Pradesh. It is found that percentage of students aged 6-14 were high in government schools. Their representation was very low high in private schools. It was almost half of the general population.

Another interesting aspect is that the health care institutions have a low presence in the villages dominated by SCS and STs. It is especially in the case of pharmacy. The presence of Anganwadis were good in these areas. In some respect the condition of ST villages is worse off than SC villages.[38]

These specific studies show that low castes in general and shoe makers in particular are the worst suffers due to caste created social inequalities. They have

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[38] Source: G. Chakraborty: Journal of Rural Development, vol.18 (2), pp. 185-219 (1999).

limited opportunities to raise their status in the society. It is shown from various studies that their status is very low be in terms of health status, housing, ownership of resources, jobs, education, income etc. their position is very low in the society and this low position in the society has continued in their economic, social, educational, occupational, economic sphere.

All these factors have affected the well being of low castes in the society. Absolute and chronic hunger, high suicide rates, conflicts, stress, anxiety, violence are all due to the limited opportunities they have for their development. We can conclude by saying that the location of groups or individuals in the social hierarchy affects the availability of opportunities which has direct implications to their well being status.

Chapter 4

FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN AGRA

"Economic dualism is widespread. Two sectors co-exist side by side. One is the organised modern sector, formal sector, characterized by capital-intensive technology, relatively high wages, large-scale operation, and corporate or governmental organisation.

The other is the unorganized, traditional, informal sector- economic unit with the reverse characteristics: labour intensive, small-scale operation, using traditional methods, and providing modest earnings to the individual or family owner. In the modern sector, wages are usually protected by labour legislation and trade union activity; in the informal sector, there is easier entry, but less jobs security and lower earnings". (Comment by Robert McNamara, president World Bank)[1]

The Government of India in its census Reports has classified leather workers as unorganised. Hence legislative protections provided by the government such as Minimum Wages Act, 1948, Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 and Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 are less likely to be applicable to them. Little attention is paid to their wages, hours of work, training, working conditions, accidents and health and safety. Low levels of awareness in terms of their rights, benefits or occupational hazards make their condition worse.

About Footwear Industry

The Footwear Industry is a significant segment of the leather industry in India. India ranks second among the footwear producing countries next to China. The industry is labour intensive and is concentrated in the small and cottage industry sectors. While leather shoes and leather shoe uppers (upper structure of shoe) are concentrated in large-scale units, the sandals and *Chappals* are produced in the household and cottage sector. India produces more of gents' footwear while the world's major production is in ladies footwear. In the case of *Chappals* and sandals,

[1] See Introduction, Industry and inequality. Holmstrom ,Mark, 1984, Cambridge press.

use of non-leather material is prevalent in the domestic market. The major production centers India are Chennai, Raniket, Ambur in Tamil Nadu, Mumbai in Maharastra, Kanpur, Agra in U.P., Jalandhar in Punjab, and Delhi.

The footwear is a major industry in Agra and is the highest employment generator followed by tourism industry. The footwear industry is located in Agra due to many factors, which work in its favour like means of communication, proximity to markets, availability of markets, cheap and efficient labour and easy access to raw material. Though the shoe industry has been bestowed with many privileges and facilities the cottage shoe industry is lacking in many respects. This industry is unorganized in nature and number of people engaged in this is difficult to know due to the nature of operation, as it is by and large a home-based industry.

The Indian shoe making industry in Agra has been hard hit by economic changes both at a national and an international level. Employees have lost their jobs and businesses have failed. Economic changes have since severely affected the industry resulting not only in loss of employment, but also more crucially in a radical shake-up of its whole structure. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the region's biggest export market, also dealt a major blow. However, not all sectors have been equally affected. Research coordinated by the UK Institute of Development Studies, shows how producers at the quality end of the market have managed to prosper in the newly competitive arena (Knorringa, 1996).

Around 60,000 workers were employed in Agra's 5,000 businesses in 1991. Due to economic Liberalisation, tougher international competition and an increased demand for quality shoes have stepped up the parameters of competition. As a result, workers employed in producing cheap exports lost their jobs and thus flooded the already over-crowded home-based industries geared to local markets. Shoe sellers at the quality and fashion end of the market, however, are prospering (Knorringa, 1996).

According to an estimate, the number of people engaged in the footwear industry was 150,000 and out of it 50,000 were in Agra (Verma, 1965; Sharma, 1958). But today it is altogether 60,000 in Agra. The employment among Jatavs has decreased due to shrinking of cottage sector. The Jatavs have not been able to sustain due to tough competition from bigger factories. Their base in footwear industry is

shrinking due to poverty, rising raw material cost, lack of superior technology, low profits against prepared goods, caste discrimination in the market discrimination, high competition. These had adverse effects on the employment and opportunities for Jatavs and Muslims.

The industry is now expanding by using high technology, capital, skilled and trained manpower. It has to be seen in relation to the cottage industry. Who are the people being marginalized due to it? How caste based inequalities been further intensified which has affected traditional interaction patterns among groups? The frequent communal tension between different groups made Agra a sensitive and disturbed area. The caste based antagonism between upper castes and Jatavs has been further intensified. These changes in the industry have wider implication for the society. The changing structure of footwear industry has affects all groups unequally. Some groups have lost occupations and wages whereas some have monopolised industry replacing others. It has changed the power structure and affected harmony in different groups. The frequent communal tensions, curfews, riots have become a routine in Agra.

History of Footwear Industry in Agra

History of leather and footwear industry can be divided into four phases according to its development. First the industry during Hindu rule, second during Muslim rule, third during British rule and fourth since independence (Sharma. 1952).[2]

Hindu Rule

The Hindus did not like to touch the leather or wear anything made of leather and they used to wear wooden shoes locally known as *'Kharaun'(*wooden slippers*)* because of fear of pollution (Sharma, 1958). The stigma attached to it never motivated kings and patrons to develop this industry separate caste known as *'Chamars'* (Jatavs) initiated the industry. This caste was also called untouchables (Lynch, 1969) and was not part of Varna system. These people had a low status in the society. They

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[2] Kailash Baboo Sharma. (1958) "Marketing of leather goods at Agra" Unpublished masters thesis. Dept of commerce, Raja Balwant Singh College, Agra (India).

promoted, financed and developed this industry. They used to cater to the local needs by collecting dead animals, skinning them and tanning it. They prepared shoes out of it and sold it to their patrons in exchange of some grains. Those times the shoes prepared were not the shape of the present shoes but simply footwear cover which protected feet from water, cold, sun and dirt etc. It was the cottage workers (*Chamars*) who started this industry. Due to the lack of finance and technology it was not developed fully (Sharma, 1958; Sisodia,[3] 1960).

Muslim Rule

In the period of Muslim rule, the Muslim rulers started giving attention to it and the industry progressed gradually. The Muslims brought with them shoemakers who began to prepare shoes for them. It was just the beginning of the shoe industry in Agra.

Fortunately Agra was the capital of Mogul emperors who helped the artisans to settle here. Therefore the foundation of leather industry was laid at Agra. There were plenty of raw materials in this region and market was available for this purpose. In the beginning the cottage industry was entirely in the hands of shoemaker community who used to live in *Bagh Muzzafar khan* and *Naubasta* (Sisodia, 1960). The Mugul emperor, Babar, also brought some artisan workers and provided them all amenities for developing this industry. The role of moguls was so important in this industry that some of the variety of shoes were named after some mogul emperor. At the time of *Jahangir* the following kind of shoes were prepared i.e. *Salim shai* shoes, *Gout shoes*, *Punja shoes* (in form of *Chappals*) and *Kimer Khar* shoes (for marriage purposes) etc. (Sharma, 1958).

These professional workers were *Chamars* and *Kandher* (Muslims). The number of workers however, was as low as 100 at that time (Sisodia, 1960:4). The workers used to prepare shoes in their own houses and sell them daily in the market at very low prices so as to enable themselves to purchase raw material for the next day and to meet their domestic needs.

[3] Sisodia, Ram Jhalak (1960). "Cottage shoe workers in Agra." Unpublished masters thesis. Dept of commerce, Raja Balwant Singh College, Agra (India).

Northern India has been the center of a great cattle population. Agra on the banks of the Yamuna specially became significant for this reason as the humid conditions suit the tanning processes. Tanning requires a lot of water and bark that was abundantly found in the region of Uttar Pradesh (that time *Oudh*). India has been an important center of hides and skins, which have resulted in the establishment of the leather industry at Agra, Kanpur etc.

British Period

When British came in India they were well equipped with shoemakers and necessary technology. British brought with them some shoemakers who assisted these people. Gradually, they hired people from India who were very skilled and at the same time very cheap in labour terms. They wanted shoe industry for military requirements like boots, belts, rifle covers, gloves etc. They took initiative and started manufacturing leather goods here. They started developing this industry for their own needs.

The first factory was started in 1892 by two Kashmiri brothers, the late Mohan Krishan Dar and Pandit Pyare Lal Dar under the name of "Stuart boot and equipment factory limited" in Tajganj on the banks of the river Yamuna. It is interesting to note that the name of Stuart was not without significance. The general Stuart a British general who was then stationed at Agra helped in obtaining orders from military and hence the factory was named after him. Although the factory was equipped with a complete plant yet due to the mismanagement, lack of capital, inexperience and keen competition from Kanpur, it failed in 1904 (Sharma, 1958). The equipment and machinery of this factory were later on taken by the Dayalbagh Satsang Sabha which continued working as "Dayalbagh Taj Tanneries".

Therefore we can calculate that the footwear industry in Agra is not more than 110 years old. Till this time, the local *Chamars* were making shoes of inferior quality (Sharma, 1958; Swarup,[4]1952; Sisodia, 1960). The venture of Dar brothers gave a lead to, a lot of Muslim shoemakers and Jatavs to establish factories on piecework system. Many dealers who were attracted to purchase "Desi" shoes of Agra on

[4] Swarup. Lachman (1952). "Leather industry in Agra" Unpublished masters thesis. Dept of commerce, Raja Balwant Singh College, Agra (India).

account of cheapness came and decided to establish factories here. The purchasers who came from outstation for a purchase of Desi shoes at Agra settled themselves here and started establishing boot and shoe factories (Swarup, 1952).

The success of such ventures led the industry to progress by leaps and bound. Thousands of Muslims and *Chamars* took over this industry and many even came from outside. Most of the owners of the factories and show dealers were Muslims from Punjab and Delhi province (Sharma, 1958). The change of shoe manufacturing from Desi shoes to the English shoes attracted many outsiders in this lucrative business. Among the many persons who came were late Haji Sayed Raja Saheb with a humble and moderate personality was the most famous local manufacturer (Ibid).

During the First World War, the demand for locally manufactured shoes increased. This was due to restrictions on import. This gave encouragement to industry and helped its strong establishment in Agra. The imports of shoes were stopped altogether by 1915 and India managed its demand though local manufacturers. It gave the local manufacturers an opportunity to progress. Yet very few succeeded in establishing and organizing successful ventures due to insufficient funds, and lack of experience for organizing capital and management. Those who could establish and organize factories and *Karkhanas* reaped good profits, which attracted more outsiders to come to Agra to open and establish shoe factories. The trade now passed on to the *Khwahas* (Muslim sub-caste) and *Bohras* (Hindu trading caste) of Bombay and to Punjabi Muslims from the local Muslims and *Chamars* (Swarup, 1952). These enterprising people soon threw the local traders and dealers to the background and occupied the most prominent place in the industry with ample resources at their command. These people started big boots and shoe factories and have become the stockiest of raw material used in manufacturing shoes and other leather goods. The Punjabi Muslims had taken over the export of the shoes of good and high quality and captured the market (Swarup, 1952).

The local traders or dealer who had little or no capital, no technical education, and no sense of business enterprise or tactics failed to compete with the big factories. They started small *Karkhanas* by assembling few workers, hiring a house and introducing division of labour on a small scale to face competition of the newly started big factories (Swarup, 1952).

In 1917 Dayalbagh Footwear Factory Limited was established which was the biggest manufacturing factory of Agra. It was later on equipped with necessary technology in 1920.

Before the war the shoe manufacturing was not up to the expectation level. During the war period, competition from Kanpur and imported goods from Japan and Germany was over. The Cooper Allen Company of Kanpur, the biggest competitor of Agra shoe industry had to divert its attention to the military requirements. The Agra shoe industry captured the civilian markets thereafter. Many new factories were established and the old factories expanded their business. The quality also improved due to competition and Dayalbagh factory diversified into production of other leather goods also. Yet, this phenomenon was short lived, since as soon as the competition revived the favorable situation disappeared. The supplies of foreign shoes as well as of Kanpur came in and a number of cottage industries closed down. The industry further declined due to worldwide depression in 1930s.

Despite all these problems the industry still continued. The total number of factories in 1914 was 4, which increased to 20 in 1929. A large number of small workshops increased to 50 during this time and with it increased and cottage workers (Sisodia, 1960; Sharma, 1952).

The condition of shoe industry again changed to the better on account of the Second World War which resulted in the increasing demand of shoes for military purposes. The big factories like Bata and Flex catered the military demand. Hence civilian demand was left for Agra shoe industry. To fulfill this demand, the factories started working day and night and number of workers and factories increased considerably. Advances were made to the workers to make them work hard and regularly. Many unskilled workers also came from outside in this process. It is estimated that the production of shoes in the year 1945 increased to 50,000 pairs a day, and the numbers of workers in 1939 increased from 37,500 to 53,000 in the year 1943-44 (Sisodia, 1960).

Period after Independence

Agra shoe industry was hard hit by the communal disturbances. The partition of India on the religious basis struck a very terrible blow on the Agra shoe industry.

The large-scale out-migration of Muslims increased instability in this industry. The neighboring cities and villages were also badly affected by it. Thousands of Muslims migrated to Pakistan leaving behind their fixed assets in the market. They took with them their cash, jewellery and liquid capital, leaving their factories in charge of servants. This greatly affected the shoe industry of Agra (Sharma, 1958).

After 1950, when the communal and political situation improved, the industry began to progress. Even then 77 per cent of the production came from the cottage workers who were facing many problems viz. those of marketing, finance, technology, and quality etc.

The fixed assets that the Muslims had left behind were sold to the migrant populations consisting of Sindhis and Punjabis. They gradually grew in this business and the traditional role set of Muslims as distributors and Jatavs as factory owners was changed (Lynch, 1969). These Punjabis and Sindhis started penetrating into areas that were once dominated by the Jatavs and Muslims. They replaced Jatavs from ownership of manufacturing units and became factory owners. It gave rise to tensions and distrust between Jatavs and Punjabis. These outsiders started redefining the trade by introducing system like '*Purchi*' and '*Katauti*' etc. The trust based relationship between Jatavs and Muslims was over and it was replaced by communal and caste based antagonism. Now the outsiders had dominant presence in the distribution and later on they expanded to manufacturing. Soon the Jatavs' monopoly was broken down. This has resulted in Jatavs dependency on outsiders for survival, on the one hand, and losing of traditional skills, wages on the other (Lynch, 1969).

Different Wholesale Markets

Agra shoe market has five wholesale markets (Sharma.1958). The names of these markets with the number of shops they contain are given below:[5]

Name of markets	Number of shops
Tikonia shoe market	50
Agra shoe market	101
National shoe market	50
Harish shoe market	36
New shoe market	17

[5] Source: Sharma (1958: 54).

All these markets are located in two localities. *Tikonia bazaar* and *Heeng ki mandi, Tikonia* shoe market is located near Zama Maszid while remaining markets viz Agra shoe market; National shoe market, Harish shoe market and New shoe market are located in *Heeng ki mandi. Heeng ki mandi* market is very big compare to *Tikonia.*

It is worth mentioning that *Tikonia* shoe market is very old one and all other markets are comparatively new. Mostly Hindus and Sikhs coming from Pakistan at the time of partition occupy these new shoe markets. One study in 1958 shows that, there were approximately 198 shops altogether at that time excluding the factories.

Tikonia Shoe Market

It is the oldest shoe market in Agra. It is dominated by Muslims as it is located closed to J*ama Maszid.* This market had 50 shops at that time given on rent to wholesale dealers who were basically Muslims community people. Few shops are also out side the market on the main road near the mosque. This market existed even before the construction of *Heeng ki mandi* market. Some Muslim dealers shifted to *Heeng ki mandi* for its better location.

Agra Shoe Market

This is a well-known market of the shoe industry at Agra. Some 80 years ago, the place where it has been constructed was lying barren. It was in the year1930 when Khadim Ali Khan, an enterprising personality of the shoe market inspired some of the wholesalers to have a well organized shoe market. He formed an association and collected funds from members for the creation of the present Muslim market. When the building was ready for about 130 shops. These were put to auction and were given to the highest bidders. When the auction was over, the shops were furnished with necessary equipment and the buildings became a well-organized market. During the time of partition most of the Muslims left this and migrated to Pakistan leaving their shops behind. The assistant custodian of evacuee property, Agra, allotted these shops to Hindu refugees in the month of august 1951 and the market is now in full swing.

There are four kinds of people who operate and interact in the markets. First are the producers who have their own factories. There are two kinds of factory owners, first who make goods on orders known as (Namewalas), second is basket

men popularly known as (Daliawalas) who make goods without orders and directly sell their goods to the wholesalers.

Second kind of person in the market is the commission merchant or factor, he is a middleman, who buys from the producer and sells it to retailers. Third kind is person who is a retailer comes to buy shoes from different parts of country like Punjab, MP, UP, Rajasthan etc. Finally there is raw material supplier who supply raw material to the producers (Lynch, 1969).

History of Marketing

In the past when the production was not arranged on the capitalist system, workers (*Chamars*) used to skin dead animals, make shoes or *Chappals* out of it and sell it in the markets. During British time, this industry started changing due to factors like excessive demand, fashion, standardisation of needs, and foreign exports etc. The traditional system of marketing also changed rapidly.

This industry has gone through various phases since its development. From a local industry, it has become a very big industry. Its products are now exported to various western European countries. The Agra shoes were exported to Punjab, Bombay, Bengal and Burma and some foreign countries like Egypt, Africa and Mesopotamia etc. (Sharma, 1958:85).

The condition of shoe market till 1933 was bad and there was no mechanism to organise the market forces. In 1934, Mr Kadim Ali Khan brought the shoe market scheme in Agra and established a market organisation named as "Agra shoe market association". Prior to this development, all the factors and distributors used to do their business in the Zama Maszid and *Tikonia* bazaar. The *Chamars* used to sit with their Dalia full of shoes on the pavements and the factors had to accompany the retailer intending to make purchases from these *Chamars*. Mr. Khan collected funds from persons who wanted to take part in this business, purchased land and erected a shoe market consisting of 130 shops approximately. The market attracted many cottage workers who displayed their shoes and disposed them.

The market received a major setback due to communal tensions, and many Muslims who were the owners of property left Agra without settling their accounts

with their creditors and thus ultimately created a loss to the market. One rough estimates shows that at least 60-75 percent Muslims migrated to Pakistan from the shoe industry in various segments i.e. small cottage workshops, organised Karkhana, factors and other workers.[6]

Thereafter three new markets were established i.e. Harish shoe market with 36 shops, national shoe market with 50 shops and new shoe market with 17 shops. The Harish shoe market shifted itself with the old shoe market named as "the shoe market *Heeng ki mandi* which was monopolized by the Muslims came in the hands of Hindus and migrated personalities of Punjab and Sindh" (Sharma, 1958:87).

Cottage workers produce a substantial part of the total show production in the Agra city. They did not have any facilities either from the government or from community itself to support them. The lack of supply of raw material and lack of bargaining power in the market network always put them in misery. Their profit was insecure and devoid of capital. As a result the cottage workers depended entirely upon the credit facilities offered to them by the leather grindery merchants and the factories. They produced inferior quality of shoes due to their poor purchasing power. Their poverty compelled them to purchase inferior raw material and sell it to the conditions of the retailers or distributors or factors.

Marketing of shoes requires constant interaction of manufacturers, distributors, raw material suppliers and the retailers. Therefore there has to be a harmony among all the stakeholders otherwise market would not be able to stablise and it may shatter after some time. A very interesting aspect of this marketing is that it operates on traditional system.

Two very interesting aspects of marketing of leather goods in Agra are the prevalence of *"Purchi/purcha"* and *Katauti"* systems. These two systems are very exploitative for the jatav particularly, as they are poor and low in the social hierarchy. The *Katauti* is a tax meant to provide facilities to the workers but in real practice this tax is pocketed by the distributors (Lynch, 1969). No one knows the emergence of *Katauti* in this industry. But as people say earlier it was meant to give facilities to the

[6] For detail see table 19, pg no 86. Kailash Baboo Sharma (1958). "Marketing of leather goods at Agra" Unpublished masters thesis, dept of commerce, Raja Balwant Singh College, Agra (India).

workers and the distributors in case of any defect in the goods kept certain portion and they could compensate with it. Earlier it was not this much high, now it charged in the ranges of 5 percent to 8 percent and sometimes 10 percent of the total value of the goods (field note).

Second interesting aspect of this marketing is the *purchi/purcha* system. *'Purchi'* or *'purcha'* are credit slips given by the distributors to the manufacturers for a period of 1-3 months (Lynch, 1969). The real reason which the distributors give for its prevalence is that since they (distributors) have to wait for 3 months to receive payment from the retailers so the manufacturers must also wait. The Jatavs are highly critical of this system as they suffer most due to it.

These *Purchi/purcha* can be cashed if there is an immediate need for money, the cottage workers usually cash it thus creating double burden for them. There are people sitting in the market who cash these slips for a charge. For example if somebody has 50,000 credit slips, the cashier first cut his percentage depending on factors like, urgency of the situation, reputation of the person, caste background etc.

The position in the market network becomes clear when the share of the total profits is considered, 1964 estimates reveal the situation like this:

Percentage/share	**Share of different stakeholders**
63.5%	Material for the shoe and cost of manufacturing
5.0%	Profit to producer
6.5%	Profit of factor/whole seller
25.0%	Profit to retailer
100%	

Source: Lynch, (1969:42).

A similar study shows the similar result:

Percentage/share	**Share of different stakeholders**
66.67%	Cost of shoe
3.33%	Producer's profit
4.44%	Railroad shipping charges
5.55%	Wholesaler/Factor's profit
20.00%	Retailer's profit
100%	

Source: Sharma (1958:91).

If the producers distribute his own shoes, the profits and costs are

Percentage/share	Share of different stakeholders
69.21%	Cost of shoe
6.58%	Producers profit
4.21%	Railroad shipping charges
20.0%	Retailer's profit
100%	

Source: Lynch, (1969: 42).

If we analysis these tables, we find that retailers are the most beneficiary of this trade in terms of the profits. Middlemen or wholesalers are little bit above from manufacturers. Manufacturers are getting the least share in profits. Further deep analysis finds that since retailers are not able sell some dozens of shoes per day. There position is good in market if they are able to sell more. Therefore they earn a good amount of margins. Although the wholesalers have little percentage in profit than retailers yet the former sale and purchase thousands of shoes and other goods per day. This way they become the biggest gainers. The wholesalers transact in bulk therefore they retain the dominant position in the market. The manufacturers have least margins and they are the biggest suffers.

If the size of production unit is big and per head expenditure is low, the margins increases. However, this is not the case as the size of the production unit is small and there is low capital investment and less advanced technology. They are not able to produce more therefore their earnings are also very low. Small manufacturers production is limited and daily output is small, thus they are always at the receiving end. Their margins further fall as additional money is paid in taxes, bribing the police, interest on raw material etc. The earnings are very limited and insecure for small unit producers especially cottage workers.

Structure of Production Units

Footwear industry has covered a long distance since its establishment in Agra. The size and patterns of operation has changed a lot. The bigger factories in the past with 200 pairs per day of production have given way to factories where the daily production is 5,000-10,000 pairs a day and so on. The factories are now diverse in

field and biggest factories are producing for the middle class consumers of western countries though the rate of these products is very high from Indian standards.

We can categorise the footwear industry into five units on the basis of production per day, capital utilisation, labour force, facilities etc. first is the very big export oriented factories, second is the big factories, third is medium factories and the fourth one is the cottage or home based units. There is difference among all these five units in terms of the production, types of tools and technique and the characteristic of the labour force. All these units have their location scattered into different parts. Their operations also differed significantly.

Export Oriented Factories

There are around 70 export units in Agra out of which there are two golden cards holder and three silver cardholder units.[7] According to Knorringa, in 1991 there were 5 such factories but now it has increased to 70. (Give reference Knorringa,) Most of these units are located in Sikandara road. These big firms are capital oriented and use sophisticated machines where the production is done on the assembly line. These big machines are imported from countries like China, Taiwan, Germany, and Italy etc. These factories employ large work force and the total export turn over for Agra is about Rs. 450 Crores. These big factories make leather shoes and sandals for the overseas middle class consumers.

People who came to Agra during the partition time own all these factories and there has been a phenomenal growth of these people in this trade. The Punjabis, Sindhis, or some other higher castes own all these very big export oriented factories. There is no representation of Jatavs or Muslims in this segment. The liberalization, increasing leather trade, support from government, subsidization on technology import and reduction in duty for export-oriented factories has made these people to grow and prosper within a short time. Their base has become stronger than before, they maintain absolute monopoly in this segment.

[7] The numbers based on the district industrial center, Agra. Also available on the website http://agra.nic.in/industry.html

There is high level of specialization in these factories. There are separate departments according to the process i.e. designing, cutting, stitching, sewing etc. These sections have been further divided into sub-sections; for example in the cutting section itself there are workers who cut different pieces of shoes or sandals at the same time in one section. The same applies to stitching section where different workers stitch different parts of a shoe or sandal. These workers work on machines especially designed to do a particular work (Field notes).[8]

These factories give employment to thousands of people in a single factory some of the factories employ up to 2,000-3,000 workers. Their daily production is around 5,000-10,000 pairs a day. These factories are known for end-product production i.e. making complete shoes and sandals from cutting of pieces to packaging. They do all the processes involved in shoe making in the factory itself. These factories attract work force from nearby villages and satellite cities of Agra. These big factories are segregated in some areas like *Sikandara*, which is an industrial cluster. Lot of factories have propped up within a period of 15-20 years after the Liberalisation policy of government.

These factories are export oriented and use heavy and sophisticated machines imported from Italy, china, Germany etc. The machines are very costly and reduce the role of workers to some elementary movements as the major work is done with the machine. There is large numbers of unskilled women workers who do some menial and simple tasks like polishing, cleaning, or packaging works which doesn't require much skill.

A small number of work force is educated and skilled having diploma and certificates from shoe training centers. The majority of the work force is floating in nature i.e. they keep shifting to different factories in search of jobs. There is *Thekadari* system prevalent in these factories helping the factories to escape from direct recruiting. The labour cost is also decreased due to this as *Thekadar* pays workers on the basis of piece rate.

These very big factories keep some 5-10 percent of their work force on salary basis and rest of the workers are kept on contract. These factories keep contractors

[8] Observation during field work.

(Thekadars) and do some work through sub-contracting. Contractors then gather manpower for and do the work through labourers. The company is not directly responsible for any worker. It is the contractor who gives wages to labourers at piece rate. Contractors work as middleman in the management and the workers. This results in the marginalisation of the workers, as they are dependent on contractors. Contractors try to maximize their profit by giving them lowest cost for their labour. Due to large number of unemployed people in Agra and big families to support, these people some times work on lower rates in need of any work.

Another feature of big factories is that a large portion of their labour force consists of women who are given the simple jobs like polishing, cleaning, or doing menial works. These women comprised mostly of widows, adult girls, middle- aged women, and deserted women etc. are recruited as they work on lower wages. The wages also differed according to duties and Specialisation. Big factories keep changing their work force to prevent formation of any unionism in the factory.

Another interesting feature of these factories is the manifestation of social hierarchy into the occupational hierarchy. All the leather piece cutter and fitter belong to Chamar (jatav) community as only these people can touch leather as it is polluting. In the conveyer belt (also known as assembly line) section, (it is considered to be standard job as work is done on big machines), we find a lot of intermediary castes along with jatav and other higher castes doing this work. The caste-based differences are still observed in terms of dining within their caste, conversation, inter-mingling etc. (field note).

These factories have a 'floating labour' population, who work with them for sometime. They are not attached to any factory, as these factories do not give permanent employment. Therefore labourers always keep their options open and try to seek job wherever possible. When there is season in the medium and small factories then the work in these export-oriented factories become slowly as this is the time when they acquire orders from overseas. These factories are very slow during this time, when there is slag time in the domestic industry; again the workers go to these factories in search of jobs.

People who work in these factories are hired though various mechanisms like thorough pamphlets, informal channel, advertisement in cable television and newspapers, workers themselves put notices, etc.

Another feature of this is that there is institutionalisation of the social inequalities in the factory system. There are various sections in the factory i.e. cutting, fitting, packaging, designing etc. It was found that the most degrading job i.e. that involves touching leather and cutting is still done by Jatavs only. All the leather pattern cutters in the cutting section were jatav people and those who supervise them were also Jatavs. It is the case with the fitting section too. In the assembly section we find a lot of Jatavs, middle castes and very few higher castes doing their work. As assembly line requires very little skills therefore we find a lot of middle castes along with higher castes doing it. There are a lot of middle caste and higher caste people in this department who hide their castes and interact within their close circles i.e. eating food, sitting and gossiping, or joking. Traditional caste rules still dominate here. The higher or medium caste come from nearby villages where they hide their work profile from their family and community members as it may affect their social standing in the society (field note).

Big Factories

There are about 60 organised footwear units which are scattered in whole of Agra. We find concentration in some places where a big jatav or Muslim populations reside like *Jewani Mandi*, *Sadar Bhatti* etc due to the availability of labour in these areas.

Like most of these export-oriented factories, they are also capital intensive, use skilled and unskilled labour power, per head production is very high, use high power using machines, spread in big geographical area, make uppers which are be exported.

Large part of the work force is skilled and unskilled with some educated skilled workers. Women, Jatavs, and Muslims do, most of the menial, and degrading tasks. Even in women work force, it is a mixed caste compositions, but a large number of women workers belong to lower castes i.e. *Jatavs*, *Koli*, *Valmiki* etc. most

of these women are either widow, deserted, young girls, middle aged women etc who work to supplement their family income.

These factories have some of their work force, as permanent employees and rest are contract labourers. These factories have a relatively good built infrastructure, and workers have fixed time of work, and these are bound by the various factory Acts. Majority of workers come from jatav or Muslim community.

The main feature of these factories is that they make leather uppers, which are exported to foreign countries. A lot of their work is sub-contracted to other smaller units. These Factories work with a labour force of 300-500 and per worker production is very high.

Small Scale Organised Karkhanas

These are smaller size factories with a work force of 30-50 workers. The actual number of such units is not known. These factories come under small-scale industry and lots of them are unregistered. Therefore they can escape from taxes and other levies from government.

These units operate from jatav or Muslims areas, but the factories are found in all over Agra. This section is a bigger segment of footwear industry in Agra and produce large quantities of shoes both leather and non-leather. These *Karkhanas* operate just like home- based small factory units but their volume of goods and circulation capital is much higher than home based units. These units have their sales agents who sell their products in different markets and some times outside of Agra. Some of these units have their marketing agents who travel to different cities in search of orders. They also carry with them the sample pieces on which orders are to be secured. These units are more organised in nature and they are not dependent on local markets for their sale. These units get raw material on credit and pay them in bulk when the order is complete. These factories have bigger circulation capital therefore they can afford to wait till the wholesale pays them money.

The owners are supervisors and they are the masters with experience in this field. They always keep a vigil on the workers and also have their presence in all the working hours till it closed. This type of factories bound labour by giving advances to

that he does not leave the factory. Advances are also given at the time of marriage, sickness, social functions, or repaying credits.

Punjabis, Sindhis, Muslims, and some Jatavs dominate this segment. It requires big capital and semi and automatic machines for large-scale production. All these have organized for their own electricity supply through generators. The workers come from nearby towns, cities, and *Basties* of Jatavs of Agra. There are large numbers of child labour engaged in these factories and due to factory regulations; owners discourage outsiders from entering factories.

Home Based Small Factory Units

There are some 2000-3000 small units operating from various areas in Agra. Most of them are operating from homes and some rented houses. These are small factories which are labour intensive, per head production is very less compare to bigger factories, it uses some traditional tools, or cheap machines, second hand machines, usually work with a work force of 5-10 workers.

Punjabi, Sindhi, Muslims dominate this segment along with Jatavs These units are segregated in all the Jatavs and Muslim localities. These units predominantly make leather and foam shoes and *Chappals*. Unlike home-based units family labour is seldom used here. Most of the workers work on wages. The workers are paid wages according to pieces manufactured per day. The master *karigar* (trainer) is usually paid salary on month basis. These units sell their product directly to whole sellers in the *Heeng ki mandi* which are fixed. They prepare shoes on orders by the whole sellers after negotiating the price and the material to be used.

Sometimes the houses are used as work place if there is enough space but some times a place is hired for the unit. These units are located in the most congested areas of Agra, as it is easier for them to recruit labour from these areas. Sometimes the whole sellers provide the raw material or sometimes ask these units to manage from the market.

Home Based Cottage Industry

These are purely home-based *Karkhanas* using family labour. These *kharkhanas* are labour intensive, use traditional tools and technology and per head production is very less. These household units make leather and non-leather shoes and *chappals*. 25 percent of these home based units make *chappals* particularly. The actual season for *chappals* starts after *Holi*.

According to rough estimates there are approximately 30,000 household units of this type. The actual number cannot be known as these operate in almost every jatav locality and in almost every house. These are scattered all over Agra but concentrated in the jatav localities particularly. This is a family occupation for most of these people. Almost all the people in the family contribute in one way or another. It is difficult to separate between a work place and living place. The workers make *chappals* and shoes by using their hands. It does not require specialization like the shoemakers, and one person can prepare *Chappals* without depending on specialized labour. The cheap quality of leather is used for it. This is a house hold business therefore there is no clear-cut separation between home and occupation place. The electric consumption is minimum due to lack of machines. The famous localities are *Jagdish pura, Nala kaji Para, Panchkuiyan, Shah ganj, Bodla* etc.

Women have two roles, first as a homemaker and second as a worker in the units. This is a labour intensive process and since these people don't have big capital with them, they run these *kharkhanas* by taking some short-term loan from relatives, friends, societies, or government banks. These people live in acute poverty and their *Basties* are located in poorer and low-lying areas of Agra,

The capital investment is minimum, and they make shoes and sell it to the whole sellers in the *Heeng ki mandi* market at very low margins. Their daily transaction may not be more than some hundred Rupees. There are two types of units; first those who make leather shoes and *chappals* on order popularly known as (*Namewalas*) and second are those who don't make on orders known as (*Daliawalas*). The shoe making Jatavs shift to *chappal* making only when there is not enough capital at their command.

There are localities in Agra which are known for the items produced like some localities are known for some specific design shoes, some are famous for ladies sandals, children's shoes and *Chappal* making areas are also different.

The *Chappal* making workers live in absolute poverty and their daily output is not very high. They have lived continuously in poverty for centuries. They earn somewhere 2-3 Rupees per pair *Chappal.* From raw material supplier to distributors, all try to extract as much as possible from them due to their vulnerability. Most of them are under debts, and purchase raw material on credit, which cost them more.

Sources of Labour

Generally, the supply of unskilled workers in the industrial centers is from the rural areas. India is an agricultural economy and most of the people are dependent on agriculture for their survival. In this agriculture sector every one is not landholder and most of the people sell their labour for their survival. India has vast population dependent on rural agricultural economy. The agricultural sector is highly labour intensive except some states where due to green revolution the impact of technology has been phenomenal. As the agriculture cost increased it pushed a lot of labour to cities. The competition on the rural economy is increasing due to increase in population, therefore a lot workers migrate to cities in search of better opportunities.

Agra is one of those centers, which attracts population from nearby villages and cities. The search for jobs for these migrated people ends in metropolitan cities and semi urban centers where there are some opportunities for these people in the lower jobs. Though the industrial workers abundantly coming from villages are not essentially agricultural who have only temporarily forsaken their agricultural work in order to add to their income by a brief spell of industrial working in the city. In the shoe industry the workers are the immigrants from villages and they belong to a caste called *Chamars* (Sharma, 1958).

The labour investigation committee appointed by government of India remarked in 1946 about the labour supply in leather industry. "The large majority of workers in tanneries in Uttar Pradesh are drawn from villages. In leather good factories the workers are mostly from urban areas and belong to the cities as Kanpur, Unnao, Allahabad and Agra. Chennai is one of the cities for the production of leather

where the labourers are available without any difficulty. The employers may recruit workers directly. In Calcutta out of 214 sample workers 94% had migrated from Bihar, MP. And UP".[9]

It has been further pointed out that the bulk of cottage shoe-workers are migrants who still have a stake in agriculture. Their occasional visits to their villages home are more for rest and recuperation than for their attention on the cultivation. The great majority of those are "at heart villagers having village traditions and frequently visiting the villages at the time of social ceremonies, urgent family matters, and illness and so on". They migrate due to increasing pressure of population on land, accumulated debts and pinch of agricultural distress. Furthermore, they receive better social treatment in the industrial centers than in villages and are spared much humiliation, as industrial employments tend to break down social and caste distinctions. The driving force in migration comes almost entirely from one end of the channel that is, the villages end. Industrial workers would remain in industry if they could secure sufficient food and clothing in the village; they are pushed not pulled to the city (Sharma, 1958:14).

Wage Structure

The wages are determined by many broad factors like nature of work, age, season, design of the shoe, size of shoe, experience, demand in market, education, quality of shoes, goods type (leather/foam) (Chappal/shoe) and so many other things. All these factors are taken into account for setting a wage structure. These factors constantly interact with each other.

The big factories pay monthly wages to the workers whereas the medium factories and small *Karkhanas* pay weekly wages. Most of the workers in the bigger factories are employed by the *Thekadars* on piece rate. Therefore these factors work a little in determining wages; rather it is the availability of abundant labour, which determines the wages in this setting.[10] There are different wages paid according to the work like cutting, stitching, fitting, pasting etc. The supervisors are kept on salary basis whose work is to supervise the workers and keep a quality check on them. The

[9] Kuwar Singh Verma (1965). "Leather industry in Agra" Unpublished masters thesis. Raja Balwant Singh College, Agra (India).
[10] Observation during field visits and interaction with the workers.

wages for different processes depend according to the production on per day, i.e. the cutter wage is least per piece but he can cut a lot of pieces per day so he can cover by cutting more. The wage of upper fitter is highest as he can make 15-24 pairs per day with a assistant.

There is hardly any factory in leather industry which gives bonus to its workers. Lot of advances is also given to workers to make them under some economic bondage. It helps the workers at the same time and on the other hand it binds the worker to the factory. Since workers get five days in a week for work that too in season time, so they hardly earn enough wages to run their families. They also try to get some other work simultaneously and always try to seek better options where they can get more secure jobs and high wages.

One interesting fact is that, there is no trade union of workers in Agra but at the same time the distributors; retailers have their market associations, which bargain hardly to the manufacturers. The lack of trade unions reduces workers and manufacturers bargaining capacity. In the past there had been attempts to organise manufacturers and workers for better working conditions, higher wages but it failed due to some inherent problems and lack of good leadership.

The material cost and the manufacturing cost has been increasing but the wages have not increased for a long time. The standard wages are given below for the workers:

Specialisation	Cutting	Fitting	Bottoming	Pasting	Finishing	Packaging
Wages Rs/Pair	2-3	8-10	4-6	2-3	2-3	3-5

Workers working in the organised factories*

Recruitment of the Labour

There are various means for labour recruitment in the industry. Most of the labour engaging in the big factories comes from the *Basties* of Jatavs or *Mohallas* of Muslims. In addition, some come from nearby villages and also from Agra itself. The

* Approximate wages paid to the workers in medium *Karkhanas*.

bigger factories especially in the conveyer belt department, a lot of higher and middle castes come from nearby villages or satellite towns.

Bigger factories use informal channel that is recruitment though personal contact of labour or officers to recruit labour. Besides that, job vacancies are also published in newspaper, local magazines, cable television, factory notice boards etc. In the middle and small segment, labour is basically hired by sending personal information to probable workers or local links are also exploited. Sometimes the owners send some person to inform them.

The labour and owners relationships are not smooth and long lasting but are seasonal. In the season time, the owners avoid any conflict and in slag season workers live on the mercy of these owners. There is no loyalty of any kind for the workers as they work where they get the maximum wages and secured work for some time.

There is another system of advance in the industry where workers are paid advance to prevent them from leaving the job. This system keeps them under economic compulsions, it helps in retaining labour for factories by factory owners. This amount is compensated by a little reduction in their wages but the principle amount remains same. Due to this system, they are always at the mercy and command for the owners. Workers take advances in certain immediate conditions like sickness, marriage, credits, social functions etc. This economic bondage is used as tool to do some work without pay (*begari*)[11]. This system is prevalent among all factory owners but this was very much prevalent in the factories of Sindhis and Punjabis as they get problem in recruiting jatav labours for their factories. To prevent their labour from working in some other factories, they provide interest free loans.

Factory owners rarely keep workers from the locality where the factory is established. This is done to prevent workers from making any solidarity with the community. Different factory workers are discouraged from inter-mingling so that any other factory owner does not copy the designs.

[11] I met many workers who were under this bondage; owners would call them at any time even if there is no work. They are forced to do some little work of owners like electricity work or cleaning factory etc.

Labour Supply in Agra

A drift of labour and capital has accompanied the development of shoe industry simultaneously from the Neighbouring places. The sources of supply of workers in the cottage shoe industry are kept mainly into three broad categories

Resident Population of the City

At first the footwear industry in Agra used to depend to a great extent on the supply of resident population of the city. The workers in this sector are the old local residents for many generations. It is significant to note that 84 to 86 percent of the workers in this industry are local residents. Though, these resident workers have previously migrated to cities from the villages. The working in cottage shoe industry has become family profession. They started a workshop in the beginning as their parents and relatives had been in shoe-making line.

Workers coming daily from the Neighbouring villages

The second source of supply of workers in footwear industry is from workers who come to work daily in the morning and go in the evening at sunset. They are members of the joint families and work to supplement their family's income by agricultural operations carried on by other members. It is interesting to note that the percentage of this source is estimated up to 15 percent to 12 percent of total workforce. It is noticeable that employment for workers from outside has increasingly been difficult, as the cottage in Agra have built up their own houses in various localities.

Workers coming outside Agra District

The third types of worker are those who are residents of other districts or states. Although their percentage is very small they still constitute a considerable percentage of the workers in the industry. The percentage of such workers is not very high and is usually between 1 percent and 2 percent. These are people whose income has decreased due to some factor and they are forced to migrate to the city in search of employment. Most of these people are from lower castes.

Classification of Workers

We can classify workers on the following variables like caste, class, skill, age, education, religion, sex, living area, family background, land ownership and so on. These classifications help us to know the characteristic of workers and its effect on them in finding meaningful jobs for them.

The Jatavs and Muslims do the lowest and menial jobs in the industry. We can find them in the lowest jobs like cleaning, cutting leather, fitting leather pieces or stitching them etc. The well-paid jobs in the factory are basically with the higher castes, as most of them are either owners or have their large shops in the wholesale markets, or they are big distributors or have retailing shops.

Women are also found in the menial and low paid jobs and most of these belong to jatav caste category as it is not unusual for them to work in factories. Most the women working in the factories are widow, deserted young ladies, teen-aged girls, middle-aged women etc. There is not a single woman in the industry holding a well-paid job. The women are not employed in the tanning. In the factory system they do the simplest and low paid jobs like polishing shoes, cleaning factory, or packaging and so on.

Muslims are also found to be sharing equal status with the Jatavs as some Muslims also engage in menial and low paid jobs. Although there is a good presence of Muslims in the distribution chain but a lot of them still work in the factories or have their own home based units.

Age is a determining factor in the industry. Although child labour is banned in big factories but in May 2002 accident in Sree Jee International a factory, one child was burnt to death along with some 42 workers[12]. Most of the factory workers are from landless families. They have their own houses are located in *Basties* away from colonies. Most of the workers who now work in the factories were earlier home-based

[12] Also available at
http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2002/06/12/stories/2002061202291700.htm
To see findings and recommendation, visit website
http://www.cec-india.org/toplinks/5/Past%20Years/news_item.2004-09-03.2236574928

workers and due to the ruination of cottage these people are forced to work in the factory system.[13] These people don't have enough capital to start their own business.

According to Sex

Men worker are found in every workshop, *Karkhana* or factory or tannery in Agra. Tanneries do not give employment to women workers and put them out of employment. Such is not the case of footwear industry. It gives employment to women but are low paid and menial. Women enter into factories as unskilled workers and are engaged in the most simplest and menial work. Status of women as homemaker is changing now as more and more women now work in the bigger factories unlike earlier. On the one hand it supplements the family income and on the other hand factories get cheap source of labour abundantly.

According to Skills

Skilled labour is founding almost every industry. In case of leather industry this fact applies wholly with the exception of those children who accompany their father to get training in the manufacture of leather goods and who handle leather from their very childhood may be put under the category of unskilled ones. The rest all are skilled labourers and even these children afterwards fall under the category of skilled labourers after some time.

It is very difficult to know the exact number of workers in this industry due to its being unorganized in nature. This is a seasonal occupation where workers go through the process of employment, under-employment and unemployment in different periods of the year. It is also difficult to know the exact number of child labour as children engage in home based units also help their parents in footwear making and some children do the work with their parents directly in the factories or *Karkhanas.*

These children are considered to be unskilled but with time they learn the skills and one-day become skilled workers. In factories they accompany with their parents or some other relatives. They are found in every *Karkhana* or small workshop,

[13] Almost all the workers had their own cottage factory or worked in the cottage factories as 'workers' in the past.

tannery or factory. As above stated they get training in their childhood and hence, they represent a good percentage of the labour force. If we cast an eye over the number of men, women children workers in tanneries, factories, *Karkhanas* or small workshops, we will find that about 60 percent of men, 35 percent of children, and 5 percent women account for the labour force in Agra leather industry.

According to Caste

In all the factories and tanning industry we can find only two castes predominantly doing this work these are *Chamars* and Muslims. Hindus do not like to touch leather due to the fear of pollution. Therefore their presence is negligible in this work.

The leather occupation was the heredity work of a caste called *Chamars* (Jatavs). They developed this industry. It was degrading for a pure Hindu to touch leather therefore there was no attempt to develop this industry. In the mogul period some Muslims also engaged in this occupation. Moguls brought with them the shoemakers from their native place. This occupation has been carried out only by the *Chamars,* as their traditional work is collecting hides, skinning animals, tanning, shoe making, and shoe repairing etc. There is a continuity of this occupation across time and space by *Chamars*. They are still found in the entire shoe making factories, *Karkhanas*, smaller units, tanning etc. They are dependent on their traditional skill for their survival.

According to Occupational Specialisation

The workers can be divided according to their Specialisation in the shoe making processes. Their status also differed to a larger extent, like the designer status is higher than a cutter, and fitter's wages are more to a pasting workers etc. The workers are divided, classified and separated according to the processes of work. These workers have their own work hierarchies which often interact with other hierarchies like age, experience etc. There are different processes in shoe making like designer, cutter, fitter, bottomer, paster, finisher, and packers etc. They are paid according to the nature of work, i.e. cutting has lowest rate, but a person can cut many pairs per day therefore compensate its low rate by cutting more.

Raw Material Supplier

Heeng ki mandi and *Tikonia* market are the major raw material supplying source. But raw material suppliers are found in all the areas of Agra. They operate from jatav *bastis*, Muslim *Mohallas*, and some key market locations. From the very early times these segment were totally dominated by Muslims. After shaping this industry from cottage to big industry, it attracted a lot of other castes and now there are numerous castes in this segment.

Raw material suppliers deal with almost all components of leather shoes, but big raw material suppliers deal in bigger products like, foam, leather sheets, soles, sole sheets etc. whereas smaller raw material suppliers deal in various components used in the shoes and *Chappals* or sandals, like iron nuts, copper nails, chains, adhesive, glue and other parts of shoes. Raw material suppliers are an important segment of leather industry. They give material on credit too but they charge more for it. The credit facility depends on factors like, reputation of customer, economic condition, caste, urgency and his previous record etc.

Distributors

Early studies in leather industry reveal that early distributors and retailers were from Muslim community because only these people could touch the leather. There was no concept of purity and pollution for them. The role of Muslim as distributors and Jatavs as manufacturers was well defined (Lynch, 1969) but Jatavs have lost their role as factory owners but Muslims to an extent have retained their role as distributors. Other castes have penetrated in to their role too. Earlier the shoes and *Chappals* were made from leather, now it has been replaced by foam.

There are larger and reputed distributors who operate from *Heeng ki mandi.* We can classify the distributor in the *Heeng ki mandi* in terms of their daily purchase. Out of 100 traders in this location, 5 are really big traders with a purchasing capacity of 3000 pairs a day. 15 are really big with a capacity of 2000 pairs, 40 with a capacity of 1000 and 40 rather small with 300 pairs a day. Besides that another smaller footwear traders reside in nearby market places: sri ram market (20), *Tikonia* market with (30), and spread out in other by-lanes another 15 footwear traders shops. 55 of

them are about the size of the smaller wholesalers on the central location, while the remaining 70 wholesalers are much smaller (buying approximately 150 pairs a day). The total number of pairs bought by wholesalers on and around *Heeng ki mandi* can thus be estimated at 125,000 pairs a day (Knorringa, 1996).[14]

The situation has changed after a lot in these 16 years when Knorringa studied this market in early 90s. Now there are more than 1000 shops of all kinds, out of which large number of distributors, raw material suppliers, and retailers have now expanding to nearby places. The community wise compositions have also changed significantly. Now out of 1000 shops in the *Heeng ki market* there are 5-10 shops belong to Jatavs, 400 belong to Muslims, 500 belong to Punjabis and Sindhis, and rest 90 belong to other higher castes like Bania, Thakurs, Brahmins and other caste groups. The Jatavs shops are running with difficulty and there is no big trader among them.[15]

Another interesting aspect of this market is that these big traders are playing multi roles, i.e. they are the financier, *purcha/ Purchi* cashier, some raw material supplier, and some have their own retailing business. They have diversified their business as now it is increasingly becoming a family business where different members are running different segments of the trade. The newer generations is also accommodated by first giving them the responsibility of cashing *purchi/purcha.* Gradually, some other business responsibilities like dealing with the customers or manufacturers are given as they get experience. When they understood the dynamics of trade, they hire some shops and start operating independently.

These distributors and trader have their own specialization in some geographical areas of operation. Some are the supplier of *Chappals* of particular kind to some particular region. Some supply to some eastern India on festival time and some supply to western India with some type of shoes or *Chappals*. These people have knowledge of the market network and taste of consumers (Lynch, 1969). One interesting aspect of this market operation is that the expansion of market is always in the reverse direction from the jatav locality. The market can expand into Muslims

[14] Knorringa, P. 1991 estimates.

[15] Rough estimates based on the interaction with some Jatavs and other people

areas or some other areas but it never penetrates into jatav areas. In a sense the jatav community is by passed by market forces (Field observation).

There has not been enough attention either by the foreigners or Indian on the changes that are taking place in the market network. In less than a century the structure of the market has changed significantly. According to one reliable source who has been in the market for more than 20 years. His elder brother has good shoe business therefore he has some market knowledge of how it works. According to him, the market has changed a lot. (Earlier before partition) the shoe distribution and shoe retailing was in the hands of Muslims but now it has shifted to higher castes. Though the number of Muslim distributors has not decreased but other higher castes share has increased more than the Muslims. The Jatavs have almost disappeared from this segment, those who have remained they are somehow sustaining. According to him we can divide the shops in the market according to caste and community compositions like this.

Training Institute

Central Footwear Training Institute is one of the oldest institutions established in 1963. This institute is located at industrial area, *Sikandra*, it works under the ministry of small scale industries, government of India. This institute conducts many courses and research on the leather designs.

The institute conducts Diploma Course in Footwear Design & Production Technology also conducts various short-term courses. Designing, physical testing, insole making, training in various activities ranging from pattern cutting, grading, machine operations, product development, finishing & fashion prediction are among the several activities that this Institute does. It caters to the demand of industry by creating professional to be absorbed in the leather industry.

Finance Source

Finance is a necessary for the establishment of any industry. Due to the expansion of industry it has created need for proper finance sources. There are various sources of finance in this industry like caste banks, cooperative societies, national and private banks, moneylenders etc. These sources give loans for setting factories, or

providing working capital, or purchasing machines etc. the bigger factories whose financial requirements are larger they get long-term loans from government banks with export subsidy. Whereas the medium one depend on cooperative societies and caste banks for their financial requirements. The cottage sector workers depend on money lenders who operates from *Basties* and *Mohallas*. Besides this there are financers in the *Heeng ki Mandi* who provide money to the workers on high interest rate. There are same caste moneylenders in every *Basti*, *Mohallas* known to give short-ranged credits on high interest rates to the workers. Generally long-ranged loans have low interest rates and short term loans have high interest rates. The finance or credits are given on conditions and interest rates depend on many factors like, reputation of the person, family background, caste, income source, urgency, motive for requirement etc.

Retailers

The retailers are scattered all over the Agra and operate from markets and some well-known areas. We find retailers presence everywhere in Agra. Big retailers operate from larger and known markets. These retailers purchase manufactured goods from whole sellers from the *Heeng ki mandi* and take their share of profits, which is extremely high. Although the margin depends on factors like design, quality, size etc, but they make profit up to 15-25% of the total value of shoes. Since they operate from standard location they get high margins compare to the smaller one. Big retailers purchase shoes in bulk and their daily sell is very high therefore they have high earnings per day. Whereas those small retailers earn comparatively less whose location of operation is not good or their daily sales is not very high.

Indian Footwear Components Industry

The Footwear Component Industry is a segment of the leather industry in India. The footwear components mainly exported from India are leather shoe uppers and leather unit soles. The estimated annual production capacity of leather shoe uppers is 112 million pairs. The major production centers are *Chennai*, *Ranipet*, *Ambur* in Tamil Nadu, *Agra* and *Delhi*. The components industry has enormous opportunity for growth to cater to increasing production of footwear of various types, both for export and domestic market.

India's export of footwear components touched US$ 229.49 million in 1999-2000, holding a share of 15% in India's total export of leather and leather products. Nearly 75% of the total export of footwear components is from the southern region, followed by the northern region, with a share of 13%. The major markets for Indian footwear components are the U.K., Germany, Italy, the USA, France, and Portugal. Nearly 83% of India's export of footwear components is to these countries.

In the year 1999-2000, India exported footwear components to the tune of 38 million pairs mainly consisting of leather shoe uppers, leather unit soles and other components. Out of these, leather shoe uppers (gents and ladies) alone constituted a share of 84%.

Supporting Industries

The footwear industry requires supporting industries providing raw materials and components to be used by it for its proper operation. Some of these industries are located in Agra itself but a lot of industries are located in outside Agra or some other distant places. So the shoe industry affects all these industries and at the same time is also affected by any fluctuation in the market. Shoe industry gives employment to millions of people across India. It indirectly affects a lot of people livelihood of millions who are engaged in other supporting industries. .

1. Leather Tanning Industry.
2. Rubber Components Industry.
3. Textile Components Industry.
4. Plastic Components Industry.
5. Metal Component Industry.
6. Shoe Component Manufacture Machines Industry.
7. Light Machines Industry.
8. Paper Industry.
9. Adhesive Industries.

Supporting industries emerged alongside the 'Main Stream' manufacturers. Leather training industry, weaving of textiles (to be used as material for canvas shoes), coating of textiles with PVC (to be used as material for sandals and shoes), are worth mentioning in addition to the rubber based shoe component manufacturing industries which supported the main footwear manufacturing industries.

This industry has wide links abroad due to its need for advanced technology to maintain a competitive edge over other rivals like the china, Taiwan, Thailand or some other south East Asian countries. China has become a major supplier of technology and cheap goods for the footwear industry. The Chinese competitive price and closeness to Indian subcontinent has attracted the attention of medium factories across Agra. China is now a source of cheap technology for the medium sector in footwear industry, as its technology is cheap compare to Italy or Germany.

It is evident from this chapter that this industry is dependent on so many other industries for its materials and supply. It is affected by the policies of government and international changes. The technology import and change in demand are affecting the operations in this industry too, like many others.

Chapter 5

CASE STUDIES

There were twenty case studies collected, out of these twenty case studies eight case studies have been attached in this chapter. Even these eight case studies were very lengthy therefore it was not possible to attach complete case studies keeping in mind the thinkness and scope of study. Some relevant portions have been used in this chapter, which were dealing with the barriers. All the attached case studies represent different levels i.e. very big, big, medium, small and cottage. There were some interesting quotes available in other case studies, some quotes have been used from other case studies, which are not attached but the proper reference is given after the quotes. All the names in the case studies have been changed keeping ethics in mind.

Kunwar Singh

Kunwar singh is the most educated worker I met. He is a high school pass but was a dropout at the intermediate level due to family problems. He is the most respected person in the factory as he is very simple and decent while talking. He appears to be silent but he has great knowledge about the industry as he has worked in different places. He is 44 years old he has been in this trade from 1981 onwards. He started this work due to problems in his family.

Kunwar Singh right now works in a (undisclosed) factory, which is located in the *meera hussani chaurah.* On the ground floor is the office cum godown for the finished goods. All the workers work on the first floor. It was a house meant for living but is now used as factory. Rooms have been divided according to the processes of shoe making.

The workers' age varies from children from 7-8 years old to persons who are above forty-five years of age. All of them share the same work environment, the young one work silently while the elder dominate talking and the little one just laughing a little. At least 30% of the work force is child labour. None of them go to school. Some of the children come with their relatives or fathers. All the people including children are addicted to one or other kind of drugs or alcohol/substance. The work is done in an assembly line production system with workers sitting in a queue according to the shoemaking process i.e. cutter, fitter, bottom and so on.

This factory is located in a jatav locality. Nearby is a *Muslim mohallah* and *Heeng ki mandi* is located little far from it. The shops are located outside the jatav area. The electric connections to the factory is illegal, for which they have to bribe officials. The factory is very dirty and has not been cleaned for months. There is a strong foul smell of leather, pasting glue, spit by workers and spirit vapours that make it intolerable place to work. There is no proper facility for drinking water or toilets as a result the workers go to nearby home for the use of a latrine.

Kunwar Singh is highly respected because he is very literate according to these people, he is very decent and silent and adults close to his son's age feel free to share jokes with him. He works in a separate room meant for pasting with one assistant, who does the compress pasting and Kunwar Singh does the rest of the work. He sits here for 8 hours and sometimes more than that if the work is more.

He has 4 children out of which 3 are boys and one daughter they are all going to school. His elder son dropped out of school this year due to financial problems in the family.

He says his wife doesn't work as she is a homemaker and she is an illiterate lady. She says, "a*ap kama ke layo humein nahi jana kisi ke ghar kaam karne. Yeh to aapki zimmedari hai.* " (you earn, I do not want to go to anybody's house for working, this is your responsibility)

Kunwar Singh family never had agricultural lands or any other means for survival except this traditional skill. His grandfather had a big shoe factory that doesn't exist now. He has never seen the factory himself but has only heard about its existence from others. His grandfather passed away when his father was just 5 year old. His father was a finisher in the shoemaking process and later became a *majdoor* in this line. His elder brother was also engaged in this work he used to do pasting. There are some processes, which have vanished now due to mechanization. Like hand stitching, sole pasting by hand or hardening the front of the shoe by using lei (a liquid) etc.

He started in this business through apprenticeship, which he learnt at many places before becoming a full-fledged worker. He says he can earn as much as possible depending upon the availability of the work and rate. If we divide his 4 month earning equally in 12 month then it is somewhere between 1500-2000 per month. In that amount he has to run the whole family. He says, "w*e are just equivalent to construction workers".*

(The pasting machines starts and create very loud and intolerable sound, it becomes difficult to listen the conversation, after some time it stops).

He has been in this factory for 3 years. And got this job through a contact with of one of his relatives. He used to work in a factory for 15 years but left the job when he had some problems with the management.

He has worked more than 7-8 locations before coming in this factory he has worked with *Muslim*s, Punjabis and a jatav. He is quite appreciative of one *Muslim* person he worked for he was good in nature. "*He was an educated Muslim and didn't discriminate on the bases of caste with me".*

The problems in Punjabi and Sindhi people is that they keep supervisors, until or unless one pays them some money one cannot get a job there. He says people have to pay some bribe to the supervisor to get a job. It is very difficult to enter the system and therefore one has to pay money to get the job and also for the continuation of the job. Therefore factory owners are not concerned about either recruitment or continuation of workers but it is the supervisors and others who recruit workers in the factories.

He has worked as a contract labourer in all these factories. He says, every time you have to appease supervisor otherwise they complain to owner and get you out of work. They have authority with them. It doesn't matter which caste you belong to, they will charge you whenever they like they charge from 30 paise a *jori* to 50 paise a *jori.*

He says this work is good but for the last 14 years it has created problems for us. Ever since BJP has come into power it has destroyed Agra shoe industry. The BJP has brought about a policy that the heat chamber and compressor machine would be taxed 25 Rs pair. Due to this the big factories like Bata or Carona have shifted to other places like Punjab and others. But now he is not sure if these factories have started operation in the city again.

He says the shoes he is preparing will be sold in the showroom in big cities. He says he earns something 2 Rs, 2.5 Rs or 3 Rs per pair shoe and the sale price will range. The rate and *majdoori* depends factory to factory. Some people may be working less than that too. And of course some may be paying higher but the chances are very low.

In 1988 he received a letter from the employment exchange to discuss the possibility of receiving loans. The person in-charge person talked to him about the loans and said that:

"*har insane ke liye to job nahi hai lekin government ki ek scheme hai ki 20,000 ka loan mil sakta par tumhe 20% dena parega tumhari applicaton lagane ke liye.*" (There are no jobs for every person but there is one scheme from the government, you can get a loan of 20,000 but you have to pay us 20% of the amount (bribe) to forward your application.). Since he could not pay the 20% he came back empty handed but others paid the amount and took loans.

Although there is no problem these days but problems arises when there is no work to do. After the season is over all the workers in the factory survive by taking credits. The BJP put extra duty on some machines like compressor, pasting and heating machines, therefore the big factories like Bata shifted their operation to some other areas, which resulted into loss of employment for Jatavs who were engaged in it the industry suffered badly particularly Jatavs

According to Kunwar Singh they (BJP) did this to make life difficult for these two communities i.e. *Muslims* and Jatavs as these two communities do this occupation for centuries. It affected these two communities when bigger factories shifted from here.

Kunwar Singh further explains why Jatavs are reducing from their own occupation "Earlier there were some shops of Jatavs but now very few have left. There is another problem is that they don't have community fund unlike others like Sindhi, Punjabis or *Muslims*". He says, Sindhi have *Gaushala*, *Muslims* have Mosque, and Punjabis have *Gurdwara*. These people give certain amount to these institutions. These institutions fund their business, to set up shops or any other thing. Jatavs should purchase and sell their products from their people only as done by higher castes and *Muslims*.

According to Kunwar Singh, "There is severe caste mobilization in the market after Babri Maszid demolition as now people do trade within their particular communities i.e. *Muslim* to *Muslim*, Sindhi to Sindhi and Punjabi to Punjabi etc."

"There is lack of community feeling among Jatavs unlike *Muslims*, Sindhis, and Punjabis etc. Jatavs neither have community feeling not have community fund. Another problem is that Jatavs don't have separate identity that is their biggest problem. Another problem in them is the lack of education without which the mobility is not possible".

He further adds, "There is hardly any jatav in the market. "This is due to jatav's inability to understand the market, they don't purchase from their people and support each other. There were shops earlier but now those shops are also closed as we do not do trade among ourselves and overtly depend on others".

"It is difficult to get a shop in a market and it requires money but Jatavs don't have that money. Second the market is discriminatory and works against the jatavs. People don't purchase from them that is the reason Jatavs are reducing in the market". If there were any funding institutions for our community then most of our problems would be solved. Due to our weak economic base our children too have problems in

accessing education. Due to casteism and money we cannot enroll our children in good colleges or schools."

Most of the Jatavs end up getting admission only in the substandard institutions, as they don't have any money to get admission in these elite institutions. He is doubtful for his future generation but still hopes that good time will come.

He recalls of an interesting incident that took place in 1994-95. One of his friends came from Delhi after attending a conference. There was a fair cum conference organized by some Hindu organization, which he is not sure of. One of his Bania friends went there with his Boss. The Bania friend showed him one pamphlet distributed there among the invitees gathered from all over India. It was clearly written there that *"Mohammadan Aur Chamaron in Dono ko Humein Peeche Karna Hai, Chamre ki Juti Nahi Pehnani Aur Chamre Ka Koi Bhi Saman Nahi Pehnana Hai, Foam ki Juti Pehno, Kapre ki Juti Pehno, Chamaron Aur Mohammadan ko Down Karna Hai to Chamre ko Hindustan se Hatana Hai .*
(*Muslims* and Jatavs have to be pushed back, leather shoes and other articles not to be used, foam or cloth shoes to be used. if *Muslims* and Jatavs have to be pushed down, We have to replace leather with foam).

He further says that it is a conspiracy to push back Jatavs and *Muslims* from this trade so that they don't get mobility. Their people have supported them that is why they are successful.

According to him "The main reason for replacing leather with foam is that higher castes do not touch leather as it is polluted but since foam is not leather, so many higher castes have come into this trade as there is no fear of pollution, BJP further pushed Jatavs and *Muslims* down by opening Indian market for Chinese and Taiwanese shoes, *Chappals* and foam. Now most of the foam is coming from Taiwan and it has replaced leather. This has affected Jatavs and *Muslims* only, as only these two communities had knowledge of leather and now because of foam their condition in the trade has worsened.

"This is the strategy that they have adopted to push back Chamars, he says" (In Agra Chamars are called Jatavs).

He adds, that some of our own people are involved in these Hindu organizations and these people themselves tell us about its working and strategy. Although they are excluded from important meeting but still we get some information.

"These organization will never allow *Muslims* and Jatavs to be united if they are united they will develop in this trade. We are not the enemies of *Muslims* we live together, but these people divide and rule us". (It is a fact that whenever there is any Hindu *Muslim* communal conflict it turns out to be Jatavs and *Muslims* conflict as these two community have their localities near to each other and other castes simply go away leaving them fighting). It shows how Jatavs are used against the *Muslims* by this trading class, these trading classes provide all sort of help and provoke Jatavs to fight against *Muslims*).

He further adds that: "If there is any conflict among jatav and *Muslim* it will directly benefit these (wholesalers and upper caste factory owners) people. They made us fight against them (*Muslims*) but still don't consider us Hindu"

The caste network works well in the market and the intra caste trading and transaction helps the upper castes to only further consolidate their position in the market.

Vinod

Vinod is 30-year old young man working in an export-oriented factory. He is a graduate. He is short height and fair in colour and relatively healthy. Despite his family problems he finished his studies. Recently he got married with a girl of his own caste.

Besides his graduation degree, He has also done his shoe design diploma from central footwear training institute Agra. He is now having good experience in this field. He aspires to have his own factory.

He is a shoe designer by Specialisation, which is highly valued in this occupation. He has been working in this factory for last 2 years. He is very humble, polite and practical but at the same time very aggressive whenever he is talking about his identity. He is proud of this jatav identity.

He lives in basti called *Ratanpura*, it was village long back but due to expansion of city this village also engulfed into it. It is located close to *Jeevni Mandi* on the one hand and *Vijay Nagar colony* on the other. It is also close to *Subhash Park.* Most of the people who live here are engaged in shoe or Chappal making, a large number of people also engage in wooden last making by hand (last is a wooden structure used to give shape to shoe) there are so many shops where workers are seen making last with their traditional tools.

The basti is small and congested like all other *Basties*, it has high density and the houses are small and congested; some of the houses are located little above normal surface. Unlike *SunderPara* and *Nala kaji Para* this is not a low area but it has a large drain flowing nearby. There is hardly any street light in the area and people use house bulbs to light the streets in the night. Some houses are just waiting to break down, as they needed renovation badly.

Roads are really in bad shape; the colour of drinking water is yellowish green probably due to bursting of pipeline somewhere. The leather dirt is not removed for some time. In night it is difficult to even walk as street lights are not there.

Beside this basti there is *Vijay Nagar colony*, a well built and properly maintained colony, where all the higher castes live. There is no Jatav living there. These two localities present two sorts of hierarchies and stand in contradictions against each other.

Vinod lives with his elder brother and mother in a house located on 2nd floor, his elder brother has 3 children all are going school. They have recently made a little kitchen for them. There are three rooms in the house and little open space in front of rooms. The house is very old and badly needs renovation. They have one colour television, one 2nd hand motorcycle, one refrigerator, and some home other things. Half the things they received in dowry or as gifts from some relatives.

He has been working in this factory (which is owned by a Punjabi) for 2 years. After diploma from CFTI Agra, he struggled to get a job, he ultimately settled for a low salary job which did not suit his qualification. He sits in the designing department along with other designers; there are other workers in the room who execute designs on the machines. His department is located on the first floor and rest of the workers work on the first floor. The interaction of these people with other management people is minimum and limits to professional aspect only. All the workers and designers belong to jatav community.

Earlier they had a small *Karkhana* which has been closed long back. Where there, there were many workers, but due to rise in manufacturing cost and their

inability to get a right price for their goods, they could not sustain and finally it was closed.

After this they struggled very hard to run the family. Their education also suffered due to it, and the whole family had to work in matchstick units located nearby to run the family. The whole family worked from early in the morning to late nights. They used to get 15-20 Rs per day per person. They had seen the worst phase when there was struggle for food and money both, there confidence level also decreased. There were already lot of problems in the family and the liquor just added some more.

This family was a very reputed and rich family amongst the jatav people. His grandfather was very mobile person and he would cover long distances for his business related matters. After the death of his grandfather the family could not sustain as the property was divided amongst brothers equally, they got some share of it, which was not sufficient. They had several shops, large piece of land earlier but now all these have been lost, due to several reasons.

His father had a sharp and technical mind; he was making substitute for lasting machine, as the imported last machine was very expensive. (Last is a wooden structure used to shape the shoe) last machine produces in bulk and save a lot of physical work. He invested heavily in that compromising their basic family needs. Everyone in the family had big expectation from that. They hoped their golden would return again, but due to financial problem it never worked out and his father expired before seeing it working. With their father death their dreams and aspirations are dead.

They are 4 brothers and sisters, out of which 2 sisters are educated till post graduation and are married. His elder brother is a school dropout, and he always in search of some job for livelihood. His mother is a homemaker and she has taught her children how to survive in bad times. She is a very tough and brave lady and they are proud of her mother.

He works in a very big factory located on *Sikandara* road. He is also one of the temporary employees in the factory like others. He says that we can be fired at any time, since he is a designer he can get job somewhere but he is doubtful of other workers. The work force kept changing and wages have not increased for so many years, if somebody protests he looses his job, and the next person recruited at his place is given a salary below the current. These factories keep changing the workers to prevent any unionism in the factory.

Although he works in the factory but he is very critical of it's labour policies. All the factories operate on the one principal that is maximization of profit by cutting labour expenditure. He adds about the promotion chances of workers. The wages in factory have not increased for a long time. If somebody asks for it, he is fired and a new person is recruited with low salary. He adds further about the promotion chances of workers.

"Jo jis level pe shuru karta hai who usi level pe rehta hai, uske upar badne ke koi chance nahi hai, jaise cutter yeh fitter ka koi promotion nahi ho sakta, usko yehi kam karna parega, usi tarah hum designer hai to hum designer hi bane rahenge, hamari management mein jaane ki koi sambhavana nahi hai"

(Those who start at any particular level, they keep at that level only, there are no chances for promotion, for example cutter and fitter cannot have promotion, they will have to do this work only, same way we are designer we will be designer only, there are no chances for us to enter into management).

Mentioning about the factory and job work he says that there is no chance for increment of wages or salary in these companies, one can get increment or promotion by changing it, factories always recruit fresh people and give them low salary as there is abundance of unemployed people. They keep changing their labour force to prevent any unionism in the factory.

He was discussing how they have been pushed from their own occupation by upper castes, it is due to Castism they get benefits and we suffer.

"Pehle hi hum logon ko ganda kaam diya gaya(occupational division of caste*), upper castes us ko bhi chinte ja rahe hai, ab hamare paas aur kya option bacha hai"?*

(Already we were given a low work, even that has also been snatched from us by upper castes, now do we have any other option with us?)

Earlier designing and other shoe work was the monopoly of us (Jatavs).Earlier designing work was done by Jatavs only, but now the upper castes have replaced us from here too there are so many factories where you will not found a single jatav.. They are well equipped with diploma and certificates from CFTE, Agra and they get easy recruitment through their contacts in the factories.

"Pehle hum logon ko rakha jata tha, kyuki hum hi log jante the juta banana, par ab to har koi aa gaya hai, hum log to sirf karigar ban ke reh gaye hain".

(Earlier we people were kept as only we knew how to make shoe but now everyone has come, we are reduced to *karigars*(manual workers)now).

Remembers those days when, he wanted to do a shoe-designing course but never had sufficient capital at his disposal. He waited for 3 years but could not manage money. The institute started a new diploma course 'production and designing' for one year, and the cost was Rs.10,000, he tried to manage from friends, and get some loans for it. He gave that amount in 4 installments.

Now the same course fee is 30,000 Rupees, who will do it now? At least not from my community he says.

He is very critical of the functioning of central footwear designing institute Agra for various reasons. He adds it is one of the reasons why the work shifted from our hands. They are teaching this work to other castes, which are replacing us. He wants that this institute should be closed down or there should be a 100% reservation for Jatavs in this. Work should be taught to Jatavs and there should be reduction in fee too.

He says, they have made this institute a machine for making money. The high castes dominates this too, most of the members are upper caste Punjabis, Pandits, or Bengalis, or some from south. While telling about increased fees in institute he says, "think of that labour class those who earn 3-4 thousands how will they give this much fees?" He asks me. *"yeh log aacha kha nahi pa rahe hain, pee nahi pa rahe hain, woh siksha kaise dilayenge".*

(They are not able to eat good food how will they afford this education)

He says, that they are increasing the fees so much that there is hardly any jatav who can afford these expensive courses. The main course fee costs 100,000 rupees and to his belief, you can count these people on fingers who have done this course ever since it's introduction.

He talks a lot of caste discrimination in the institute, he says and ask me to check the records of institute since it's establishment for those people who have topped it. He says, you will not find a single SC topper. He puts it like this:

"Hum logon ka patrik kaam, hum log karne wale, phir bhi hum mein se kisi ne top nahi kiya.who log karte hain.jinhone juta pehna to jarur hai par kabhi bbanaya

nahi hai. Top karne wale hamesha Bengali karte hain kyuki director wahan ka Bengali hai. Nahi to pandit, Punjabi yeh koi aur karta hai. Jin logon ki koi back ground nahi hai is mein"
(It is our hereditary work, we are the karigar or workers, even then nobody from us has ever topped this, topper are those people who know how to wear a shoe but never know how to make it. Bengalis tops as the director himself is a Bengali otherwise it is pandits, Punjabis or some other, those tops who never had any background in this occupation).
Citing the reasons for this discrimination he adds.

"Woh log humein top nahi karne dete hain, kyuki agar hum top kar gaye to humein factory mein preference milega, foreign mein posting mil jayegi, humein jaida salary milegi, jo ki woh log nahi chahte hain, family aage bad jayegi"
(These people do not allow us to top because if we top the institute, then we will get preference in factories, we can get foreign posting, we will get higher salary. these people don't want that we progress or our family will progress.).

"Hamare saath bhedbhav kiya jata hai, woh log preference usi ko dete hain jo unki caste ka hota hai, yeh paisa wala hota hai, yeh jiski koi bari source hoti haih.hamare paas in mein se kuch bhi nahi hain, Agar unka bus chale to humein admission hi na de, yeh to quota ki wajah se unhe humein admission dena padta hai"
(They discriminate with us, they give preference to their caste, or rich or those who have higher political source, we do not have any of these, if they wished they will not give us admission to us, it is because of quota (reservation) that they have to give us admission)

The biggest reason for this discrimination is the caste-based antagonism, and prejudices which worked against Jatavs.
"Sabse bada kaaran yeh hai ki hum 'Chamar' hain".
(The biggest factor is that we are '*Chamar*')

He asks me, whether I have read '*Manusmriti*' ,if not then read it only then you will realize why they hate us.

"In logon ke khoon mein chala aa raha hai" (it is in their blood)

He has become very furious but still has not lost control over his language and maintains his cool. When asked about the reason about this Castism he says

"Agar yeh karan pata chal jaye to yeh Castism khatam na ho jaye"!
(If it is known then caste would be diluted within no time).

"Kya paida hona hamare bus mein tha, agar mere bus mein hota, to mein to kabhi SC mein janam hi nahi leta, mein to chahta ki koi high caste mein janam luin yeh kisi paise wale ke yahan janam luin.
(Is it in our control to take birth? if it had been I would not have taken birth into a SC community, rather I would have wished to be born into a higher caste or some rich person family)

But at the same time he asserts and is not ashamed to he born as jatav, he still proud for his identity as he got so many things to learn from it. But he is at the same time proud on his family and being a jatav. He thanks god that he got an opportunity to learn more in this caste.

"Hamare bus mein to tha nahi agar har kisi ke bus mein ho to who kyun gandi jagah mein paida hona chayega...sukh suvidha kise pasand nahi hai".
(It is not in our control to take birth, if it is in control of everybody then why anybody would born into a dirty place. After all who doesn't like happiness and facilities?)

He says, that his status as jatav deprives him in many ways.

"Humein sabhi jagah uthna padta hai jatav hone ka nuksan, seekhne mein, chalne mein, bolne mein, kuch bhi karne mein".

(Being a jatav we have to suffer everywhere like learning, walking, talking, everywhere)

He says, he feels problem in dealing with government officials as they try to exploit us as much as possible. *"Police walon se panga nahi lete hain Varna humein kisi na kisi mein fasa hi denge".*

(We don't get into police affair, otherwise they will stuck us anywhere and everywhere)

"Agar unhe yeh pata chal jaye ki yeh SC hai to who humein pareshan karne mein koi kasar nahi chorte hain."

(If they come to know that we are SC, they will try their best to create problems for us).

He mentions a incident when a yadav was caught by the police when they (police) came to know about his caste they told him how to get off, they helped him all his way out.

"Hum logon ke log system mein nahi hai, agar who hai bhi to us position pe nahi hai ki kuch kar sakein. Hamare log to pehle kaam hain agar hain bhi to who 3rd yeh 4th class mein jaida hai, jahan koi power nahi hai".

(Our people are not there in the system in good numbers, if some are there, they are not at such position to do something, our people are very few if they are, they are at class 3 or class 4 positions predominantly, where there is no power).

"Agar hamare log koi colony mein chale jayein to woh jaat badal ke rehte hain, unko bhi sharam aati hai apne ko jatav batane mein, aur phir yeh log milna julna kam kar dete hain caste pata chalne ke baad".

(If our people went to live in any colony, they live there hiding their caste, they are also ashamed to tell that they are Jatavs, and then these people stop intermingling with them if they knew their caste).

Chan Singh

Chan Singh is a middle-aged man of 50, he is illiterate but still have some good experience of the market and it's dynamism. He has 5 children out of whom his daughter reached to the post-graduation level and one of his sons is aspiring to be in police job is also doing graduation despite that other children are not studying. The eldest one i.e. daughter is married and other children help their father in his work. His wife is also an illiterate who also helps him in this work. She has double burden of looking after the family and contributing into the work too.

The whole family lives in a single room with one balcony that they use as their kitchen. They have one *almirah*, one bed, one cooler some iron sheet boxes, one colour television with cable, and other kitchen grocery i.e. porcelain cups and plates, glasses, bowls etc which have been displayed in their only room. The room is not only dark but also ill ventilated and they have to use bulk all the time. Sometimes this room is also used for doing small processes of Chappal making like separating pieces and others. They also have another room which they have given for rent so that they get some fixed amount per month which their occupation cannot give to them as this work is done for only 3-4 months in a year, the foul smell of sole pasting solution and leather identify a house that leather work is done here.

Chan Singh's father used to work with the British and he earned a good name in that field. They had a big business and used to make shoes of good quality. But now due to the division of property and very high numbers of dependents they have suffered inter-generational downward mobility. He says, when they were young, they could see shoes being put for drying in front of every house. But now you will find very few houses doing this work, as the opportunities have been lost due to shifting of this trade to upper castes.

He is a cottage worker who makes *chappals* utilising the family labour and sometimes hiring one of two *karigars* (workers). He lives in a *basti* called *panchkuiyan* located on the backside of a *Muslim* graveyard. This *basti* has a peripheral settlement is little away from the nearby market, this *basti* was not a part of Agra earlier, but with the expansion of the city a lot of jatav and other low areas engulfed into it. It is a jatav *basti* and there are some 60-70 houses. This *basti* was known for making shoes earlier but now most the people are engaged in *Chappals* making. Due to increasing poverty most of them have shifted to low capital-intensive *Chappal* making. The number of people in this occupation has decreased over a period of time. Most of the people make *chappals* nowadays. These *Basties* of today and outskirt areas of the past have one thing common that is, 'exclusion' from public sphere or mainstream. This *basti* is almost been restricted by the market on the one side and graveyard on the other, front from the boundary college wall. There is no hope for expansion for this area.

This area doesn't have a well-built infrastructure, there is dark in the night as there are hardly any streetlights, if one or two are there, they are not functioning, the bulbs outside of houses are used to light the streets. There is no severing line any proper latrine and bathroom facility. Dirty surroundings, bad roads, lack supply of safe drinking water and high density and small and dark house in a first appearance reveal that it is a low caste locality. This area is called *Panchkuiyan,* it is different from colony, popular perception about colonies is that it is inhabited by rich, well-educated, upper caste people. In fact in Agra one can easily trace the localities of different caste groups. The dirtiest the locality the likely it to be a *dalit* or low caste area. The well-built and proper infrastructure areas belong to higher castes.

Chan Singh is very critical of the government policy of opening of Indian markets for cheap Chinese products. He says that it has severely affected the jatavs and him. Now their products demand has decreased as consumers are opting for cheap Chinese shoes and *chappals*. He is very critical of this change and his repeated attempt to emphasis that how these products are hazardous for ones health can be seen in his aggressive body language.

He says, "Leather is superior to PVC, plastic and cheap Chinese chappals. Leather absorbs the sweat therefore there are no chances of getting diseases" he validates his argument by giving example that *"he does not allow even his children to wear this cheap footwear". He says, "Chemicals have hazardous effects on our body and he himself was bad ridden for six months due to allergy from chemical, sometimes it starts bleeding if you inhale chemical by mistake, it affects the eyes too".*

There is so much of anger among jatavs, it come out only when enquired deeply. They appear to be silent but one can observe their anger when talk about these issues. Jatavs are very helpless they are witnessing their occupation shifting from their control but they cannot do any thing. As he says *"this occupation has finally shifted to dwi jati (upper caste) from Jatavs control. Earlier it was 50% with* jatavs, *but now it is far less than that. The work of jatavs is decreasing year by year, and Punjabis and Sindhis work is increasing rapidly at the cost of us. Now we have been pushed further and reduced to the status of karigars or majdoors".*

He criticizes the government particularly BJP for opening Indian markets for Chinese goods he says *"The cheap Chinese products have increased unemployment and poverty for us. It has affected Jatavs particularly, shopkeepers are still selling products, and it has not affected them, earlier shopkeepers used to sell leather shoes and Chappals now they are selling Chinese shoes and chappals. They are anyways earning but our source of livelihood is snatched away from us".*

"Jatavon ko bekar karne wale yehi log hain, aur garibi barane wale bhi yehi log hain, yeh log kehte hain Gagibon ko hatao, yeh log Garibon ko khatam kar denge aur sirf paisa wale hi reh jayenge"

(They are responsible for creating unemployment and poverty, these people say, eradicate the poors, these people will eradicate the poors and only rich will remain).

While explaining about how they are exploited at different levels He adds, *"The raw material suppliers, whole-sellers, retailers, financers and purcha cashier, moneylenders, all try to extract as much money as possible from us. The monopoly of these people in market forced us to sell our products some times at loss, as there are very few jatavs in the market".* Everywhere jatavs have a subordinate position everyone talks to them with arrogance and rudely including *Muslims* due to their low position. If they talk loudly and strictly, their goods are rejected and they are forced to sell it on loss to some others in the market. He says,

"Jaise maine kadak(loudly) ke baat ki dukandar se ki mujhe nagad(cash) paise chahiye woh kehte hain maal utha nagad paise nahi hai . eik hafte baad paise denge par mere paas gunjaiyash(capacity) hi nahi hai bhai mujhe to nagad chahiye woh kehte hain ja maal le ja. Aacha dusri dukan par jayenge,to wahan par aur paisa tut jata hai kyuki hamare jatav bhai to hain nahi dukandar jaide".

(If I speak loudly and strictly to the shopkeeper that I want cash payment, they say take your goods, there is no cash, we will pay you after one week, but do not have capacity to sustain longer without cash, they say take your goods, if we go to any other shop, there they will decrease the price further, as there are very few jatavs in the market).

"Hum haath se majdoori karte hum sham ko dekhte hain ki humari haath mein 'tekh' (hard skin or insensitive skin in hand) *pad jati hai Jab bhi hume market mein mehnat ka pura paisa nahi milta hai"* (we work by hand and see our hands get hard skin in the evening, even then we don't get right price in the market for our labour) he says further

"Phir yeh katauti (it is an unknown tax) bahut buri cheez hai, repeats again, hum apne paise laga kar maal laa rahe hain aur yeh humse katauti kha rahe hai, akhir kis cheez ki katauti katt rahain hai Bahut jan ne ki koshish ki eik do (one or two time) baar hamare jhagda(fight) bhi ho gaya isi baat par, bhai katauti hai kya cheez?. to woh kehte hain ki yeh to hamara haq (right) hai yeh to hamare janam sidh adhikar (birth right) hai mera pehle bhi kai baar jhagda ho chuka hai katauti ke chakkar mein magar woh katauti ko chorte nahi hain. Ab to 5% 8 % kar di hai unhone".

(This Katauti is bad thing, we invest our money in goods and you take Katauti from us, for what you cut Katauti, I tried a lot to know (the logic and emergence of katauti) and once or twice, I had a conflict over this issue, what is Katauti?, they say it is our birth right, I had fight previously with them regarding Katauti, but they do not leave this (Katauti), now they have increased it to 5% to 8%). He further expands it,

"Parcha kat denge jaida pareshani hai to parcha (credit slip) kat denge 3 mahine ka 8%,5%,2% katauti ke alawa, use cash karao to aap ko paisa dene parega" (After cutting 8/5/2 % Katauti they give parcha for 3 months if it is cashed, again we have to pay extra money for it) he further says Raw material seller also charge more from us as we take raw material on credits and sometimes they insist on cash. *"Na ke barabar paise milte hain, humare jatavon ki majboori hai ki unhe roti khani hai to dekhne padta hai"*(we get least money, we are helpless, we have to see certain things as we have to survive)

Jatavs are exploited everywhere because of their low position in the society. They do not have fixed capital assets in the market; this is one of the major reasons why they are dependent on upper castes for marketing their goods. He says

"Jatav jaida dukandari mein nahi hai pehli bat to yeh ki jatav do dekh ke Dukan (shop) bhi nahi lene dete hain market mein, woh to jatavon ko dete hai nahi hain (emphasis) woh to kehte hain hum to apni caste me aadmi ko denge hum kisi ko nahi denge hum jatav ko to nahi dennge". (Jatavs do not have much presence in shop ownership, first they do not allow us to take shops in the market, they do not give us shops (emphasis) they say, we would give shops to their caste men, atleast we will not give to jatavs). He says that there are hardly 2-4 shops in the market, those too are running with difficulty.

He complains they are discriminated by government officials, banks fund these people easily and readily but we have to make several rounds whole year to get loans. They demand bribes and cut some portion of loan by themselves.

*"Punjabi itna bar chuka hai ki bank unko bank haal (immediately) finance kar deti hai jatavon ko chakkar lagane parte hain saal bhar, unka kaam jaldi ho jata ha"(*repeats it again).

(Punjabis have gone too far, banks fund them easily and immediately whereas jatavs have to visits whole year, their (upper caste Punjabis) work is done without delay).

The Punjabis and Sindhis take loans against their fixed assets therefore they get bigger loans but we do not have this therefore they always create problems in sanctioning loans to us.

According to him, these Punjabis and Sindhis follow a different policy; they keep our jatav workers for establishing their units. When the units are well established they kick us off saying *"chal nikal ja yahan se, humne kaam sikh liya, ab hume teri*

*jarurat nahi ha, humne kaam seekh liya"(*get out from here, we have learnt the skill, we don't need you anymore, we have leant this work") while complaining about them, he says only these have brought foam into the market.

"Jatavon ka aane wale samai mein bhavishya kya hoga? bahut kharab hi bhavishya hoga, Agar in par rok nahi lagai gayi is PVC or hawai chappal par to jatav ka bhavishya aur andhakar(dark) mein chala jayega"(said with deep breath)
(What would be the future of jatavs in the coming time? It will be very bad if PVC or Hawai chappals are not banned, jatavs future will be very dark).

Although, he is proud of his traditional skills and knowledge and says proudly how perfect chappal or shoe he can make that other people will be surprised. He proudly says that only Jatavs have knowledge of good quality leather *"chamre ki parakh sirf jatav ko hai"*(only jatavs have the knowledge of leather). But he is depressed and unhappy that now they are loosing their skills and knowledge. He does not want that his children joined this occupation. He wants his children to join some government jobs be it at class 3 or class 4 levels, he does not expect more. According to him there are no opportunities left in this occupation. Perhaps he wants to say that there are limited opportunities for jatavs in this occupation as other castes are entering into it seeing a lot of growth and opportunities.

According to him, Nowadays, *Muslim*s also behave badly with jatavs, earlier they had good relationship with us but now they also treat us badly. Now they also show arrogance towards us, they also dictate their terms on us, they reject our goods on one pretext or the other. They unnecessarily find faults in our products and always try to extract as much as possible from us.

Once we take our goods to the markets we cannot bring it back in our homes as it gets destroyed in mishandling. We have to sell the products as whatever price fixed by the wholesalers. If we talk with loudly with these people they return and reject out orders. We go to shop to shop to sell our goods and every shopkeeper tries to reduce the price further as these shopkeepers have a good understanding among them. They contact each other and convey message to each other that they have rejected someone's goods so others also reduce it further when we take our product to them. He says these people have their union and we do not have our union. He said jatavs tried for some union but these Punjabis and others paid money to the leaders and they kept quite. These people have money they can do anything but we cannot do as we are weak in money.

He says everyone is flourishing in this occupation but we are reducing year by year. He repeatedly said that the price of wheat flour has increased from 8 to 12 Rs per kg, the cost of material has increased but these people are not ready to raise our wages or price of goods that we sell, they know they have so many choices unlike us. He says if Chinese and PVC are not banned and if we loose our livlihood, jatavs will be destroyed completely. As he says *"jab kaam dhanda nahi hoga to hum sarak par utar ayange, marenge aur maarenge, lootmaar karenge, 2-4-6 marenge aur 10-20 maarenge"*
(If we do not have work then we will come on roads, we will kill or get killed, we will plunder, and some 2-4-6 will get killed or (we) will kill 10-20)

He mentions a case when a jatav boy was cut in to pieces and his stomach was filled with highly inflammable glue, he was burnt at the open square. This incident has created some hatred among *Muslim*s and jatavs. Now they both see each other with suspicion.
He mentions, one incident in *nala kaji para* when so many of their leaders were put behind bars without any charge. When there was a communal tension. Police was also

biased against jatavs; they witnessed a jatavs being burnt at square but they did not do anything he depressingly said.

He says that there a fire in Agra in may 2002 where some 42 workers burnt to death according to official figures, even there also nobody did anything except Mayawati. She distributed money to the victims' families, besides that nobody did anything everyone just promised. The factory owner is roaming free as he is a relative of Rajnath Singh of BJP.

He says they feel secure in Mayawati's rule although he says that Mayawati does not give them food but her governance is very good, everyone get security. The officers come on time and go by time; they talk politely to us and do our work readily. He says they feel empowered due to Mayawati rule. He proudly says that she is such a person who can scold even a district magistrate. He says *"behin ji ke raaj mein lady akeli ja sakti thi 12-12 baje* (a lady could go alone at 12 o'clock in the night), *there cannot be a good ruler like Mayawati*", he continues *"aapne dekha hoga ki Behinji ke raaj mein mathura mein mandir aur Maszid barabar mein hai, magar behin ji ne mandir ki bhi rakhwali ki aur Maszid ki bhi rakhwali ki"*(you must have seen, in *mathura mandir* and Maszid are located side by side, but she safeguarded *mandir* and Maszid both)

Chan Singh says that there is no caste discrimination in Agra but it exists in rural areas. When asked about specifically he accepted that there is caste discrimination. As he says if you are a *Thakur* or a *Yadav* your work will be done first, if you are a jatav your work will not be done.

It is interesting to note that jatavs have internalized caste discrimination to the extent that they do not see it as a problem, for them it is something natural or part of life.

He says, police people behave rudely to them, they even do not register our complaints, they always try to extract some money from us through D*alals*, they even cannot tolerate if we dare to sit in front of them.

He further says if *"we go to government offices and if they knew our caste they do not ask us to sit they ask us to keep standing*". He mentions a incident when he went to RBS college for admission of his son, first he was made to sit for 4 hours, at last when he was called, the person at the window said that his form has been lost, since it was last date for admission I could not do anything and my son suffered due to it. He says *"tu yeh dur-vyahar (mis-behave) to kartein hain, peeth paiche kehte hai ki dekh .....woh Chamar ja raha hai"*(they misbehave with us, on our back they say that see, that .....*Chamar* is going)

Chan Singh was asked what will happen if there is any crime nearby, where will the police people search first or who will they catch? He says immediately without thinking twice *"Pehle jatavon ke ladkon ko pakrenge, jo hatte khatte (well built) ladke dekhe unko pakrenge unse puch tach karenge baad mein kisi aur ko pakrenge". (*First they will catch jatav boys, especially those who are well-built, they will enquire them first, then they will catch others).

He says that people (jatav) hide their locality name as there is water logging, somewhere there is no floor, somewhere there is no light, all sorts of problems exist in jatav localities. He says it is the condition in almost all the *bastie*. Even in our *basti* water is logged in front of our house, the drains are full with filth and dirt, we ask them (authorities) tirelessly but they never turn up.

Surender

Surender lives in a *Basti* called *panchkuiyan*, some say the *Basti* got it's name based on the five well in that area meant for five different castes, i.e. one for Brahmins, one for *kshtriyas* and so on. This *Basti* was a village earlier but due to expansion of the city these areas have engulfed it. This *Basti* still have that exclusion in it's location even in it's present time.

This *Basti* is located on the police line road. On the backside of it is a Muslim graveyard, on the front a boundried school, on the two side it is restricted by a market, though market is now slowly expanding to their *Basti* and one corner is seen to be touching a market, on the other corner are boundried flats. This *Basti* earlier known for making shoes but now very few houses make shoes. Most of the people are involved in *chappal* making profession as it is less capital intensive.

The houses are *pucca*, there was a land vacant earlier but after a long struggle they have established an Ambedkar statue there. Now this place is used for their social and cultural functions like, marriages, festivals and some other religious purposes. Some houses have their water taps located outside of their houses, some of the road side houses have their *kuccha* latrine and most of the people use the Muslim graveyard for relieving themselves. The density of this *Basti* is very high, in the more internal part houses are small and people are living in single rooms as, there is hardly joint family exist. With every generation the family property is divided and their living space becomes more and more congested. The infrastructure base is weak in this area and there is hardly any light in the night. Roads are in bad condition. Water supply although good but sometimes it gets very dirty and it smells.

The markets are little far away, there is hardly any big shop in this *Basti* except some make shift arrangements by some families where they sell little and daily use things. Nearby areas have some medicine, doctor's clinics, with some fruit selling *Thelas*. Despite having front school very few families send their children to schools. There is no other government institution there.

Surender is a 29-year-old man working in a small-scale home-based unit. He is a graduate from Agra College and he is proud of that. He was among the highly qualified worker in nearby area. He is physically handicapped person suffered from polio in his early age. He speaks Hindi and frequently uses English words in conversation to make it more impactful.

He is a Chappal karigar working, and he was involved in making Chappal with some younger aged children who were around 8-12 in age, when I interviewed him. He gets up at 6 o clock in the morning in season time and work till 12 or 1 in the night. This routine is maintained religiously for 3 months. When the season is over they don't follow such a strict routine.

He tells about this work that, "today the condition is more deplorable than earlier times. Previously we got employment for 4 regular months but now we get it in pieces. Due to competition from cities, which were not famous for this work. Now shoe work is done in *Delhi, bharatpur, Gwalior, jaipur, Meerut, Bhopal* etc".

(Several visits were made earlier to develop some trust with people, these people are always doubtful about people who take interest in them, which is strange for them)

He has 6 sisters and 1 elder brother. Of the 6 sisters 4 are married and some are educated and some are school dropouts due to some family problems. He has been in this occupation for last 16 years and he started doing this work at the age of 13

years. He used to go to school and help his father in small processes after he came back from school.

He works in a *Chappal Karkhana*, which was initiated by his father long back. His father was a karigar earlier, but now surrender and his elder brother look after this business. His father sits at a Bania shop that issues *purcha* to the cottage workers against the delivery of goods and he cashes those parchas after deducting his share.

This home based unit where he works now, had been established by his father in 60s. Ever since it's establishment they have been making *Chappals* only as it is less capital intensive.

Surrender's grandfather used to have a big shoe factory that does not exist now; he was a very well known *karigar*, in this area. He worked with British, Banias, Sindhis and Kashmiri. He says that British were very impressed by his grandfather skills and they always treated him specially.

Surrender despite being a graduate tried very hard to get a job somewhere but all attempts went vein. He applied for UPSC, PSC, SSC, employment exchange but did not get a job. Ultimately he was forced to join this work. There was another reasons also, he was not capable to pay the donation or bribe to the concerned people due to weak financial background. He never wanted to come to this job but situations and conditions were such that he was forced to come to this hereditary occupation at last. However he has not lost hope and he is sure one day he may get a government job of some kind.

His father and grandfather never had agricultural land or any other means for survival, the only thing they have is their skill, they make leather *Chappals* on order and some times without order and sell it in Heeng ki Mandi for their survival.

He further mentions that the work in this industry has degraded in terms of quality and quantity while describing the changes in the industry. Nowadays leather shoes have been replaced by foam, and foam was brought by these upper caste people like, Punjabis, Sindhis, Pandits, Banias etc. the leather shoes are more durable than foam but it requires a lot of effort to make leather shoes.

In earlier times there was labour shortage but now there is more labour than required. Due to big machines the production has increased but these have negative impact on our lives. We have lost to these machines we cannot compete them; these make goods quickly in bulk.

He further adds that due to the replacement of leather by foam, the new generation is forgetting their hereditary leather skills, they cannot distinguish between fine and sub-standard leather. The old generation is not capable to work, the new generation has totally forgotten their hereditary skills they cannot make leather shoes. What they have seen is foam. Now they know how to make *Chappals* while earlier all the karigars knew all the processes of shoe. Since we usually make leather and non-leather *Chappals* at home. These young workers will master in that only and will be useless for leather shoe making.

"We started leather Chappals because we did not have big capital with us; it requires at least 7-8 specialist workers in shoe making. There is no margin for us in shoe making as in absence of machines we can make utmost 16 pairs per day but we can make 100 Chappals per day as it does not require specialists. The rising cost of machines and other government taxes made shoe making non profitable for us"

Today people sell their products (*Chappals*) at the margin of 0.5 to 2 Rs per pair. We have to prepare at least 200 pairs to sustain in the market.

We don't get much margin in the Chappal business also; the real beneficiaries are the distributors and retailers. (He showed me one pair of Chappal and says)

The manufacturing cost of this Chappal is 60 Rs including labour charge, but we sell it to wholesaler for 65 Rs. the whole seller will sell it to retailer for 70 Rs and the retailer will sell it to consumer for 120 Rs or more than that. The whole sellers cut a *Katauti* (a unknown tax) of 2 Rs per pair of total pairs and give us a credit slip called *purcha* mentioning the date and time for collection of rest of money. If we need money urgently we have to cash this slip, again the same people have their brother and kin's as cashier in the market. These people will further deduct 2 to 5 % interest rate on that slip, now think what we have got? In this amount we have to pay to the labours also, purchase the raw material, pay the electricity bill, self-labour cost and run the *Karkhana*".

He further mentions that this *Basti* was known for making shoes earlier, but due to high costs people have shifted to Chappal making and most of the houses have left it altogether. This occupation and business has shifted to higher castes from us like Pandits, Banias, Punjabis, Sindhis etc there are some houses that are still doing this other have left this occupation (very aggressively and loudly spoken).

When asked about the problems in the market for them he answers

These people (wholesalers) create problems at every point of time like they never give cash, instead issue credit slips to be payable after 3 months, give dates and roll back of their promises, they make us bondage and ask us to keep coming for money number of times.

He adds that "if we pressurize and say them high tone or 'loudly' that we want money in cash". They say *"bhag ja yahan se, ja apna maal le ja, humein nahi chaiye, bahut hain tere jaise dene wale"* (get away from here, get out with your goods, we don't want, there are many like you with us). They will find hundreds of faults in our product and always try to lower the selling price. Their policy is clear they want to purchase as low as possible and sell it as high as possible. *"Hum is chakkar mein mare jaite hain"* (we are exploited in this way)

He further reveals that these people have wider links in the local market as well as in other states too, if some product is not selling in local market they will sell it to other markets in India.

Ever since foam has come our margins have decreased a lot. Now these people are raw material supplier, wholesaler, retailers and distributors, they know rates of each item, they calculate by components cost, our own people who works as workers there, tell them the rate of component used and the price of shoe altogether. The foam has benefitted them only and these people only have brought it in the market. The production with foam is high and it requires little efforts in making. In leather we could save some money but in foam we cannot. If we use substandard leather then we can save some money.

"Our own people are to be blamed for it as they have passed the secrets of this trade to them. There is hardly any jatav in the market, we are forced to sell it to these people. We cannot do anything".

He further tells that there is strong caste networking in the market. There is caste based trading in the market, Muslim will trade to Muslim, *Punjabi-to-Punjabi* and *Pandit-to-Pandit*. They promote their own caste people

There is a problem for us in this industry, we cannot study as our exams and our season conflict, and we do not have enough money to hire labour from market.

Jatavs do not have any secure job, they get work only for 120 days in a year that too not regular. Rest of the time we pass our time by playing cricket, card games in groups, gamble, or simply doing nothing. Moreover we have to find work in off-season in some Bania, Sindhis or Muslim factory.

He says *"pure Agra mein kaam karne wale to sirf jatav hi milenge par woh malik nahi hain Karkhana ke, sirf karigar hain"* (in whole of Agra you will find only jatav workers in the *Karkhanas*, there is no owner from them, they are simply labourers) the jatavs hardly control 25% of the smallest home small-scale production units. The rest work is with other castes

According to him the problems of Jatavs are, lack of job round the year, lack of mobility, lack of migration outside, (they are born in Agra and die here only) poverty and family problems, lack of education. There are other endless problems, *"bahar niklne ka koi raasta nahi hai"*(there is no way out for us) (in a depressing tone)

(He showed me one very young child of 8 years, whose father was dead at the age of 32 by some disease, he says there is no life for this boy, he will also become like us, now who will support him?, no one)

He further adds *"jaise hum pehle gulam the angrezon ke, par who log chale gaye to hum gulam ho gaye hain in panditon ke, Bania ke, Muslim ke"* (earlier we were slaves of British, but now they have left but we have become slaves of these Pandits, Bania and Muslims)

He further mentions about the locality where he lives with his family. There is no hope or expansion of this area, it is covered and boundried by everything, due to this shoe work, people say that this is a jatav *Basti* as shoe work is done here. But at the same time he appreciates his locality, as it is different from other jatav notorious localities.

There is no drinker, no group fighting, and no criminal and there is no dirty surrounding (It was partly true, as this *Basti* was very dirty, no toilets, no proper drainage system, leather dirt, and pieces laying here and there. In fact their perception of cleanliness, conflicts, morals, habits and others were qualitatively different from others.)

He accepts the uniqueness of his locality but at the same time accepts that it is segregated and they have to go to Market Square for little things, which is little far away. He also complains that the market has not expanded into their area, it has stopped there only. He adds *"hamare yahan koi dukan nahi hain siwai kuch chemists, doctors aur kuch juice walon ke"* (there is no shop of any kind except some chemist shops, along with doctors and juice shop).

On asked about the practice of untouchability he says you just go to any village 10-15 kilo meters away, you will know it yourself.

On being asked about the government institution and people response for them, he adds, that if we go to police station, they don't give us a priority, they don't listen us. They already know our caste by identifying our locality, they don't say Chamar directly but their behaviour is always different for us than normal.

When I asked him how he feels being a jatav he gives a very gives a very strange (not very strange in this situation).

He said *"kabhi kabhi apne aap se nafrat hone lagti hai ki humne galat samaj mein janam le liya. Jab koi hamari sunai hi nahi hoti, log nafrat ki nigah se dekhte hain, ki samne wala yeh hai, samne wala who hai. hum is jat mein hote hum us jaat mein hote jab hum to kaisa hota, yahan khali baite rehte hain, thora ghoom aate hain, tab yeh masus hota hai ki humne kyun is samaj mein janam le liya. Hum 3 mahine tak machine ki tarah kaam karte hain aur phir iske baad bekar ho jate hain"*

(Some times we hate ourselves that we took birth in a wrong community, no body listens us, everyone see us through hatred eyes, people say that this person is this, that person is that. We imagine if we were in any other caste we would have been

different. Here we sit idle, we roam/walk a little, then we feel why we were born in this caste. We work hard like machines for 3 continuous months and after that we are worth/use less)

On being asked about the government facilities he further says, although they have ration cards but it is of no use, there is no sugar, no oil, no wheat, no rice which was available earlier.

There is no water problem in this area, but sometimes water becomes yellow whenever they clean *'Yamunaji'*. They go to nearby Muslims graveyard for relieving themselves, which is located behind this *Basti*. "Sometimes Muslims create problems, they don't allow us to use it. Sometimes they also beat up us, but what we can do, we don't any other choice".

Although government has made a *sulabh sochalaya* nearby for ladies but people don't even pay 30 Rs per month. The condition of this is very bad and it is not cleaned for many days, every time you pass by you will feel intolerable smell. Some houses have kacchi latrine especially those houses which are located on the roadside. Even those latrines waste passes though a drain flowing in front of their houses.

He himself tells the importance of credits in jatavs life. He says that they don't know the importance of credits. They take loans to run their families, not to start business. These people take loans but they are unable to pay it back due to their poverty. And thus to repay earlier loan they further take loan they stuck in the cycle *"yeh log loan tab lete hain jab season nahi hota hai, Is liye khane peene mein nikal jata hai"*.(these people take loan when there is no season, their loan is spent in eating and running their families). Workers earnings are not very much, they get loans at very high rate like 5% or 8% and when they are unable to pay it, the interest keeps increasing and ultimately, they have to sell their house to someone.

These people due to their poverty are transferring their hereditary skills to these (upper castes) people by helping them opening factories in all over India.

He hold his own community responsible for this shifting of trade to other caste as he says that these people (older generation) never encourage from heart to engage in this work, we joined it due to our problems it is not a voluntary decision. These (older generation) neither encouraged us for study nor they took this work seriously. Our work was never bad it is our people who perceived it to be stigmatic.

When asked about their cultural and political symbols he says

Although Baba Saheb was not from this caste, he was a *mahar*. We give him so much of respect that no body can give. I am an *achut* (untouchable) person. Though Baba Saheb was a great personality but his followers are not following him properly.

He says that Mayawati is also a symbol for them. But it is due to Mayawati jatavs have felt strength at mental and psychological level. The attitude of government and police official is not discriminatory in her rule. They feel secured in her rule from upper cases, police, traders and other people. In her rule the officials listen to us they don't talk rudely due to the fear of Mayawati.

He says that *"our living and working conditions are not satisfactory. Our living condition is really bad, families are surviving in single rooms, and there is no drinking water, large numbers of children in all families. There are no latrines, people still use railway lines etc. until or unless there is good source of earning our living and working condition will not improve"*.

He is a staunch supporter of Mayawati (proudly says) he never thought of casting his vote to any other party as he says there are other caste people voting for their people, then why should not we vote for our people.

Shanti Devi

Shanti devi lives in a basti called *Tila Nand Ram* is a low area which is located deep inside from the main road. This *basti* got it's name due to the presence of a high land within this low area. This basti is relatively little above within the low lying area.

This area is located near *Sadar Bhatti* and close to *meera husaani chowk.* It is an area which is located in the interior touching *nala kaji para* on the one end and a *Muslim mohalla* on the other end. It is also close to the collectrate office.

The streets are not only narrow but are bad and water logging can be seen in most of these areas. Within this area there are geographical differences as mentioned above, this area is a low area from normal surface, within this area some houses are located little above normal surface and some located even below normal surface. Most of the houses are two storied, as there is horizontal limit in expansion but to accommodate family members, once they are married, these changes have been made.

It is predominantly a *jatav basti* where all the workers who are directly or indirectly engaged in shoe business live. Most of the people are workers here. It is a perceptions among the jatavs and other people that low caste areas are dirty, congested and bad in terms of infrastructure.

The houses are small and congested, and are not big enough to accommodate big families of these people. Therefore we can see a good number of people always found on the streets or gossiping in groups or just pass their time by roaming around. In the evening and night time this place becomes very crowded as all the workers return to their homes, and due to suffocation and power cuts people come out in open. Some people like to sleep in the open or on terrace. There is hardly any open place outside homes. Most of the houses have 1 or 2 electric bulbs, rooms are ill ventilated; dark, smelly, and leather dirt could be seen outside their houses. Some houses don't have even doors or windows in their houses. The houses are old and have not been white-washed for a long time

In fact some of the families are using leather waste pieces alternate for fuel which causes filthy smell and smoke. Some of the people have tap located outside their houses, as most of them do not have separate bathroom and latrine facility. These taps have been placed during the rule of Mayawati but now there is no water. Water comes once in a month or fortnight and most of the time they go to nearby *chowk* to get water. Water riots are common in this area, throughout the year. They, especially women get up at 5 in the morning and queue up to get water.

Both men and women go in the open or in the nearby railway line for relieving themselves where police people beat them. But some women prefer to go to *sulabh sauchalaya* in the night hours, which is very dirty and smelling, they go in groups for security reasons.

There is hardly any health facility in this area. Most of the people go to government hospitals for treatment. Some local RMP work there with limited medicines. There is school available but the *Muslims* have established some schools, they go there but most of the children don't go to schools, they help their family in its work. The PDS and other institutions don't work most of the time they are closed and people don't get anything. Overall this is the same condition in all the low caste areas.

Shanti Devi lives in a single room of less than 25 yards in this area with her family of 5 members. There is no latrine or bathroom in her house. There are no doors or windows in her house and when I went there she was burning leather pieces for cooking as there is no gas stove, which created intolerable smell in her house. The

plaster was piling from the walls, the house has not been white-washed for a long time.

The house (single room) seems to be very old and like other houses this house is also congested with large number of members living in it. She has one bed, some kitchen utensils which she displayed in her single room, She has one electric bulb in her home. Her children have not gone to school due to financial compulsions.

She is a 40+ woman with 3 daughters and two sons. She is illiterate and speaks typical local brij (a dialect of Hindi language). She lives along with her son and his family in a single room. She is the head of he family and has been running it with all the hardships of life. She is politically conscious person and well impressed with Mayawati.

She does not have any secured work but sometimes she gets a work of separating different size leather pieces. She earns 25-30 Rupees per day, she works from 9 in the morning till 5 in the evening. She has a very temporary work, and her work place is not fixed, she sometimes work on the footpath, sometimes in the front of houses or sometimes in the godown of 'big people'. Sometimes she has to cover a long distance for work, and more often she walks by feet to reach that place, even if it is too far.

She gets this work for 10 days in a month or at most 15 days in a month, that to in bits and pieces, she gets employment only for 4 months in a year, due to the nature of this industry.

She does not have any secured means for survival except this work, even this work she gets in bits and pieces, there is no security, work availability actually depends on the local *haat* (fair) being organised on Monday and Friday she gets her work just before that, as these pieces are sold in the *haat*

"haat se ek din pehle kaam milta hai agar bikta hai to majdoori mil jati hai aur agar nahi bikta hai to hamari majdoor gaye. Kal aur parson se ghar mein baithe hain. ab kya gujara hoga hamara"?).

(We get work just before the *haat*, if the products are sold we get our wages if pieces are not sold we loose our wages, from today and yester day we are sitting idle, how will we survive?)

It is difficult to survive in these conditions for most of the workers. She says, *"Do waqt ki dal roti mil jaye time se, bus itna hi bahut hai"* (It is enough for us to get two times *dal-roti* (meal)).

Her husband died 20 years back when he was 25-30 year of age. She spent 40-50 thousand in his treatment borrowing money from all sources but he could not be saved. Though she doesn't remember the exact year but calculated, she says her husband died some time back, when enquired I came to know it's been 20 long years. He died in an attempt to save one of his neighbours, who burnt herself due to some financial problems in her family.

She is having 5 children out of which the eldest one is married and live in the same room with his family. Three daughters are married and her youngest son is working like her in the same work. She lives in a house which was earlier belonged to her but now they are paying rent for it as, it has been sold.

In a phase wise manner she mentions how she started collecting money for her daughters marriage and running the family.

She took a credit of 20,000 but it increased to 80,000 due to interest, first she put this house on mortgage, then sold her jewellery, later when more money was required because of marriages, she sold the house. She did not have enough money to

take it back, due to financial problems despite selling her house, she could spent very little money in her daughter's marriages.

She mentions how she faced lot of hardships in life even then she married off her daughters in such difficult circumstances

"Karja (credit) le le kar ki hai abhi tak chukka rahi hui aur makan bhi chala gaya hai makan bhi bic (sold) chukka hai shaadi ke karje ke chakkar mein. Aaj mein kirai (rent) par reh rahi hui apne is ghar mein mujhe pata nahi kab nikal de humein yahan se".

(I took credit to marry off my daughters and I am still repaying the debt. I have lost my home also, house is also sold due to the credit borrowed for marriage, today I am living on rent in my own house, we don't know when they ask us to leave)

She points out to iron utensils and says

"Bartan sabhi lohe ke hain garib aadmi aur kahan se layehge"

(All utensils are iron made, where else the poors bring all these)

She was talking at the same time preparing some food on the *chulah*; she puts more leather pieces in that when asked about why she is burning leather pieces she says

"Peth bharn ke liye kuch to karna hi parega, nahi jalayen to roti kis se banegi sabji kis se banegi .khayenge kya, pareshani to hai hi. Lakri bahut mehangi (costly) hai lakri hai 25-30 Rs 5 kilos, hum kahan se layein. Ab Karen to kya karein?".

(We have to do something to fill our stomach, if I don't burn these, how will I prepare *roti* and *sabzi*, what we will eat, I have problems, but wood is too expensive, it is 25-30 Rupees/kilogram, where should we manage it from, what to do?)

(She was regularly coughing and her keep rubbing her eyes and at the same time putting more leather pieces in *chulah*) when asked if it creates some health problems for her, she says

"Ab khasna (cough) to hota hi hai, aakhen dard karti hai, dikhai bhi theek se nahi deta. Geeli lakri mil jaye to aur bhi pareshani hoti hai".

(It is normal to cough, eyes pain, it is difficult even to see, if we burn moist wood, it is more a problem).

When asked about any health problem in the family due to this or some other diseases.

She quickly replies in negation as I found that it is a stigma in the *Basties*, a lot of people in the shoe making occupation suffer from TB, Asthma, and due to the fear of harassment and embarrassment they never reveal it even though they are suffering from it.

Although she denies that there is any health problems either in her family or to her, but when asked about the average age people live up to, she accepts that the average age is very low and says these in her own words.

"Hamari line mein to muskil se 40 tak pauch pata hai. Woh bhi muskil par jati hai. Jaldi khatam ho jata hai kyuki is mein ghee dudh to milta nahi hai, sirf dal roti milti hai woh bhi bari muskil se, ab chatni se to insan mein kya taquat rahegi yeh to hai nahi ki 80-90 saal ji jayein. Yahan par to khel khatam ho jata hai 40-50 saal mein".

(In our line, people hardly cross 40 years, even that too is difficult to cross, life ends very early, because there is no milk, ghee, in this line (occupation) people only manage with *dal-roti*, that too with difficulty, how will anybody get energy by eating *chatni*, this is not possible that a person live 80-90 years, here the life ends at the age of 40-50 years).

She says that people are hardly crossing beyond 40 years, which is why you will never find many old people in the *Basties*.

"Jawani mein buddhe ho jate hain, koi tik nahi pata. Is liye aapko yahan jaida buddhe log nahi milte bastiyon mein".

(People get old in their youth, nobody sustain beyond that, which is why you don't find many older people in *Basties*).

She seems to be very helpless in these conditions, she has lost hope for a better life, and it is a big challenge for her to survive in this world. Although she has many problems but still she feels satisfied that she has played her role as mother and as wife, her dreams of getting grooms for her daughters and marring off her sons is over. She still has Rs 20,000 credit on her, her house is also sold, but her major duties are over as three daughters are married, she never had any dreams for herself, she always thought for others, through conversation, it seems she has fulfilled her major role in this world.

She has not thought of any other work, as there is no money for that as she says

"Kar to le par paisa kahan hai, peth hi bhar jaye mehnat se yeh hi bahut hai".

(I can think of that, but there is no money, is not it enough that we are filling out stomach).

All her children are drop out at a very early age, the reason she mentions

"Kaun parata bechare ko. Kahan se parati unhe, peth to bharna muskil ho rahai hai parate kahain se".

(Who would have taught that poor fellow, wherefrom I get education for him?, it is difficult to feed our stomach, how to teach (in these circumstances)

When I asked why she didn't send her children to government school as they charge very little fee she replied

"Itne chote chote the jab paisa mange fees ke liye to maina baitha liye mein fees ke liye paisa kahan se laun, kitap mangte the fees mangte the. Kaun paratha inhe. Sabzi to milti nah hai dono time phir parai kahan se".

(These were very young like this (showing by hand), when they asked money for fees, I made them stay in the house, wherefrom I get the money, they asked for books, they asked for fees, who would have taught them? we don't get even sabzi (green vegetaple) two times (a day), then where to teach them from).

Continuing with her argument she says they pass many days in a week without green vegetables. Most of the times they have to prepare *chatni* for the family as green vegetables are very expensive.

"Zindagi aise kat rahi hai jaise hum log kire makore (insects) hain, samaj li jiye ki hum zindgi ji (live) nahi rahe balki dhekal (drag) rahi hain, khana hai to kha liya aur agar nahi hai to subah se sham tak baithe hain, kaam mil gaya to theek hai nahi to aise hi baithe hai chup chap".

(We are living life as if we are insects, you understand that? we are not living our life, but we are dragging it. if food is there, we eat it, if there is no food then we sit just like that, if we get some work it is ok otherwise, we sit quietly like this)

She says that she has passed such days when there is no food at all in the home

"Jab kaam nahi milege to aata kahan se aayega. Aur aata nahi ayega to roti kahan se banegi.aur jab roti nahi banegi to bhukeh hi baithe rehna padta hain. Is time bahut hi pareshani ka samna karna pad raha hai.aap dekh hi rahe hain hum log kaise ji rahe hain".

(If there is no work, where I get wheat flour from, if there is no flour, then where from *roti* would be prepared, if there is no *roti*, we have to starve, this time there are a lot of problems, you can see how we are surviving)

While pointing her house she hopelessly says that her house has not been white washed for many years, she does not have enough money for that.

"Is samai hum kaise ji rahe hai hum hi jante hai. Kaise kaise je rahe hain, bahut pareshani hai, aise aise log hai ki kuch bata nahi sakti hui, footpath pe pare hai".

(Only we know how we are surviving, how we are living, there are lots of problems, there are people that we cannot tell you about, they are lying on footpath).

She has a lot of complains from government and became furious while talking about the facilities they get from government, they are hardly able to get 8 hours electricity in a day, and they pass summers almost without electricity. Even for water they have to cover distance and queue up for water, as most of the houses have no taps in their houses.

She gets up early morning to get water from square, people stand up in queue, water conflicts are a part of life here. They get tap water once in a month. She says there is no facility for the labours, nobody cares, and even police also trouble us many times.

It appears from her body language if she has lost hope in her life, life seems to be a burden that has to be dragged. (Observation: sad and depressed*) "kya soche, hamari jindgai tori bachi hai woh bhi kat jayegii. Abhi tak to humne kheechi hai life, age bacche khila denge pila denge"*

(What to think, what to think, there is little life left in us that too will pass, so far we have dragged our life, now forth children will feed us).

When further enquired about the sickness and diseases and mechanism to deal with it she replies,

"Sarkari mein chale jaite hain, 1 Rs purcha mein 2 Rs parchi mein, ilaj (treatment) ho gaya to ho gaya nahi to pauch jate hain bhagwan ji ke yahan.kya kare"

(We go to government hospital, if treatment is done in 1 rupee or 2 rupees card , if it is ok otherwise we go to gods place(death))

"Bimar Ho gaye to ho gaye! Thora bahut bimari theek ho gayi to sarkari mein varna marne ka intezaar karte hain".

(If it happens then it happens, Nothing unusual about it, we go to government hospitals for sickness otherwise wait for the death)

(She told me that there are two known doctors but one prescribes tablets with milk and other one with water, therefore they prefer the one who prescribes tablets with water).

Mayawati is her favourite politician Mayawati is not less than a goddess for her although she always refers to her as *'behinji'*. According to her she could nurtured her children because of her as she provided widow pension to her, she also installed taps in their locality. She is an illiterate person but she is aware where to put her stamp when voting. She says she puts their stamp on *'Haat'* (elephant) an election symbol of BSP. She mentions about the recent incident when Ambedkar statue was vandalized in B.R.Ambedkar University.

"kafi bawal ho gaya tha usme. yeh sab cheez aj bhi hoti hain yeh log thori nafrat (hatred) rakhte hain humse. Phir jiska raaj hoga woh to apni karega hi".

(There was a big issue over it, this kind of things do happened, even today, these people keep hatred for us, but then whoever rules will have its own ruling).

She mentions that caste system is a big problem for them even today,

"Yeh to shuru se hi hota aaya hai panditYon ne kiya hai ki yeh achut hai achut ki chaya bhi gandi hoti hai, talab se pani nahi lene dete the. Pandit logon ne kabhi

mehnat nahi ki, agar mehnat karni pare tounhe malum pare ki pareshani kya hoti hai? Hum to subah se sham tak mehnat karte hain agar woh bhi mehnat kare to pata pare. Agar jaise facility unhe milti hai agar humein mil jaye to hum bhi kuch kar kar dekha de".

(This has been continuing from very early, the *pandits* have done this, that they are *Achut* (untouchable) the shadow of untouchable is dirty, they did not allow even to get water from the public wells. Pandits have never done work from hand, if they do, only then they will realize what is problem! We work hard from morning to evening, if they do hard work only then they will realize, if we get the kind of facilities they enjoy, then we can also do something).

Dinesh

Dinesh is a 33-year-old man, popularly known as *Bittu*. He is illiterate with no education, he is married and have three school going children, he lives in the Sunder para a locality located close to collectorate. He is a very simple man with no liquor habits, which the Jatavs are notorious for. His wife is a homemaker but at the same time also helps her husband in his work and do small tasks like separating leather pieces, pasting and putting milk on the pieces. His youngest son is not going to school due to financial compulsions. Sometimes when the workload is very high all the children help their father in work after returning from school. They study in the same room where their father works with his tools for preparing shoe. The eldest son and young daughter are very conscious of their caste identity although they are just 9 or 10 years old. The youngest one roams here and there and often goes to play with the other children who play cricket with him. Even though he is hardly 6 but he knows the name of every part of shoes and how to make it. These children love kite flying but compromise by just watching others fly it. When I visited them I also flied kite with them and won their trust and they became friends. At the time of visit the youngest one got his arm fractured for which no cure was done for 15 days. At last parents spend 600 Rs for the plaster when the problem became acute.

Dinesh is having a two rooms home where one room is used for the work and the other is used to prepare food and sleeping. They don't have any expensive material things in their room except one small black and white television and some kitchen utensils, which they have displayed, in that room only. The plaster on the walls is piled up and there is hardly any money to whitewash it. The children often go to other places to watch Television with cable. The rooms are very dark and they have to use electric bulbs whole day to get light. The rooms are dark, ill-ventilated, small and no concrete floor is there the water connection was located outside of every house as there is hardly any space inside. There is no separate latrine or bathroom facility they go to nearby railway line for relieving. They have one ceiling and table fan with them. There room is also having a small temple and gods and goddesses although they are 2nd or 3rd generation Buddhist converts.

Dinesh previous generation had good business in this line, they had their own small factory but after the death of his father and division of property they lost their trade. Now he is reduced to the status of a karigar. This family was relatively very rich previously in father's time but now they are barely surviving. They are badly dependent on the credits, which they get from people on very high rate of interest. This family has seen good and bad time in a same generation. It has suffered downward inter-generational mobility.

He lives in the basti called *Sunder para*, which is a low area, which is 20-25 feet below normal surface. It is predominantly a jatav basti who are directly or indirectly engaged in leatherwork. Smell of leather and glue and sound of shoe making could be heard from almost every house. The houses are very small not enough big to accommodate large jatav families so some sleep on their terrace or in open. A lot of other low caste also resides like *valmiki*, *Ghera tribe*, *Muslim*s and others. Sarcastically people use a word '*gaddha*'(pit) for it. The market is far away and people have to cover distance even for little things. There is a liquor shop just a

short little away from the jatav colony, infact all the jatav residential localities and working places have liquor shops nearby.

This basti doesn't have good infrastructure and has only one open space where all the wedding and functions take place. It does have sewage system and all the drains are opened up and one could see the human excreta over flowing and children playing at the same place. People use nearby railway line for relieving. Water accumulation problem is severe here and in rainy season overflowing drain water enters into their house and human dirt and waste could be seen in their little houses. The water taps are located outside of every house as there is hardly any space inside the houses. The density is very high and most of the houses are two floored and married new generation living in it. Most of the electricity connections are illegal, water quality and quantity is very dirty and irregular, the quality of water is almost yellowish green and unfit for drinking. it is evident in high number of water born diseases in this area in rainy and summer season. There is hardly any street light in most of the area, women go to nearby railway line in groups for relief and sometimes police create problem for them.

Earlier Dinesh family had a big *Karkhana* where 10 workers used to work. But now it has been closed as they could not sustain the competition and rising cost of raw material on the one hand and exploitation by the wholesalers on the other. He took responsibility very early as he never saw his father who died to some diseases related to lungs. He left his school at a very age due to financial problems and to support his family.

He has been in this occupation for last 20 years, he is very hardworking and did not stop for while the conversation was on. His wife is also sitting with him and doing some small processes like applying glue milk on *chappals.*

One of the reasons he thinks why jatavs failed in their own occupation is that "they do not have wider market network outside Agra, another reason he says Is the exploitation by the *heend ki Mandi* traders. He further adds that upper castes deal in credits and they get the right price of their goods in the market but we do not get right price for out hard work. Traders always try to create problem for jatavs, they never give us cash but give *purcha/purshi.* We have to cash these slips in the market again they will deduct some portion of it. Our margins are completely finished in this process. They call us 3 or 4 times to their shops even then they do not give full price or will give our money in installments".

Most of the jatavs and especially the cottage workers face similar problems due to their dependence on the upper caste traders in the markets. The merchants try to exploit them as much as possible; they negotiate hard, against jatavs. Most of the cottage units are running with great difficulty, as they do not get right price of their goods in the markets.

Dinesh is although a very silent person but he gets angry when he discusses the problems of jatavs. But at times he seems to be very helpless, as his body language and his depressed voice indicates. Everyone tries to exploit jatavs be it the traders in the market or the government officials. Loans are essential for people to start their own business but here again he says that jatavs do not get loans easily and if they get it will be very small compare to their requirements as he says

"Humein to loan milega hi nahi, 50 sawal hote hain, dalal hote hain aur dalalon ko bhi paisa dena padta hai aur hamare paas hai kahan, ab unhe dene ki liya kahan se aaye? Apna to peth bharta nahi hai aur unhe aur de do. Itni mehnat hoti nahi hai woh to haal keh dete hain eik form ke liye ki le aao mein bharta hui 1000-500 Rs do, abhi tumhara kam ho raha hai phir do 1000-500 Rs. Ab 50,000 ka loan

hoga to 15 hazar to woh le leta hai dalal. Aur phir 35000 bhi nahi mil pata hai us mein se bhi mil pata hai saab 25-30 hazar.baki sab dalal kha jata hai. Kehte hai Hah hah aa rahi hai cheque, aa rahi hai, yeh cheez hai"
(We cannot get loans, the ask 50 questions, then there are dalals, we have to pay them money that we do not have, where to get money to pay them. it is so difficult to feed our stomach how can we give them money. We do not get work and the easily say that ger one form I fill give us 1000-500 Rs, your work is being done again pay them 1000-500 Rs. If the worth of loan is 50,000 out of it 15,000 the keep with them, and then we do not get even 35,000 Rs, we get just 25-30 thousands out of those (35,000) rest of the money is taken by *Dalals* they say that your cheaque is coming, this is the case) Dinesh is a fitter by specialization, and he proudly says that he can make 10 pairs of shoes but he does not have money to start some business.

"Waise to hum 10 pure(complete) jute tayar(ready) kar sakte hain par hamare paas paisa nahi hai. Is liye hum majdoori karte hain"(although we can prepare 10 complete pairs of shoes but we do not have money, that is why do labour).

He makes upto 16 pieces per day with the help of one assistant and he charges 10 Rs per piece therefore his daily earnings are 160 Rs in season out of which he gives 50 Rs to his assistant. But he complains that he gets regular work for 2 months and in rest 2 months, he get it in bits and pieces. The work is highly irregular therefore earning are also irregular he says he spend his time at different place to escape from hunger as he says

"Gujar basar aise karte hain ki kuch din kate humne apne JIJA ke yahan, bacchon ki chutti par jati hain, bacchon ke saath nikal jate hain susral mein wahan din kat lete hain".
(We manage our life like sometimes we pass our time in our brother-in-law home, when children get holidays we go out in our mother-in-law place, we pass our days there) (Observation: he was laughing but feeling shy to share this information)

The job and wages are very irregular in this industry and workers are always in search for some jobs, the competition is too much. If work is there they will have some source of earning when they do not have it they will pass their time by sitting in their homes.
"Baithe rehte hain dundte rehte hain ki kuch kam mil jaye, factories mein jate hain ki thora bahut mil jaye, Karkhanon mein jate hai thora bahut mil jata hai to kar lete hai nahi to laut aate hain"(we search jobs in factories or in *Karkhana,*if work is available we do it otherwise we return).

There is always a power negotiation between the workers and factory owners. Both the parties try to dictate their terms in different period of season. In season the owners are dependent on workers and in slack season workers depend on owners for some work. The relationships are not durable, it keeps on changing with time and demand as Dinesh mentions,

"Agar woh hamare paas aate hain to hum apni rate ke hisab se charge karte hain aur agar hum unke paas jate hai to woh hamari majboori ka faida uthate hain jaise 6 Rs hai to 5 Rs mein banani paragi yeh 4 Rs mein banani paregi phir bhi hum banate hain peth(stomach) bhi to palna(survive) hum logon ko. Bacche palne hain to banana parega kam karne parega peth to palna hi parega. Agar nahi karna hai to bookhe(hungry) peth(stomach) se raho"
(If they come to us, we charge by our rate if we go to them, then they exploit our helplessness like for Rs 6 work we have to do in Rs 5 or in Rs 4. Even then we do it as we have to feed our stomach. If we have to nurture our children and stomach we have to do it, if we do not do it we will be forced to live hungry).

Dinesh's wife is also working with him. She has double burden on her; one is to help her husband and another to look after the home chores. She gets up at 6 in the morning fill water, then sends her children to schools, after that she prepares food, eventually starts helping her husband. But despite that she is very jolly in nature. Her role in this occupation is decided that she will do small process like Dinesh says,

"Woh doodh lagati hai aur thora murai worai(moulding) bhi kar leti hain, dhage bhi kat leti hain aur dekha bhari(look after) bhi kar leti hain mere peeche bhi kam sambhalti hain woh".

(She applies milk (pasting glue) and also do moulding, she can cut the threads, and look after this work in my absence)

Her second round starts when the children return from school, after spending some time with them, she works till evening and after dinner she starts this work till 11 or 12. She hardly has any time for her or for leisure or entertainment. This routine is maintained only till they get regular work in slack season their routine is very different. They are living at the two extremes. Dinesh although accepts that he and his wife does not get enough time for entertainment but he is choiceless in this matter as he adds

"Pareshani to hoti hain, Bacchon ki fees hai tution fees hai. Ab tution fees aur school ki fees yeh hai ki woh mahine ki mahine nahi lete hain ikhatti jama karate hain ab ikhatti nahi hoti hai to school wale humein dhamki dete hain. School wale dhamki dete hain hume ki hum tumhare bacce ko kal se class mein nahi baithne denge"

(We do face problem, tution fee and school fee is there, they (School authority) do not take school fees monthly they take whole amount in one time, if we do not have whole amount, they threaten us, they say that they will not allow children to sit in the class)

When he starts these things he come back on the previous point

The factory owners and traders do not pay them all money as they may not work for them, but this way they keep jatavs as bonded labourers. They do not give them the promised money and most of the time they keep some of money with them in one pretext or other, this strategy is basically followed by *Punjabis, Sindhis, Banias, Muslims etc.* as they face problems in finding jatav workers, by adopting this strategy they are in constant touch with jatavs.

According to Dinesh one of the biggest problems for most of the jatavs is that they do not get price for their work, they are used as labour source

"Hum logon ko to yehi dikkat hai ki hum logon se kam kara liya jata hai aur paisa time par nahi milta hai woh bhi pura nahi milta hai..Hum log lage rehte hai ki chalo bhai thora bahut hota rahega dhanda pani time bhi karta rahega bacche bhi padte rahenge, woh bhi nahi ho pata hai."

(Our problem is that they get their work done through us, neither they give money on time nor give full amount. We still do it to earn some and pass our time, so that out children will keep studying, that too is difficult (in such circumstances).

Dinesh has a dream that his children become some good officers in the government services. He proudly says that he pays 450 Rs per month for his children fees. Although in such circumstance he must be facing a lot of crisis due to his limited and low earnings. But he is sacrificasing his present to see a bright future for his children. He does not wish that his children also entered into this field, as there is hardly any scope anymore here.

When dinesh was enquired how he manages this high fees with his limited earnings he says,

"Kya Karen (sad voice) apna man marke rehna padta hai, na kapre banwate hai, hum to bus bacchon ke liye karte hain, Apne app (self) ko down rakhte hain, jaise koi cheez, yeh koi shok nahi karte hain aapne man ko maar ke rekhte hain, Down rekhna padta hai aapne aap ko. Jaise hain waise hi raho bacchon ki taraf dekhne padta hai, man to hamara bhi karta hai par yeh hai ki jaiv(pocket) mein ho paisa tabhi to! Ab hai hi nahi to yeh soch lete hai ki bacche hamare pad likh jayen kuch ban jayen, bane yeh nahi bane par par likh to jayen."
(What to do (sad voice), we suppress our wishes, we do not make new cloths, we just do for our children. We keep ourselves down, we do not enjoy, we suppress out feelings, we keep ourselves as we are, we have to look after children, we also have feelings/interests but we do not have money in our pocket, nowthat we do not have money, hence we think that our children get educatd or become some, whether they become or not atleast they should be educated).

Jatavs have lost major proportion of this occupation. This has created a lot of job insecurities for jatavs. Now jatavs control very little part of this trade. Dinesh is pessimistic and hopeless about this occupation. Probably that is the reason why he does not want his children to come into this occupation. As he says

"Jatavon ke paas to yeh kam 100 mein se 5% reh gaya hai aur baki kam chala gaya hai jaise baniya hai, thakur hain, sindhi hain, Gujrati hain, Punjabi hain, Muslim hain in logon ke paas, aapko koi bhi bari factory jatav ki nahi milegi sabhi log karigar ban ke reh gayen hain, hum to bus gujara kar rahe hain".
(Only 5% of work if left with jatavs rest of the work has shifted to Banias, Thakurs, Sindhis, Gujratis, Punjabis and *Muslims*, you cannot find any jatav owning big factory, all have been reduced to *karigars*, we are somehow surviving)

"Kam to hai hi jatavon ka par ab yeh dusron ke paas chala gaya hai. Jatav to ab bas karigar ban kar reh gaya hai, yeh to mehnat par hai yeh, samaj lo ki 100% mein 70% mehnat kar raha hai aur 25% majdoori , beldari, riksha chala raha hai, thel laga hai koi fal fruit bech raha hai. 5 % hai jo aaram se kha raha hai".
(Although this work is of jatav's, but it has gone to others, jatavs have been reduced to *karigars*, these are surviving on labour, you can understand that 70% out of 100% are labourers, 25% are pulling Rikshaw, construction workers, selling fruits or running *thelas*, only 5% are surviving with ease)

Caste discrimination is such a regular phenonena in Agra that they always try to pull down a jatavs if he progresses or try to change his status. Caste discrimination is done in a very systematic way and sometimes very openly. Some jatav in bigger factories always prey to such discrimination. He tells an incident how his elder brother was discriminated by upper caste people. They always created some or other problem for him and ultimately he left that job. Even if somebody reaches to some high level they feel jealous of it.

He says he faces Castism daily be it in the *Mohalla*, square or police station or some other place. Caste discrimination is a normal thing for them. They have internalized castism to the extent that they always say *"itna to chalta hai "*. (This much is acceptable).

He is critical of the system and tells once he applied for a loan of 50,000 but ultimately he received only 20,000 so he returned that loan, as it was insufficient for him to start his business. Besides this there is Castism in the government offices, first they create problems for jatavs in sanctioning loans, second they have to pay extra to bribe the officials, third their loans ae most often delayed due to some reasons. He complains that he somke upper caste people apply for some loans they will get bigger loans and sooner. Explaining the perceptions of government machinery he says

"Woh samajte hai ki yeh to denge nahi yeh to pi kha (drink and eat) *kar mauj* (enjoy) *karenge"* (they think that we will not pay back (the loan), they assume that these (jatavs) people will drink and enjoy with that money).

Dinesh still does not have a gas connection and prepares food on chaulah, he says earlier we used to get some oil at the ration store but that too has stopped, dirty water comes in tap and sometimes it smells.water comes in 3-4 days in a week and the colour greeinish yellow he showed the colour of wate. Water logging problem is severe here and this areas is cut from outside world for 2-2, 3-3 days. They take shelter in bagichi or some dharmshala.there is no latrine bathroom facility and majority of them go to railway line for relieving. Once they protested for their demand for sanitation and water facility and they were beaten by the police with *lathis.*

These people are living at two extremes due the nature of their work, which is seasonal. In season time they do not have any other choice for entertainment and in slack they have so much of time that they just find it difficult to pass their time. When dinesh was asked about the entertainment and leisure he answers

"Hamare paas to koi manoranjan ke sadhan nahi hai bus yeh juban hai, purane gaane ga lete hain dil behla lete hain. (We do not have any source of entertainment, except this tongue we sing old songs and entertain us). In a very short and poetic way he explains his whole pain of his life *"apni nazar mein aaj kal phir yeh andhari raat thi, saaya hi apne saath tha, saaya hi apne saath hai"*

Dinesh also has hidden aspirations in his life that he never shares to others, as in such conditions it will become a joke for others. But he is very hopeful that one day his dreams will come. He says,

"Hamari yeh iccha hai ki hum bhi kabhi bare aadmi bane, aache bane, paise wale bhi bane. Hamare paas bhi kothi ho, car bhi ho"(we have a aspiration that we should also become big man, good, rich, we also have bunglow and car).

When asked about the possibility of such dreams in his generations

"Hah sochta hui, ho hi jayengi pure (with a deep breath) *agar laga raha ro ho bhi sakta hai ki ho bhi jayen sapne pure.* (yeah, I think my dreams may be fulfilled, if I continue (working), it is possible that my dreams may fulfill).(Observation: The wife sitting beside him had tears in her eyes, there was pin drop silence in the room and the atmosphere was very emotional)

They have lost hope that government will do anything for them, despite their repeated request nothing has been done even the basic facilities have not been provided. *"ab humein sarkar(government) se koi ummeed nahi hai, kyuki sarkar sunti nahi hai hum logon ki*".(we do not have any expectation from government, because government do not listen to us)

"Aaj ana, kal aana , parson aana, chakkar lagwate rehte hai woh log, phir dukhi hoke insane chor deta hai umeed. Phir baith jata hai". (come today, come tomorrow, they always keep us making rounds, then we loose hope and sit in our home)

Majority of jatavs complains of price hike as a major problem, their wages have not increased just 10% in the last 10 or so years, whereas the cost of living has increased many fold. They are the worst sufferers due to this hike in essential commodities. *"Pehle se stithi (condition) aur kharab hui hai aur ho rahi aur hogi"* (our condition has deterioted than before, it is detorioting and will be deteriated in future).

He laughing says that if they loose this occupation then they may sell fruit, or vegetables or sell eggs on road side. Although this was said in a light mood but it shows that they are preparing themselves for that change too, they have this option

open for them. Interestingly he never thinks of taking any violent measure but will accept the changes like that. When asked what he will do when he looses this work completely.

"Ab kya hoga, jab chala gaya to chala gaya, ab kya kar sakte hain, ab aayega to nahi kyuki inke(jatavs) paas paisa to hai nahi. Kam to chala gaya. Yeh log(upper castes) lagate hain pura pura paisa, in logon ko mil bhi jata hai 10-10 lakh 20-20 lakh aur inhe (jatavon) ko nahi milta hai 20000 ka loan bhi.".

(What we can do, what has gone is gone, it will not come back again because Jatavs do not have money, the work has gone, these (upper castes) invest money heavily, these people get loan of 10-10, 20-20 lacks and jatavs do not get a loan of 20,000 even).

The government officials especially police has a bad behaviour against jatavs. They openly call them '*Chamar*' and use degrading language against them. He says "*bahut batimiji se baat karte hain*", (they talk us with rudeness/roughly) he narrates an incident how police treated him when he helped a person injured in an accident.

"Pehle meri caste puchi thi, kaun ho?, ki kahan rehte ho, maine kaha ki Sundarpara collectory ke pass rehta hui? Maine kaha ki jatav hui to bola ..... chamar ho tum, woh bol dete hai unhe kaun rokega"(first they (police) asked my caste and who you are and where I live?, I replied that I live in sunderpara collectery, I said that I am a jatav then he said ....you are *Chamar*, the usually say this, who will stop them?)

These are not isolated and exceptional incidents but every jatavs has some stories to tell about caste discrimination and their social sufferings. In *Sunderpara* I met a person who was involved in pickpocket some one or so decade back. He was severely beaten by police and his hand and foot nails were taken out, his hairs were uprooted physically, and his body was injured with sharp weapons, he was beaten so severely that his lower body still pains even after passage of such a long time. The caste terror is such that they will look here and there to ensure that nobody is listening them whenever they are referring about upper castes.

Rakesh kumar

Rakesh kumar is about 55+ year old man, he is well built, fair complexion, tall and educated person. He is very polite while talking and very hospitable too. The other Jatavs give him so much respect although some are jealous of him. Some people in basti refer him as *'Bare Aadmi'*. He maintains some distance from other Jatavs in the basti and has very restricted interaction with them.

He lives in *Panchkuiyan* a Jatav locality. The condition of this basti is not different from other jatav *Basties* in Agra. Everything is same here and same problems also exist here. it is also marked by dirt, water loggings, bad roads, lack of street lights and sanitation facilities etc. this basti is a excluded basti and there is a big Muslim graveyard behind this.

He works as chief designer in a very big factory and he feels proud that he must be the only person who has reached to such a high level among all Jatavs working in big factories. He says with little pride, that he has left many government jobs. He was selected into state service commission but he left, as there was no income. He did his certificate course in 1968 from central footwear training institute, Agra. After that he worked at many places and kept shifting from company to company. He says that he has reached at this level through his experience and hard work. He has plenty of offers and choices, and he is in a position to negotiate with them on his terms. He discussed at great length how he started establishing himself and reached to this level.

The company he works has 3000 strong workforce and 90% of the employees are temporary or contract workers. Most of them work under *Thekadars*; some Jatavs also play the role of *Thekadar*. *Thekadars* generally pay wages on piece rate system. they take the responsibility for some work and we pay them money for their work. There are some 250-300 permanent employees in the factory. He is also one of the contract employees. He does not get bonus, provident fund, Ltc, or other benefits like other contract workers, as company does not provide to them. Although he is a contract worker in the factory but he holds a very important position in the company due to his work. He shows his importance by referring that he always lives close to the factory director all the time. According to him the managers and other permanent staff belong to upper castes and they take their own relatives, friends, family members in management.

According to him the bigger factories are owned by Punjabis,Sindhis and other higher castes there is no representation of Jatavs and Muslims. He says (without any stop) that Jatavs have lost this occupation and they have reduced to level of workers. The work has shifted to upper castes finally. Now other castes are replacing Jatavs, and Jatavs number is decreasing.

According to him, factories are governed by some government laws but hardly anyone follows those. All the provision in the laws are not fulfilled.There are very few holidays, the workers are given holidays on major festivals. They are not paid bonus by the factory. Although they have recreation facility and canteen but it is largely unused as people hardly have enough time and money to afford these. *"Par phir bhi humein paper work karna padta ha bachne ke liyei"*(despite that we have to do paper work to prevent ourselves).

The other workers who work under *Thekadars* are getting very little salary and their working conditions are tough.

He remembered his old days and says when he did his diploma from CFTI, Agra. He used to get some stipend from government. But now they have stopped it and increased the cost of education so much that it is beyond to the paying capacity of Jatavs. The number of Jatavs has decreased and other castes are now learning this shoe making skills. Other castes are now taking diplomas to establish their own factories or become manger, supervisor, designers or go abroad for highly paid jobs.

He emphasis that he never felt that he belongs to SC, and personally he never felt caste discrimination. Although he rejects this notion that there is caste discrimination in factories, but he himself tells an incident when other people try to show him in bad light in the eyes of managements by finding faults in his designs. But he says *"itna to chalta hai"*(this much is normal) he mentions one incident when some upper caste people who were jealous of him due to his progress. They wet the shoe in water which he designed and dried it later and packed it. The shape of the shoe was changed and they complaint to the director that, there is some problem in the design prepared by him.

When specifically asked about caste discrimination by giving examples, he mentions many incidents how they are always looked down upon as low and untouchables as he says *"woh log thora khaane peene mein duri banaye rakhte hain, phir hum bhi unke paas nahi jate yeh saab dekh kare"* (These people maintain some distance in eating and drinking, seeing all these, we also do not go to them then). He again says *"Jatav management mein nahi hain unhe door rakha jaja hai in mamlon se"*(Jatavs are not there in management, they are kept away from these things). He says they can complain against caste discrimination to the authorities but they take action against after evaluating the importance of both sides, which is more beneficial to them? He says if one jatav and another upper caste person with same caliber come for some job, then it depends on, who is recruiting or in charge of that? They favour their own people, but he dismiss it to be a big issue, As he says *"yeh to hota hi hai"*(this happens after all)

He mentions a interesting incident when some of his friends who did not know his caste came to visit him in his home, the first thing they asked him was *"yaar tu kyun in 'chamaron' ke beech mein kyun reh raha hai, tune kyun yahan kothi bana li hai"* (yaar, why do you live among these *Chamars*, why have you made your kothi (big house) here (among Chamars) he laughingly asked me *"ab aap bataiye mein kya jawab du in logon ko"* (now you tell me what should I answer to these people).

Rakesh kumar is very critical of his own people. He blames his own caste people for their stagnant growth, these people cannot see others progress. They always create one or other problem and tries to pull down each other. They always keep a jealousy feeling for their own people. He says this is the reason, why there is no growth in this caste. They do not encourage each other and stand united. He hates Jatavs habit to stand at their house gate and talk. He says I never do this, I invite people to my house share tea with them and then I talk. I do not send people back from my house gate.

He further says that it takes 20-30 Crores to establish a factory and he has all the knowledge and skills but he does not have enough money. He also wants to start his own export house, but it will take some time.

Rajinder

Rajinder is a thin young man of 24 years of age with wheatish complexion. He is fold of English language and wants to speak like others people. He is very polite speaking in conversation.. His education is 6th pass and he lives in Tila Nand Ram which is geographically a low area close to the Nala kaji Para a Jatav locality.

Tila Nand Ram is a lowly Area, which is located deep inside from the main road. It is an area which is located close to *Sadar Bhatti*, and it touches *Nala Kaji Para* on the one hand and a *Muslim Molalla* on the other. All the people who live here belong to jatav community. The occupation of most of the people is shoe or Chappal making. Although there is no big shop here but people have managed some makeshift arrangement for daily needs commodities. This area has very high density.

Most of the people are using illegal electric connections. The houses are small and congested, there is hardly any open place outside homes. Most of the houses have 1 or 2 electric bulbs, Rooms are small, ill ventilated, dark, smelly, and leather dirt could be seen outside their houses. In fact some of the families are using leather waste pieces alternate for fuel which causes filthy smell and smoke. Some of the people have tap located outside their houses, as most of them do not have separate bathroom and latrine facility. Both men and women go in the open but some women prefer to go to *Sulabh Sauchalaya*, which is very dirty, and for so many days it's not changed. The tap water comes once in a month or fortnight, as water does not go to the deep inside areas easily. There are queues for water, and water conflicts and riots are common throughout year. There is electricity cut for 7-10 house in these 'basties' in summer season.

He lives in a 20 yards room with 2 floor upbuilt on it, with all his 5 brothers his wife and elder *Bhaiya* and *Bhabi* and his mother. The upper 2 floors are used by himself and his elder brother and the ground floor is used by rest of the family. He has a colour television, one bed, fan, cooler, kitchen utensils, Almirah and a cassette player. His elder brother received all the things in dowry except, cooler and bed. all the things have been received in dowry, which is shared by all the members equally. They have displayed the kitchen utensils and other expensive gadgets in this single room. They use this single room as bedroom, drawing room, or common room, most of the time all the family members would see television together in this same room. If any guest comes to their house some of the members would go to the streets and sleep there.

Rajinder works as fitter (one of the process of shoe making) and charges 8-12 Rs per pair on an average depending upon the season, he makes 32 pairs per day with 1 assistant in season days. He says he gets employment for 4 months in a year, out of it Sundays and Mondays are holidays for workers, rest of the year it is a struggle to get work if at all, he gets in bits and pieces and the rate varies drastically from 3-4 Rs per pair during off season.

Nowadays he works in a small scale home based unit called *'Mira Hussani Chaurah'* He has been in this occupation for more than 12 years. He came in this business when he was just 12 years old. However he started learning this work much earlier when he was still a child in his home. He used to help his father and brother in small works when he came from school.

He could not finish his studies due to family problems and added responsibility of looking after his family when his father got ulcer cancer at the age of 37. Due to added pressure of treatment of his father and family support he suppressed his ambition to go to army or police and he jumped in to this traditional occupation which he never thought he would join. The other reason he tells is that He tells "*mera man parai mein nahi laga*"(I did not feel studying) he was scared of math and English.

He is having 5 more brothers and 2 sisters, all of them are illiterate, and his elder brother and sister are married. He borrowed money from moneylenders to marry off his elder sister at the rate of 5/100. He himself is also married and had 1 boy child who died of underweight in government hospitable. His wife is a housewife who is also short and thin like him.

His father had 2 brothers and 1 sister. His father also did not have agricultural land except his traditional shoe making skill, but according to Ravindra his father worked hard and he used to earn very much as this line did not have such problems as it has now. His father was a sole stitcher and used to work 14-15 hours a day. His Father wanted to educate his children but no one could become due to family and financial problems. The only thing his father could give to them was 'skill' that he gave to his sons in inheritance along with one room house.

He separated from his elder brother because he drinks too much, the reason might be the sudden death of his wife who passed away at an early age. His elder brother's earning is spent in liquor and he and his younger brothers run the family. He himself married off his elder sister with little money he had earned. His father passed away at the age of 40 who was the sole earning member in the family at that time, he got ulcer cancer and they spent 2-2.5 lacks for his health expenses. The treatment continued for 2 years they had borrowed the money from relatives, local panchayats, and friends. He is working hard to pay the debts and still he is paying. His younger brother also helped by joining him in the same occupation.

When his father died he left a lot of problem in inheritance for them, there was no education, no agricultural land to cultivate, no other means for survival. He and his brothers worked hard and have paid back almost all the debts and it took them 8 years. They would have lottery and pay 1000 per week as installment compromising with their basic minimum needs. He does not believe in taking loans as he says as half of the promised loan is lost in bribing the officials and '*Dallals*' after several rounds of visits and each visit is a punishment. They have seen touch times time and again once there was a time when they were prepared to sell off their single room home also.

Rajinder believes there is no caste discrimination today in urban areas but when asked about the police, official's behaviour if they come to know about his caste he says They ask us to stand at a distance, and don't allow us to sit in front of them and sometimes use filthy language for us and try to extract as much as possible from us. Their behaviour is welcome when dealing with higher castes.

He further says he is scared of going to high caste localities as he puts *"humein high caste colony mein jane se dar lagta hai, ki koi humse battamiji na ker de, koi humein 'Dher Chamar' na keh de".*(We are afraid/scared of going in high caste colonies that someone do not misbehaves with us, somebody do not say us 'Dher Chamar'). Jatavs hate this word 'Dher chamar'. Sometimes it becomes a reason for a conflict. Whenever there is any fight or conflicts the caste name is frequently used for reference.

After the death of his father when they were still young with no other means to survive, his mother started selling cloths and cow dung cakes in the market and somehow run the family. At that time they saw the severe episodes of hunger and poverty. At one time they were compelled to sell off their single room house to pay the debts.

He further says he has seen his spirit crumbling down whenever some lenders would ask for the money and often it is a humiliating affair, which results in lot of argument and insult.

He remembers of year 2000 crucial time when the sales tax departments had closed down many unregistered units. It affected workers worst, as the workers would run pillar to post to get some work. It was a struggle to survive that time. At times their family would sleep without food, sometimes they would feed on diluted 'Dal chawal'. They would eat the green vegetables once in 8 days otherwise most of the time it is '*Roti aur chatni*". He further adds

At last he got a job in Sri Jee International which is 4-5 km away from his home. He went walking and worked without food as he did not have in home, therein he made 24 pairs on first day. Second day again he worked without food. After much courage he begs for 50 Rs which he got and had some food in the market with his younger brother. In that week he worked worth 600 and the week passed happily and peacefully. He further mentions,

"Hum 4 mahine khoob mehnat karte hain, in 4 mahine mein jitna kama liya kam liya, uske baad bekar ho jate hain, kabhi kabhi apne aap se nafrat hoti hai ki humne galat samaj mein janam le liya").

(We do hard work for four months, in these four months whatever is earned is earned, after that we become worth/useless, sometimes we hate ourselves that we took birth in a wrong community). he further expands his job insecurity issue and how it is related with indebtness

"hamari sabsi bari parashani hai ki hamara paisa bach nahi pata hai, sab khaane peene mein kharch ho jata hai, jo paisa hum season pe kamate hain who off season tak kharch ho jata hai phir humein udhar lena padta hai".

(Our biggest problem is that our money is not saved, all goes in managing food and others, the money we earn in season that is spent till off-season/slack season, after that we are forced to take credits).

He says *"hum log to karje ke sahare ji rahe hain, hum karja lete hain, use chukate hain, phir off season pe karja lete hain., phir use season pe chukate hain yeh sab chakkar laga rehta hai"*.

(We people are surviving on credits, we take credit, pay it, then again take it in off-season/slack season again pay it back this cycle goes on and on). There is hardly any saving for us.

In off-season, he passes his time by playing cards, visiting yamuna banks, chatting with friends, watching television, playing cricket or roaming here and there. In season days he hardly gets time to play his favourite game due to work stress and pressure and family responsibility.

Rajinder has not lost his spirit despite numerous problems in his life. He is still optimistic that one day he would have a good house to live and his condition may improve in future. When asked about what options he may have if he lost his traditional occupation he says *"andolan karenge, logon ko jagayange, har ghar se eik admi lenge or sarokon pe utar yeng"'*, at the same time he says *"agar aisa din aaya to hum chineyenge, maarenge, marenge, lutenge, chori karenge, dakati dalenge, satta jua khelenge"'*

Rajinder appear to be very silent and simple but at the same time he also acknowledges the problem in his line or occupation. but he is helpless he does not have many chioice, this adds up his insecurities more. He is visualizing his future, and it's problems, but he is unable to do anything.

Chapter 6

BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY

This chapter deals with the themes came out very strongly across various case studies. The issues are identified through various methods and tools like in-depth case study, group discussions, direct field observation, field note etc. This chapter emphasizes upon the barriers faced by Jatavs who are engaged in footwear industry. Various barriers like socio-economic, psychological, political etc have been identified and are explained in different headings with some analysis in regard to its causes and consequences. Some of the issues although very important have been left keeping in mind the scope of the study. There are various quotes used by workers, these are used to authenticate the argument in their own language.

Case studies were analyzed bringing out issues and trying to address the barriers faced by 'Jatavs' in their quest for upward social and economic mobility. Besides this, there are some issues, which came out through case studies, which were beyond the scope of this study, therefore these issues have not been dealt with great detail. There were other issues, which came out though discussion and informal talks with the people in their locality. Some issues are so broad that they are overlapping with some other issues. Through sincere efforts it has been tried to incorporate those as much as possible without going out of the scope of the study.

Weak Economic Base

Lack of land and capital is one the major issues came out from various case studies. All the respondents never had agricultural lands either in their family or with themselves and it is true for other Jatavs too, who are not engaged in footwear industry. The sources of these inequalities can be located in the structure of caste system. Since Jatavs are an untouchable caste which always provided cheap physical labour to the means of production. Therefore they never owned the means of production like land not did they have access to capital etc, this phenomenon explains why there is lack of ownership of land among the Jatavs.

Poverty is a wide spread phenomena among Jatavs. They are always concerned about absolute poverty, which appears in slack season. They have

internalized chronic poverty to an extent that it does not appear a problem for them. For most of them managing two times meals a day is enough, one respondent says,

> *"Do waqt ki dal roti mil jaye time se, bus itna hi bahut hai"* (Shanti Devi, January, Agra).
> (It is enough for us to get two times *dal-roti* (meal)).

These expressions show how difficult it is, to manage two times food in such circumstances. The weak economic base of the Jatavs has its implication for their quality of life. Poverty has multi-dimensional effects on their living areas, standard of living, consumption patterns, housing, food intake, health, living conditions, education, and status in the society etc. poverty never allow them to afford quality anywhere, be it the quality of food, or quality of living, quality of housing or it is accessibility of various quality services. Quality never becomes a priority due to lack of choices in such circumstances.

This weak economic base and poor earnings have increased their dependency on others like moneylenders, wholesalers, factory owners etc. they are not able to afford a good, materially satisfying life due to poverty. Poverty reduces their choices and freedom to act as independent social beings. It deprives and reduces their chances for self-development and meet their aspirations. Poverty increases dependence on others therefore opens a channel for exploitation. Jatavs dependence on moneylenders, wholesalers, factory owners, opens a channel for their exploitation.

The poverty is wide spread among Jatavs that they are not able to finance their occupational requirements. They are not able to purchase machines, raw material at large scale, therefore their capabilities to produce more are restricted due to financial problems. They are never able to transform their small business into a bigger one. Their earnings are very low and insecured, they are barely managing with it. They are not able to save some money to be invested into their occupation or business.

Poverty often translates into deprivation of opportunities and act as a barrier for Jatavs. One jatav respondent says,

> *"Hum log karobar karne mein nipun hain par hamare paas itna paisa ho nahi pata hai ki hum age tarakii kar sekein"*(Rajesh Kumar, January, Agra).
> (We are expert in trading, but we do not have enough money to progress).

They are not able to acquire bigger order due to poverty, despite having the physical and mental capabilities. Poverty restricts them from acquiring bigger orders from wholesalers. It works as capability deprivations for Jatavs; the full potential of Jatavs is unused due to it. Their weak financial and low untouchable caste status works as a barriers when they are not able to negotiate with retailers and wholesalers on equal terms in regard to fixing price for goods, margins, fixing delivery times, meetings etc

They do not have enough working and circulation capital at their disposal. All of them survive on the wages and little profits they earn by selling their products in the markets. Since their daily output is very low due to low capital investment and traditional technology, their earnings are also limited due to it. They do not have capacity to sustain longer without cash. The middlemen often give them *purshi/purcha* rather than cash. But the raw material supplier wants cash therefore they have to sell these *purcha/Purchi* on discount to cashiers in the market to purchase raw material and meet their family requirements.

The social support system plays a major role in the development of any community. The caste Hindus have their own social support systems in the form of caste or community based funds like *Vaishya Bank, Aggarwal Bank.* These funds play a major role in financing their ventures and businesses. The lack of community support system among Jatavs deprive them opportunities, which are otherwise available to others. They have also developed smaller support systems like *lottery* or *kameti.* (*lottery* or *kameti* is a system where some members contribute some fixed amount weekly or monthly, in a community fund, each month a person is selected though lucky draw and bulk amount is given to her/him) jatav workers use this bulk amount (range from 10,000 to 15000) to invest in their houses, marriage, or business etc. there is a difference in both the support systems. Caste *Hindu* support systems are developed to support them financially in establishing business, whereas jatav support systems are a survival strategy for their livelihood and existence.

Lack of Job Security

Another issue that came out very strongly is the job security. The job security is a major issue, which affects workers economic well-being. Footwear industry does

not give permanent and regular employment as it is seasonal in nature, and operates just for few months in a year. There are many determining factors like marriages, festivals, and monsoon, which are responsible for the fluctuations of demand for shoes and Chappals. In monsoon the demand for shoes and Chappals decreases, as people do not wear leather shoes or Chappals in rainy weather, besides this, there is no major festival and marriage season. The production stops and majority of manufacturing units except some bigger factories close down. Thus their employment opportunities and income are limited and highly insecure. It directly affects their earnings and increases their dependence on high interest credits. Workers earn bulk of their earnings in season, like some may earn 3-4 thousands or more than that per month but this income in leveled in slack season when there is no work. They have to depend on credits then.

Even in season time there is no surety of work, as work availability depends on orders. If factories do not have orders or have limited orders it cannot give employment to all the workers. Therefore workers always try to search work door to door or through friends. There are more labourers than the work available; it gives enough power to factory owners to negotiate hard with the jatav workers to fix the wages. As soon as the slack season starts the wages starts decreasing as competition for limited work increases. The workers have to go through different phases of unemployment, underemployment in a year. One respondent says,

> *"kabhi kabhi apne aap se nafrat hone lagti hai ki humne galat samaj mein janam le liya. Jab koi hamari sunai hi nahi hoti, log nafrat ki nigah se dekhte hain, ki samne wala yeh hai, samne wala woh hai. hum is jat mein hote hum us jaat mein hote jab hum to kaisa hota, yahan khali baite rehte hain, thora ghoom aate hain, tab yeh mehsus hota hai ki humne kyun is samaj mein janam le liya. Hum 3 mahine tak machine ki tarah kaam karte hain aur phir iske baad bekar ho jate hain".* (Surender, January, Agra).
>
> (Some times we hate ourselves that we took birth in a wrong community, no body listens us, everyone see us through hatred eyes, people say that this person is this, that person is that. We imagine if we were in any other caste we would have been different. Here we sit idle, we roam/walk a little here and there, then we feel why we were born in this caste. We work hard like machines for three continuous months and after that we become worth/use less).

Insecure work and income have become a way of life for jatav workers as these conditions are repeated every year at the same time. Workers always try to

search some other sources of income. Some of them never hesitate to become construction workers or road workers.

One prominent issue related to occupation is the quality of work. Workers do physical exhausting work, that too without any leisure and entertainment. The factory owner always keeps a vigil on these workers to ensure that workers do work continuously. This monotonous, and exhausting physical work make the workers dependent on some substances like *Gutka*, *Khaini*, liquor, spirit, grass, cigarettes and other drugs. One worker says,

> *"Agar hum yeh sab na karein to hum yeh kaam nahi kar sakte, nasha dimag ko sunn kar deta hai, aur humein phir duniya ki fikar nahi rehti"* (Bhagat Singh, January, Agra).
> (If we do not take/do these addictives, we cannot do this work, it insensitises the mind, then we are not bothered of the world).

It is observed in various factories, all the workers are dependent on some kind of additives. Children who work in these factories also start on tease addictives quite early (field note).

Jatavs have lost their individuality as social beings; they have become a means of production like capital, raw material, tools, land etc. if one has to establish factory for shoe making besides managing capital, raw material, tools and technology one has to manage Jatavs to do this work. They have become a tool for production. One Sindhi commented about jatav workers,

> *"In logon ko itna do ki yeh kal tak jinda reh sakein, agar jaida de doge to yeh to bhag jayenge,yeh daru mein ura denge, phir yeh kaam kaun karega"* (Sindhi factory owner, January, Agra).[1]
> (Give that much to these people so that they may live till tomorrow, if they are given in excess, they will either run away or spend the money in liquor, and then who will do this work?).

Workers are not getting satisfactory, meaningful, secured jobs for realisation of their potential and self-development. One respondent explains,

> *"Hum 4 mahine khoob mehnat karte hain, in 4 mahine mein jitna kama liya kam liya, uske baad bekar ho jate hain, kabhi kabhi apne aap se nafrat hoti hai ki humne galat samaj mein janam le liya"* (Rajinder, January, Agra).

[1] These views were reported by a house owner where a Sindhi run his factory. He does not have good opinion about Jatavs and treat them very badly. He thinks that Jatavs are fit only for shoe making work.

(We do hard work for four months, in these four months whatever is earned is earned, after that we become worth/useless, sometimes we hate ourselves that we took birth in a wrong community).

These are extreme expressions, these are caste-based insecurities found in some particular castes. These expressions have it's roots in the relative deprivation. Some castes do not have these insecurities like the work of priesthood, trade, scavenging money lending, etc. therefore these insecurities are relative. Ones hatred to himself is the hatred for his caste status in the society. The caste based occupational division and fixing of status is the source of anger, resentment of this kind. In this case this person has started hating himself because of the insecurity that his caste provides to him. These expressions develop because of his low caste and lack of other opportunities. This has implications on his mental and psychological well-being. These job insecurities also give rise to various other insecurities like, psychological, mental, social, economic etc. workers already know the social status of their work and it's meaning for them. This job selection is not voluntary but a compulsion due to circumstances. As one respondent says,

"Pehle hi hum logon ko ganda kaam diya gaya (caste based occupational division of labour), upper castes us ko bhi chinti ja rahi hai, ab hamare paas aur kya option bacha hai"?(Vinod, January, Agra).
(Already we were given a low/degrading/polluting work, caste *Hindus* have snatched that too from us, now what optional is left with us?).

The above example shows that this work was not satisfactory and meaningful to them. It is rather the lack of other choices that they were forced to continue this occupation. Even that job has also gone out of their control. There is so much anxiety and stress that is created by insecure job conditions. These job insecurities give rise to conflicts in the home and outside. During field visit one person in *SunderPara* committed suicide on railway track, which is located next to the *Basti*. These are not exceptional cases, workers have high stress and tension, and people feel suffocated in the social environment and often take to such extreme measures. The conflicts in houses over little issues and high dissatisfaction with their social environment with limited opportunities for mobility often compelled people to take such extreme measures.

I met one person in Panchkuiyan who cut his body and arm over little conflict in family by a *Chappal* making tool. The high competition, limited resources and

dissatisfaction with one's position in social as well as economic hierarchy create conditions to take such measures. Due to high poverty and unemployment the competition for limited opportunities increases many fold, there is more labour supply than the market could actually absorb. This situation results in decrease in wages as large number of people compete for limited jobs.

Another important aspect related to jobs is the non-availability of regular jobs throughout year. The jobs are not regular workers get it in bits and pieces. Their work availability depends on so many factors like international demand, climatic conditions, market situations, etc. the disintegration of Russia resulted in loss of market for goods therefore loss of opportunities for workers too. There are other factors too like technology, labour availability in the market etc. therefore the availability depends on factors like market conditions and the degree of Mechanisation in factories. Workers get work in bits and pieces, which again reduce their bargaining capacity. One respondent says,

> *"Off season mein hamare upar musibaton ka pahar sa tut parta hai kyuki tab hamare pas koi karobar rehta nahi hain"*(Rajesh Kumar, January, Agra).
> (In slack season we are burdened by a lot of problems as there is no work available at that time).

This expression shows how difficult life Jatavs live, when there is no work in slack season. If any extra expenditure like marriage, illness occurs life simply go out of their control. The job insecurity has wider implication on their earnings, and living standards, consumption, health, dependence on credits etc. The earnings are very low already, and largely determined by the supply of labour in the market. Now due to this instability in job availability their earnings are further reduced.

High Indebtedness

One of the major problems of Jatavs is their high dependency on credits. This aspect is also related with the nature of work. The reason for high indebtness is the lack of steady work (Lynch 1969). Their earnings are hardly enough to fulfill their basic needs. They are hardly able to save some money. Almost all the workers had some credit on them and they were paying with interests as high as 5-10%. According to one respondent,

"hamari sabsi bari parashani hai ki hamara paisa bach nahi pata hai, sab khaane peene mein kharch ho jata hai, jo paisa hum season pe kamate hain who off season tak kharch ho jata hai phir humein udhar lena padta hai"(Rajinder Kumar, January, Agra).
(Our biggest problem is that our money is not saved, all goes in managing food and others, the money we earn in season that is spent till off-season/slack season, after that we are forced to take credits).

Another respondent says that,

"hum log to karje ke sahare ji rahe hain, hum karja lete hain, use chukate hain, phir off season pe karja lete hain., phir use season pe chukate hain yeh sab chakkar laga rehta hai"(Rajinder Kumar, January, Agra).
(we people are surviving on credits, we take credit, pay it, then again take it in off-season/slack season again pay it back this cycle goes on and on).

These example shows that they are badly trapped in the credit and poverty cycle. Their low wages and insecure jobs are largely responsible for their condition. When the credit becomes too much and it goes beyond their paying capacity they sell off their houses and start living in rented houses. One respondent while mentioning her conditions says that,

"Karja (credit) le le kar(shaadi) ki hai abhi tak chukka rahi hui aur makan bhi bich (sold) chukka hai shaadi ke karje ke chakkar mein. Aaj mein kirai (rent) par reh rahi hui apne is ghar mein mujhe pata nahi kab nikal de humein yahan se" (Shanti Devi, January, Agra).
(I took credits for marriage (for daughters' marriages), till today I am repaying (debts) and house is also sold due to marriages, today I am living on rent in my own house, I do not know when they will throw us from the house).

These conditions are extreme, there is no social security network for them there is no support mechanism, which they can depend on. If the condition becomes acute they become bonded labourers in some small manufacturing units due to credits. The small factory and home based production units give credits to workers so bring them under some involuntary economic bondage. This are the way factories ensure unrestricted supply of labour. Their high dependency on credits always make their life insecure, and they are always under some stress, and anxiety due to it.

Two major characteristics of debts are, it is short and long-range debts, short loans have high interest and long-term loans have low interest rates. Short-range loans are generally taken in slack season whereas long-term credits are taken when there is any urgency, which cannot be, avoided i.e. sickness. There are other various reasons for taking credits like marriages, establishing business, purchasing raw material,

sickness, social and religious functions Etc. Some sociological reasons behind this dependence on credit are explained below:

Firstly, there is high poverty among Jatavs; this poverty is hereditary in nature. Poverty is passed from one generation to another as their previous generations do not pass enough capital for them in heritage that is why they never have enough circulation capital with them that could be invested in their business. Social capital base is very weak among Jatavs. Their relatives, friends, and family members all have the identical conditions, they cannot support each other to a large extent due to their own problems. This lack of social capital also increases their high indebtness.

Second reason related to their nature of work, which is largely seasonal. The shoe making work is a seasonal work in nature, and now it is available only for four months due to excessive Mechanisation. This also limits their earning options. If they had round the year work, they would not be depending on credits.

Third reason is, their low earning due to low wages in the industry. The wages are very low and have not met up with the rising prices of different commodities. Due to high unemployment and poverty there is intense competition for available jobs. This unfavorable situation empowers factory owners to negotiate hard for setting wages.

Fourth, they loose good number of working days due to health problems, occupational injuries and diseases related to water contamination and poor living conditions, all these have direct bearing on their earnings. Besides these factors some external factors like frequent communal tension, raids by sales tax, electricity department also amount to wage loss due to temporary closure of factories. All these factors create enough conditions for credit taking.

Caste Discrimination

Caste discrimination is a complex issue as it is not restricted to social sphere but crosses over to various spheres like economy, polity, religion, and occupation in the society. Whenever the status-set of different groups starts changing which disturbs the power equilibrium (here caste structure) the caste discrimination is used as a tool to control the changing of caste defined status sets. Caste discrimination is a

tool to maintain status quo vis-à-vis caste rigidity. It is a systematic method to prevent and maintain already prevalent socio-economic inequalities. Caste violence and atrocities are often the extreme forms of suppression used to terrorise and create fear among the low caste people. There is so much of psychological fear among Jatavs that they lower down their voice when referring to higher caste.

It is interesting to note whenever they (Jatavs) are asked if they are discriminated on the basis of caste, everyone says there is no caste discrimination at all but it exist in rural areas. But when asked more specifically they will reveal how they are seen as untouchable and discriminated due to their caste background. It shows that they have internalized caste discrimination to the extent that they have started seeing it as a part of their life, something that cannot be cured or eradicated. The mental agony of being an untouchable (jatav) always haunt in their mind one respondent says,

> *"humein high caste colony mein jane se dar lagta hai, ki koi humse battamiji na ker de, koi humein 'Dher Chamar' na keh de"*(Rajinder Kumar, January, Agra).
> (We are afraid/scared of going in high caste colonies that someone do not misbehaves with us, somebody do not say us 'Dher Chamar').

Some argue that low castes have low status due to their association with dirty occupations. But Ambedkar says 'caste is not division of labour but division of labourers' therefore castes are fixation of status in the society. It is evident in those cases where people have left their traditional calling but are still subject to discrimination. A rich jatav engineer in government services living in upper caste colony says,

> *"Hum log yahan apni caste chupa ke rehte hain, agar unhe (upper caste) pata chal jaye to woh hum se bol chal kam kar denge aur humein puchenge nahi"*
> (An Engineer, January, Agra).
> (We live here by hiding our caste, if these people (upper castes) come to know about it, they will reduce their interaction with us, and they will not ask us (for any purpose)).

The economic and market discrimination is wide prevalent in society. Lower castes are discriminated in the economic sphere. This deprives them equal opportunities to access and avail market opportunities.

Footwear industry is a very lucrative segment of the leather industry. The turnover crosses some hundreds of Crores per year. There is caste-based chasm between an artisan community that produces a good and a traders' community that sells (Knorringa, 1999). The traditional caste based antagonism and conflicts are continued in a secular institution called the market. There is high competition in the market and caste *Hindu* Punjabis always try to keep out Jatavs from markets. Caste discrimination in the market is largely to prevent lower caste (here Jatavs) from penetrating into a set monopoly of higher castes.

> ...Jatavs probably not be able to occupy the status of factor because this status is traditionally ascribed to and exclusively occupied by upper caste. Upper castes Punjabis resist any incursion on their occupation monopoly by the low caste jatav. The Punjabis' greater capital and control of the market system, including the retailers, make it easier to freeze out a lower caste competitor by making salient the Jatavs' untouchable status within the market networks (Lynch 1969, pg 39).

The caste *Hindus* do not allow Jatavs to purchase lands or shops in the prime locations. They prefer and encourage their own people into markets. According to one respondent about caste discrimination in the market he says,

> *"jatav do dekh ke Dukan (shop) bhi nahi lene dete hain market mein! Woh to jatavon ko dete hai nahi hain woh to kehte hain hum to apni caste ke aadmi ko denge hum kisi ko nahi denge hum jatav ko to nahi hi dennge"*(Chan Singh, January Agra).
> (They do not let us take shops (in market) due to being Jatavs, they do not give their shops to Jatavs, they say that we will give shops to a person belonging to our own caste, we will not give shop at least to a jatav.

This clearly shows that the lower castes (Jatavs) are prevented from coming into set monopoly of caste Hindus. But caste Hindu have broken and monopolised the traditional jatav occupation. But Jatavs have not been able to encroach into caste Hindu role-set like priesthood, trading, education etc. this shows that caste system is flexible for caste Hindus more than the lower one. The caste Hindus have various options, choices and opportunities but this is not the case with lower ones. The structure of *Hindu* society is very complex at the one end it shows enough flexibility for caste Hindus but it becomes rigid for low castes. It is evident from this industry how caste Hindus have monopolised and thrown out Jatavs for their occupation when they saw opportunities here. They did not become untouchable by associating themselves with leatherwork but a jatav becomes and remains an untouchable if he does or associates himself with leatherwork. It is interesting that those people who have left their traditional callings are also seen as untouchables. Therefore it is

becomes clear that untouchability is used as a tool for keeping low castes weaker so that they maintain labour supply and use their unpaid labour for their benefit. It also shows that low castes have limited options whereas caste Hindus have wide range of options and choices. Jatavs have not challenged caste Hindus by taking up their occupations and roles. The caste discrimination is a means to control low castes (here Jatavs) from taking more advantageous jobs.

The monopoly of caste Hindus over this occupation (footwear) is absolute. They set the terms and conditions for trade, Sometimes they reject the jatav goods on one pretext or the others, since the middlemen have so many suppliers, they have the choice but manufacturers, especially small ones do not have many choices. Caste *Hindu* people try to extract as much as possible from poor Jatavs as one respondent says this,

> *"Jatav bhai haath se mehnat bhi karta phir bhi market mein paise nahi milte hain"*(Chan Singh, January Agra).
> (Jatav people although work hard by hand, even then they do not get price of their products in the markets).

This cottage worker like all others complains that middlemen (caste *Hindus*) do not give them the right price for their goods. They always negotiate hard with them and Jatavs low status always becomes a barrier and they cannot set terms. One respondent says,

> "*Eik baar maine jor se karak ke baat ki, ki mujhe nagad paise chahiye, usne kaha ja apna maal utha aur nikal yahan se*"(Chan Singh, January, Agra)
> (Once I spoke strictly and loudly that I wanted money in cash, he replied take your goods and get away from here).

This is a fact that caste background matters a lot in the market. Caste *Hindus* do not negotiate hard with each other due to the similar caste background. They can give some concessions to each other or take goods without any hard negotiations. But this does not happen in the case of Jatavs. The traditional caste based antagonism always plays a major role in the market (Lynch 1969, Knorringa 1996).

Caste Hindus always use tactics to make Jatavs dependent on them. They are not paid money in cash but they are issued credit slips. It has five functions, firstly Jatavs dependence on them is maintained, secondly they make sure that he comes over and again so that they can recruit Jatavs in case they have some work, thirdly

middlemen utilize this unpaid money into their ventures, fourthly it dissuades Jatavs to invest this bulk amount into some ventures i.e. shops, opening small *Karkhana*, finally some middlemen have their own caste men working as cashiers i.e. these *purcha/purshi* gives employment to these cashier middlemen as they cash *purshi/purcha* on commission. Jatavs are forced to come into unequal terms with these people. Caste *Hindus* use this unpaid labour of Jatavs for their benefit.

These sentiments clearly reveal that Jatavs untouchable status always carry over into the market. In the markets Jatavs are at the mercy of these middlemen. The middlemen negotiate hard and try to buy the goods at as low a price as possible to maximise their margins. It is done through finding faults in the shoes.

If Jatavs come into marketing it will be easier for them to interact with consumers and it will end the caste *Hindus* role as middlemen. That is the fear of the middlemen as their role will be over. It is the prime reason why jatav *Basti*es are often surpassed by market forces when markets expands.

A very important barrier for most of the Jatavs is caste discrimination. Caste violence and atrocities are often used to control and maintain traditional social structure. Caste created inequalities are further enforced though caste discrimination. Jatavs are looked down upon as dirty, shrewd, dishonest, lazy, uncivilized, drinkers etc. these notions develop inferiority feeling among them and affects their self esteem and confidence levels. The popular perceptions work against Jatavs everywhere be it in the market or any public sphere. Positive images and perceptions sets background for smooth interaction, it works in favour of caste *Hindus*. Caste system divides people into units known as castes. Some castes are looked down upon due to their association with some polluting work. Caste is understood to be division of labour but according to Ambedkar it is the division of labourers. Caste should be seen not in terms of its functions but also to unequal opportunities it creates. Therefore opportunity deprivation is one of the important functions of caste system.

Caste discrimination is a tool for denying lower castes a chance to change their status in the society. Banerji (1982) shows when there is no medical catastrophes health needs may be low, control over medical services at the time of a medical catastrophes, the exploiting privileged class uses this as a weapon to control and

exploit the poor. Because of its privileged class orientation the medical establishment also ends up strengthening the privileged class by helping it to deal more effectively with the health problems. The poors and Dalits never become a priority when it comes to providing quality of services or something else. The caste bias of people in the system always try to strengthen or provide quality of services to their own people[2].

Caste discrimination is a well, known phenomenon in Indian society. One jatav who works in a big factory complains how Jatavs are discriminated in institutions of learning. He complains about Central Footwear Training Institute (CFTI) Agra.

> *"Woh log humein top nahi karne dete hain, kyuki agar hum top kar gaye to humein factory mein preference milega, foreign mein posting mil jayegi, humein jaida salary milegi, jo ki woh log nahi chahte hain, hamari family aage bad jayegi"*(Vinod, January, Agra).
> (These people do not allow us to top (merit) because if we top the merit (in the institute), then we will get preference in factories, we can get foreign postings, we will get higher salary. These people don't want that we should progress or our family should progress).

Although shoe making is a traditional and hereditary occupation of Jatavs but due to caste discrimination they do not figure in the merit list. One Jatavs workers in the big factory says,

> *"hum logon ka patrik kaam, hum log karne wale, phir bhi hum mein se kisi ne top nahi kiya. Top woh log karte hain. jinhone juta pehna to jarur hai par kabhi banaya nahi hai. Top karne wale hamesha Bengali hote hain kyuki director wahan ka director Bengali hai. Nahi to pandit, Punjabi yeh koi aur karta hai. Jin logon ki koi back ground nahi hai is mein"*(Vinod, January, Agra).
> (It is our hereditary work, we are the *karigars* (workers), even then nobody from us has ever topped this (institute), toppers are those people who know how to wear a shoe but never know how it is made. Bengalis have topped, as the director himself is a Bengali otherwise it is Pandits, Punjabis or some others. Those who top this (institute) never had any shoe making background).

He further says that, there is discrimination in admission too.

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[2] In recent Tsunami tragedy in Tamil Nadu, Dalits were discriminated in terms of distribution of relief material, food, water, shelter, medicines etc. (The Navhind Times, 10-1-2005) Dalits were thrown out of relief camps; they were kept away from food preparing places (The Washington Times, 22-1-2005). For more details about tsunami and caste discrimination visit websites
http://socialjustice.ekduniya.net/document.2005-11-24.7355387384/document_view
http://www.indianet.nl/a050204.html
http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=2298

"hamare saath bhedbhav kiya jata hai, woh log preference usi ko dete hain jo unki caste ka hota hai, yeh paisa wala hota hai, yeh jiski koi bari source hoti haih.hamare paas in mein se kuch bhi nahi hain, Agar unka bus chale to humein admission hi na de, yeh to quota(Reservation) ki wajah se unhe humein admission dena padta hai"(Vinod, January, Agra).
(They discriminate with us, they give preference to their caste, or rich or those who have higher political source, we do not have any of these, if they wished they will not give us admission to us, it is because of quota (Reservation) that they have to give us admission).

The caste-based inequalities are institutionalised in the factories. The interaction patterns among different groups are guided by traditional beliefs. There is more intermingling among same caste people than others. Some of the Jatavs who are well established in factories find it difficult to share food and others with other caste groups. One Jatavs respondent in a big factory says,

"woh log thora khaane peene mein duri banaye rakhte hain, phir hum bhi unke paas nahi jate yeh saab dekh kare"(Rajesh Kumar, January, Agra).
(These people maintain some distance in eating and drinking, seeing all these, we also do not go to them then).

The Jatavs who work in these factories are always prevented from taking up highly paid jobs. They are kept away from management where all the major decisions are taken regarding the working of factories. One jatav who works at a key position in a very big factory says,

"Jatav management mein nahi hain unhe door rakha jaja hai in mamlon se"(Rajesh Kumar, January, Agra).
(Jatavs are not there in management, they are kept away from these things).

There is always a high pressure on Jatavs to perform well in such situations, because others always try to pull them down. If some jatav has reached to some key position in the factory others feel jealous of him. It is evident from Rajesh Kumar narrative how these (upper castes) people played a conspiracy against him to pull him down by creating artificial faults in the shoes designed by him.

One respondent tells an interesting incident regarding, how systematically caste system operates in Indian society. He mentioned an incident.

There was a fair cum conference organized by some *Hindu* organization, the name he is not aware of. One of his Bania friends went there with his Boss. The Bania

friend showed him one pamphlet which were distributed among the invitees gathered from all over India. It was written there that,

> *"Mohammadan Aur Chamaron in Dono ko Humein Peeche Karna Hai, Chamre ki Juti Nahi Pehnani Aur Chamre Ka Koi Bhi Saman Nahi Pehnana Hai, Foam ki Juti Pehno Kapre ki Juti Pehno, Agar In Chamaron Aur Mohammadan ko Down Karna Hai to Chamre ko* hindus*tan Se Hatana Hai".* (Kunwar Singh, January, Agra).
> (Muslims and Jatavs have to be pushed back, leather shoes and other articles not to be used, foam or cloth shoes to be used. If Muslims and Jatavs have to be pushed down, we have to replace leather with foam).

All these expressions show that Jatavs are kept away from opportunities and power. One of the important functions of caste is exclusion. The low castes are excluded from sharing equal power and status with caste *Hindus*. Lower castes are excluded from spheres which can fetch some power and status i.e. markets, education, high paid jobs.

Lack of Marketing Place and Network

One of the major issues for Jatavs is their dependence on middlemen (caste *Hindus*) for selling their goods. It is largely due to lack of market place and fixed capital assets in the prime locations. The exclusion of their localities from mainstream i.e. markets, deprive them of a lot of opportunities that are otherwise available to others. The historical exclusion of their living areas i.e. outskirts, prevent them from entering into direct market channel. This is also resulted into limited interaction with the consumers.

There is a gap between Jatavs and consumers, which is exploited, by wholesalers and retailers. They try to give them as low a price as possible by finding hundreds of faults in their products to maximise their margins. According to one cottage worker,

> *"hum log to Heeng ki Mandi mein hi mare hate hain, woh hamesha koshish karte hain ki kam se kam mein maal kharide"* (Dinesh, January, Agra).
> (We people (Jatavs) are exploited in the Heeng ki Mandi, those people (wholesalers) always try to give us as low as possible).

They are forced to pay unnecessary taxes like *Katauti* and often depend on these people for cash payments. These people issue credits slips known as *purcha/purshi* in place of cash. This increases their dependence on others for cashing

these, which further results in deduction of their profits. If we look at the margins we find Jatavs get very a small proportion of the profits and wholesalers and the retailers keep a lion share in profits. Middlemen maintain their dominant position because they control the market place and have higher social, and market networks.

The physical distance from markets also increases their expenses as they have to supply these goods to the market themselves. In the process they have to bribe local policemen and other agents to allow them to enter into markets. The bigger manufacturers do not pay as they have higher links in the government. But it pinches the smaller manufacturers mostly due to their poverty. The policemen charges 10 Rs per R*ickshaw* loaded with manufactured goods at the *Heeng ki Mandi* gate (field note).

There is one leather raw material market organised every Friday and Monday in a jatav *Basti*. Due to lack of markets place they sell their goods on footpath in the *Basti*. The caste *Hindu* people always create problems if this weekly market extends into their area. The caste *Hindu* people always resist Jatavs efforts to enter into markets. Caste discrimination is the major tool used against Jatavs, one respondent says,

> *"Pehle jatavon ki kuch dukan thi par ab bahut hi kaam bachi hain,phir jatavon se koi bhi maal kharidna nahi chahta, is liye bhi unki dukan kaam ho rahi hain"*(Kunwar Singh, January, Agra).
> (Earlier Jatavs had some shops in the market but now very few have left, and then nobody wants to purchase goods from Jatavs, which is also the reason why they are reducing from market).

These bigger factory owners, wholesalers and retailers have wider market links not only in Agra but also in other states. They promote their own caste men in the markets. The caste *Hindu* manufacturers get easy access to outer markets due to their presence in trading everywhere. These caste *Hindus* have greater solidarity and dominant presence everywhere, which is not the case with Jatavs. It is easier for caste *Hindus* to channelise demand and absorb their products in the markets. Since they have wider links and greater demand of their products as they can trade in a greater geographical area, therefore they have constant demand of their products. Their factories run for a longer time due to constant demand of their goods. They have higher contacts with government and big traders in every part of India. If any particular product is not selling in Agra they will sell it to other parts. Upper caste due

to their historical presence in trade put them in advantage over Jatavs. Jatavs do not have any presence in trade outside and are limited to Agra only. Therefore one of the functions of poverty is restricted mobility. Due to poverty, Jatavs are not able to utilise opportunities available outside Agra. This poverty has it's association with some castes therefore it can be argued that caste also plays a detrimental role in creating negative and positive conditions for physical mobility of communities. Caste can also be seen as exclusion of certain communities from moving freely. Therefore caste system should not be seen as a simple division of labour but also as exclusion of certain communities from availing equal opportunities.

Lack of Higher Links in Government

Jatavs do not have good social links in the government and other institutions. In absence of these vital links they have to give bribe to get their work done. There are many reasons for this firstly their work is largely physical therefore they hardly have interaction with the government officials. Secondly there is under-representation of their people in the government, thirdly most of their people are segregated in class 3rd and class 4th position which are powerless, fourthly due to lack of education and other opportunities they are unable to go into government jobs, finally some of their people negotiate their status with others in the government, in this process they maintain distance from their own people.

Jatavs face problems in dealing with government be it in sanctioning loans, or dealing with police officials, sales tax officials or electricity officials etc. one respondent while mentioning why they always find problems in getting loans, he says,

> *"woh samajte hai ki yeh to denge nahi.....yeh to pi kha (drink and eat) kar mooj*(enjoy) *karenge"*(Dinesh, January, Agra).
> (They think that we will not pay back (the loan), they assume that these (Jatavs) people will drink and enjoy with that money).

These are the popular perceptions, which go against Jatavs everywhere. Popular construction of Jatavs as being drinkers, shrewd, dishonest always put them in disadvantageous position whenever they are dealing with the government. Whereas positive perceptions play a major role, it sets a condition for a smooth interaction. Jatavs have to double the efforts, first to break that negative perceptions and then negotiate for their work i.e. loans etc.

The negative perceptions work in a systematic manner and those who have negative perceptions are the first to suffer, preference always go to those people who have positive perceptions. As one government officer says,

> The workers are addicted to a number of vices; gambling and alcohol claim a major part of their earnings. They are constantly under debt, which is never cleared. They remain absent from work, and often found dead drunk on weekends, and on Mondays they are often hunted out from their dens by the manufacturers. The result is that in spite of their good earnings ... they remain miserably poor... they usually live in slums with the result that their domestic life is not quite healthy. (Lynch. 1969: 53)

The interesting point in this argument is that it is blaming Jatavs rather than the social environment in which they live and work. This argument did not have any sympathy for Jatavs but a popular bias. This bias is similar to what factory owners have against Jatavs. Factory owners always use Jatavs drinking habit as an excuse to give them low wages. As one puts,

> *"In logon ko jaida de doge to daru mein ura denge"* (Sindhi factory owner, January, Agra).
> (If you give them more (wages), they will waste it on liquor).

They have inherent fear of the police, they do not have guts to face police, it is because police has caste *Hindu* bias, police largely behaves like a Thakur in the villages. The police in this respect seen by them as a caste oppressor. The fear is not because of it's being rude or harsh but it is so, in case of some communities. This fear has it's root in the caste suppression by upper caste people and *Thakurs* are just symbolized that order. Another reason is the lack of savior for them in police. If police catches them it will mean loss of working days and loss of income for them. The reason of fear is because Jatavs are not present in the police and administration. This disability is exploited by *Dalals* or middlemen who provide a link between them and the government officials.

Another aspects related with it are corruption and caste discrimination by government officials against Jatavs. The caste *Hindu* people have all these factors working in their favour as one respondent says,

> *"unka kam jaldi ho jata hai kyuki unke log wahan (government) mein hai".*(Dinesh, Chan Singh, January, Agra).
> (Their work is done without any delay because their people are there (in Government)).

One jatav factory owner complaint that he has applied for revolver license but he is denied every time he goes there. He says,

> *"agar meri jagah koi Punjabi yeh koi Bania hota to use turant mil jata"*(A jatav factory owner, January, Agra).
> (If there had been any Punjabi or Bania in my place, his work could have been done immediately).

Most of the people in the market have revolver license for their safety due to frequent communal clashes in Agra. A jatav factory owner says while referring to a Sindhi who was sitting at his shop for some work.

> *"maine aur isne eik saath kam shuru kiya tha, par aaj yeh mujse bahut aage chala gaya hai, jis stage pe yeh aaj hai us stage pe mujhe pauchne mein dugna time lagega, kyuki inko government ki puri help milti hai aur inki biradiri bhi inka saath deti hai"* (A Jatav owner of Small factory, January, Agra).
> (He and I started working at same position, but he has progressed far ahead than me, it will take double efforts for me to reach to his position. because they get full support from Government, and their own community also supports them).

These are not isolated or exceptional incidents, seeing the present situations he may be right. Jatavs have to suffer for not having these vital links. It plays down their aspirations and dreams. It is a kind of discouragement for them. In such a caste divided society, those who are part of the system try to benefit their own people. In this process those who are already marginalized and under-represented felt alienation and exclusion, which is the function of the caste system.

Education

Education is a major problem in this community. When a boy leaves school (the rule rather than a exception) he attaches himself to a man who becomes his guru or teacher (Lynch 1969). The major characteristics are high drop out, early drop out, illiteracy, etc.

One of the reasons for high illiteracy is because this is largely a physical work occupation, which hardly requires education. The high poverty often compelled these children to learn hereditary skills at a very early age, which are necessary for survival. Children are employed into the industry at a very early age through a system of apprenticeship (Lynch, 1969). These children learn the skills under the guidance of parents or master workers who become their teacher in this line. Due to day-to-day

sufferings there is a feeling among children to start earning as early as possible. It is either to support their family or get supplementary income or to claim the earning status in the family. There is high pressure on the children to earn as early as possible (field note).

Most of the case studies shows that majority of the workers are illiterate or are early drop out from schools. There are many reasons for early drop out. Generally Children help their father in the small work and go to schools simultaneously. Most of the children drop out at the age of 11-12 years this is also the average age to become a semi skilled karigar in the industry. By this time they become fully aware of different processes in shoe or Chappal making. "Shoe making is a way of life for these people, there is hardly anybody who has not done some shoe work in his life (Lynch 1969) When a child grows up, he starts imitating his elders, he is also attracted to the income which it gets. In short children in this occupation achieve the earning status at a very early age (field note). There is one interesting aspect regarding girls' education. It is found that girls are encouraged to study, and some girls reached to the post graduation level.

The poor housing and economic conditions are responsible for this. There is no proper housing among the shoemaking Jatavs. Their houses are small and congested. Since there is high density per household, there is hardly any distinction between working and living place. It is difficult for these children to study in the single room where their parents are working and all family members discussing or watching cable television. There are so many diversions for the children. These conditions work as pull factors for these children in this occupation. They start becoming involved into it just in one-way or the other. There are so many diversions for children, lack of motivation for education from elders and parents often works as pull factor indirectly in this industry.

Another important reason is the seasonal nature of this occupation. In season time workers have many orders and their capacities are limited, therefore they involve their children into it by utilizing their labour in small processes. If they are student they have to take leave or leave school forever. Slowly children get involved in the household labour and gradually get absorbed in the family work.

There are other reasons too like death of any earning member, high debts, sickness of earning members, some financial problems in the family, lack of schools in their locality, lack of encouragement from parents, social environment, problems of fee and other schools expenditure. These reasons are responsible for high illiteracy and high and early drop out rates among these workers.

Another reason although it was not covered fully but came up in interaction with some school going children. These children are asked their castes frequently in the class. Although there is no problems in intermingling among different caste children. One school going teenager tells that he was first asked his caste by a teacher and later the teacher warned him to be beware of him. This teacher had some prejudice against a SC teacher too. A reason not probed fully but exist is caste discrimination in schools, one teenager tells, that some high caste teachers often ask their caste in the class, they also threaten us if we do some mistakes.

> *"Agar hum log koi galti kar dete hain to humein bahut saza milti hai"* (A School going jatav teenager, January, Agra).
> (We are severely punished if we are found guilty of any misconduct).

Illiteracy and low education is a major barrier for most of the workers. They do not have education that can be used as a vehicle for mobility. Lack of educations means lack of options and opportunities for them. They are unaware of the government policies, rules, regulations, safety, legal provisions wages and other facilities given by the government. The factory owners take advantage of this ignorance and exploit them. Besides these factors workers are unaware of the various policies, programs initiated for the development of scheduled castes. They are neither aware nor able to utilize these opportunities.

The factory owners exploit workers illiteracy and ignorance for their advantage. Workers are not provided with a hygienic working environment. Workers also do not resist due to the fear of loosing jobs. It is due to lack of education and understanding that caste *Hindus* use them against each other. This has created some conflict among them. It is evident that most of the workers are critical of their caste men for the problems in this occupation. They do not question the role of caste *Hindus* in this matter. The caste *Hindus* use these people to establish their factories but later throw them out of work after establishment of the factories. It is largely due

to lack of education and understanding among them that factory owners subjugate and exploit them.

Workers are often given little privileges like liquor, little extra salary to reveal secrets of this occupation. The cottage small manufacturing units pay an unnecessary tax called *Katauti*, they resist but they do not know how to solve this problem.

The workers recognize that they come from jatav caste but they do not have that class-consciousness. In Marxian notion they form a 'class in itself' but the consciousness of 'class for itself' is missing among them. This lack of consciousness prevents any solidarity among them. They are not able to unite despite their similar experiences. They are still divided on little issues; due to their vulnerability it is easier to divide them. Jatavs are often used against Muslims by caste *Hindus*. It serve two purposes for them, first caste *Hindus* control Muslims indirectly who are strong competitor for them in the market, second it benefits caste *Hindus* directly as due to this antagonism between these two communities they stop inter community trade and depend on caste *Hindus* for selling or purchasing goods.

Corruption

It is one of the important barriers for Jatavs. This problem become acute given Jatavs weak economic base and low earnings which are hardly enough to fulfill their family requirement. Jatavs do not have higher political and social links, therefore they have to bribe official to get their work done. All the respondents' complained of corruption for their sufferings. One respondent while discussing how employment exchange people openly demanded bribe from him when they said,

> "*har insane ke liye to job nahi hai lekin government ki eik scheme hai ki 20,000 ka loan mil sakta par tumhe 20% dena parega tumhari applicaton lagane ke liye.*" (Kunwar Singh, January, Agra).
> (There are no jobs for every person but there is one scheme from the government, you can get a loan of 20,000 but you have to pay us 20% of the amount (bribe) to forward your application.).

This person returned the loan, as he did not have capacity to pay the bribe. All have faced problems due to corruption in one-way or the other. Their illiteracy, and lack of education and ignorance makes them susceptible to be exploited by upper caste people.

Small manufacturers have to pay 10 Rs per visit to the policemen at the *Heeng ki Mandi* gate (field note). The bigger manufacturers escape this extortion as they have higher links in the police and government. Besides that Jatavs have to pay extra amount in bribes to the electricity officials as they use unauthorised electricity connections. The bigger manufacturers have to pay less as their links with higher authorities compensate this.

Several workers complained that, if they apply for loans of Rs 50,000 they hardly receive Rs 25,000, rest of the amount is lost in bribing officials. Two jatav respondents returned the sanctioned loans, as they did not have capacity to pay extra in bribes. This widespread corruption also discourages them from taking loans and expanding their business. They often become prey to the *Dalals* who try to exploit them as much as possible due to their ignorance.

Corruption is functional for some people who have the capacity to pay the price. But it is a severe problem for those who do not have money and social contacts. Money to an extent compensates the lack of social links. Corruption works for those people who have enough money. Bribes are used as a tool to get some work done through unfair means. For example the bigger factories bribe the electricity department officials to escape from paying the actual amount. In footwear industry all the big factory owners have both money and social contacts, which are exploited to the maximum for some favours.

Jatavs have to pay the price everywhere because of not having their people in the government. Two respondents who were graduates from Agra College said that they could not get government jobs, because they did not have enough money to pay bribes to the concerned persons, and they were forced to join their traditional occupation lastly. One respondent said when she went to make an income certificate in the authority the person demanded bribe and when she refused, he warned her that she would not get it without paying the bribe.

All these experiences show that corruption is a problem in the society but it becomes more acute and severe for the poor. In such insecure conditions and poor earnings corruption just adds burden of the poor. It is largely due to corruption that people are compelled to compromise situations. It works as discouragement to people

who are already poor. It deprives opportunities to people to overcome man made inequalities and realize their full potential.

Living Conditions

The first thing one cannot ignore in Agra is the geographical segregation of different communities, i.e. *jatav Basti, Muslim Mohalla, kumhar Basti, Valmiki Basti and upper caste colony* etc. the peculiar things of this spatial segregation is that it is predominantly known by the name of resident castes. The social separateness of the various caste and ethnic groups is reflected in their segregation in residential localities of a community.

The exclusion of their localities from mainstream i.e. markets, deprive them a lot of opportunities that are otherwise available for other people. The historical exclusion of their living areas i.e. outskirts, prevent them from entering into markets and building networks. This also results into limited interaction with the consumers.

Disadvantageous location and weak infrastructure in these localities often work as push factor for the establishment of markets and other institutions. Market forces also discriminate against Jatavs. Most often their areas are surpassed when the market expands. This is evident from *Meera hussani chaurah* where market has not expanded into jatav *Basti* but at the same time has expanded into *Muslim Mohalla* (field note). This clearly shows that Jatavs are intentionally kept away from markets. This exclusion from public sphere also restricts developing network and relationships in the markets. Since most of their *Basti*es are located at disadvantageous locations, it becomes barrier for them in utilizing these areas for some kind of business opportunities.

The living areas are also contributing negatively to their growth. Poor and unhygienic living conditions result in frequent diseases and epidemic, which result in loss of working days affects their income and compelled them to take credits. The high prevalence of diseases also results in per head high expenditure on health. Due to voltage fluctuation they have to invest extra money in replacing bulbs, tubes and other electric appliances. Due to water accumulation in *Basti* and their houses their expenditure increases on replacing or washing cloths, quilts and other household goods.

Implications for Well-being

According to oxford advanced English dictionary 'Well being is the state of happiness and healthy'. The WHO definition of health introduces the concept of 'well-being". The question then arises what is meant by well being? In point of fact, there is no satisfactory definition of well-being.

Recently psychologists have pointed out that the 'well-being' of an individual or group of individuals have objective and subjective components. The objective components relate to such concerns as are generally known by the term "standard of living or "level of living" the subjective components of well being (as expressed by each individual) is referred to as "quality of life".

Well-being is the result of various socio-economic factors interacting with each other. These factors largely determine the conditions where people live and work to maximise their social and economic well-being. There are variations in the concept of well being in different strata of the society which are shaped by their social and economic conditions. The perceptions of well being both at objective level and subjective level differs significantly.

Well-being is a socially constructed phenomena, everyone defines well-being in their own context. This perception of well-being is shaped by availability of opportunities for self realisation. This well-being has various components which affects one's life like income, wages, housing, food, meaningful occupation, safe drinking water, occupational security etc. It is this broad understanding that forms the research topic of this research. This research explores the lives of Jatavs in the footwear industry to understand the meaning of well being for them and their differential experiences in terms of opportunities and constraints.

As explained in the definition of well-being, it is the state of happiness and healthy. It is a process where individual acts in his social environment for realisation of her/his aspirations. It is the state of satisfaction with his social environment. A state of satisfaction and happiness develop only when one has the harmony within and with other fellow beings. When one is not deprived of opportunities and freedom to realize and develop her/him self. Therefore meaningful and secured jobs and occupations, secured income, satisfactory living and working conditions, leisure and entertainment,

social security, quality education, and other equal opportunities become necessary for ones satisfaction.

All these factors contribute and determine ones well-being. Therefore well being is the result of various forces operating in the society like economy, social institutions, stratification systems, polity etc. the interaction between these factors largely govern the lives of people in any society. Although these factors are differed in community-to-community, culture-to-culture, but universally all these factors play vital role in determining the well being of individual in the society.

The feeling of happiness depends upon factors like employment, wages, social security, Therefore the well-being depends upon various factors which are responsible for the realisation of any individual potential as social being. Poverty, caste discrimination, food insecurity, insecured income, lack of meaningful jobs, occupational insecurity, bad living and working conditions, illiteracy, lack of opportunities for growth, have direct bearing for the well-being of individuals and groups. These factors largely affect the mental, physical, social, economical state of people who are struggling against their social environment for their existence.

When people do not get enough opportunities, resources and basic securities in their lives, It results in depression, stress, loss of dignity, esteem, confidence and self-respect. It creates frustration, hatred, guilt, jealousy, mental and psychological imbalances etc. It affects individual's social standing and reduces confidence level.

When the opportunities are not available and there is no hope for a better and secure future, people are compelled to take extreme steps like suicides, self-immolation, injuring themselves and others, involving in crimes, drugs and various addictions etc. Due to social inequalities in terms of resource distribution and opportunities availabilities, people are forced to compromise in their day-to-day life. They are compelled to take extreme actions like in *Basties* it is common for people to commit suicides due to frustrations, anger, conflicts in their situations. Life in *Basties* is a compromise with their lives, as one respondent says,

> *"Zindagi aise kaat rahi hai jaise hum log kire makore (insects) hain, samaj li jiye ki hum zindgi ji (live) nahi rahe balki dhekal (drag) rahi hain, khana hai to kha liya aur agar nahi hai to subah se sham tak baithe hain, kaam mil gaya to theek hai nahi to aise hi baithe hai"*(Shanti Devi, January, Agra).

(We are passing our life as if we are insects, you know, we are not living our lives, we are dragging it, if food is available, we eat it, if it is not available then we sit just like that from morning to evening, if work is available the it is ok otherwise we sit just like that).

These are the extreme expressions found in historically marginalised jatav community. They are compelled to compare themselves to insects. it shows how much they have been reduced in public sphere. it shows how they perceive themselves in a larger society. In the absence of opportunities in such conditions, they experience frustrations, indignity, unhappiness and anger, with their life situations. There is extreme anger and frustration due to loss of opportunities among Jatavs. One jatav respondent says,

"jab kaam dhanda nahi hoga to hum sarak par utar ayange, marenge aur maarenge, lootmaar karenge, 2-4-6 marenge aur 10-20 maarenge" (chan Singh, January, Agra).
(If we do not have work then we will come on roads, we will kill or get killed, we will plunder, and some 2-4-6 will get killed or (we) will kill 10-20).

People living at this end are living with scarce resources with no meaning of quality of life. Their notion of quality of life is restricted to managing two times food.

"Do waqt ki dal roti mil jaye time se, bus itna hi bahut hai"
(Shanti Devi, January, Agra).
(It is enough for us to get two times Dal Roti (meal) on time).

This shows how they are barely surviving, there is huge competition for limited resources and people are finding it difficult to even to manage two meals a day. Their expectations are reduced to food. People do not expect more than that probably they think that in such circumstances it is not possible to aspire more. The lack of chance and opportunities for growth due to the nature of their work often leave them in such conditions. (They have suppressed aspirations, which they do not share with others due to their improbability of realisation. One respondent says,

"Hamari yeh iccha hai ki hum bhi kabhi bare aadmi bane, aache bane, paise wale bane, Hamare paas bhi kothi ho, car ho"(Dinesh, January, Agra).
(We have a desire that I also become big man, Goodman, Richman, we should also have a bungalow and a car).

There is a huge gap between their present situation and their future aspirations. Workers also dream to have all the luxuries of life, but when these aspirations do not get a channel for realisation it creates conflicts within the individuals and with the society. Their unmet aspirations for quality of life create frustrations, anxiety, stress,

tension, and unhappiness among them. People are forced to compromise, due to lack of choice and freedom.

In such a caste divided society where equality of opportunities exists in theory, a large section is deprived of basic human amenities of life. The compromises to their dreams and aspirations are a routine due to lack of resources. The caste discrimination dimension also increases their sufferings. They are discriminated everywhere be it in classrooms, public sphere, or religious places.

> *"Humein sabhi jagah uthna padta hai jatav hone ka nuksan, seekhne mein, chalne mein, bolne mein, kuch bhi karne mein"*(Vinod, January, Agra).
> (We have to suffer everywhere due to being jatav, like in learning, walking, speaking or doing anything).

There are already so many problems for these people and the discrimination breaks their confidence and their self-respect. They are seen with hatred due to their association with so called dirty work. One respondent says,

> *"kya paida hona hamare bus mein tha, agar mere bus mein hota, to mein to kabhi SC mein janam hi nahi leta, mein to chahta ki koi high caste mein janam lui yeh kisi paise wale ke yahan janam lui"*(Vinod, January, Agra).
> (Is it in my control to take birth?, if it were, then I would not have born in SC, I would have wished to born into a high caste or some rich family).

The argument is rational in this sense why people hate to be born in SC or jatav families. Their life chances and opportunities are largely determined by their caste. Their wish to be born into higher castes also reveals their idealization of caste *Hindu*. But this has its roots in the caste system where they acquire higher status in the society and this status is well manifested in their day to day life be it consumption patterns, opportunities, education, living and working conditions, quality of life, social interaction etc. their hatred for themselves is largely the result of reduction and marginalisation from social sphere which is reflected in their day to day life. The unequal opportunities, lack of education, lack of growth and self-realisation and opportunities often make them complain against their status in the society. Their hatred to be called SC or jatav, or Chamar as it brings so much humiliation, social sufferings, and anxiety.

From the above discussion it is clear that people are not in harmony either with their self or with their social environment. There is unhappiness within and it affects their inter-personal relations with other fellow beings. The root cause of this

well-being is found in the stratification system whereby some live at the cost of others. This relative deprivation creates dissatisfaction, competition, unhappiness, anger, tension and many other problems.

Implications for Health

The widely accepted definition defines of health is that given by the world health organization (1948) in the preamble to its constitution.

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease of infirmity".

Health is the outcome of various components of health systems. Health is not achieved only by health care systems. Health is largely determined by factors i.e. sanitation, safe drinking water supply, meaningful and secured income, education, recreational facilities, living and working conditions, leisure, safe housing, entertainment nutritional intake, employments security, social security, consumption patterns etc. Health is therefore is not only about physical fitness it is also about mental, psychological, social well-being. Health is also about harmony with oneself and other beings in the society.

If we analyse the health status of Jatavs we find they are living at the edge. This section is most vulnerable in terms of health in the society. Their earnings are insecure, living and working areas are unsafe and unhygienic, there is no provision of sanitation and safe drinking water, they hardly have recreation facilities, and entertainment choices are limited. There is no social security and social support systems are weak, their housing is congested and small, not fit for accommodating large families, food-intake in terms of quality and quantity is not satisfactory. The education is low and ignorance is high in regard to health etc. in such conditions the health hardly becomes a priority for most of the workers. Their prime concern is to escape from hunger and absolute poverty. Health requirements are often compromised in such situations. One respondent while discussing her life and occupation says,

> *"Bimar Ho gaye to ho gaye! Thora bahut bimari theek ho gayi to sarkari mein varna marne ka intezaar karte hain"*(Shanti Devi, January, Agra).
> (If it happens then it happens, Nothing unusual about it, we go to government hospitals for sickness otherwise wait for the death).

These expressions are constructed in a social context, the helplessness and their wait for death shows how they have lost hope in their life. They perceive life to be a burden and they want to get rid of it as soon as possible. There is so much of helplessness, compromise, unhappiness and pessimistic feeling about their life. When survival becomes so competitive and difficult, health never becomes a priority in such circumstances. They rather view death to be better than living like insects. It is the expression of failed interaction of individuals with their social environment.

All these factors have adverse effects on their physical, mental, psychological, social well-being. Besides poverty they have to bear the additional pain of being an untouchable caste. This affects their self-respect and dignity to a great extent. Psychologically it breaks them down. The wide spread caste discrimination in the society continues even in the health care institutions.

The *Basties* in which they have a large number of diseases related to water and sanitation problems. The Problems becomes severe in monsoon and summers. Almost every house has some sick person suffering from TB or Asthma or some occupational disease. It is true especially for those houses, which are located close to drains (field note). The large numbers of diseases are related to their occupation. workers have skin infections, respiratory problems, lung problems, TB, Asthma etc. due to frequent contact with chemicals, leather, and leather dust. Occupational injuries are most common, injuries from mishandling of machines, cut by tools, bleeding etc. they apply glue or white solution used in pasting shoes or Chappals on injured part.

The life expectancy in this industry is not very high, workers hardly survive beyond 40-45. It is evident from various case studies; their previous generation expired at a very early age i.e. 40-45. They start working at a very early age i.e. from 8 or so by the time they reach 40 they have spent a good part of their life in such a poor environment. In such insecure social and material conditions, stress, anxiety, long working hours, diseases, exhausting physical work, family problems, work environment, competition do not let a worker to reach beyond 45 or so. They cannot sustain their life and die due to one or other disease. But this lower life expectancy is considered to be normal. The new generation is also witnessing this same; they also do not hope to live beyond 40-45 years. The percentage of older people is very low in *Basties*, because of low life expectancy age. According to one respondent,

"Hamari line mein to (life expectancy)muskil se 40 tak pauch pata hai. Woh bhi muskil par jati hai. Jaldi khatam ho jata hai kyuki is(occupation) mein ghee dudh to milta nahi hai, sirf dal roti milti hai woh bhi bari muskil se, ab chatni se to insan mein kya taquat rahegi yeh to hai nahi ki 80-90 saal ji jayein. Yahan par to khel khatam ho jata hai 40-50 saal mein"(Shanti Devi, January, Agra).
(In our line, people hardly reach 40 years, even that too is difficult to reach, life ends very early, because there is no milk, ghee, in this line (occupation) people only manage with *dal-roti*, that too with difficulty, how will anybody get energy by eating *chatni*, this is not possible that a person lived for 80-90 years, here the life ends at the age of 40-50 years).

The meaning of health for Jatavs is to be physically fit to carry out their work. For most of them health is the absence of diseases. The meaning of health is just reduced to this level. In such adverse situations they are forced to compromise with their health. The health never becomes a priority for most of these people due to the prevalent conditions.

The work is so exhausting and wages are so low and insecured that hardly they are unable to look after their physical health. Health never becomes a priority when people are living on the edge. Workers compromise with their health, as they do not have many choices. The life expectancy is so low that hardly anybody lives beyond 50-55. One respondent says,

"Jawani mein buddhe ho jate hain, koi tik nahi pata. Is liye aapko yahan jaida buddhe log nahi milte Bastiyon mein".(Shanti Devi, January, Agra).
(People get old in their youth, nobody sustain beyond that, which is why you don't find many older people in *Basties*).

There are high numbers of diseases, which are preventable, but due to lack of treatment in such conditions they are forced to live with these diseases. The non-functioning and lack of institutional support in terms of PDS, health care facilities, hospitals add the problem further. The physical distance of government institutions from their localities always put extra burden to them.

The unbalanced development and inter-group inequalities always put the already marginalised people at the edge. The condition of Jatavs shows that the health systems are not working properly and the health care systems are not reaching where the health needs are acute and needs immediate interventions.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted among the Jatavs engaged in footwear industry of Agra. It captures the changes affecting people in general and Jatavs in particular. This study is an attempt to correlate social mobility and well being keeping footwear industry into background. It provides evidence from field that how the macro changes at structural level affects the lives of workers at micro level.

The footwear industry has undergone major changes in the past 100 or so years. It has seen various phases of its development. It's nature, pattern of operations; technology, labour-power, work force, etc. have changed. These changes have not benefitted different sections uniformly as these have favoured traditionally privileged classes/castes. The hierarchies of caste system have developed into this industry too. Now the Caste Hindus have grabbed the most lucrative segment and jobs whereas the Jatavs and Muslims have been pushed down to the bottom. These changes have given way to more caste-based conflicts over a period of time. These changes have been discussed below.

The traditional role set of Jatavs as manufacturers and Muslims as factors has changed (Lynch, 1969). The Jatavs have been replaced from ownership of lucrative manufacturing units whereas the Muslims have been outnumbered by Caste Hindus in the marketing. The industry has developed hierarchies similar to social hierarchies based on caste. The highly lucrative upper segment is monopolised by Caste Hindus and the labour intensive bottom sector is left for Jatavs.

The outsider upper caste people controlled the major proportion of this industry. In the 1990s, practically all the larger workshops and all factories were owned by non-Jatavs. Jatavs were excluded from the more attractive units of production. Jatavs own only home based labour intensive small production units (Knorringa, 1999).

The very big, big and medium factories are controlled by the Caste Hindus and the Jatavs have been reduced to the smaller units. Jatavs have been reduced to the bottom level in their own occupation. The mobility patterns have been affected by this change. This loss of opportunities to Caste Hindus has created greater job insecurity

for Jatavs. This loss of ownership and opportunities of Jatavs from manufacturing units has not been compensated by entering into some other lucrative segment like marketing and retailing (Lynch, 1969). The Jatavs are given caste-based menial jobs in the factories and here also they are marginalised and compelled to work polluting manual work.

The high competition from capital-technology intensive factories and cheap Chinese goods are destroying cottage sector. More and more smaller units are being closed down, as these are not able to compete both high capital and technology-intensive big factories and cheap Chinese goods. This is creating further marginalisation, unemployment and poverty among the Jatavs. Due to these changes the cottage sector is not able to sustain itself. The cottage sector base is shrinking and it is creating further unemployment resulting surplus labour in the market. These big factories are flourishing at the cost of smaller and cottage sector. Those who loose jobs in smaller units or cottage sector due to closure resort to big factories jobs on little wages

This change is more than just a shift from Jatavs' control to upper caste. Now the industry is fastly transforming into capital-intensive industry. It is using imported sophisticated and expensive technology that can produce at large scale in a shorter time. Therefore this replacement of labour to capital and technology has actually reduced the working days and has further created unemployment and poverty. Export factories are using capital as a substitute for labour. The high dependence on technology is resulting into more unemployment among Jatavs. More and more technology upgradation means lack of dependence on Jatavs. The replacement of Jatavs with technology is resulting further antagonism between different castes.

Jatavs have been eliminated from their own traditional occupation as they are shifting from shoe making to *chappal* making which is less capital and more labour intensive. This shows their increasing poverty. The *Basties* i.e. Panchkuiyan known for making shoes are now famous for making *chappals*. Jatavs' volume of work is decreasing day by day. At the same time, the employment and trade for others like Punjabis, Sindhis, Gujratis and some other Caste Hindus are increasing.

The stigma associated with shoes work has been reduced as now shoes are made from imported foam. This replacement of leather with synthetic foam has attracted other castes into this occupation. This has created competition for Jatavs which was absent earlier. The stigma attached to leatherwork is reduced for Caste Hindus but this stigma attached with Jatavs is still very much prevalent. This is seen in the interaction patterns in the industry.

The availability and replacement of leather with imported foam has created knowledge crisis among Jatavs. It has resulted into loss of traditional knowledge system. The new generation exposure to leather is limited and the older generation is not capable to work. The traditional heritage of Jatavs is not passing to new generation. The new generation cannot distinguish between good quality and bad quality leather. They are forgetting their traditional leather shoe making skills. The replace of leather sole with rubber and plastic sole has affected Jatavs badly. It has also affected castes making leather and tanned it. Demand of leather is decreased due to cheap availability of rubber and plastic soles.

In bigger factories, the work is highly specialized and they do only one kind of work. This also results into loss of other skills, which could have been utilised in cottage sector. Now workers' skills are well defined and they are not able to do multi-tasking possible in cottage sector. Their skills are restricted to elementary movements of hands. With the passage of time they forget other skills as these skills remain unpracticed for a long time. They become fit to do only one specialized work therefore their chances of earning also become limited.

The Liberalisation has had bad effects on the domestic cottage sector. Institutional support to bigger factories in terms of loans, infrastructure, tax exemption, concessions, and duty exemption on technology import led to phenomenal growth at the cost of cottage sector. The same support has not been extended to smaller units. The rising raw material costs and high competition is slowly destroying cottage sector.

Some processes of shoe making have disappeared due to this technology like sole stitching by hand, hardening of upper front by hand, leather sole making etc. These have adverse affects on the workers. It has actually affected employment

patterns. A single machine can make goods faster than those made by hands. There is enough capital to be invested on such machines and some machines are able to do more than one task. This has negative effects on the working processes and employment. There are big and sophisticated machines which make PVC and plastic which lasts quickly and efficiently without taking much time.

Some other subsidiary activities related to footwear making have also shifted from Jatavs control. For example the last making work (last is a wooden structure used to shape the shoe) has been shifted from jatav control to upper caste. Now plastic and PVC lasts are heavily used which have replaced the wooden lasts made by Jatavs. Although Jatavs still have monopoly over it but the volume of their work is decreased as now big factories use wooden lasts only for samples. The replacement of wooden last with PVC and plastic lasts has adverse consequences. The Jatavs have lost jobs and employment as their volume of work have decreased. Factories use hundreds of such lasts made from plastic and PVC.

The shoe making work has been reduced to four months due to excessive Mechanisation. India has very limited demand of shoes and Chappals. The per capita consumption of shoes and Chappals is very little compare to world standards. The climatic conditions and lack of purchasing power are largely responsible for it. Therefore the demand increases only in off-monsoon seasons especially winters. The demand in peak time increases so much that the local manufacturers with traditional technology cannot meet it. Therefore it increases dependence on machines. The machines are now undermining workers. The actual days of work are reducing each year due to lack of surplus demand. Workers say that earlier the work was available for 6-7 months but now it has reduced to four months.

Another change after Liberalisation was felt in the sport shoes segment in Agra. There was a big sport shoe industry in Agra in early 1990s. The preference for branded shoes over local-made sport shoes has ruined this sector too. This industry suffered badly due to change in demand. Now this industry does not operate at large scale in Agra. It has shifted its base to some nearby areas or states due to some infrastructual problems. This has also resulted in unemployment and poverty among the Jatavs.

Besides these changes, the dumping of cheap Chinese goods like shoes, sandals, Chappals and other leather goods are decreasing the demand for domestically made products. It has vast socio-economic implications for the Jatavs. The cottage sector cannot withstand this high competition, as it is predominantly a labour intensive and less advanced in terms of technology. It cannot compete with cheap imports, high technology and capital-intensive sector.

All these factors have contributed to high unemployment and poverty among Jatavs and Muslims. There has been an inter-generational and intra-generational downward mobility among the Muslims and Jatavs engaged in footwear industry. Although Muslims have retained their role as wholesalers but they have also been outnumbered by Caste Hindus.

All these factors have negative effects on the Jatavs and Muslims. These changes have created greater job insecurity for them. Now they are at the mercy of Caste Hindus, as they have been reduced to the status of workers. The material conditions of Jatavs and Muslims have been badly affected due to these changes having implications on the well being of both the communities.

All these changes show that the unemployment and poverty among Jatavs and Muslims have increased. The share of both these communities in footwear industry has gone down. Now the tension between these two communities is increasing as both are fighting for the remaining opportunities in this trade. The past incidents have shown that Jatavs are used against the Muslims by Caste Hindus. The role of some Hindu organisations is crucial here. They organise their camps in jatav-dominated areas. They incite Jatavs against Muslims and it could be seen whenever there is tension of Muslims with Caste Hindus it later transforms into jatav-Muslim conflict. The Caste Hindus just incite and pull back leaving both communities fighting together. The integration of Jatavs in Hindu fold has distanced them from Muslims. This is more a cultural change. Muslims and Jatavs see each other with suspicion. The result is the frequent communal tensions and large-scale bloodshed. The root cause of conflict is over the remaining share in the footwear industry.

These changes have implications on their living standards, consumption patterns, employment, income etc. Due to the change in industry structure, vast

unemployment and poverty has occurred among these two communities. The differences between upper castes and lower castes have increased. The relative deprivations create conditions for conflicts. It has created more frustrations, stress, competition, extreme hatred, jealousy, unhappiness, insecurity, and restlessness, among them. This has also increased their dependence on credits. The caste-based antagonism has increased to a large scale. The change has been positive in case of Caste Hindus who have gained at the cost of Jatavs and Muslims. The stigma attached to it has reduced but it is still prevalent in the case of Jatavs.

All these factors have affected their well-being in the society. The resources already scarce at this end have further reduced. This has created conditions for a conflict between different communities. People are finding it difficult to earn their livelihood as in such conditions loss of opportunities are not compensated anywhere else. It is affecting the harmony within the society.

There are many dangers associated with these big factories. So far these Caste Hindus owned export factories are exporting their goods to some foreign countries. In future if they diversify or expand their activities to domestic markets then the cottage sector will have to struggle hard for its existence or vanish completely. In another case if there is any big conflict that disturb the exports then these big factories may shift their attention to domestic market which again will be a real disaster to the cottage sector. It has already happened in the case of Russia, when Russia was divided Indian shoe industry lost its traditional market and the demand decreased. This factor led closure of many factories and workers unemployment increased.

Findings

The first key finding of the study is that the structure of the industry has changed over the last 60-70 years. This structural change has also resulted in ownership change for some groups. All the very big, big and medium factories are monopolised by Caste Hindus in terms of ownership. Jatavs have been reduced to the bottom level and now they control very small proportion of smaller units. Majority of the Jatavs have been reduced to the level of workers in the industry.

Second key finding is that the social status of Jatavs largely determines their opportunities in the factories. They are found in the menial, manual and polluting low

paid jobs. They do all the socially low and economically underpaid jobs. Caste Hindus resist lower castes from taking lucrative positions in the factories.

Third finding is that caste still plays a major role in the society. It still guides patterns of interaction of different communities. There is caste discrimination in the footwear industry including markets. Their caste identity largely restricts their opportunities in the markets. The structural position of Jatavs' works against them everywhere including markets.

Fourth finding is that, Liberalisation and Globalisation are having adverse effects on the lives of people. The inequalities between low castes (here Jatavs) and Caste Hindus are increasing. Mechanisation and Globalisation displaces people from work therefore affects livelihood. The more the Mechanisation and Globalisation the more the displacement it is evident from various industries in India like silk, Beedi, fishery, textiles, agriculture etc. These changes at macro level are affecting harmony at micro level as evident in frequent communal tensions between Caste Hindus, Jatavs and Muslims in footwear industry.

Discussion

In this highly globalising world, low castes are loosing their opportunities to the Caste Hindus. The global changes are now affecting social structure and creating further power imbalances in poor countries. These changes may be fruitful to already privileged sections but it is marginalising a majority of underprivileged people.

The role of technology is no doubt very important here. It is being used as an alternative to labour vis-à-vis human beings. Therefore high use of technology means more labour displacement. More labour surplus leads to more degrading conditions for labour. Can we overtly depend on technology for human welfare? Do we really have control over technology? Technology is creating unemployment and poverty and it is strengthening the caste/class positions of some sections. Can technology be an alternative in diffusing the already prevalent inequalities?

The caste system has played an important role in creating inequalities. It uses caste discrimination to maintain status quo or caste rigidity or mobility within the system. The economic structure is based on caste-based social structure in Indian

society. Capitalism in India has its roots in the caste system. People are still following their traditional callings. Trade and commerce are controlled by some particular castes. The traditional values and beliefs still guide the patterns of interactions between different groups. Globalisation in simple term means interlinking or consolidation of the capital across countries. Therefore we find dominance of different groups have common interests. Globalisation is consolidating and amassing the wealth of countries in few dominant hands. Through Globalisation various dominant caste based groups are consolidating their position in the society.

Suggestions for Interventions

Jatavs are trapped in the poverty cycle and their condition is degrading day by day due to shrinking base of cottage sector. Their employment has decreased due to changes in the structure of industry. The poverty among them has increased due to various forces mentioned above. There are so many factors responsible for their stagnant growth. Here are some suggestions to solve their problems to an extent.

Jatavs have weak economic base largely due to lack of ownerships of lands, low wages, insecure employment, and discrimination in the markets. They should be distributed lands so that they can ensure secured income through it. Besides this, some educated and enterprising people should be provided bigger loans to open big business and motivate others in their own caste.

The caste-based monopoly of some castes has to be broken down at first so that the system becomes more accommodative for other castes and people. The market network has to be democratised and rationalized for proper representation of stakeholders. Middlemen cash their positions due to their dominance in markets. Government should take up the role of marketing agent and market their products. At the same time it should open new markets for Jatavs and others so that they could sell their products without depending on middlemen.

Caste discrimination cases have to be dealt severely without any delay. Severe punishment should be given to those who practice caste discrimination. These are short-term measures, a change of mentality is a permanent solution for it. Socialisation agencies i.e. schools should focus more upon caste discrimination and its consequences etc. besides these procedures for registering cases should be made

simple. There should be awareness drive against caste discrimination. The government officials should be made more responsible and sensitive to the caste discrimination issue.

The weak infrastructure in low castes and jatav Basties has to be improved to attract capital investment in their areas. Government can set up its institutions in their areas so that good interaction could be possible between different groups and these areas could be brought into mainstream.

The institutional absence in their areas has to be improved and made working like PDS, health care systems, schools, etc. A balance should be maintained seeing the complexity of the situation having its roots in historical deprivation of this community.

Education and high drop out rate are major problems among Jatavs. This situation can be improved by providing good schools in *Basties* or nearby areas. Second, free schooling up to the secondary level can be given. Third, proper scholarships and other incentives will work as pull factors to large number of students. Fourth, the schools should provide good infrastructure to students' etc. schools should work as pull factors rather than push factors. The courses have to be made interesting and interactive. Any caste discrimination case has to be dealt firmly without any delay.

Government has to change the image of government institutions as extortion centers and corruption points. Jatavs do not get loans easily and are trapped into *Dalals* network due to their illiteracy and ignorance. The loan procedures have to be made rational and simple so that it becomes reachable to the people. Low interest loans with easy conditions should be provided on a long-term basis.

Although job security issue is difficult to solve due to the nature of industry but government can provide loans to start some other businesses. At the same time it can provide free professional and vocational training courses so that people have other alternatives and skills besides jobs in this industry.

The living conditions are bad and unhygienic and breed a lot of diseases. It has impact on their working and health. Government should try to accommodate these

people in some safer areas. There has to be a long-term proper policy in this matter. For temporary solutions it can provide sanitation, safe drinking water and proper electricity supply, etc. There should be proper cleanliness drive to ensure that these areas are cleaned properly.

Government should act firmly against the violation of factory laws by factory owners. Criminal charges should be imposed who are found not following the rules and regulations regarding safety in the factory, minimum wages, recreations and entertainment facilities, etc.

These are short-term measures to improve the situation. Government has to develop long terms policies to tackle the issues of inequalities in the society. Government should devise some mechanism to reduce this inequality gap between different groups. It is the root cause of all the problems in the society. Besides this, the government system has to be made more representative, democratic, transparent and accountable so that everybody has equal stake in it. When there is harmony in the society only then society will progress.

Annexure A

Annexure A

NOTES FROM THE 'FIELD'

This chapter is actually a collection of my experiences with jatav shoemakers in their locality. It is an attempt to share my experience with an 'untouchable' community called Jatavs.

When I selected my topic and asked responses about the topic; I received mixed responses. Some people questioned why I am so interested in these people; some viewed it as a challenge and encouraged me; some just criticised me for taking another topic on caste. They said, "Why don't you people see anything else than caste. "There are so many problems why you are so obsessed with caste". In fact some of the Jatavs themselves commented that "why do you want to waste your time for these dirty and liquor drinking people. You can do some meaningful work; these people will neither understand you nor your work".

After these mixed responses I was more determined to work with these people. In fact, it made me think deeply why these people have so low reputation in the society. Why a community that makes world-class shoes is never appreciated for its skills but is notorious for all wrong reasons. If these negative perceptions exist, how Jatavs react to it and what are their perceptions about these and about themselves?

I got an accommodation in *Meera hussani chaurah* a jatav basti located beside a Muslim Mohalla. I was lucky in a way that I got a room recently sold by a *Sindhi.* On the ground floor workers worked and I used to live on the first floor. It was a house earlier which was turned into storeroom for storing raw material. I had to bear the smell of raw material every time I entered in my room.

The bathroom and latrine facilities were available there. Otherwise most of the people use nearby open space for relieving themselves. Some relatively rich people have proper sanitation facilities in their homes. Majority of people is deprived of it. People there were very accommodative and they came to me whenever they passed by to share their views with me.

The place I was living was full of leather-dirt and waste. The stairs to my room were blocked by bundles of raw material. Every time I had to climb up to go to my room. Hard water made my life difficult as the same is used for drinking there. So, I had to accustom myself according to the situation. I spent a good amount of money on replacing electricity bulbs due to frequent voltage fluctuation there. It became a habit to check bulbs every time switching on the lights. I must have changed some 15 or so electric bulbs during my whole stay in that *basti*. Sometimes the electricity was so high that many bulbs busted when I was reading in my room. Although I did not face much problem of power cuts at that time as it was winters but I can imagine what happens there in summers. These areas must be like chambers in such congested environment.

There were irritating and frustrating moments too. The hammer-sound of shoe making from early morning to late night was intolerable for me. Besides this, the loud sound of stereo starting from early morning to late evening was more a frustration as the same cassette was repeated over and again. I had no choice but to tolerate it without any interest. The houses are so congested and small that one can easily sense the kind of food neighbours are preparing. Whether it is the fish or meat, we talked jokingly. Besides this the market was little away so I had to get up, lock the room and walk a little to have tea nearby. It took some time to adjust the local environment there.

I could hear the workers talks from my room. The workers stole moments from their work to refresh themselves. There were light moments when all the workers gather and enjoy. As soon as the slack season started the number of workers in the factory started decreasing. The interaction also became limited so became the light and joking environment. There was a time when only one worker was left. He did not have much choice as he was helpless and had nobody to talk, even. Every morning I could see him working alone. He was addicted to '*Gutka*' and '*khaini*'. Whenever I passed by, he would ask me if I eat these and offered me. After some time he stopped asking me as I don't eat these. He missed most of the workers in the factory. Sometimes he would walk around or talk to some other workers nearby to refresh himself. I admire his patience how he could work 8-10 hours alone. After sometime he brought with him a child of hardly 10-12 years who would assist him in

his work. He would teach him basics of shoemaking. Most of the time factory owner or some will keep a vigil on the workers' movements. He will ensure by his physical presence that the workers do the work continuously without break.

Workers' conversation covered a lot of diverse topics but most often was related to work or politics. In some moments they crack jokes or just pull each other's leg by referring some incident just to make the environment light and work more interesting. This is the only source of entertainment and leisure for them. Most of them want quick entertainment and they try to utilize it fully by talking some thing very exciting. This is a monotonous work with no scope for creativity. Workers are heavily dependent on additives to release their tension and work stress. The children started taking these addictives at a very early age as they now earn. They also consumer what the elder workers talked as they share same environment with them.

There was a liquor shop which has no opening and closing timing. Interestingly, there is no holiday for these shops as these shops open 30 days a month. Every Saturday, I could see long queues of workers who waited patiently to take liquor and some stranger passing by commenting to (each other) very slowly on Jatavs.

"Aj lagta hai paisa mil gaya hai, aaj to party ho rahi hai chamaron ki" (They seem to have got their salaries, today is the party of these *'chamars'*). This is fact that all the jatav *bastis* and factory areas have liquor shops. These shops are running because of these workers. If Jatavs cannot reach to these shops, then shops are reaching to Jatavs in their area. One educated worker told me that Mayawati ordered for the closure of these shops but the strong lobby of these people compelled the other government to open these again in jatav areas. According to him, it is a conspiracy against Jatavs as he asks me that have you ever seen any liquor shop opening in high caste colony? I did not have the answer so I was quite.

It was such a different experience living in a jatav locality. Every morning I used to get up and could see ladies of all ages going to railway colonies or some open space nearby for relieving. They move in the groups and people in the markets actually know where they are going. They don't talk to anybody even if it is known person, as they are ashamed of their act. I do not know why this social

shame/embarrassment happens with some communities only. These women are ashamed as if they are doing some crime or have done some mistake. Why this social guilty is associated with some castes more than others and untouchables are the worst sufferers of this indignity. The words also change their meaning according to the context.

Every morning was a new experience for me. I could see their life more closely; saw their sufferings, their debates over little issues, their poverty, their helplessness, their compromises, their sorrows of life etc. They may feel sad for a while but they will forget and start work again. They know there is no point in repenting, as life has to go on.

The workers greet each other by saying "jai Bheem". They never greeted me by "jai Bheem" as they assumed that I was from high caste and may not respond them positively. Anyways they always greeted me with "jai Ram ji ki" or "Namaskar". Perhaps they thought that I may not feel good If I am greeted by *Jai Bheem*. Therefore to break the ice, I took the initiative and started greeting them "jai Bheem". They were very happy and every morning they would greet me jai Bheem and it became a routine for them. After some time they asked if I wanted to open a factory. They directly did not ask my caste but they wanted to know, so I told them from my side. A lot of these have to deal with the power negotiation in the society. In the slack time when the upper caste is dependent on Jatavs for labour requirement, they also greet the workers by saying jai Bheem. The situation changes when the workers needed some jobs, then they have to say, "jai Ram ji ki", "Namaskar" to factory owners. Jatavs especially the workers greet each other by jai Bheem. They always put Dr B.R. Ambedkar's photo in their factory and worship it. The use of jai Bheem shows the confidence in Jatavs for their identity but it is still in an infancy stage. They are asserting themselves to claim equality and power both.

I was surprised why there is so much difference between Jatavs and others. Despite having all the problems in their life they are very tough. I used to get new information about Jatavs through Jatavs. When we see though compartmentalized view of these people, we may label them as shrewd, dishonest, drinkers without understanding the context of their behaviour. We are generally guided by popular perceptions which largely affect our behaviour. These are artificial boundaries which

are difficult to cross if not impossible. If we act by popular perceptions we may unintentionally label somebody as good or bad.

If we interact with Jatavs, we find there is a caste-based fear among them. The construction of others as 'they' and 'we'. There is a clear-cut divide between these two terms. This is a caste divide as the term 'they' is often used with caution by Jatavs. Their tone and speaking style changes whenever talking about 'they'. A person who is bold enough will lower down his voice when talking about 'they' (upper castes). This is a clear-cut caste divide in Indian society. This construction of 'they' and 'we' are also the difference in their experiences from same social structure. It is a construction which largely shapes their conducts and interactions with the outside world.

During my stay there, I learnt a lot of things from them like, how do cope with problems in odd circumstances and limited resources, the limit of human sufferings and tolerance. It surprised me how people are just satisfied with little facilities which they have. We often make little things so big that it appears a major problem for us. But jatav make their biggest problem very little as it is nothing. If we fall sick we are so disturbed due to it, but for them it is a part of life. They never think that fever, cough, and cold are diseases.

Their perception of well-being is restricted to managing a home, two times food, and regular work. They do not want more than that, (in such circumstances aspiring a car or bungalow is a dream for them, a dream which cannot be fulfilled). It made me think many times are we people greedy? Can't we satisfy whatever we have now!

These people are very hospitable and provided all kinds of help to me. Some workers were hesitant to call me in their homes as they imagined that I might have some problems in their houses. Yet, some of them invited me in their houses for dinner. One young adult became so happy when I visited his home that he thought being an educated and from big city I may be drinking only cold drinks. He offered me cold drink in those winter days. One guy said sir "*hamari sabse bari problem yeh hai ki hum apne ap ko rook nahi sakte agar koi hamare ghar mein aata hai, aur sayad isi wajah se hamare pass paisa nahi rehta*". They treat their guest with full respect

and hospitality despite having numerous problems in their life. Meat is a special dish and most of their important guests are served with it. Sometimes meat with liquor is served together to special guests. It is the most special treatment they can give to their guests.

The liquor habit for which Jatavs of Agra are notorious for motivated me to enquire about this issue. I visited many homes and discussed it with workers and their family members. I received some responses and characteristics. People generally drink in groups. This group is generally a common occupational group as work is highly monotonous and insecure. Generally workers drink with their close friends etc. These characteristics show that workers enhance their social bonding and social security by sharing drinks with each other. Moreover, in such highly insecure jobs it becomes important that people are well informed about jobs availability which is often passed on by the friends. People drink with friends who can give them some credit in slack season. In this monotonous physical work workers needed time for leisure and entertainment. Due to lack of entertainment and leisure choices they resort to drinking, as it is the only cheapest source of entertainment for them.

The younger one used to call me 'sir' despite my repeated request not to do so and the older one gave respect by using *'aap'*. They had many complaints from the governments and they wanted me to highlight their problems in my book. Some also expressed their views that I should meet President and Prime Minister and solve their problems.

The workers and others became very enthusiastic that someone has come from Delhi to write a book on them. Although they initially had doubts about me whether I had some vested interest as people come to them only when they have some work from them. Some people also asked me if I wanted to open a shoe factory and doing some survey. After some time I won their trust and they were very comfortable with me.

I had to be very cautious of my behaviour so that I may not hurt them intentionally. My whole context was changed. I had to mould myself according to the situation. These people remember that one *'Angrej'* also came to study them. They did not give me enough attention initially, which a foreigner gets due to some reasons.

After some time they started opening up. These people needed someone to interact, and if you we give them enough space they will talk about their whole problems including their family matters. I was surprised that they discuss their family problems with quite ease if somebody shows them some sympathy. The working class never hesitates to discuss their social and personal life. On the other hand some well-off sections never reveal their personal or family life to others. They talk these things in openly probably they assume that it happens everywhere.

Some people were so impressed with me since I gave them enough time to listen their problems sympathetically. Hardly anyone gives them enough attention or listen their problem. When a stranger gives them enough time and space to express their self, they consider it to be a respect which they hardly get from society in general. Caste Hindus hate them to the extent that they do not hesitate to insult them in public over trivial issues. Jatavs take it as a respect when some body listens them without having vested interests. Their comparison of me with Ambedkar was something that put me into shame. Yet, it shows that if somebody gives them enough respect and listen them patiently they take it as a big thing and do not hesitate to compare with Ambedkar.

Most of the workers talk at great length about Gandhi and Nehru for their role in suppressing Ambedkar voice for *'Achutistan'*. They have a belief that Nehru and Gandhi prevented Ambedkar from making a separate nation. They criticise Nehru and Gandhi for it. They say, *"agar Nehru aur Gandhi Ambedkar ki chalne dete to aaj hamara apna desh hota"*. They have a feeling that they cannot have dignity and respect in this country.

Most of the workers are addicted to some kind of substances without which they cannot work. Infact the factory owners some times give it as bribes to workers to work more. There are very few who dominate the conversation and most of them are old workers in the factory. The children who make good percentage of work force are silent but share laughing with them. The master *karigar* most of the time dominates the working scene. There is good exchange of verbal abuses to each other jokingly. Someone may just talk about their past relationships one has had in this life. These are light moments which each of them shares regularly.

The workers develop deep relationships with their fellow workers so much that they do not enjoy the work if somebody is absent. One may visit their homes also to ensure everything is all right. One person told *"hum logon mein itni acchi dosti ho jati hai ki jab hum factory chorte hain to bahut dukh hota hai, ki phir milenge ki nahi"*. It is true when one person did not turn up some two or three people visited his home to know his well-being. I was a part of that group. Everyone understands the nature of this industry workers place of work are not fixed as they have to leave their relation behind in search of new jobs in some other factories. It hurts when people have to leave and break social bonding to pursue their material well-being. Factories replace this working force with new workers and emerging and breaking relationships cycle continues year after year.

Agra, although a relatively beautiful city is marked by the sharp inter-group inequalities within different communities. There is Ghettoisation of castes. There are *Valmiki basti*, *jatav basti*, *Muslim Mohalla*, and *Upper caste colony*. Their occupation, attitudes, life style, perceptions, all are different. Castes are distributed geographically in the city. The poorest castes have the most disadvantageous areas whereas the rich people are located in geographically good areas.

There are people who are proud to belong to Agra city because of Taj Mahal. Somebody is proud as it was made by a Muslims ruler, somebody is proud that it belongs to India. Somebody appreciates that it gives ample opportunities that it gives to them due to tourism.

Agra is known for shoe-industry rather than the people who actually make it. The history always subordinates some sections of people. I have seldom seen people who are appreciating Jatavs for their skills. People always appreciates the 'end products' i.e. leather shoes, garments, sandals, *Chappals* but at the same time had very different perceptions about the people who make it. Why this 'dualism' exists why these people never figure in terms of their contribution to the society. People appreciate shoes but condemn Jatavs for various reasons. The Jatavs are rather known for their drinking habits, fighting, dirty living, shrewd and cunning mentality and dishonesty.

It questions why people having such good skills are never appreciated for their skills but are criticised for their drinking habits. Why we feel problems in appreciating these people, but at the same time we wilnappreciate the product made by them.

The Jatavs of Agra popularly known as *Chamars*, due to their association with leather work, this is quite often heard word in Agra city, either by the Jatavs themselves or by some other people. People in *Basties* often jokingly abuse each other by this word.

The first thing that one cannot ignore is the geographical segregation of people in Agra city. The location of people in city has been guided by the caste-based spaces. The outskirts areas now have been engulfed by city but their basic character is still predominant. These areas still areas are dirty, segregated and are distant from market places. One interesting observation is that even if jatav areas are close to market, the market forces surpass them. Market never reaches into their areas but at the same time can expand into Muslim areas.

All the jatav localities have one or other kind of disadvantage that make them undesirable for other higher castes. For example, all jatav *bastis* are either located next to some graveyard or close to drains, railway lines or low areas. The graveyards are situated outside of village in older times. Therefore with the expansion of city, these areas have become a part of city. These are situated either close railway lines, drainages, low areas, or some other kind of disadvantages.

All the jatav Basties I visited were sharing one thing common that is exclusion from mainstream. They have their own sub-culture which is different from what we so called 'civilized world'. The parameters we set to judge people by using certain indexes often misjudge the situation without looking into context. One may easily label them 'uncivilized' using popular notions.

Caste system still guides the interaction patterns of large part of the society the shared experiences, problems, shared culture, shared identity, etc. often compel people to interact within their groups. Muslims feel comfortable with Muslims, Punjabis with Punjabis, and Jatavs with Jatavs. People still feel comfortable in their caste groups. The compartmentalized interactions are still a reality.

Jatav world is different from other's world as they have their own meaning, perceptions, believes and practices originating in some contexts. Their meaning of diseases, suffering, habits, life style, notions, etc. are very different from others. The mainstream culture has not been able to accommodate their differences thus they it appears to be very strange and different. The 'ideal' of this dominant culture is different from Jatavs notion. This section has not been able to integrate itself into mainstream. This sub culture has its roots in the exclusion. There has not been enough attention to know why this sub culture exist, is it the result of lack of interaction with the wider society, or is it the result of marginalisation and exclusion.

Jatavs's definition of complete 'happiness' is just restricted to getting "*dal roti*". They never think beyond that, as they know how difficult it is to manage even that given this kind of insecurity. Perhaps they know their limitations that it is not possible for them to ask for more. They never ask for 'quality' or they have internalized the prevalent notion of themselves as 'lesser' human beings and that they don't deserve quality. They are satisfied whatever they get and never question as the citizens of this country.

If we interact with Jatavs about good areas in Agra, instantly they will talk about colonies like Sanjay palace, professor's colony, Khandari, Dayalbagh etc. Nowhere they will talk about *Basties* or *Mohallas*. Traditional and popular notions given to them by the high castes guide their perception about themselves. When you talk about bad areas, they quickly refer to some jatav and Muslim areas without mentioning their area.

The notion of 'good' signifies clean, well built, educated, rich, fair, well mannered people, and their notion of 'bad' is dirty, filthy, drinking, abusive, dark, dirty areas etc. This signifies how they have internalized the prevalent beliefs about themselves and the 'others'.

In one of the interesting incidents, I was shooting these people by handy camera. I was talking to one lady, and shooting the houses from inside. Within some time I found myself surrounded by some 20 or so people who all were very furious. I really got scared. They asked me why I am shooting their houses. I just explained that I am a student and just doing this as part of my research work. But it was not easy, my

friend who was somewhere came running and explained these people about my research work. After knowing this, workers started complaining me about their problems and their earnings. They asked me to convey their views to the government or institute where I study. My friend took me off from that place. He told me after some time that some electricity officials cut some connections two days back. Therefore these people mistakenly thought that you have come for the same and will show this clip in department. I still have those adventurous images in my mind. Besides this incident some of the incidents just shocked me, it is worth mentioning those too.

When I visited *Rattanpura*, a jatav basti located next to a posh and elite *Vijay Nagar* colony to meet a worker in his home. I saw a lot of women sitting road side for relieving in front of that *basti*. The young boys passing by on scooters and motorcycle passed derogatory comments. The women very hopeless kept their heads down so that nobody identifies them. I was deeply hurt by that incident. Sometimes I discussed this with some people and their answer was that it is a part of life. But I questioned myself 'does everybody face this 'social embarrassment' in the society equally'?

There has been an attempt to stop these women from using this area too by blocking this area using iron wire but wire has been broken down. They hardly have any other open space for this purpose. Why some particular communities suffer more than others. It is said that caste cease to exist in urban areas. Our understanding is shallow if we say that caste does not matter in urban areas or cities. If this is the case, then why some selected communities are forced to suffer more than others. Why low caste people do not dare to go to so called elite areas and if at all they go what the society reacts to it by labeling them as thieves.

There is a tendency among these people not to mention about their original locality. They use a popular and famous reference point that is nearby to their place. For example, people living in *SunderPara* always use Collectrate as their reference point to hide their identity. They don't want to reveal that they live in a particular jatav locality. In the same way, the people of Rattanpura will always use *Vijay Nagar colony* for their reference point to hide that they live in *Rattanpura basti.*

In one incident I was well dressed and clean shaven, the rickshaw puller took me to *Vijay Nagar colony* even though I did not ask him for that place, probably he imagined by my dress, and speaking sense that I belong some high caste who live in *Vijay agar colony.*

In one incident I remember where I was sitting in a coffee house with one friend in those winter days. Suddenly a girl passed by wearing jeans. She was whitish in colour. My friend passed a remark *"woh dekh chamaria jaa rahi hai"* (see, that *chamaria* (jatav woman) going). That incident shattered and disturbed me badly. I was shocked and could not say anything. Why a person making such a remark without knowing the girls' community? Do Chamars have a different outlooks? How they are identified from others? What was that which shaped this man's perception? I was surprised why he was making such comments. Why this particular hatred for these people? Did that girl commit a crime by coming into a public sphere, or she has done a mistake by wearing jeans? I had so many questions in mind at that time.

The association of outlook and behaviour guide the interaction patterns in the society at large. Some people asked me if I belong to Rajput of Rajasthan or some Thakur. One person was so sure of my caste that he was ready to bet with me. The physical features do work in the interaction. Generally people never talk to Rickshaw puller politely or give respect talk to the toilets cleaner. Is there some caste prejudice one has to question?

Physical and behavioral things matters as one girl narrates a incident when she went to purchase some cloths in a shop. By reading her body language and skin colour, the shopkeeper asks her if she is a Punjabi? She said that I am a jatav. The shopkeeper says, *"Beti tum jatav to nahi lagti ho"*(beti you don't look to be jatav)(field note). The identification of the physical traits with particular caste largely affects the interaction patterns in society. In a similar incident I was asked by a Rajput guy who was drinking coffee with me that do I belong to *Thakur.* I asked him to identify me and he said that you appear to be *Thakur*, as they are supposed to be very bold and loud. These perceptions do matter in the society and negative perceptions are also a barrier for people sometimes.

In another incident my another friend came to my resident to meet me. He was aware that I m doing my research on Jatavs. When he entered my building, the first thing he says is that *"tu in chamaron ke beech mein kyun reh raha hai, tu kahe to mein tere liye eik badia makan ka intejaam kar deta hui', tujhe problem hoti hogi in logon ke beech mein"* (why are you living among these Chamars, if you say I can manage a good house for you, you must be feeling problem living among these). These constructions of 'other' to be degraded often shape their behaviour.

There are some localities where some Jatavs government employees have purchased some houses in medium range price colony. This lady was one of them. She narrates an incident when one jatav person who recently shifted here, invited everyone from the colony for his son's marriage. He prepared vegetarian food without using onion. To his surprise, nobody came to attend the marriage citing one or other reason. That day a lot of food was wasted. This lady tells that although they don't come to our functions but they invite us whenever they have any program. They have limited interaction with us. These are powerful people here, we cannot resist them otherwise they make it difficult for us to survive here.

There is relatively a rich person living in Dayalbagh. He is a jatav by caste and all the people in this colony belong to upper caste except 2-3 Muslim families. The family live here hiding its caste. They don't want that anybody knew their caste; otherwise they will start limiting their interaction with them. There is a jatav *basti* next to it and a concrete wall is made so that these people do not enter the area.

Agra city is highly ghettoized, in terms of living. Due to the state provisions people cannot call caste names anymore. People generally don't ask your caste directly rather they ask which place you live to know your caste as every locality is known by the particular caste. There are jatav basti, *Valmiki basti, Koli basti, Muslim Mohalla, Ghera janjati basti* etc. people don't have to exercise much to know ones religion and caste in this highly ghettoized set up.

I was coming out of a jatav basti to make a STD call at a PCO. The man who was sitting in front of shop actually saw me, I made 4-5 calls he gave me the bill calculating the total amount. When I calculated it I saw that he was overcharging little. I had an argument with him. He said " *tum log kya hum se jaida pad gaye ho*

kya'(are you people are more literate than us) as he assumed that I am a jatav since I was coming from a jatav basti. This construction *'tum log'*, he was referring to whole community.

I have observed there are sharp differences between low caste and high caste locality. On the one hand low caste locality (in this case jatav) marked by bad road, lack electricity, lack of institutions in their area, no severe line, no water logging control mechanism, high density, small and very old houses, lack of sanitation facilities, bad quality of water and frequent power cuts. On the other hand a high caste "good" colony has good roads, good street lights, big and highly expensive houses, low density, proper sanitation, no water logging, regular and clean water etc. we may not find many people in these colonies but we may find hundreds of people sitting around their houses in low caste Basties. Two different exist side by side. People from both the localities never have inter-personal interaction among each other. One world is highly privileged whereas other world is marginalised. It gives a contradictory picture of the vast inequalities within a particular geographical area.

Annexure B

Annexure B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General Information

Name.....sex.....age.....caste.....

Nature of family (nuclear, joint, others)

Occupation: a) primary..... b) secondary.....

Education: Illiterate ..... Till 5th.....till 10th.....graduation..... Above Graduation....

No of family members and their roles (whichever is applicable)

Father.....mother.....wife.....daughters.....sons.....

Parent's occupation?

Fathers..... Mothers.....

Material possessions

TV colour/BW.....cable....., fridge...., vehicle...., radio....., cooking gas....., audio system....., cooler.....,fans...others.....

Non moveable property (type specify)

No land..... < than 1 acre...,<2 acre....., <5 acre....., < than 10 acre.....

Housing

House owned or rented? Specify

Puccca/ /semi-pucca/ partly pucca/ kuccha

No of living rooms per family

No Rooms.....One.... Two.....three.....

How do you evaluate your living conditions?

.....

Do you have windows, ventilators, proper lights in your houses?

.....

Do you get unrestricted supply of electricity in your homes?

.....

Whether have separate bathrooms and kitchens if not how do you manage it?

.....

Do you have toilet in your home if not how do you manage it?

.....

How do the women cope with this kind of situation?

.....

Water supply source: public tabs or separate family tabs and the quality of water supply

.....

Is there any conflict for water in your home or locality?

.....

Working and living

Are you working in Big factory.....small factory.....cottage .....

Years in the occupation

.....

Days of work in a week/month/year

.....

Are you satisfied with your occupation? If yes then why if not then why not

.....

Are you satisfied with the working conditions in the big/small/cottage industry?

.....

Do you feel any kind of discrimination in big/small/cottage factories? If yes specify

.....

If no... why? If yes.... How do you manage it?

How many hours you work daily

In home..... In factory.....

Income earned daily/weekly/monthly

.....

Does the income suffice your daily needs?

.....

How Do you perceive the interactions of different castes in work setting or living setting or social setting? Are they still guided by old believes values?

.....

Do other caste people come to your home in festivals?

.....

Do you visit your employer's house on social and religious functions?

.....

Do they behave you in the same way as they do with others?

.....

Do you share food with your employers?

.....

If given choice which occupation would you like to have?

.....

How do you pass your time when not working or in slack-season?

.....

What is the major cause of liquor problem in the community?

.....

What are the factors which are responsible for your stagnant growth? Is it liquor or high unemployment, low paid work, lack of education or others please specify?

.....

Do you feel comfortable in interacting with other higher castes as you do with yours?

.....

What is the perception of your occupations in your and others view?

.....

Do you frequently roam in the higher castes colonies as you do in yours?

.....

Why do you live in same caste locality? Is it due to compulsory or voluntary reason?

.....

Would you like to shift to higher caste locality if given a choice if not why?

.....

Do they object your movement in their locality or see with suspicion?

.....

When you go to sell your manufactured goods do you get preferred price?

.....

Do the purchaser or merchants buy your products readily or find fault in it?

.....

Do the merchants treat you and their caste men differently?

.....

Mention 5 major problems which you think are important for you

.....

Do you feel discrimination in day-to-day interaction, sharing food, or talking, abuses or talking in certain manner to some communities?

.....

Do they give you public space readily i.e sitting at Dhaba, cinema, sitting at bazaars, purchasing something, or using public facilities?

.....

What are the tactics they use against you to put you off the competition in different spheres be it market, religious places, social programs, politics or public utility facilities?

.....

Does the political assertion of BSP in UP have any positive impact on your working, living or level of confidence specify how?

Health

What is health for you?

.....

What is the meaning of disease to you and how it affects you?

.....

where do you go in case of sickness and why?

Pvt.....public.....others.....

What are the major diseases in your locality?

.....

Is there any sick member in your family, getting treatment or not, how is the meaning of this for the family and how does the family feel about it?

.....

If there was any death in your family what was the cause of it, was it preventable?

.....

What is the staple diet of your family do you think the dietary patterns are changing?

.....

How the changing dietary patterns are affecting your health?

.....

In respect to food quality and quantity, have you observed positive or negative changes compare to your previous generations?

.....

What are the major factors which have negative implications on the family budget and health of a person?

.....

What are the major health problems and how do you cope with it?

.....

How far the caste network works in the different institutions i.e. schools, PDS, hospitals, police stations, municipality, or any other place

.....

Does the presence of your caste man in any institution help you in getting the services easily and better?

.....

Does the higher links help you get preferential treatment and better services?

.....

Do the health institutions located close to your locality? If not what are the reasons you feel?

.....

Occupational health

What are the major health problems associated with this leather work?

.....

How can these health hazards be prevented?

.....

Is there anyone in your family suffering from any disease related to leather work, if yes which and how long?

.....

Do you cure injuries from tools or something occurred while working ?

.....

What do you do yourself to prevent yourself from leather hazards?

.....

Are the conditions at your work place sufficient or are you satisfied with work environment?

.....

Annexure C

Annexure C

CHECK LIST

1. Explore the Jatav Basties and find out similarities and differences, does spatial stratification exists?

2. General information of the respondents with their family background, education and occupation and inter-generational changes

3. Make an event-to-event record of a 'day routine' in a jatav life working in cottage/small/big factory and compare it within.

4. Talk them about their social and cultural life i.e. festivals, marriages, kinships, and religious functions.

5. Talk about the day-to-day life problems, how they cope with it.

6. Explore the importance of loans in their lives. Talk about quality of life, happiness, work stress, job security etc

7. Talk about the quality and regularity of facilities they get by government like, sanitation, PDS, water supply, electricity or any other.

8. Talk about (if they have) basic facilities like separate toilets, bathrooms, electricity, water, roads etc.

9. Talk about their lives, employment, trade, leisure, games, favourite past-time, entertainment etc.

10. If possible make a expenditure chart of different levels of workers compare within.

11. Talk about their aspirations/ dreams and how they feel with their current state of affair.

12. Talk about the division of labour in their family and what are the changes they are noticing.

13. Observe the role of women as productive agent and role as housewife how they cope with it.

14. Observe is there different role and status of women in cottage/small/big factories.

15. Talk them the different processes of life i.e. from early life to present, and how they reach here.

16. Talk about different forms of caste discrimination how they feel it and has the situation improved over a period of time.

17. Their perception of themselves in their view and in others view with relate to caste hierarchy and discrimination.

18. Who are their role models? Do the perceptions of role models are also changing.

19. The functioning of government institutions in their areas and how they feel about it. Do they feel attached, feared, disenchantment or revolt?

20. What is the attitude of government machinery about them i.e police, teachers, health workers, bureaucrats or others?

21. Talk about what are the reasons for disenchantment from government institutions/machinery.

22. What is the state of government infrastructure in their locality compare to rich colonies how they perceive it?

23. How their caste background deprives them the opportunities, which the others enjoy?

24. Talk about the caste discrimination at work place, markets, and government institutions and in high caste localities.

25. Talk about the living and working conditions in homes and factories.

26. How they feel about working with the higher castes in factory setting.

27. Talk about their past, present and future perceptions.

28. What is their perception about health and diseases?

29. What are disease patterns in their locality?

30. Talk about the treatment they get in public and private practitioners does their Caste backgrounds affect the treatment.

31. Talk about the occupational health problems how it affects them morally, economically and psychologically.

32. Talk them regarding BSP. How they feel about it, does it make them proud, how they justify BSP stands on issues. Talk about political aspiration of Jatavs and other lower castes and *Dalit* assertion.

33. Talk about the changes they have observed in last few decades, is it positive or negative how Jatavs have responded to it.

Annexure D

Annexure D

PROBLEMS FACED DURING FIELD WORK

It is a tiring job to do an ethnography study and even more when the field is new. Making rapport with the respondents while collecting data is another concern. You have to constantly meet them to make your presence felt and earn and win their trust. Besides the problems faced into the field, a lot of problems occurred when the researcher's social background most of the time created problem while dealing with official machinery. When you do a research on the marginalised sections of the society, which have been historically denied access to basic human rights; it becomes a problem to get information from the people due to the popular prejudices and biases against these peoples whether in government machinery or somewhere else. These popular beliefs and prejudices often played negative role in getting access to governmental machinery.

When you are fully prepared to do a study it becomes very important to study the field area; their habitat and the environment in which the daily interaction takes place. It takes a lot of time to actually know the context of their interaction without which one can commit serious mistakes while doing fieldwork. When you understood the contexts and analyse the patterns of interactions between groups and individuals then fieldwork becomes more efficient or easy.

It was a exhausting and tiring experience to locate these cases or individuals from population of the study. After selecting the sample or respondents for the study, making rapport with them is another issue. The latter is a challenge given the fact I being a result of being new person to them. After days of interactions and informal talks, you actually extract some information from them keeping objectives of the study in mind. When i went field with full of enthusiasm and spirit, things seem to be very comfortable but this is at superficial level. My own background influences a lot of things like acceptivity by the officials and the respondents etc.

I felt a lot of problem in getting accommodation. The main reason was the inhuman conditions of living. There was problem in getting accommodation as there were hardly any infrastructure base in that area i.e. toilets, running water, hygiene in

the area, crowded living and working places, foul smell of leather and glue and distance from markets among others. It becomes difficult for a person who is not brought up or did not have such experiences before to cope up with such situations. Most of the time, I faced problems but at the same time I had to behave normal so that the respondents are comfortable while interacting.

The accommodation some how managed was located on first floor. The workers used to work on the ground floor. Besides this you have to always keep in mind that the respondents/ population are/is unknown. Again, any act of mine should not reflect them in degradation, as it might become hindrance in winning their trust. My behaviour' had to be contextualised and free from value judgment and personal biases otherwise I could not have worn their trust.

With these entire issues the researcher found many problems in data collection. First dealing with the government machinery and second dealing with the local people. The first one was more complex and exhausting. It revealed that how the social background of any person works in favor or against her or him especially dealing with the system. The prevalent notions of the society always carry with it a lot of biases, negative perceptions, negative references and discriminating attitudes.

In the first incident in the Raja Balwant Singh College, Khandari (Agra), the researcher made many visits to study the material located there. But when asked for permission to photocopy it, the request was simply denied despite being shown the letter from the university and the collector of Agra. Several requests were made but futile. At last the researcher had to take help from one of his high caste friend who accompanied him to the college and gave his identification and used his kin name to get it. The material was photocopied without any problem.

In the second incident the researcher wanted to photocopy one of the theses, which was written on the working and living conditions of leather workers in Agra which was located in Institute of Social Sciences in Agra university. The in-charge of the library initially didn't help but with the recommendation of one professor he allowed. After some time the researcher was not allowed even to copy the theses. Again the high caste link was used and the person allowed but didn't allow

photocopying it as he knew I needed it and he was very non-cooperative and rude in nature.

In the third incident in the district industrial center Agra, despite recommendation of the assistant labour commissioner the people in the office didn't help in anyway. In fact they were very rude and using filthy language. They made me wait for 4 hours then at last asked me to come on next day. The next day the people didn't turned up and I have to wait for another 4 hours. After two days again I went there and this time the files were missing, and it was alleged that due to some problem data couldn't be given, as it is not allowed. The behaviour was not only rude but appears to be guided by certain beliefs. As in their word *" yeh nahi milega yeh yahan nahi hota, labour commissioner ke paas jao'*. When told that he only sent me, he said *"tum logon ke liye hi yahan baithe hain hum kya, aa jate hain mooh utha ke, aap jaise bahut log aate hain yahan, aj hum busy hain"*. When I told him that I wanted to meet General Manger; he said *"who kya karega, kam to hum log hi karte hain'*. It was a disgusting feeling and seeing no possibility of getting work done I came back without any material or data.

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