LABOUR PROCESSES AND LIVES OF DALIT WORKERS OF LEATHER INDUSTRY IN AGRA
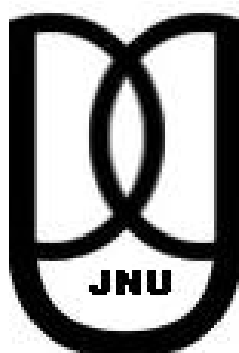
*Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I, **PRASHANT KUMAR KAIN**, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled **"LABOUR PROCESSES AND LIVES OF DALIT WORKERS OF LEATHER INDUSTRY IN AGRA"**, submitted by me to the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, School of Social Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of **"DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY"** embodies the result of bonafide research work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any degree or diploma of this university or any other university/ institution.

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CERTIFICATE

It is hereby recommended that the thesis may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Dedicated to

The struggles and Movements

For

Human Dignity, Equality and Freedom

And

The politics

of

Hope, justice and peace

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PRASHANT KUMAR KAIN

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ABBREVIATIONS

AISMC	All India Safai Mazdoor Congress
APEDA	Agricultural Products Exports and Development Authority
ASI	Annual Surveys of Industries
BMC	Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CEC	Centre for Education and Communication
CETP	Combined Effluent Treatment Plant
CFTI	Central Footwear Training Institute
CLE	Council of Leather Exports
CLRI	Central Leather Research Institute
CLSI	The Christian Literature Society For India
CPCB	Central Pollution Control Board
CSO	Central Statistical Organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DGCI & S	Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics
DGE & T	Director general of employment and training
DIC	District Industrial Centre
DIPP	Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion
EBI	Exim Bank of India (Export-Import Bank of India)
EPW	Economic and Political Review
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FERA	The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act
FOB	Freight/Free on Board
FSSAI	The Food Safety And Standards Authority Of India
GAP	Ganga Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLI	Government Leather Institute
GOI	Government of India
GVA	Gross value added
IDBI	Industrial Development Bank of India
IESHR	Indian Economic and Social History Review
IETP	Individual affluent treatment plants

IIC	Indian Industrial Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISID	Institute for Studies in Industrial Development
ITC	Italian Trade Commission
JRSA	Journal of the Royal Society of Arts
LPG	Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation
MLE	Ministry of Labour & Employment
MNC	Multi National Corporations
MRTP	Monopoly Restriction and Trade Practices Act
MSJE	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
MSI	Ministry of Industrial Supply
MSME	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MSPI	Ministry Of Statistics and Programme Implementation
NCAER	National Council of Applied Research Economic Research
NCDHR	National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights
NCEUS	National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector
NCLR	National Campaign on Labour Rights
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGT	National Green Tribunal
NMCC	National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council
NSDC	National Skills Development Corporation
NSO	National Statistical Organization
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization
OBC	Other Backward Classes
OCRAI	Onicra Credit Rating Agency of India
PETA	People for Ethnic Treatment for Animals
PU	Polyurethane (Synthetic Material Used In Footwear)
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
RCLI	Royal Commission of Labour in India
RLIBP	Report On Leather Industries of the Bombay Presidency
RSEAMC	Royal Society for the Encouragements of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SC	Schedules Castes

SCA	Special Central Assistance
SCP	Special Component Plan
SCSP	Scheduled Castes Sub Plan
SFA	Safai Karamchari Andolan
SFVS	Safai Kamgar Vikas Sangh
TSP	Tribal Sub Plan
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
SFH	Semi-Finished Hides
SIDBI	Small Industrial Development Bank of India
SISI	Small Industrial Service Institute
SOMO	Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
SPCB	State Pollution Control Board
SSC	Staff Selection Commission
SSI	Small Scale Industries
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nation Industrial Development Organization
UNO	United Nations Organization
UPPCS	Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission
UPSC	Union Public Service Commission
UPSIDC	Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

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INTRODUCTION

In the long history of human evolution, there have been huge developments in various spheres of human life. Every human society and civilization has evolved and undergone social, political, economic changes of different magnitude in different phases of their respective history. These changes have shaped up their interactions patterns with the nature and other human beings. The emergence of science and the scientific rationality is one of the most important discoveries of human beings. The science and scientific revolution changed the ways we see the world. It changed our relationships with the society forever. The ways we see the reality, related with the events, phenomenon, and seriously questioned out belief system. In that ways it is one of the most important developments of human history.

The emergence and development of science also changed the ways we see or perceive the reality. The human society is not a divine creation rather a social product is one of the most important thesis propagated by science. These new development have drastically changed their way of living, thinking and working. The drastic changes happened in such a ways that it forced human beings to develop new ways to organise themselves, structure their relationships, invent new areas and patterns of work. The neutral, objective and value free world of science led to the separation of nature from the life world of human beings. The question of morality and ethics reduced as subjective and perceptional. This resulted into a condition where nature was seen more of a commodity rather than a harmonious relation. Science at the one end empowered human beings to protest themselves against the onslaught of nature on the other hand it also led to the excessive manipulation, exploitation of nature which now has threatened the very existence of human on this planet. Science has been used to play dual role in human societies, on the one end it bridged up the inequalities and on the other hand it also created inequalities.

Human have always resisted inequalities whether it is created by man or nature. There are certain kinds of inequalities on which human beings do not have much control like physical disability, birth deformities, biological defects, genetic disorders, incurable diseases etc. besides these, there are certain events and natural disasters like droughts, earthquakes, volcano eruptions, tsunami, floods, spread of diseases etc. These conditions also produce extreme inequalities and result in deaths, displacement, pain, sufferings and extreme vulnerabilities. These natural inequalities

often become natural disastrous due to lack of or no management or mechanism to handle it. On the contrarily there are certain kinds of inequalities which are man-made. The social and economic disparities, starvation deaths, famines, hunger, lack of access to medical care and facilities, social discriminations, suicides, lack of access to housing, safe water, sanitation, food consumption, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, institutional violence etc.

The persistence of social-economic inequalities in human world makes the human societies unstable, violent, and prone to conflicts. All human societies and civilization have perpetuated or witnessed violence in one form or the other. There has not been any known society where violence is completely absent or has not been in it's history. Violence is prevalent in every society and no society can be called to be just in its true sense. In all civilizations and societies there have been people and groups who enjoyed tremendous power over others due to their social positions. Some groups and sections were privileged enough to impose their will on the others. The masses have become victim of the power which curtailed their freedom, brought pain, sufferings and exploitation.

The human beings become object when they lose their voice. When they are not allowed to question and argue against their suppression. These are the consequence of unequal power distribution between different groups, communities and societies. When people are reduced, kept in bondage, denied freedom and their free will, it results in subjugation, marginalization and slavery. The notions, nature, forms have always been changing as human being have evolved throughout history. The humans have always desired peace and freedom but it has always remained at a desire level. Hence the quest and desire for liberation, equality, justice and freedom are as old as the history of violence itself. All human history is the struggle of human beings to transform themselves from objects to subjects to decide their own independent will and destiny.

The reasons and causes of conflicts, violence and inequalities in human world go well beyond the biological, genetic, racial divisions. The causes are not there in the mental, psychological and pathology of human biology. These are located in the ways society is organized and structured. When the power is centralized and controlled by few groups, it leads to monopoly and hegemony. When the economic and cultural resources are not distributed in a rational manner it leads to marginalization of the individuals and groups. History shows that some of the genocides and massacres

happened in those countries, societies and civilization where power was centralized in few hands. When there are vast inequalities in the society there is more disturbances and abuse of power. The wider the resource gaps between groups and individuals the greater the conflict. The more just, balanced and rational distribution of power and resources the more peaceful and sensitive it becomes.

The sources of conflict and inequalities in human world are to be found in the relationships between human beings. These relationships are to be found in the differential worldviews and belief systems. The inequalities in society led to differential perceptions about reality within the society. The perceptions and worldviews of the privileged and non--privileged differ qualitatively. They have differential, contradictory and opposite worldviews when they interpret the reality in the society. There is more ambiguity, nostalgia, romanticism and obsession with the culture, traditions and identity in the privileged worldview. The privileged worldviews therefore is fixed by nature as they have to justify status quo. They use metaphysics, religion, culture and identity as a shield to justify their privileged position. Opposite and contradictory to this world view is the unprivileged and oppressed views which is more open, flexible, pragmatic and critical. It is an engaged world view which by default is open to alternatives, options, choices and emancipatory discourses it clearly rejects the present status quo and more future oriented in its approach.

The ways people experience reality in the society determine their worldviews, approaches and imagination. Those who are the victim of inequalities do not see society as a divine, fixed and externally created by supernatural will. They see this as a socially constructed world which can be changed, modified, altered and transformed with critical engagement with the society. Society therefore is not a neutral, objective an apolitical site of inquiry. All societies are marked by conflicts, tensions, disturbances, violence, suppression and gross inequalities. There is power struggle going on among different groups. One cannot be (afford to be) neutral, unbiased and unaffected by these under currents. Every one holds some values, posses opinion and keep certain beliefs about it whether they are directly related or not. It is impossible for human being to be neutral, objective and value free in that sense. Knowledge and knowledge production therefore is never a neutral process. All knowledge has a purpose and consequences in the society. Hence knowledge and knowledge production processes are ideological and political by default. Formal education is

particular kind of knowledge is politically controlled. Michael W. apple says, "Formal schooling by and large is organized and controlled by the government. This means that by its very nature the entire schooling process - how it is paid for, what goals it seeks to attain and how these goals will be measured, who has power over it, what textbooks are approved, who does well in schools and who does not, who has the right to ask and answer these question, and so on- is by definition political" (Apple, 2003: 1).

If knowledge is to be differentiated from dominant ideology then one has to question the epistemological foundations of knowledge. Given the historical and contemporary inequalities among the human beings it is indeed an unavoidable question to ask the epidemiological goals and visions of knowledge. The nature and quality of knowledge determine the nature and quality of our imagination and actions in the society. What we accept as knowledge and what should be the basis and broad objectives of knowledge, are epistemological in nature about the very nature of knowledge itself in philosophy of science and knowledge. One's acceptance of human liberation and freedom makes a person decisively in favour of emancipation of human beings as inevitable goal of knowledge. Neutrality itself is a value in human world therefore 'value free' knowledge is not without value and opinion in that way.

Knowledge is not mere a tool to understand society but it has a purpose and function to transform the existing society. Knowledge is neither insulated nor isolated of its consequences in the society. The notions, nature and forms of knowledge determine our perceptions, relation and association with the society. What is right, real, good, desirable and also wrong, bad, false knowledge etc. are all political and ideological in nature. The social and political processes affect knowledge and knowledge also affects the social and political processes. Knowledge therefore can be used as a tool both for liberation and subjugation at the same time. Politics and knowledge therefore are deeply related to each other and complement each other. It is the power which determines the nature, goals and visions of knowledge. The nature, visions and goals of knowledge are political by default.

In human world neutrality itself is a value and it is never without value or consequences. Valueless or value free knowledge itself is a value determined phenomenon as it is based on certain understanding and granted meaning. When there is already violence in the society, it is difficult for one to be isolated, insulated and unaffected of its outcome. When marginality and subjugation is present in the society

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it is political not to take a stand against it. Silence, objectivity and neutrality therefore bring their own political outcomes. When suppression, subjugation is widespread and enforced and freedom is curtailed the neutrality merely strengthen the status quo. The neutral position and neutrality always help the dominants and privileged. It directly helps them strengthen and control people and treat them like objects. Neutrality itself therefore allows reinforcement of status quo hence it is violence in itself.

Knowledge is a powerful tool for the empowerment of the subjects and epistemological intervention against inequalities. It is hence by default opposed to slavery, subjugation and marginality. It is therefore a critical exercise which leads to should lead to social change and transformation of the society. The philosophic concerns about nature, aim, visions of knowledge are not different and beyond of the very objective and emancipatory goal of human freedom. One's acceptance of human liberation and freedom makes a person decisively in favour of emancipation of human beings as inevitable goal of knowledge. Neutrality itself is a value in human world therefore 'value free' knowledge is not without value and opinion in that way. The questions and concerns like whether knowledge should to be 'value free' are philosophically inadequate, Mis-directed and Mis-conceptualised as it imagines about the possibility rather than essentiality. The appropriate question may be how we can generate knowledge which helps us construct a just, rational, equal and peaceful society.

All knowledge has a certain normative functions in the society. It has a certain history, location and context. Each and every society has a certain specific history, belief systems, and cultural location. Therefore the sources, nature and forms of inequalities are also to be found within the history, belief systems and cultural practices of any society. One of the most important spheres where inequalities in human world exist is in the sphere of work and labour. The work determines the value, worth, prestige, status, respect and honor of any individual in the society. The status and quality of life that a person is able to afford are determined by the quality, nature, regularity and terms and conditions of any work. Work gives people social status and also affects their social and economic status in the society. It is merely a matter of income, employment and livelihood alone. It structures their lives and gives it a meaning, stability and purpose. Non-work is associated with indignity, stigma and humiliation while work is associated with respect, dignity and higher status. A man without work is considered to be a liability, repulsion and shame.

In all societies attitudes towards works are dependent on their historical, ideological, philosophical and religio-cultural beliefs. Work cannot merely be seen by its economic value. It is a matter of creativity, innovations, gives people identity, self-respect and status. "Work is the best of all educators; for it forces men into contact with others, and with things as they really are…"there is nothing so laborious," said St. Augustine, "as not to labour". There are certain perceptions towards works in different societies, like Jeremy Taylor says, "idleness" is the burial of a living man,-an idle person being so useless to any purpose of God and man, that he is like one that is dead, unconcerned in the changes and necessities of the world; and he only lived to spend his time, and eat the fruits of the earth, like a vermin or a wolf. When their time comes, they die and perish, and in the meantime do not good; they neither plough not carry burthens; all that they do is either nonprofitable or mischievous. Idleness, indeed, is the greatest prodigality in the world" (SS, 1887: 2-4).

Labour is an important category to analysis social history, economic relations and social and political formation in any society. It is the labour by which human societies are produced and reproduced. Marx said that it is the labour which adds value to any commodity. Nothing can be produced in this world without the involvement of labour. Work and labour therefore are the foundation on which human societies exist. There are considerable differences about the idea, notions, perceptions, value, and attitudes towards work between and across societies and groups due to historical, socio-cultural and political factors. According to karlsson (1978) "ideas of work have changed within the public's consciousness according to different types of production and different forms of social organization. Within development of the capitalist mode of production we have witnessed the perpetuation of the ideology of the positive value of work" (Hetzler, 1981:76). Our present understanding is historically dependent on many factors like the role of religion, the cultural and philosophic imagining of work, scientific revolution, industralisation, the discoveries and inventions, colonialism, the intellectual texts etc. The very notions and categories like good, bad, high and low, pure and impure, masculine and feminine, manual and mental, spiritual and material, technical and non-technical, menial and intellectual etc. are social construct and not natural divisions. There have been considerable shifts and changes in the notions, nature, and composition of work throughout history.

The relations of labour with wages and employment with salary are new to history and came with industralisation and capitalist mode of production. Work is a social construction and there are differential perceptions about it across different groups, societies and cultures whereas labour is a value loaded term. The very term labour is ideological as it takes us away from our natural sites to imagine some specific sites and specific kind of people involved in hard physical work. This is largely due to the ideological construction of labour. One is very unlikely to imagine temple, priest, doctors, hospitals, managers, engineers, teachers as being labourers. This is because the very term labour is defined in very narrow terms. It is not comprehensive and reduced only to those works which are economically paid or for which people receive wages or salary. There are certain other disciplines like history, anthropology, and sociology which have produced rich and qualitative literature on the various aspects of labour. These disciplines have problematized the often taken for granted assumptions of work and labour. These disciplines have brought in the social and cultural factors playing an important role in its determination.

The literature on labour has been produced from different disciplines which have dealt this area from different school of thought, perspectives and approaches. Therefore one can see the effect of these in various writings in terms of definition, conceptualization, and treatment in terms of selectivity and prominence of certain issues, drawing generalizations, philosophic assumptions, deriving to certain conclusions, applicability and defining of certain concepts, omission or underplay of certain accounts, selection of material etc. It is precisely the reason that labour research is one of the most politically sensitive, contested and highly debatable area as it touches and covers some of the most politically sensitive issues. These issues are important because it has huge social and political implications to the society and political formations.

Labour studies and labour research are critical area of knowledge production because labour by default a political category. The very ways the concept of labour is constructed, imagined, defined, and conceptualized across different cultures and societies directly brings into question the beliefs systems, customs, practices, structure of society, the functioning of the state and labour policies etc. It engages with the lives of those people who are engaged in an unequal, hierarchal and inferior terms and relationships with those who control their lives, labour and conditions. It is about narrating the lives and experiences of those people who are manipulated, controlled,

exploited and discriminated. Labour studies and labour research therefore directly brings state as being a major determinant of working conditions and conditions of work. Labour research is highly politicized and political area due as it engages and touches upon many of the social issues which are very sensitive and political.

Indian society is probably the most stratified, hierarchal and unequal in the world. The People are divided into thousand of groups with each group differing from other on the basis of history, location, origin, identity, social status, prestige, economic assets, rights, privileges etc. Each caste and group has a fixed, rigid and predetermined position assigned to them by sacred texts. In this arrangement those who are located at the top in the social pyramid have cumulative advantages over the others while those located at the bottom have cumulative and disadvantages. This arrangement is not seen as a social construct rather an inevitable and necessary arrangement for the proper functioning of the society and universe. Hence it is religiously sanctioned, culturally accepted legitimate social order.

Some of the most obvious attributes of this social division are segregation, segmentation and monopoly. Each caste and group has a definite, defined and marked area of its activities. These activities are very much reflected in the occupation patterns, residential separations, and economic rights and duties. Different castes and group not only resist going to others' domain but also prevent others from coming to their areas. This is probably why the caste has survived so long in India. There are external and internal forces which reinforce and maintain the status quo. This order is maintained by complex system of regulatory and enforcing mechanism like punishments, rewards, ostracism, public shaming, discrimination, marriage prohibition outside caste, controlled interactions and public mixings. What appears to be diversity in the society is actually a form of inequality. This is very much reflected in the occupational patterns. Each caste maintains a monopoly in some specific work and resists the entry of others. The traditional monopolies have continued and survived the political disturbances, external invasions, scientific revolution, and colonial rule without much change. This clearly indicates, how powerful and deep these are in the social psychology of the people.

Leather work has been one of the oldest occupations among human beings. It has played an important role in all human civilizations and histories. Leather was the only material available to human beings when the other alternatives were not there. It has been extensively used by travelers, explorers, soldiers, merchants, adventurers to

store their food, oil, water when they covered long distances. There was heavy use of leather in wars, battles, body safety and in extreme weather conditions. It has a diverse, multiple and huge utility in the lives of people. If human beings could survive in extreme weather conditions and could travel long distances it is due to leather. Leather workers therefore were among the highly skilled and most respected in many cultures. It is therefore accorded a special place in the life of people. It can conveniently be called the civilisational commodity because it has heavily been used in the wars, explorations, civil utility, conquest, travels and discoveries. The defeat or victory of any army dependent on the ability to survive in tough and extreme landscape and weathers.

Converting animal skin to leather has been one of the most important discoveries/inventions in parallel to the discovery and invention fire, copper, iron, wheel, agriculture etc. leather work has an important craft and leather workers have been considered to be craftsmen. It has acquired the status of science in west. There are huge written documents and records about this art in the west. These were preserved by the artisans themselves. They were the most hardworking people and their labour was instrumental in the times of wars and civilian purposes. The success of any army is dependent on how well protected it from injuries and extreme weather conditions. The workers have accorded respect for their technical craft, skill and rewarded for their hard work.

This work which has played such an important role in the emergence of civilization has been stereotyped as dirty, ritually impure and degrading in India. A large chunk of population largely identified as Dalits are dependent on this work for their livelihood. It has never been considered a dignified and remunerative craft due to the complex social and cultural value system. Hence the leather workers mostly Dalits have been among the most poor, socially ostracized and degraded people. They have been victim of exploitation and violence throughout their history. They have been living a socially marginalized life for hundreds of years. Their sophisticated art has been ridiculed as dirty, unhygienic and impure. They have never been appreciated for their skills even though society benefited from their skills. The society always discriminated against them it never allowed this art to develop and bring prosperity to their lives. The social values, traditions and customs have kept this industry and workers under bondage and control. It is because of this reason the Dalits who have

been doing leather work for hundreds of years have largely remained powerless, marginalized and subjugated.

The social values, belief systems and cultural practices have been responsible for the stereotyping of this craft, devaluation of labour, discrimination and ill treatment against those who work on leather. Hence there is strong and close relationship between labour and violence. This relationship is stronger and visible in the case of leather occupation and dalits in India. The relationship makes this one of the most challenging and interesting areas to probe the complex relationship between social structure, occupational patterns and composition of labour across different sites of work. The role and power of religion is not visible but is always there in the undercurrents of the society. The functions of religion are not merely restricted to temples and churches only. It has deep pervasive role in determining the economics of the work, occupations and professions.

The leather industry is still an understudied area when comparing to coal, jute, textile, tea estates etc. This is also reflected in the kinds of issues that have been touched and explored. There are already many studies done on leather industry and most of the studies have covered the commercial and economic aspects of it. Hence it is the quantitative analysis which dominated research on this area. There has not been much interesting and qualitative work on the area except a few notable ones in south India. There are works which have focussed on structural and commercial aspects of the industry. There are many works which approached leather industry focusing largely the trade and export potential, foreign exchange earnings. Many others have focused on technological improvement and upgradation, problem in raw material availability, skill and training programs etc. There are some works which have explored state finance and support, policies, factors affecting its growth etc. while many deal with the issue of ground water pollution and dumping of industrial affluence in rivers etc.

These studies completely bypassed the social, cultural and historical aspect of this industry. Leather industry is one of the most politicised industries due the issues of cow slaughter, the composition of labour, killing of animals, and the issue of beef selling and consumption and poor working conditions. Any change in its structure, operation and functioning likely to affect some specific groups in the society. It is therefore very sensitive and political by nature. Most of the studies are silent on many of these issues and maintain a political silence while analyzing this industry. These

studies have not touched and studied this industry seeing the larger social, cultural and political history of the country. The economic and scientific perspective has determined the nature of most of these studies. Surprisingly, though not, these (baring few) studies are silent or lack the voices of those who are working in this industry. Those engaged in this work bear the brunt of not only cruel working conditions but also face social ostracism and violence both within work sites and outside. The perspective and voice of those, who are working in leather industry, is seriously missing when one tries to conceptualize and understand leather industry

There are not much works which approach, relate, interpret and theorize this area in larger epistemological debates and discourses. There are many dissertations and thesis produced in different universities on leather work. Most of these works are descriptive, analytical in nature rather than critical. These works tend to treat leather work in the same way as any other work. These studies fail to relate this with largely social, cultural and political discourses. Many studies simply use the Marxian concepts and neutral terminologies while defining the leather workers hence the "poor" "marginalized" "class" "groups" "weaker sections" etc. terms are used more often. These studies do not even mention the specific castes which are involved in this occupation across different hierarchies of work.

Leather work is considered to be an impure and stigmatic occupation and the workers are victim of Untouchability and stigma. Therefore the workers carry some specific, meanings, associations and relations with the society. Their experiences from the society are negative, violent and humiliating. Many of the studies on leather industry and workers have studied their life experiences from outside. There is no significant study which has captured the inner world, their experiences, perceptions and the experience of pain and sufferings. Over a period of time there have been significant changes in the economy and the leather work due to the emergence of organized sector, FDI in leather, cheap imports from china and targeting of leather workers by the nationalists. The changes in the economy have brought new development in their lives.

This study is an effort to understand the lives of Dalits and how they feel about the various socio, economic and political developments. How they relate with the society and how the changes in the economy has affected them. In what ways it has affected their interaction patterns both within the community and outside. It explores their worldview, their perceptions about well being, their works, life choices,

their articulations about their experiences from society. It is an attempt to understand their world from their own life histories and experiences. This study sees society from their eyes and experiences theorize within the larger discourses in theory of knowledge.

CHAPTER 1

PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework for this study draws its inspiration from critical theory developed in "Institute for Social Research". This school of thought is located in Germany and popularly known as Frankfurt school in academic circles. "The Institute for Social Research was founded in 1923. Growing out of a Marxist study group, which sought to deal with the practical problems facing the labor movement in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution" (Bronner, 2011: 9). This school produced some of the most prolific and influential critical thinkers of its time. Some of the most influential thinkers associated with this school are Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin and Jurgen Habermas. This school of thought acquired significant place and name due to the contributions of many of the above mentioned thinkers in Social Theory. Jurgen Habermas emerged one of the most famous and prolific thinkers of this school.

This school established in a time when there were huge social, economic and political disturbances and crisis in the world politics. Many of the associated thinkers witnessed Russian revolution, the gradual erosion of the rights of the people due to the world wars, dictatorships and autocratic regimes, exploitation and manipulations by the ruling class, institutional violence, fascism, political corruption, false propaganda, the shrinking space for public discourse, narrowing and reduction in individual rights and liberty etc. (Scambler, 2001: 1-24). The violence and suppression largely became an accepted norm and it was difficult to maintain sovereignty, autonomy and independent opinions. People were targeted and killed on the basis of their beliefs and faiths. As a result of these, violence became a natural and normal part and parcel of everyday life experiences of people. It was this disturbing period that brought many thinkers together who shared the similar visions and aims for the society. It was this time that they realized that one need to reject this violence and create a social theory which has a vision and aim to transform the society. This school of thought established itself as "Institute for Social Research" which later on associated with critical theory.

The term "Critical theory" was first coined by Max Horkheimer in 1937 in one of his earliest works. Today it is used as an umbrella term to denote all social theories which are based on critique. The Frankfurt school based critical theory distinguishes itself from other social theories on the basis of certain attributes. These are nature and form of social reality, aims and vision of social theory, the primacy and emphasis on the role of culture and ideology in production of subjugation and exploitation, and brining transformation and emancipation as a goal of knowledge production processes. Frankfurt based Critical theory rejects the conventional theories which operate on the basis of certain self-grantedness, pre-determinism of human reality and also about it visions. While pointing out about this pre-determinism and self-grantedness. Horkheimer writes,

> "those long chains of deductive reasoning, simple and easy as they are, of which geometricians make use in order to arrive at the most difficult demonstrations, had caused me to imagine that all those things which fall under the cognizance of men might very likely be mutually related in the same fashion; and that, provided only that we abstain from receiving anything as true which is not so, and always retain the order which is necessary in order to deduce the one conclusion from the other, there can be nothing so remote that we cannot reach to it, nor so recondite that we cannot discover it" (Kivisto, 2003: 384-5).

The subject matter of natural science and social science are completely different due to the absence and presence of consciousness. The "traditional" theories do not differentiate between subjects and objects as they are founded on natural science methods and epistemology. The objects do not have consciousness therefore they are fixed, closed, non-dynamic and cannot change themselves with their own experiences and motivations. Human beings contrarily possess emotions, curiosity, desires, will, intentions, taste and reflexivity unlike objects or matter. Their behavior is not governed by some fixed laws and principles. They are not guided by impulses, drives, and instincts but by their consciousness and reflexivity. Due to the presence of reflexivity they behavior is determined by multiple factors. There are multiple causes and motivations behind their behavior and actions.

Human beings possess rationality and reflexivity therefore they are by default open, flexible, dynamic and self reflective. Therefore human society can be altered, changed, modified and transformed with human interventions. This is what separates and differentiate human world from the natural (objective and objectified) world. Unlike the matter and animal world, the human reality is changeable due to the presence of reflexivity and consciousness which is built in human nature. The critical

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theory largely based on this assumption that Human beings have an inbuilt reflective and introspective nature because of consciousness. They do not accept subjugation, marginality and inequalities as their destiny nor they belief it is caused by some divine will or extra human agency. Human beings tend to critique, resist and reject anything and everything which brings them pain, sufferings and reduce them as objects. Hence human beings are open to change and transformation if it brings them better alternatives, options, opportunities, respect and dignity. Critical theory makes this as base of its foundational argument.

The aims of *Critical theory* were first defined by Max Horkheimer in his 1937 essay *Traditional and Critical Theory*. In this essay Horkheimer critiques the theory of knowledge which is derived from the philosophy of positivism. The positivist philosophy has created fundamental error in readying human reality because it is based on natural science methodology which does not distinguish between objects and subjects. Rejecting the traditional theories which failed to take into considerations of human subjectivity or take human subjectivity for granted. Horkheimer observes, "The real validity of the theory depends on the derived propositions being consonant with the actual facts. If experience and theory contradict each other, one of the two must be reexamined. Either the scientist has failed to observe correctly or something is wrong with the principle of the theory" (Horkheimer, 2002: 188). According to Horkheimer, critical theory is a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole. Paradoxically, traditional theories (scientific positivism) are oriented only to understanding or explaining some phenomenon. He critiques the obsession of adopting natural science methodology to study human subject bypassing human subjectivity and agency.

Knowledge should meet the aspirations of the people and help them achieve it. Critical theory has to bridge the gap between ideal and real so that transformation of the society is the desired goal of all knowledge generation processes. Horkheimer was the director of the institute and he was the first who drafted the aims and vision of the institute and critical theory. He was interested in the transformation of the whole society therefore he is critical of those theoretical approaches, methods, and perspectives which narrow and reduce the discourse. It is due to this reason Horkheimer does not view knowledge as separate, sacred, isolated and insulated domain of human activity. He brings at the centre the discourse of transformation,

reconstruction of the society and the importance of knowledge in achieving it. This gives knowledge both political and social agenda.

Horkheimer rejects the binaries and dichotomies which came to define knowledge like the objective and subjective, internal and external, theory and practice, qualitative and quantitative, is and ought, observation and action, etc. According to Horkheimer, Human beings have to be emancipated and liberated from "all" the circumstances and conditions which enslave them. "The two-sided character of the social totality in its present form becomes, for men who adopt the critical attitude, a conscious opposition" (Kivisto, 2003: 386). He therefore takes a (non reductionist and uncompromised) comprehensive view of the reality. He believes if human beings have to be liberated in fully then one has to take into account of the totality of the circumstances which enslave them. He therefore does not see society in its narrow and sectarian categories, parts and fragments. He rejects the pre-determined positivist interpretation of the society both by functionalist and dialectic thinkers. The positivism both the functional and dialectic variants reduce human beings as objects since it is based on certain pre-determined and fixed assumptions, generalizations and laws.

The purpose and function of the theory is not merely to interpret the world rather work towards transforming it. In that ways critical theory and critical thinkers share the Marxian visions. Horkheimer therefore, is critical of the traditional social sciences which have become more of studying the existing societies without having any agenda to transform it. He critiques the conventional social science and theory of knowledge. According to him,

> "The social sciences, in modeling themselves after the natural sciences, were attempting to position themselves centrally in an industrial society increasingly dependent on monitoring and managing key socio-economic variables. By promoting a positivistic image of themselves of just "telling it like it is" they could claim to offer a "view from nowhere" with all its rights and privileges, other approaches thereby became marginalized as pre-scientific, ideological, self-interested, or the like. One of the first tasks of critical theory was to challenge the privileged "non-position" of social-scientific knowledge by analyzing the modes of its production, the roles it played in society, the interests it served, and the historical process through which it came to power" (Peters, Lankshear & Olssen, 2003: 4).

The critical theory as propounded by Max Horkheimer has a firm belief that knowledge should lead to freedom, self-determination of the subjects and transformation of the society. Horkheimer brings morality, ethics and epistemology at

the core of knowledge generation processes. He proposes that if the society has to be transformed then one cannot reduce oneself in the conservative and orthodox disciplinary boundaries and categories. One has to take a comprehensive view of reality in order to arrive to certain positions. He expands the very idea of knowledge by advocating inter-disciplinary and multiple disciplinary approaches to deal with the complex human reality. According to Horkheimer

> "The social function of philosophy lies in the criticism of what is prevalent. Positivist thought, by accepting the role of science as the careful recording of the facts and limiting its generalizations to the unity of apparent reality leaves the question of historical development aside and becomes instrumental to the prevailing system of power" (Aronowitz, 2002: Xiii).

The traditional social science is based on the philosophy of positivism which assumes human beings to be static, slave of physical laws and devoid of consciousness. Antony Giddens explains this,

> "In social theory, we cannot treat human activities as though they were determined by causes in the same way as natural events are. We have to grasp what I would call the double involvement of individuals and institutions: we create society at the same time as we are created by it…social system are like building that are at every moment constantly being reconstructed by the very bricks that compose them" (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 9).

The human world and society is dynamic and flexible in nature. It has never been fixed as is reflected in the overall human evolution in history. Human beings change as they confront new situations and modify their behavior accordingly. It is this dynamism, openness, and adoptability in human nature that makes them rational. Horkheimer recognizes this; therefore he treats all scientific and orthodox Marxian theories of society as traditional theory. The traditional theories either do not have vision or they have a predetermined or fixed vision hence both reduces human reality and transforms human beings as objects. Critical theory does not aim at some fixed and pre-determined goal but rather seeks to "to liberate human beings from all (in their totality) circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer, 1982: 244). This task requires the interplay between philosophy and social science as well as multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary social research (Horkheimer, 1993).

Frankfurt school of thought and critical theory brings domination and liberation at the core of knowledge building processes. Marrow and Brown say,

> "critical theory has a more specific focus on the substantive problematic of domination, a complex notion based on a concern with the ways social relations also mediate power relations to create various forms of alienation

and inhibit the realization of human possibilities. In this respect, critical theory is a kind of conflict theory in that it is recognized that relations of domination manifest themselves in social struggles" (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 10).

It works towards rational, ethical and moral ordering of the society on the basis of freedom and happiness. Douglas Kellner says, "Critical theory advances the conception of a critical and normative theory which is committed to emancipation from all forms of oppression, as well as to freedom, happiness, and rational ordering of society" (Kellener, 1990: 12).

It challenges and occupies itself with the question of violence rather than venturing into 'philosophical' and existential dilemma of seeking objective truth. Rassmussen says,

> "the ancient assumption that the purpose of reflection was for knowledge itself, allied with the further assumption that pure contemplation was the proper end of the human subject, was replaced by another end of reflection also to be derived from classical thought but with its own peculiarly modern twist; they when applied with praxis has a proper political end, namely the, social transformation" (Rasmussen, 1996: 12).

The critical theory proposes that knowledge should be directed to liberate human beings from the chains which control them. It therefore brings knowledge at the central stage in its role in the society. It makes knowledge and a knowledge generation processes both political and equips it with a social agenda.

> "Critical theory, from the very first, expressed an explicit interest in the abolition of social injustice. The point was to show how repressive interests were hidden by the supposedly neutral formulations of science no less than ontology and, in this way, the movement always retained a commitment to the sociology of knowledge and the "critique of ideology"(Bronner, 1994: 3).

The modern societies are oppressive in the sense it curtails the freedom of the people and force them to behave in certain ways which is the source of conflict. "Critical social science (emerges from critical theory) assume that contemporary societies are oppressive in that they systematically encourage the development of certain societal groups at the expense of others" (Morgaine, 1994: 325). The pain and suffering has become a part and parcel of the lives of people as people have been forced to accept it as their destiny and fate. This coercion and imposition is resisted by people. People have never accepted their subjugation and subordination which can be seen in the everyday critique of people. The liberation and emancipation driven knowledge should engage with the society and expose the exploitation and

suppression which has become normal and accepted norm. It should equip people with a vision so that they can realize their potential and achieve self determined goals in life. "The Frankfurt school registered this historical shift by subjecting long-standing leftist beliefs in the inherently progressive character of science and technology, popular education, and mass political to withering interrogation" (Bronner, 2011: 3).

Knowledge can bring both subjugation and liberation depending upon the nature, visions and ideological priorities. The Frankfurt school based critical theory and more especially Habermas is aware of the ideological role that knowledge plays in the society. He therefore does not see knowledge as a neutral, objective, sacred, apolitical, timeless phenomenon. He sees deeper links between Knowledge, ideology and power. As the power changes in the society it also changes the nature of knowledge, forms and its ideological functions. Knowledge is a power determined process and phenomenon. The nature and forms of knowledge also change as the power changes in the society and vice-versa. Knowledge therefore can be used as an ideological tool to liberate at the same time it can also be used to subjugate and enslave people. Habermas is critical of the pre-determinism of social theory which fixed the consciousness of human beings. The positivist knowledge reduces human beings as static objects devoid of subjectivity while Marxian understanding reduces them as cluster of classes mechanically reaching towards to some pre-defined and pre-determined goal. The scientific and the Marxian theories are reductionist in the sense they treat individuals as objects. They take a macro view of the reality and interpret human reality through objectified categories.

Critical theory since its inception was occupied with the question of violence and suppression. Farganis says, "Critical theory, with its roots in the dialectical traditions, is a substantive critique of society and a critique of the theory of knowledge (positivism) by which that society is known" (Farganis, 1975:485). Critical theory operates on the assumption that there is violence in the society and people are living a life where there is conflict and disharmony. This dissatisfaction and conflict is visible in the everyday life experiences of people. Jurgen Habermas was one of the most influential thinkers associated with critical theory. Extending the arguments of Max Horkheimer further, Habermas believes that knowledge has a major role to play in the society. According to Habermas all knowledge is interest oriented in the sense it serves certain interests (cognitive) in the society. Knowledge

and interests therefore, are part and parcel of the knowledge production processes. He therefore distinguishes three kinds of knowledge on the basis of interests it serves in the society. Habermas (1971) categorizes of human interest- the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory- give rise to three distinct inquiry paradigms: empirical-analytical (positivism), hermeneutic/interpretive, and critical/emancipatory (Lather, 1999: 249). Scott says,

> "The analytical-empirical knowledge is that which is embodied in the natural sciences. Theorizing consists of the construction of deductive-nomological theories which 'fit' data derived from observation…he argues that the dominant approach to the philosophy of science has treated a distorted view of analytical-empirical knowledge as the paradigm of all knowledge, and he terms this approach 'positivism' or 'scientism'…The historical-hermeneutic knowledge of the cultural sciences works through a 'cycle of interpretation' (the hermeneutic circle) in which theorizing always depends upon a prior understanding of the object of knowledge. It aims to relate ordinary utterances and social products to the social life-world in which they are constituted. This is the method of *verstehen*. Historical-hermeneutic knowledge yields 'interpretations' and is structured into processes of 'understanding'. Interpretations are practically relevant knowledge, in the sense they aid 'mutual' understanding in the conduct of life" (Scott, 1978: 3-4).

The positivist and interpretive knowledge are blind to their own role in the society. They provide functionalist understanding of the society thereby desist from taking a decisive action and stand. Hence they also play a functional role in the society without much interest and motivation for emancipation. Furhman articulated similar views while interpreting Habermas. He writes,

> "The empirical-analytic sciences are interested in the covariance of particular observable events. Given a set of initial conditions, predictions may be possible when all other things are equal. The cognitive interest of this science is certainty and control- their technical exploitability. In part, the emergence of this interest was based on the desire to dominate and control nature and indirectly people. The historical-hermeneutic sciences are less concerned with technical control but more so with the extension of inter-subjective understanding. "Access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning not observation"…according to Habermas, both of the already mentioned sciences do not have an emancipatory interest. They do not have the power to reflect on their own self-interests" (Fuhrman, 1978: 15).

Habermas sees critical-dialectic interests to be more important as their core concerns are to transform society rather than merely studying the status quo. The interest to transform society makes it critical and emancipatory in its nature. According to Habermas, "critical-dialectical knowledge is specific to social science and combines the other two forms of knowledge by recognizing their limitations and

the need to reconcile them in a higher synthesis. Example of critical sciences given by Habermas are psychoanalysis and Marxism, although he claims that both Freud and Marx tended to interpret their works positivistically. Critical social theory has both a philosophical and a sociological component. Its philosophical component takes connection between knowledge and interests as it objects, whilst the society which have existed in human history. The two components are linked, in as much as evolution is seen as a process of historical 'self-formation'. Critical theory aims to restore to men an awareness of their position as active, yet historically limited subjects. In so far as it discovers which forms of constraint on human freedom are necessary which are historically specific, it generates a critique of society: the institutions of a society are compared with the objective possibilities of human development, with the ideas of a rational society. In this way actors can achieve a historically conditions autonomy and so engage in rational social change" (Scott, 1978: 4).

POSITIVISM, OBJECTIVITY AND SOCIETY

The origin and foundation of modern science and scientific knowledge is the product of western enlightenment. The major contribution of enlightenment was in the field of philosophy and science. "Seventeenth century philosophy was associated with the work of thinkers such as Rene Decartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. The emphasis was on producing grand, general, and very abstract system of ideas that made rational sense" (Ritzer, 1988: 10). Positivism which is the foundational philosophy of modern science emerged as product of enlightenment belief. This philosophy holds the view that there is a fundamental unity of the cosmic world and universe. All the objects/substances/matter in the cosmology and universe are governed by the same universal laws and principles irrespective of time and location. There is no divine will which control the universe and objects in the universe are determined not by the will of the god but by principle and laws which can be discovered by rational and scientific inquiry.

This philosophy was in a direct contradiction to the dominant thoughts which relied on theology, god and believed in the divine origin of the world. This severely challenged the institution of church (institution) and the authority of monarchs and aristocracy. Ritzer says,

"The most extreme form of opposition to enlightenment ideas was French catholic counter revolutionary philosophy, as represented by the ideas of Louis de Bonard (1754-1840) and Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). These men were reacting against not only the enlightenment but also the French revolution, which they saw partly as a product of the kind of thinking characteristic of enlightenment. De Bonard, was disturbed by the revolutionary changes and yearned for a return to the peace and harmony of the middle ages. In this view, god was the source of society; therefore, reason, which was so important to the enlightenment philosophers, was seen as inferior to traditional religious beliefs. Furthermore, it was believed that because god had creates society, people should not tamper with it and should not try to change a holy creation" (Ibid: 11).

Enlightenment came as a reaction and resistance against the religious theology, dogma, power of church in deciding public affairs and the rights of people to decide their own fate and subjectivity. The religious theory relied and believed on the sacred texts, divine origin of the world whereas enlightenment denied it. This philosophy at the one end challenged the religion for its absolute control over the lives of people at the same time also became absolutists by labeling and denying all other forms of knowledge. The philosophy of enlightenment gave rise to positivism which holds the view human societies can also be studied like a natural science objects and world. This philosophical tradition does not distinguish between objects and subjects as it operates on the belief that there is a fundamental unity of the objects in the world therefore this unity applies both to the living and non living being equally. This philosophy largely sees human beings as biological entities composed of cells, tissues and chemicals which are governed and behave in the same ways under similar conditions.

The positivism backed knowledge specially the scientific knowledge is a product of the western enlightenment. It therefore has a certain specific history, conditions and location. It emerged at a time in history when the religious orthodoxy and violence was at its peak. People were subjected to heinous punishments, torture, and public shame for questioning the authority of the church and priests. Science since the beginning directed and engaged to religion and philosophers and scientists spent considerable time and energy against it. It's significance grew continuously in the society. It was assumed that scientific rationality and temperament was the solution to all the human problems. Crespi observes, "rational thought was conceived as a pure unifying capacity based on absolute standards of truth, from which normative order had to be inferred; on the other hand, the world of action was

considered as a manifold and indeterminate reality, maintaining an essentially opacity to knowledge" (Crespi, 2004: 4).

The science projected religion as dogma and superstition and it adopted a role of liberator to human beings from ignorance. It believed that science (only) has all the answers and explanations of the problems that the human beings are facing. The science itself was becoming faith and acquiring the same characteristics of religion. Science and scientists failed to see their own biases and subjectivity. Their projection of reality was based on empirical method hence they failed to see the historical character of knowledge and its effect on human beings. Signifying this paradox of positivist knowledge, Namenwirth observes, "Scientists firmly believe that as long as they are not conscious of any bias or political agenda, they are neutral and objective, when in fact they are only unconscious" (Lather, 1999: 247). Science was also carrying certain ideologies because it kept out the subjectivity out of inquiry.

The positivism was based on certain granted assumptions about human reality. "The former interpretation rests its case on the attack on metaphysics: what can be known or what can be said is limited by highly restrictive criteria, resulting from a destructively skeptical attitude to what, it is suspected, cannot be known" (Stockman, 1983: 29). It overlooked the reflexive and consciousness of human beings which differentiate objects from subjects. 'In the practice of social science the term has generally been used to refer to the incorporation of natural science methods into that practice. Three assumptions are implied by this notion of positivism: (1) since the methodological procedures of natural science are used as a model, human values enter into the study of social phenomena and conduct only as objects; (2) the goal of social scientific investigation is to construct laws, or law-like generalizations like those of physics; (3) social science has a technical character, providing knowledge which is solely instrumental (Sewart, 1978: 16). Accordingly, there is this biological unity of human beings and all the human beings have the same nature, traits, character, attitudes and behavior. Hence human beings can be studied, observed, classified and predicted on the same principle as natural science object.

The positivist knowledge sees world as a functional unity determined by chemicals, laws and physics principles. It is assumed that human behavior is also governed and determined by these external and inevitable laws of nature. This grantedness produced a problematic understanding not only about human subjects but also its role in changing these. Comstock writes, "The assumptions and the self-

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granted character of scientific thought and knowledge lies in the enlightenment belief that genuine knowledge is the most effective means for the liberation of humans. Yet modern positive science has excluded, on epistemological and methodological grounds, any such interest. Instead, science is views as neutral means equally utilizable for liberation or oppression" (Comstock, 1994: 372). Positivism, according to Horkheimer (1972), presents a view of knowledge and science that stripped both of their critical possibilities. "Knowledge was reduced to the exclusive province of science, and science itself was subsumed within a methodology that limited "scientific activity to the description, classification, and generalization of phenomena, with no care to distinguish the unimportant from the essential" (Giroux, 1997:39).

According to Horkheimer, positivism operates with the fundamental belief in "a mathematically formulated universal science deducible from the smallest possible number of axioms, a system which assumes the calculation of the probable occurrence of all events. Society, too, is to be explained this way" (Fuhrman, 1978: 8). The positivism does not see society as having tensions, conflicts and disharmony as it is purely based on neutral and objective epistemology. Scientific knowledge derived from the philosophy of positivism imagines that human beings and society can be studied just like natural science matter/objects. It therefore assumes human beings to be static, predetermined, objective, fixed, non-dynamic and non-reflexive like a natural science matter/objects. It, therefore completely relies on empirical methods in knowing human reality. Comstock says, "Positivist knowledge sees society as an objective phenomenon which can be described as a set of Ahistoric forces which constrain human behavior" (Comstrock, 1994: 372).

The emergence of scientific knowledge is based on western enlightenment or scientific revolution which distinguishes or separate between concrete and abstract forms of knowledge. Rosernberg, says,

> "Logical positivism began with hume's account of causation as the operation of empirical laws. More important, logical positivists adopted his epistemology, empiricism, the thesis that our knowledge of the world can be justified only by the testimony of the senses- that is, by experiences, observation and experiment. Logical positivists extended this thesis to a more radical one- the principle of verification-that sentences that no one could verify or falsify by experiences are , strictly speaking, meaningless"(Rosenberg, 2008: 10-11).

Empiricists due to their epistemological and methodological narrowness focus on objectivity and unbiased description of society which can be observable, predictable, verifiable and replicable facts/truth of human beings.

The reduction of individuals and society as objects and the obsession to create objective and value free knowledge became a ideological in nature as the values which are shared by all considered to be the objective truth of human beings and society. In the process of having the objective view of reality the scientific method accepted the objectified view of reality as an objective truth of society. Scientific method and knowledge itself promotes status quo by accepting dominantly shared experiences as natural without concerning how these have come to be accepted as normal and natural. Therefore the values which are shared by majority of people itself become an objective fact of society. The power of dominant groups and their values become natural and justified. Those who do not share the dominant values themselves become subjective, minor, pheripheral and exceptional. Criticizing positivism, kolakowski says,

> "According to positivism, the distinction between essence and phenomenon should be eliminated from science on the ground that it is misleading. We are entitled to record only that which is actually manifested in experience; opinions concerning occult entities of which experienced things are supposedly the manifestations are *untrust*-worthy" (kolakowski, 1968:3).

In the whole process of knowing human society, positivism makes the dominant values as just, legitimate and natural. Therefore violence, exploitation and suppression are also established as factual, natural and unavoidable reality. The violence and exploitation is established as something commonly shared, accepted and natural feature of society. The empirical methodology reduces human beings as non-reflexive objects in its inquiry therefore it fails to grasp the dynamism of human actors within society. According to Horkheimer "objective epistemologies transform a dynamic life world into an artificial, static, reified substance that is reduced to abstract principles" (Gorman, 2008:67). The objective description of reality or society institutionalizes the conflict, violence and exploitation in society as factual and natural reality of human experience. This understanding objectifies and naturalizes all human beings as naturally violent, cruel, corrupt, degraded, selfish, violent and in competition with each other and guided by their impulses, instincts and self interest.

Critical theory has been since the beginning was critical of the positivist interpretation of society. Positivism has created some of the grave and fundamental errors in interpreting human reality. Grunbaum observes,

> "Recent critics of naturalistic humanism, to which they refer disparangingly as "scientism" or "modernism" have called it the root error of modern man and the fountainhead of his recent epic tragedy. We are told that science is a sacred cow and a false god (1) that even when properly understood, the application to its methodological cannons to the social sciences inevitably issues in a theoretical underpinning of totalitarian abuses (2), that by rejecting supernaturalism, a world-perspective based on science leaves no room for human values (3), and that the secular thesis of the autonomy of man has produced anachronistic optimism among left-of-center liberals (4). In short, the success of science is held to be a kind of success de scandale, not primarily because it makes possible weapons of mass destruction, but, much more fundamentally, because science has become a philosophy" (Grunbaum, 1954: 13).

According to Horkheimer, "scientific theorizing is historically conditioned. Empirical science presupposes an Apriorism that is derived from and reflects, dominant social values" (ibid: 67). Therefore the dominant values itself become objective facts and through empiricism they get concretized as truth, knowledge and real. The hidden coercion and conflict among people gets reduced as subjective experiences of people. Science (method) itself takes those dominant social values as objectives facts and bypasses the hidden coercion and resistance which is enforced and shared in society. Dahms says, "the empirical science since do not view society in terms of the hidden coercion that actors live with rather it promotes this coercion by objectifying those dominant practices as factual and real. In Lemert's phrase mainstream approaches (to knowledge) reflect "modern" societies in their specificity in the sense that they provide a *mirror* of "modern" society, rather than *a mirror for* society" (Dahms, 2008: 48).

The assumption that human behaviour can be predicted itself institutionalizes that human actions and human consciousness is fixed, non-dynamic, granted and static. Since scientific method separates subjective experiences from objective reality therefore what is actually caused by sectarian interests of human behaviour is believed and accepted to be inherent human nature. In other words, the positivist or Empiricists due to their methodological fallacy often neglect the role played by power, culture, historical events, ideology in determining and shaping the consciousness of the self and actions of people. kolakowski says,

> "Positivism stands for a certain philosophical attitude concerning human knowledge; strictly speaking it does not prejudge question about how men

arrive at knowledge-neither the psychological nor the historical foundations of knowledge. But it is a collection of rules and evaluative criteria referring to human cognition" (kolakowski, 1968: 2).

According to it, we can arrive to some universal truth about human beings by using scientific method. "positivism is a collection of prohibitions concerning human knowledge, intended to confine the name of "knowledge" (or "science") to those operations that are observable in the evolution of the modern sciences in nature" (ibid: 9). Hence what is empirically verifiable is knowledge and what is non-verifiable is meta-physical, subjective, ideological, peripheral, non determining reality of human life. This duality itself is inbuilt in the method which sees subjectivity or self outside the domain of knowledge or in opposition to truth. Therefore objective knowledge is always against self determination. In epistemological terms it is self-denying and self-defying in nature. The phrase, knowledge itself is power is in the eyes of positivist truer when turned around: power itself is knowledge.

This non-reflexive character of knowledge led to serious flaws in understanding human reality. The unbiased description of society led to a biased view of reality where the dominant's views itself become truth which is validated as knowledge and oppressed groups view's became common sensical, superficial, minor and subjective. According to Horkheimer "in traditional thinking, the genesis of particular objective facts, the practical application of the conceptual system by which it grasps the facts, and the role of such system in actions, are all taken to be external to the theoretical thinking itself" (Horkheimer, 2003: 386). This duality led to separation of knowledge from action, theory from practice, facts from values, external from internal, means from end, is from ought, descriptive from normative, value free and values determination, objective from subjective, society from self, empirical from historical and so on, are the result of methodological and epistemological conservatism of scientific knowledge formation which fail to see society in its totality or human context. Gorman says,

> "Traditional social science (traditional theory) embodies a Cartesian world view taken directly taken from empirical sciences. Explanation depends on logical and empirically verified propositions. Living and nonliving phenomena, for Empirists, exist in a net of causal relationship that emerge by analytically deconstructing reality into unilinear deductive sets and stressing data accumulation" (Gorman, 2008: 66).

The root cause of this separation lies in instrumental reason backed by positivist philosophy which separates knowledge from subjective experiences of

people. The moral 'ought' and ethical and humane dimension are by default is missing from knowledge and its historical evolution. Since facts rest outside of individual subjectivity or facts are separated from history hence "positivism freezes both human beings and history. In the case of the latter, the issue of historical development is left aside since the historical dimension contains truth that cannot be assigned "to a special fact gathering branch of science" (Giroux, 1997: 40).

The natural science itself determines self by keeping the subjectivity or 'self' outside, from the domain of knowledge. The dominant itself become the objective knowledge which is explained through facts, classifications and interpretation. In human world value free itself is a value, people can never be freed from their values in true sense. Any claim of neutrality is misleading as People will have opinion, views, critique, and belief about everything they can think of or exposed of. Daniel Dennett puts it, "there is no such thing as philosophy- free science; there is only science whose philosophical baggage is taken on board without examination" (Epstein, 2012: 9). Neutrality itself promotes the violence, exploitation and suppression. Scientific method and knowledge then is by default ideological because it promotes the interests of dominant sections in the society by not taking a decisive stand against violence, exploitation and suppression. Scientific knowledge claimed to be neutral but it is never non-political. Bohman says, "This kind of knowledge focuses more on the correctness of explanation rather than the political effect on a specific audience" (Bohman, 2003: 93).

Scientific knowledge not neutral in the sense it does not have neutral implications to the society. The application of strict methods of natural science on human world has misrepresented the human because it failed to recognize the reflexivity and consciousness of human beings. The value that science could be or should be value free itself a value which is not propagated by science itself. "The idea that science is or could be value free is not itself a scientific thesis; it belongs rather to philosophy" (Crittenden, 1990: 113). Science therefore not a neutral venture rather an ideological construction. This epistemological and methodological failure led to a problematic understanding of human beings and human society as being fixed and unchanging. Nietzche (1966) insight that "it is not the victory of science (knowledge) that is the distinguishing mark of our nineteenth century, but the victory of scientific method over science" (Giroux, 1997: 39). Science itself produced violence in the society by accepting the objectified view as an objective view of society. Science

helped enforce the dominant truth as objective and never questioned the grated 'self' or will as its study matter.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM, HISTORY AND REALITY

The philosophy of science is to explain this world in the most neutral, unbiased and objective manner. This makes science treat society in an objective, unbiased and objective manner paradoxically human beings are never free from values, opinions and beliefs. They have opinion, beliefs and perceptions about every things even those things which they have not experienced in their real life. Social Constructionism as an approach emerged to address some of the problems in social theory emerged by the application of positivist method on human society. It was an epistemological intervention and a critique of the grantedness of the positivism and scientific method. The positivism backed scientific method completely relied on empirical testability, verifiability to understand human reality. It failed to grasp that the reality and consciousness that human beings have did not come all of a sudden. The perceptions, notions and understanding that human beings have is historically determined and conditioned. The meaning, relation, association that human beings have about this world is historically created and history has to be brought in question if one has to understand and interpret reality in the society.

The Social Constructionism brought history into the very domain of the social inquiry which was taken for granted by positivism and scientific method. Social constructivism is a critique of positivism and empiricist method of science to know and understand the truth about human subjects and society. Social Constructionism as a methodological and epistemological intervention came into being with, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* jointly written by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann which was first published in 1966. It had such a profound impact that international sociological association listed this as the 5th most important sociological book of the 20th century. According to Berger and Luckmann "there has been general agreement to the effect that sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises. It may thus be said that the sociology of knowledge constitutes the sociological focus of a much more general problem, that of the existential determination" (Berger & Luckmann, 1971: 16).

> "Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world (including ourselves). It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world. It is therefore in opposition to what are referred to as positivism and empiricism in traditional science- the assumption that the nature of the world can be revealed by observation, and that what exists is what we *perceive* to exist" (Burr, 1995:2).

The natural science epistemology reduces human reality as if it has been externally determined not internally created by the subjects. Social constructivism rejected in the pre-determined character of knowledge which was established by the positivist. It critiqued and attacked the scientific method that neglected the human consciousness and thought. The reality which human beings hold is not inevitable or natural rather a product of complex human interaction in the society. In other words social construction of reality or knowledge informs us about the how a particular kind of knowledge has been socially constructed or established through various socio-historical processes. Hence, Berger and Luckmann write, "Sociology of knowledge will have to deal not only with empirical variety of knowledge in human societies, but also with the processes by which any body of knowledge comes to be socially established as reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1971: 15).

According to social constructionists truth is socially created by the actors involved in due historical and social processes means that what we take as absolute is not the eternal reality of human beings. It includes institutions, customs, beliefs systems, practices, rituals, values, democracy, politics, religion etc. There is no divine will or external factors which create these rather a product of human thoughts. The notions and nature of these dependent on human will rather than having any independent will on its own. Any phenomena can exist as long as human beings want it to exist. It is human consciousness which has the power to define truth and create truth. Constructionists believe that true and false are social construction, so are the notions good and bad and right and wrong, truth and lie hence every phenomenon is not immanent and inevitable they are all modifiable, challengeable and alterable and with the progressive understanding of the human beings they are also subject to change and modification.

The order, meanings, association, relations, perceptions etc. are the product of complex human interaction with their social and cultural environment. The truth in

the human world is determined by the actors in the society rather than caused externally by any other super or divine will. Social construction of reality in epistemological terms means that there is no Ahistorical and absolute truth in this world rather truth is socially constructed by the actors. It is shaped by historical, cultural and social processes. In other words truth does not lie outside of human actors it is rather constructed by the actors themselves about themselves. It is well within the values and thoughts of human actors. The scientific and natural science knowledge is also not pure knowledge in that sense. It is historically conditioned and it emerged at a certain point of time in history. Therefore the 'pure' and natural science itself is a socially constructed phenomenon. Epstein explains,

> "Accordingly to social constructivism, truth is constructed through social processes, is historically and culturally specific and is in part shaped through power struggles within a community. Constructivism denies that our knowledge reflects any external realities; rather, perceptions of truth are contingent on convention, human perception and social experience. Constructionists maintain that representations of physical and biological reality, including race, sexuality and gender, are socially constructed" (Epstein, 2012: 20).

The truth has no external causes but determined by the inner dynamics of the society. the sources of the change has to be found in the relationship among human beings. It is the reflexive characters of human beings which initiate change in the society. According to Scheler,

> "Human knowledge is given in society as an *a priori* to individual experience, providing the latter with its order of meaning. This order, although it is relative to a particular socio-historical situation, appears to the individual as the natural way of look at the world. He called this 'relative-natural world view' of a society" (Berger & Luckmann, 1971: 20).

Social Constructionism is anti-essentialist in its nature and questions the innate assumptions of social theory. It brings history and human agency as an important determinant of social reality. Burr says, "since the social world, including ourselves as people, is the product of social processes, it followed that there cannot be any given, determined nature of the world or people" (Burr, 1995: 4). Social constructivism takes us beyond empirical understanding of reality but it does not inform us about whether 'truth' and 'false' which are social construct are desirable or undesirable for the society. The critiques of social construction have labeled this perspective and approach as being anti-realism and also providing relativist interpretation of society. In the first case it denies that knowledge can be experienced by the actors. The denial

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of the experiential knowledge led it to become against the self determination of the subjects. In the latter case it provides a relativist understanding of the social reality, in the sense that all knowledge has to be interpreted in its own historical and social context. It therefore reduces the very emancipatory agenda of knowledge building. It then also denies people the right to determine their self. Social constructions of knowledge/society/truth are then the power struggle in the society and manifestation of dominants view of reality.

MARXISM, CLASS DETERMINATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Marxian social theory is one of the most important critical theories. It's difficult to deny the role in played it in shaping the course of modern history. It provides one of the most severe critiques of "modern" societies, social formations and critique of capitalism. It is one of the most dominant theories around in academic circles both for its alternative imagination of society and its persistent critique of economic exploitation. This theory despite its important contributions to social theory has it's weakness in the way it understand and conceptualizes social reality. The conceptualization and it's over emphasis and obsession with on economic determinism proved to be fatal for this theory. Marx does not give much importance to ideas, culture, values and ideology in shaping the consciousness of human beings. Bendix says,

> "Karl Marx (1818-83) gave more emphasis of their scientific character of his materialist philosophy. Rejecting the tradition of German idealism, he held that in long run, ideas and institutions are determined by the material conditions under which men work. He allowed that in the short run history was affected by "accidents" and ideas" (Bendix, 1974: 149-150).

The Marxian reduction of ideas to material conditions reflects the weak link of the theory. Human beings are the only one who possesses ideas, thinking and reflexivity. They use these in their life to improve their conditions and satisfaction. Ideas are so inseparable part of human existence and without ideas they are just reduced as a machine or object. The origin of western capitalism itself emerged due to certain ideas that are associated with the Calvinism. The emergence of capitalism in west, discoveries, scientific progress, commercial revolution, development in philosophy etc. all have been possible not due to the "accidents" rather due to human reflexivity which resisted against the "revealed" thought of its time. The Marxian

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economic determinism gets little closer to metaphysics as it assumes that material conditions are beyond of human will and thought. This becomes clearer by the famous Marxian notion that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their existence that determines their consciousness" (Panayotakis, 2004: 125). Clearly Marx becomes more scientific and takes the history out of the consciousness of the human beings. It seems and describe the social relations in which people find themselves as "independent of their will" and consciousness (Ibid). Marxism itself a product of capitalism as it is its critique. It did not come on its own now was it inevitable development in human evolution. The Marxian as an idea has definitely affected the growth capitalism in many ways which itself contradict Marxian assumptions that ideas do not determine being but being determines ideas.

Marx and Marxian theory see and analyze society in terms of the contradiction of between classes. This is a macro and bird eye view of the interpretation of the reality in the society. The Marxian theory takes a pre-deterministic and fixed stand both on the question of group formations and on the ideological end of human reality. This does not have any agenda for the individuals this makes it narrow, sectarian and positivist. Critiquing this fixation of Marxian theory and Marxist obsessions with certain fixed formulations Willian Leiss says,

> "This crucial aspect of subjectivity was never secured permanently within Marxist theory; rather, it was constantly embattled as a result of the theory's involvement in the social milieu and had to be reformulated time and again under pressure of events. Throughout the period of the second and third internationals, there was a powerful tendency toward what Russell Jacoby has termed as "automatic Marxism", a determinist view of history as proceeding unerringly towards its final goal, governed inexorably by the "laws" of dialectics" (Leiss, 1974: 337).

Frankfurt school based critical theory shares Marxian dialectic method and vision to transform society. It agrees with the famous Marxian visions that "Philosophers have always interpreted the world; the point is to change it" (Rasmussen, 1996: 11). Critical theory although accept this Marxian visions but it rejects the orthodox Marxian assumptions about social reality. It shares Marxian goals and aims that exploitation must end in the society and human beings should be emancipated and liberated. At the same time it rejects Marxian reductionism of reality at least on three accounts such as: a) historical inevitability, b) the primacy of the mode of production in the shaping of history, c) the notion that class struggle as well

as the mechanisms of domination takes place primarily within the confines of the labor processes (Giroux, 1997: 36).

The Marxian idea of the inevitability of revolution and socialism as the final stage of human evolution is pre-deterministic, in the sense it predicts human beings on the same principles of natural sciences objects. It pre-fixes and pre-determines human consciousness thereby reduces human beings as being guided by some fixed universal principles which they do not have control over. It reduces human beings as machines or objects rather than subjects guiding their own circumstances. It subjugates human reason, rationality and subjectivity in determining their reality. The stage theory is determental, mechanical and reductionist and stereotype human as having some pre-fixed goals. It creates false hopes with a utopian end which keep human beings into illusions and dependent. Secondly, Marxian thought gives primacy to economic reality which is called 'base' or ''sub-structure' in determining reality and history. Means of production definitely play an important role in determining and shaping conditions of human beings but it is not the sole factor which determines human actions and consciousness. Culture as the form of ideology, beliefs, practices, morals, values, faiths, religion play far greater and important role in determining human reality and actions. Finally, Marxian assumptions that the domination and exploitation takes place within the confines of labour processes is partial truth. Human beings are dominated, exploited and suppressed within the realm of culture rather than solely by economic institutions. It is not in the labour processes or certain kinds of economic systems that one is alienated, controlled and exploited.

The Marxian analysis is partial and incomplete in the sense it does not see society in its totality. The economy does not operate in isolation to the culture of the society. It is therefore not insulated of the cultural influences. Culture has a deep and strong influence on economy directly. Gorman says,

> "Marx's and Engel's suggestion that economics is in some sense prior to thought was false. Sub and superstructure are constantly interpenetrating. Although economics conditions values and institutions, the latter are also subjectively created and experiences, not objectively caused. Moreover, they ricochet throughout the social totality" (Gorman, 2008: 68).

The Marxian assumptions that "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" or say it is economic determinism which shape history rather than consciousness or human thought itself proved to be wrong, Marxian thought itself has changed the world so much after its critical analysis of history. The root of

exploitation is not mere economic but lies in superstructure which affects the political economy also. Sharing similar views about base and superstructure, Ambedkar says that "but the base is not the building, on the basis of the economic relations a building is erected of religion, social and political institutions. This building has just as much truth (reality) as the base. If we want to change the base, then first the building that has been constructed on it has to be knocked down. In the same way, if we want to change the economic relations of society, then first the existing social, political and other institutions will have to be destroyed" (Omvedt, 2010: 228).

The belief that sudden and dramatic overthrow of regimes will make society stable, contradiction and harmonious is a romanticized notion. The order and meanings that people associate with the world do not (cannot be) change(d) so suddenly. The sudden change may bring many gains to those who are likely to benefit from such sudden change but it also brings a lot of anxiety, uncertainty and unpredictability of the future both about it sustainability and also its repercussion on their cultural life. The role and power of the state increase phenomenally in Marxian state. It becomes a whole and sole and became a totalitarian and absolute state. Antonio says, "Marxism promotes the expansion, rather than the 'withering away' of the state. As a result, marx's *raison d'etre*- emancipation- is eclipsed by concerns for political expediency and administrative efficiency" (Antonio, 1981: 331). Socialism may bring change in the nature of state or change of individual's relations with the state; it does not free people from their internal constraints, it does not make them rational, enlightened and free. The role of state in socialism is not weakened rather it becomes more expanded, brutal and hegemonic.

Revolution may alter the nature of state, but it does not end exploitation and suppression. Horkheimer and Adorno in one of the important works *dialectic of enlightenment* argue that "Socialism's material reductionism had merely replaced capitalist exploitation with an equally horrible party apparatus that destroyed subjectivity. Domination then was not merely economic and was not just (only) found in capitalism" (Gorman, 2008: 71). End of capitalism does not mean end of exploitation, suppression and domination. The domination and enslavement is not the product of some economic system alone but the result of dominant social and cultural values. "Historically, domination had taken different forms, including domination of man by man (human by human), of man by nature and of nature by man. Domination, critical theorists argued, was never justified, whatever its form" (ibid: 70). What

socialism may change is basically the domination of man by man but it does not change the violence of man against nature. Revolution may bring down one kind of system and replace it with another kind of system, it may alter the nature of state, but it does not end exploitation and suppression.

The Marxian theory of class determination provided an understanding of the society where the economic factors play dominant role in shaping human actions. His works are critical but it does not give much importance to the cultural factors and the role of religion in shaping consciousness of people in the society. He too, provided a natural science like analogy of the society which foresees a certain pre-deterministic future for all human beings. This pre-determination and grantedness of the social reality brings him closer to metaphysics. Marx does not give much importance to culture in shaping the imagination and actions of the people in the society. Alvin Gouldner recognizes this and categorize the Marxian works on the basis this grantedness.

> "Gouldner conceptualizes the distinction between critical and scientific Marxism in terms of a broader dichotomy between freedom and determinism. Scientific Marxism represents the deterministic pole, emphasizing the laws that govern the social life. These laws are an expression of social structure that subordinate individuals to their imperatives. Furthermore, scientific Marxism tends to attribute social change to the dynamic tendencies of social structures rather than to the agency and struggles of human individuals and social group" (Panayotakis, 2004: 124).

Marx sees the contradiction, tensions and conflict between different classes as a source of change in the society. He thus, reduces human reflexivity and subjectivity as a privilege of some particular class. Many of the Marxian predictions have failed to stand the test of the time. There has been improvement in the working conditions over a period of time due to emergence of democracy and also due to the own needs of capitalism. The Marxian theory has failed to provide a satisfactory answer to the problems why other identities like nationalism, citizenship, religious beliefs and ethnic loyalties, regional associations and linguistic groups and identities have proved to be stronger than the class identity and consciousness. Human beings in their long history have resisted not against each other but also against the brutality of nature. They have consistently resisted and overcome the brutalities and absolutism of violence both by nature and human due to their reflexivity. They have never accepted violence as their destiny and fate nor did they believe that it can be decided by some external agency. They have resisted and contested their marginalization throughout

history in whatever forms. Human rationality, critical thoughts, and reflexivity are the source of change rather than some biological and physical impulses, instinct and drive.

While negating the orthodox Marxism (economic determinism), critical theory has borrowed some of Marxian concepts like alienation, false consciousness and reification. While, Marx see alienation and *commodity fetishism* also known as reification as the result of capitalist mode of production in which workers lost their subjectivity in the very process of commodity and value creation. While, alienation is the socio-psychological effect of capitalist mode of production on workers lives in which they loose their subjectivity. *Reification* according to Peter Berger,

> "As a state of amnesia in which the individual "forget" the human origins of the social world, social phenomena are apprehended instead "as if they were something else than human products- such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws or manifestations of divine will". This "forgetfulness" is explained , in turn , as a defensive reaction by which the individual seeks to establish psychic stability in the face of "some fundamental errors of human existence, notably the terror of chaos" (quoted in Burris, 1988: 3).

According to critical theory, these concepts have wider applicability in society. It is not only in the economic sphere that these operate or occur but these are very much produced in the cultural sphere. Culture denies people of their subjectivity therefore it creates alienation of people from their real interest make their violence, suppression and exploitation appear natural part of their lives. Critical theory sees the role of culture in the production of loss of subjectivity. Therefore alienation and false consciousness is produced by culture by mystifying exploitation as being unreal and illusionary. Hegemony is another concept which is very close to critical theory but it is not directly related with Frankfurt school. It is the manipulation and interpretation of culture in such a way that the ruling class is able to dominate other class not by physical or direct control rather through certain subtle, ideological, worldviews which help it maintain control over them.

CULTURE, IDENTITY AND SELF DETERMINATION

Human beings are social beings and they possess emotions, values and consciousness unlike objects. Their behavior is not guided by some fixed and predetermined principles and laws. They are simply not guided by their physical and

biological instincts, drives and impulses. They are not mere a biological objects or entities driven by some uncontrolled urges for self-fulfillment. They are very conscious beings who are well aware of themselves and their surroundings. These qualities make their reality very different from non-living mattes. They have reflexivity therefore their behavior is dynamic. The presence of rationality and reflexivity separate them both from objects and animals. They can differentiate between good and bad on the basis of their judgment after evaluating a situation. They can very well appreciate art and aesthetics, responds to different unanticipated situations on the basis of their rationality, they work to earn their livelihood unlike animals, respond to human emotions and cultivate their surrounding as per their requirements. They can very well respond to situations and change their course of actions by anticipating its consequences.

These things are possible as human beings are subjects. They are conscious of their self and they responds on situations on the basis of their judgments and understanding. They do not simply act and react as programmed machines. Due to the presence of these qualities human world and society is dynamic, flexible and ever changing unlike non-living things. This open, dynamic, flexible and adaptive characteristic makes their reality multi-dimensional. The multi-dimensionality in their behavior is due to the presence of consciousness. Therefore they do not merely and blindly act or react on the basis of some fixed laws rather they act and respond after judging a situation. These traits differentiate them from object and matter and make them and their world far complex than natural science subject matter. The human beings can differentiate between good and bad due to their consciousness. Hence they can take value position on each and every thing which they face or confront in their real life.

Human world is a world of meanings and subjectivity. People act, responds, or judge anything and everything on the basis of meanings they have for it. Therefore their actions are determined by how they see that particular thing in the society. Culture is a shared phenomenon among the people it is something which is foundations for human beings to interact with each other on the basis of some shared meanings, values, codes, norms, beliefs and customs. McCarthy says,

> "Knowledge is best conceived and studied as culture, and the various types of social knowledges communicate and signal social meanings- such meanings about power and pleasure, beauty and death, goodness and danger. As

powerful cultural forms, knowledge also constitute meanings and create entirely new objects and social practices" (McCarthy, 1996: 1).

Culture therefore is an elaborated system of symbols and meanings which human beings have. It helps people related with this world and make sense of it. Culture therefore is a medium and a powerful tool which determine how people see this world.

> "One stand of the sociological tradition, stretching from Emile Durkheim to Talcott parsons, theorized that culture works to tie together individuals and integrate a society. This traditions focused on the ways in which shared norms and values create social order. This formulations implies that culture is a kind of system for the social control of individuals, and that it integrates them into society, to the benefit of both individuals and society" (Hall, Neitz & Battani, 2003: 20).

The society is structured into ordered and hierarchal associations and relationships between human beings, objects and nature. The philosophy, morals, beliefs that govern those relations and associations come from the religion. Religion therefore is an inseparable part of culture. It provides a order, stability and a governing norm to the society. It governs the worldviews and perspectives of people how they see the world. Religion provides an elaborated codes and guidelines to the people in the society to behave in the society. Religion therefore is something which is much deeper, pervasive and has extensive power over the actions of people. It directly controls the people's imagination and their actions. Human beings learn to categorize this world into desirable and non-desirable from elaborates system of beliefs and guidelines which come from religion. According to Clifford Geertz,

> "Religion is: a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (Geertz, 1973: 90).

The religious doctrines provide answer to some of the fundamental questions like the origin, role, and function of people in the society. It fulfills the culture needs of the groups to have some rational justification about the order and structure. The rational justification of the order, structure, meanings and association come from religion. Religion is not mere a system of unique beliefs and practices it is far more complex, deeper and expanded phenomenon which covers the whole lives of people. It provides and affects the relationships of people with this world. People learn to adhere to order and authority from religion. It affects the people imagination,

worldviews, perspectives, their actions, responses and their association with the world. Religion plays an important role in the lives of people by giving them deciding and motivations people to achieve their ends. Religion is not a neutral, apolitical, Ahistorical phenomenon. It is rather a power determined phenomenon. It exerts exceptional power over the people in determining their imagination, associations and actions in the society. It explains the (dis)order in the society by linking it with supernatural and extra human agency. It forces people to adhere to authority, become submissive, and lose their subjectivity in favor of an imagined collectivity.

The Religio-cultural beliefs have far deeper impact on human imaginations and actions. These worldviews and perspectives makes people think in a controlled manner and block their imaginations. It present peoples a closed, fabricated, illusionary and romanticized truth which is far away from reality. It neutralizes hides and covers the tensions in the society by providing people a justification of their failures and success. According to Malinowski, "Religion helps one to endure "situations of emotional stress" by "open (ing) up escapes from such situations and such impasses as offer no empirical way out except by ritual and belief into the domain of the supernatural"" (Geertz, 1973: 103). Religions and culture which are largely shared beliefs and customs deny people their subjectivity. It presents a closed, narrow, sectarian and highly romanticized view of truth which is far away from reality.

The notions, understandings, meanings and associations that people carry about themselves and others is culturally driven. The perceptions are culturally determined so are the responses and actions. Culture therefore has a profound impact on what we think, eat, act, imagine etc. it determines and controls all our actions and imagination. It provides us a *Weltanschauung* i.e. worldview which is far away from truth but we are trained to accept it as a truth due to our socialization. This worldview is constructed rather than a naturally evolved fact. It appears to be normal and natural because it is infused in people through power. Culture has a hegemonic influence on the actions of the people and there is hardly any area which is not governed by the culture. It is an elaborative system of beliefs, symbols and icons to categorize the world into desirable and undesirable. It exerts force, coercions and pressure on people to behave in a particular ways. It thereby controls their imaginations, actions, and their idea about themselves. It is a site of power where human beings are trained to

see the world in a particular ways in that ways the culture hold power over everything which we have.

Culture is not a neutral, unbiased, apolitical, Ahistorical site or phenomenon nor is it about some unique beliefs and customs. It is far greater and deeper phenomenon for human beings. It provides us meaning to relate and associate with the world. Culture denies people subjectivity by forcing them to accept the dominantly shared values as truth. It snatches the right from people to choose their destiny/fate, self-expression and the option of defining and determining their self. It creates marginality, subjugation and inequality in the society which results in pain, sufferings and humiliations. Culture therefore plays a far greater role in determining, controlling and producing marginality. It creates false consciousness and alienation; it makes exploitation, suppression and violence natural and unavoidable. Culture creates false unity and false consciousness among the people who despite their common interests do not come together against their suppression and exploitation. It prevents human beings to realize their true interests and let exploitation become natural and inevitable.

It creates conflicts, tensions, and subjugation among the life of people and in the society. This is present and visible in the perceptions of people who are highly dis-satisfied and critical of the state of affairs in the society. The life of human beings is controlled by their circumstances by which they have been reduced as an object. They live a life which is not determined by them rather forced to live on the terms and conditions of the society. This has caused alienation and a fabricated idea of self and their interests. This duality is responsible for the alienation of the subjects from their real interests.

> "In this traditions, the idea of alienation is thus intimately linked with the notion of self-alienation. And the 'self' or kind of 'selfhood' in question is not construed in terms of the actual disposition and various felt needs and wants of particular human beings. Rather, it is understood in terms of certain traits and attainments regarded as constitutive of human life as it can and should be lived. Thus, "self-alienation' here signifies either dehumanization or incomplete (stunted or thwarted) humanization" (Schacht, 1976: 135).

Culture has a penetrative power over the actions and imagination of people. It directly affects the ways individuals feel about themselves. It forces people to accept fixed meanings and feel comfortable about it. This cannot be done without the use of power, coercion and curtailment of freedom. Culture prevents alternatives, choices and options to people therefore lead to self-alienation of the subjects.

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CRITICAL THEORY, IDEOLOGY AND VIOLENCE

The society is not objective, neutral or tension free. There is hidden power struggle among different groups. This makes the society violent and exploitative. Society forces human beings to behave in some fixed ways which results in loss of subjectivity. People do not realize this coercion as they have not been trained to question the reality rather trained to accept given reality as being right and just. Culture beliefs and institutions play a major role in controlling their consciousness. It produces coercion and dominance over subjects and has decisive power on the actions of human beings. Culture is then power determined site but it is also a power contestation site. James Scott study (1985) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* is interesting piece of work as it explores the internal world of peasants. The state and authority exercise power over workers through rules, disciplines, laws, norms, timings, control, behavior etc. The workers show their own resistance not necessarily through confrontation but in their own cultural ways which may include cracking jokes, being late consciously, showing indiscipline, at times showing rebellious attitude etc.

The notions, understanding and meanings that people carry about them (selves) come from culture and since these meanings, understandings and notions are largely shared in the society these appear as a normal, natural and granted. Culture enslaves people by pre-determining their actions and making people see reality from their own pre-given and pre-fixed worldviews, therefore,

> "The very heart of the critical theory of society is its criticism of ideology (Marxian superstructure). Their ideology is what prevents agents in the society from correctly perceiving their true situation and real interests; if they (people) are to free themselves from social repression, the agents must rid themselves of ideological illusion" (Guess, 1981: 3).

Here Ideology here is not about some political belief rather the distortion of reality. The social reality as it appears to the members of some particular social class is sectarian, biased and incomplete because it is far away from truth. This fabricated reality which has been projected to the masses is highly romantic, fixed, nostalgic and ideologically charged. It represents what Marx called "false consciousness" as it binds people into a false unity and illusion.

Culture become and works as an ideology when it forces people to accept the fixed and conventional meanings associated with this world. It presents an imagined unity, shared interests, accepted norms as something which binds people together. It therefore hides the inner conflicts, tensions, and inequalities within the society. It makes people forget their real interests and presents them a picture which is romantic, illusionary and highly fabricated. "The problems with ideology is not about its origin but it's false representation of social reality" (ibid: 39). It is culture which creates false representation of social reality by creating a false unity of the interests of people. People live in false state of consciousness. What they believe to be true and real is already determined by society. We have been conditioned in such a way that we accept this as natural and immanent truth. People live a life which is already given to them rather than chosen by them. The interests, options, opinions, values, passions, hobbies all have been already conditioned and pre-determined for them. What they believe to be truth is only a partial truth, most of the time we live with a false hope which create conflicts within and with others. "The idea of freedom that motivates critical theory is not freedom from physical bondage or violent repression but freedom for individuals to live their lives to the full: freedom from alienation" (Dant, 2003: 158).

Frankfurt school was not the first one to recognize the role of culture in determining the reality and human consciousness. Before that Sigmund Freud through his work on psychoanalysis analyzed the effect of culture on individuals. He reflected on 'neuroses' that caused a departure from the ordinary state of human being. In his one of the important books *civilisations and its discontents* (1962), he explains, society controls people in such a way that it produces high discontents among individuals. For Freud, "the civilized societies of modernity produced a general state of unhappiness not explicable by economic exploitation- he identified the cause in culture, civilization itself…happiness of the individual depended on her or his social context; culture and society bore back on the individual, affecting that person's life" (Dant, 2003:11).

The ideas and ideologies that people carry come from religion rather than from any external sources. These ideas are very powerful which control the behavior of people in the society. Max Weber in his path breaking work *protestant ethics and spirit of capitalism* (1930) shows how certain religio-cultural practices affect the overall outlook of people towards their world. The certain *Calvinist* doctrines and

beliefs were detrimental in shaping the course of capitalism in west. This work is important because it explains that it is not economic which determine the social rather it is social which determines the economic in society. The Marxian understanding of dialectic materialism got seriously challenged with this work. It is not economic structure that shapes the consciousness of actors rather it is cultural in a more pervasive sense which determines one's consciousness and being. It is the social values not economic determinism which influences people's actions and motivations in society. Dant writes,

> "In a major development from Marx's analysis of capitalism, critical theory recognizes that culture is as much a determinant of the form of society as political economy. Any change in the form of society will ultimately have economic and political effect but it cannot be achieved without transformation of culture of "modernity". The form of society has a material dimension: the economic and practical arrangements for meeting needs, the laws governing social actions and the specific institutions that make practical arrangements. But the material form of society is given meaning, communicated and understood through the society's culture. The ideas understanding, reasons, images, writing and other modes of expression that accompany the material dimension. Critical theory mounts its critique of society as culture, rather than as political system or economy" (Dant, 2003: 156).

The culture which appears to the human beings as natural, inevitable and is mere a social construction rather than a natural fact. It was constructed as a certain point of time by human agency and it can also be modified and altered by human will. It is very much within the will and power of people it is not at all beyond and outside of human control. Guess says,

> "It is also not hard to see in what sense the 'unfree existence' from which the agents suffer is a form of self-imposed coercion. Social institutions are not natural phenomena; they don't just exist of and by themselves. The agents in a society impose coercive institutions on themselves by participating in them, accepting them without protest, etc" (Guess, 1981: 60).

The participation in the social institutions, customs, and cultural values is not voluntary rather a forced one as people do not have any other alternatives. This is reflected in the anger, frustrations and discontent in their everyday experiences. The discontent lead them to struggle to achieve their true self and over come the false self which is imposed on them by the society. The dominants everywhere alienates people from their natural self by projecting an untrue and false image of oppressed.

> "Alienation is a matter of some sort of separation, non-identity or disunity which ought to be overcome, for reasons pertaining to man's essential nature or to the character of true humanity. In this tradition, the idea of alienation is

thus intimately linked with the notion of self-alienation. And the 'self' or kind of 'selfhood' in question is not construed in terms of the actual disposition and various felt needs and wants of particular human beings. Rather it is understood in terms of certain traits and attainment regarded as constitutive of human life as it can and should be lived. Thus 'self-alienation' here signifies either dehumanisation or incomplete (stunted or thwarted) humanisation" (Geyer & Schweitzer, 1976:135).

The self-Alienation is a state of mind in which human beings become alien and loose subjectivity. They hold the reality which does not reflect their interests rather the interests of their superiors. This suppressed and degraded consciousness is the function of unequal power relationships between human beings. Critical theory challenges this by bring subordination and violence at the core while understanding reality in the society. Boltanski says,

"Critical theories of domination posit the existence of profound, enduring asymmetries which, while assuming different forms in different contexts, are constantly duplicated to the point of colonizing reality as a whole. They adopt the point of view of the totality. The dominated and the dominant are everywhere, whether the latter are identified as dominant class, dominant sex or, for example dominant ethnicity. What is involved is not only not directly observable, but also invariably eludes the consciousness of actors" (Boltanski, 2011: 2).

Critical theory treats social reality in its totality rather than its specificity. Therefore all reality is the product of human actions. It believes that social reality is not externally determined but it is humanly created phenomena. Knowledge is not something which can be experienced from outside it is all within the domain of our felt day to day experiences. It therefore rejects the existentialism of scientific method and critical of historical determinism of Marxism as they both reduce human reality. Its focus is then on the whole of society particularly the culture which shapes the overall human experiences of people in the society.

Critical knowledge does not present a positive picture of society. It takes a negative evaluation of society in the sense that they negate the already given reality. It believes that present society is repressive, it constraints people by denying the free will and suppresses human consciousness and their actions. It is not satisfied with present explanations of reality therefore their interest is to transform or change the society by recognizing critique as necessary and immanent tool to overcome alienation and exploitation.

"Uncritical thinking derives its beliefs, norms, and values from existing thought and social practices, while critical thought seeks alternative modes of thought and behaviour from which it creates a standpoint of critique. Such a

critical standpoint requires developing what Marcuse calls "negative thinking," which "negates" existing forms of thought and reality from the perspective of higher possibilities. This practice presupposes the ability to make a distinction between existence and essence, fact and potentiality, and appearance and reality" (kellner, 1991:XV).

They present picture where individual subjectivity is suppressed by dominant truth. If society has to be transformed and social change is to occur it cannot be possible by mere knowing the reality. Knowledge should make us question the reality of the society. Knowledge should not be the mirror of society rather it should show mirror to the society in the sense it should not mere tell how society is rather it should inform us how it should not be like that. It should question the present conditions where violence not only exist but also normalised as natural. Descriptive or explanatory knowledge does liberate human beings it merely produce information without any visions. It does destabilize our understanding about taken for granted realities of life, it does not make human introspect their reality. True knowledge destabilizes our often taken for granted reality, it questioned the basic assumptions of the world.

SOCIAL THEORY, RECONSTRUCTION AND EMANCIPATION

Human beings due to their humanly traits like reflexivity question violence and injustice. They are not passive, submissive and meek by nature. Therefore, they do not accept violence as natural, inevitable and justified. They do not give their consent for their suppression. They know that it is humanly created circumstances and conditions therefore it can be altered, modified and transformed with critical engagement with the society. They respond to violence on the basis of their judgments, reflections and experiences. They reject it in different ways not necessarily through physical confrontation only. The process involves reimagining, restructuring and reconstructing society which is more peaceful and just. The methodology, means and tools that the marginalized employ and adopt are not fixed. Their worldview is flexible, diverse and dynamic therefore they are always ready to adopt any method or means which is able to change the social arrangements and end exploitation.

The nature of knowledge determines nature of our visions, alternative and options that human beings think of. Therefore it is important to question the

epistemological foundations of knowledge, whether knowledge should make us aware of facts of life or it should make us aware how those facts of life have controlled us. Emancipatory knowledge is based on a vision of human society it explores possibilities, potentials and capabilities and guided towards reconstruction of the society and history and set the agenda for liberation. It frees people from the chains and bondages which so far have controlled them psychologically. Jacob bronowski says,

> "Knowledge is not a loose-leaf notebook of facts. Above all, it is a responsibility for the integrity of what we are, primarily of what we are as ethical creatures. You cannot possibly maintain that informed integrity if you let other people run the world for you while you yourself continue to live out of a ragbag of morals that come from past beliefs. That is really crucial today" (Mani, 2014).

The philosophy of knowledge is not mere collection of facts, interpreting the events, analyzing the facts. It is rather to correct those facts and values which are wrongly set in the society. Placing ethics above knowledge, Rousseau suggested that the regeneration would come about not by scientific and technological improvement but by humanity's rediscovery and renewal of itself. True knowledge does not mere reveal facts it engage with those facts critically. It challenges those facts which serve the interests of dominant sections in the society. It is not knowing about people and society rather what we know already has been controlled, fabricated and mis-represented. True Knowledge lead to self determination, in the sense it helps people determine their self and allow freedom to question their domination. It promotes freedom, equality and creates alternatives. Paulo Freire says,

> "Man's ontological vocations is to be a 'subject' who acts upon and transform his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. This world to which he relates is not a static and closed order, a given reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather, it is a problems to be worked on and solved" (Shaull, 2000: 32).

The normative concerns of society should be the guiding principles of all kinds of knowledge. Critical theory since its inception critical of society and its culture for controlling actors in the society. They are critical of those fixed methods and fixed goals of knowledge about human society which has been propagated by certain kinds of knowledge. Critical knowledge should make us question of the taken for granted realties of life. It expects from society to reject those practices and beliefs

which cannot be justified on the basis of our reflection. It promotes rational and free thinking so that people are able to liberate themselves from imposed realities of life.

> "It must be capable of projecting a different world view, a redefinition of existing problems and their possible solutions, which will resolve the crisis engendered by the older paradigm of positivism. It must enable us to see the facts differently, allow us to give new meaning to those facts, lead us to discovery of newly relevant facts, and provide us with a way out of the immanent technocratic domination projected by existing theories and validated by the method of empiricism" (Farganis, 1975: 484-5).

The application of positivism inspired scientific method on human society produced very problematic understanding about human beings and society. It imagined and reduced human world to be still, stagnant, fixed, static, externally determined, non-changing and pre-deterministic and guided by some universal principles and laws. This scientific knowledge transformed active human world into a passive world which can be observed, classified, interpreted and predicted by applying some fixed criteria or principles. Therefore observation, classification, analysis, and prediction duplicated with description, explanation, interpretation and generalization. The empiricist approach of knowledge did not focus on the reflexivity and consciousness of human beings who are constantly changing their world with their own efforts and experiences. Similarly, While many of the dominant approaches Marxism (particularly Scientific Marxism) or constructivism to knowledge are guided by their specificity whether it is in regard to a fixed method or particular goal, therefore their criticism of reality is also not comprehensive but partial. The critique is guided against some particular rather than a collective whole.

Critical theory of society concerns itself with the enlightenment and emancipation of its subjects. It is interested in liberating individuals from the inner coercion that people live within their daily lives.

> "Critical social science (critical theory) seeks to expose the ways in which social and cultural realities may be hindering the human potential of all people. This exposure is accomplished by encouraging oppressed group members to examine societal structures as well as their own values, beliefs and assumptions about everyday life. Critical social science is based on the belief that individuals do not need an expert to tell them what to do; they are capable of becoming enlightened about hidden influences in their own personal and social situations. It is assumed that praxis, or emancipative action toward making change, will occur once people are enlightened" (Morgaine, 1994: 325).

Transformation of society is not possible without transforming people who make up any society. It is people who make up any reality and it is through people

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only that social transformation can be achieved. Forced transformation without people having consensus may not sustain itself. The purpose of knowledge should be to make people aware of those realities which have been taken for granted and made it final. Human beings are not driven by their fixed human traits like animals; they are not animals who are guided by their impulses, instinct and bodily requirements. They are far superior beings who have curiosities, wide and diverse thinking, sensibilities, appreciations for taste, languages, sense of art, beauty, aesthetics, etc. They can very well control their environment and behavior as per their rational requirement, coordinate and cooperate with each other for common goals. They are not a bunch of hungry animals that will do everything to satisfy their ends at the cost of other human beings.

C.W. Mills says, "Knowledge is no longer widely felt as an ideal; it is seen as an instrument" (Mani, 2014:172). Knowledge is no more seen in separation from politics. It is rather a very active agent in changing the politics itself. Knowledge is definitely is an instrument, but it can work in both ways it can work like a tool for transformation at the same time it can also become tool for oppression. "Based on habermas' (1971) thesis in knowledge and human interests that claims to value-free knowledge obscure the human interests inherent in all social knowledge, critical theorists hold that there is no end to ideology, part of culture where ideology does not permeate. This most certainly include the university and the production of social knowledge. Hesse (1980) terms the recognition of the pervasiveness of values and the openly emancipatory intent of a critical social science as "epistemological breaks" portending a more reflexive and, hence, valid human science" (Lather, 1999: 249).

Knowledge can be used as a tool to transform the society but it can also be a used as an instrument for oppression. All knowledge fulfills certain ideological and normative objectives and goals. Therefore knowledge is never without implications and consequences in the society. It becomes ideology of status quo when and if, it does not help us transform the society in the desired ways. Socrates says, "All knowledge that is divorced from justice must be called cunning" (Mani, 2014: 171). True knowledge does not merely inform us about the problems but it is directed towards making society more just, rational and egalitarian. Knowledge is a critical process of reconstruction of the society to make is more humane, rational and just. It has to serve the purpose of liberation and emancipation of the common masses. It should reveal the processes and conditions which led to exploitation and slavery

appear as unproblematic, unavoidable, smooth and in the interests of all in the society. If knowledge does not make people think independently, restore their subjectivity and challenge their chains cannot be called knowledge but an ideology of status quo.

Immanent critique is the core of critical theory; it is persistent critique against domination. Immanent critique is a means of detecting the societal contradictions which offer the most determinate possibilities for emancipatory social change. Critical theory is persistent in their critique of the social and cultural formations rather than of any specific goal therefore critical theory is more of a method rather than a theory as such. Immanent critique is essential rejection of the already given.

> "Immanent critique has two critical moments: one is moving from ideology to social reality and the other in the obverse direction. The goal of the method is immanent truth which unifies what is, with the determinate possibilities for, what could be. Schroyer describes immanent critique as a means of restoring 'actuality to false appearance' by first describing 'what a social totality holds itself to be and then confronting it with what it is in fact becoming" (Antonio, 1981: 338).

There are already contradictions in the society and these are located within the beliefs and social structures. "Horkheimer argues that immanent critique describes the dialectic in history which is driven by the contradiction between ideology and reality. Elites attempt to stall change by denying these contradictions; they portray a false unity of the ideal and real. However, the greater the ideological claims, the more dangerous they become to their social contexts" (ibid). As an immanent critique of domination, the truth of critical theory lies in neither absolute nor instrumental reason, but in the determinate negation of domination.

CASTE, KNOWLEDGE AND SUBJECTIVITY

Caste is one of the most prominent and rigid social stratification systems in India. It has its origin and source in religion and sacred texts. Hence, it is imbedded in religion and culture therefore is deeply internalized as a customary practice. The stratification does not appear to be a matter of concern or problem as it is religiously sanctioned, culturally shared and socially acceptable and legitimized phenomenon. It is so deep rooted in cultural beliefs and has such a long history of its presence that it is taken for granted. A person without caste is often seen as a person without identity, history and location. Caste is essentially about patterned orders and grades and cannot

function without hierarchies. Hence it becomes really difficult to associate or relate with others due to the absence of pre-determined meanings. Its influence has been so strong in history that those religions which did not have the idea of caste also developed caste or alike categorization within themselves.

The origin and source of caste lies in the Brahmanic sacred texts and knowledge systems. According to Brahmanic religious theology, doctrines, sacred texts, and *weltanschauung*, the universe is a pre-determined, divinely created and external and beyond to human will and control. Hence the present nature of world is theoretically and conceptually ordered, natural and normal. The grading and division of people into hierarchal groups is for the proper functioning of the society. In this division of society each group has a predetermined and fixed role, function and status according to their place in the social and religious hierarchy. According to Franco & Sherry Chand,

> "Varna discourse authenticates itself with the claim that the lord instituted this order for the optimum functioning of humankind and the world. It is, therefore eternally valid, and any discourse which attempts to step out-side it or to temper with it is a grievous sin against the almighty and the rest of human humankind" (Franco & Sherry Chand, 2009: 14).

This view theoretically holds that it is not a social construction rather a divine creation therefore outside of the purview of change, modification and alternation by humans. The caste is not mere a division of people rather a division of the world into various hierarchical, ordered, patterned meanings and associations. It is the hierarchal arrangement of society into clusters, groups and categories who have graded hierarchal and unequal power, prestige, rights, duties and privileges. This division is not a matter of denial, subjugation and violence rather a matter of religious prescriptions and duty, cultural beliefs, norms and a matter of identity. It is believed to have been created by god therefore beyond to reason and critique. It is assumed to be inevitable and necessary for the proper functioning of the world. According to Thorat "In this hierarchical arrangements castes are artfully interlinked in such a manner that the rights and privileges of higher castes become the disabilities of lower castes, particularly former untouchables and other lower castes" (Thorat & kumar, 2009: 4). This system of graded hierarchy manifests in different sphere and activities. Those who are located at the top of this hierarchy have many privileges like secured income, freedom, respect, rights etc while those who are located at the bottom have duties, insecured livelihood, humiliation and sufferings.

The division is not merely an empirical manifestation rather it has been there in the history for a very long time. The presence and impact of caste in the society has been so deep, pervasive and strong that it divides people into clusters or groups who share with each others divided histories, different visions and differential relationships. It is deep rooted in history, language, attitudes, life style, practices and customs that most of the time people are (un)conscious of its presence in their interaction with others.

> "Caste is etched into the social fabric by codes of conduct governing modes of address, attire and physical positioning that carry most force in isolated villages'… 'the ways in which people walk, work, act, dress, talk and even the things that they eat help to constitute the everyday reality of caste" (Gorringe & Rafanell, 2007: 103-4).

It is so skin deep that "the very way of dressing, the use of vocabulary, and the gestures adopted would reveal who (which caste) she/he is" (Jayaharam, 1992: 4). There are different symbols, icons, markers that people use consciously and unconsciously to differentiate themselves from others. William Dalrymple, in his book *the age of kali: Indian travels & encounters* (1998) observes, "the way you trained your moustache-upwards, downwards, or across- and the knot with which you tied your *dhoti* defined you even more closely, and could show even your sub-caste" (Dalrymple, 1998: 114). This clearly shows how deep and strongly it operates in the society. It is clearly not a matter of choice rather something which is given to them by their families, culture and society. Hence it does not lie within the individuals it is rather imposed and instilled in them though force, coercion and power. This forceful imposition involves tensions and conflict both outside and inside. Caste is clearly a matter of denial of subjectivity, loss of individuality, and suppression of hopes and choices. People are forced to believe caste as a natural and normal phenomenon in the interests of all. It is not seen nor is it projected as a something which curtails their hopes, choices, dignity, personhood and freedom.

Caste has been a power determined and political question as it involves denial, subjugation and forceful imposition of will by others. It has not been seen this way either by the society or by the literature specially the literature which has been produced from positivist framework. The dominant perspectives and approaches like scientific, Constructionism and Marxism have their own inbuilt theoretical and methodological limitations. They operate on certain granted assumptions about social reality. These approaches take a narrow view to knowledge therefore lack

comprehensive picture of reality due to rigidity of methods and partial view of visions. The problem has its roots in the very foundation of knowledge itself which is occupied with knowing the society rather than critically engaging itself with it. These approaches and perspectives lacked reflexivity therefore rather than producing a real and reflective picture of society it presented a dominantly perceived view as reality. The caste issue has been mis-represented and mis-conceived due to narrow methodologies and theoretical designs. It has been systematically depoliticized or reduced as a non-political or apolitical question due to the positivist treatment. Caste is still a reality and there are many people who still justify it in the name of traditions and customs. This raises the fundamental questions about the perspective, approach and treatment of the question of caste.

One of the most important works on caste has been by Louis Dumont. This work became one of the major works and many were forced to engage with it. It has been critiqued by many due to many reasons. But it provoked and instigated many people to do research and write about it. Dumont works has been critiqued for producing the Brahmanical version of Indian reality when it focuses on the purity and pollution as a marked principle in determining the experiences of people. While criticizing Dumont's work for its presentation of Indian reality. Berreman says,

> "The human meaning of caste for those who live it is power and vulnerability, privilege and oppression, honor and denigration, plenty and want, reward and deprivation, security and anxiety. As an anthropological document, a description of caste which fails to convey this is a travesty" (Berreman,1979:159).

The understanding that has been derived from such works then has been sectarian, partial, one-sided version of reality. Knowledge itself is dis-located, de-contextualized, and detached from totality of human reality and experiences. Brij Ranjan Mani, noted author and writer says "Our understanding of caste will remain forever incomplete without understanding the politics of knowledge that nurtured and normalized it from the dim and distant past to the present time"(Mani, 2012).

Most of the influential works on caste is carried by scholars like Srinivas, Dumont, Moffat, Ghurye, Beteille, Gupta. All these works are largely anthropological and ethnographical in nature. Anthropology and ethnography as discipline focus more on accuracy of events rather than the implication of such works on the society. These are not critical works by default. They are more concerned about objectivity,

neutrality and unbiased description of reality as observed by them. In that process these end up producing dominant view of reality. According to Uma Chakravarthi,

> "In a deeply hierarchical society like ours, it is not surprising that sociological writing- whose practitioners have mostly been men- often intellectualize and thereby masks rather than explains the structure of the caste system. It gives an over-emphasis on the ideology of the caste system, namely, on its ritual aspect, to the exclusion of material conditions and questions of power. This is a consequence of focusing on the brahmanical view drawn from brahmanical texts. It completely evades the views of Dalit writers who have provided a counter view on the caste system by focusing on the experiential dimensions of caste based oppression. Scholars like Louis Dumont and Michael Moffat dominate the world of sociological scholarship rather than Joan Mencher or Gerald berreman precisely because they present the caste system as a system of consensual values - a set of value accepted by both the dominant and the dominated" (Chakravarthi, 2006: 6-7).

Caste affects everyone when people are not allowed to exercise their choices in various matters whether it is food or choosing life partners. For many, caste is a secular, natural and unproblematic part of their identity. For some it is a matter of pride while for many it is humiliation. Most of the time, it is casteism that people deny not their caste. But when one hears of caste it is mostly associated with dalits and Adivasis. This clearly shows how the discourses on caste have been built which gives clear way out to its beneficiaries. Ghanshyam says,

> "Like Brahmans, Dalits do not have material interests in maintaining a caste based hierarchy. The practice of hierarchy among them is cultural imposition rather than their own preference, thanks to the hegemony of the dominant caste milieu in which they live. Dalits do not imitate Brahmans and Brahmanical ideology per se but emulate dominant caste which is in their immediate vicinity" (Shah, 2001: 27).

Those who are the sufferers of this ideological structure do not see it as a system but exploitation and a matter of power. Academic approach towards caste has been more of description and explanation rather than critical and emancipatory. Enrico Fasana (1976) while concluding about Ambedkar's writings, remarks that "on the whole it seems to me that more than scientific studies, his papers and books on the caste system represents political document, though certain admissions are amazing for their objectivity" this conclusion seems to be shared by the entire sociological community, including the scholars closest to him, in my opinion, like M.N. Srinivas or Louis Dumont, which never quotes any of his texts (Herrenschmidt, 2004: 37). Although caste has been a political matter but it is systematically depoliticized and secularized by dominant academic practice.

The theoretical and methodological position of this knowledge had huge implications to the society. It fabricated and mis-represented the reality in the society which also had its own political implications. First, they reduced caste to mere Untouchability and discrimination, secondly, caste was linked with Dalits and Adivasis only, thirdly, it is assumed that caste is peculiar to villages; fourthly, it was imagined to be found exclusively among Hindus, fifthly, it is understood as a system rather than an ideology. Sixthly, the regional and historical character of caste is often overlooked; in some regions caste does not matter at all or has little significance. Although Brahmins are the clear beneficiaries of caste but they have hundreds of sub-divisions among themselves and some Brahmins consider themselves so pure that they avoid touching their own family members.

The early studies on caste were executed in villages due to the popular belief that caste was a rural phenomenon. It lacked multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches and perspectives. It was a descriptive view of reality which did not take into account the totality of phenomena. The dominant academic understanding about caste has been shaped by those village studies. Most of the literature produced on caste is not the first hand account of those who suffered from caste. Caste has been studied from outside, therefore it lacked empathy and zeal. These studies did not reflect the critical accounts of the experiences of people who suffered from it. Most of the studies on caste treated caste as a system which can be studied and observed from outside. According to Robert Deliege "Until 1960, the untouchable had practically never been studied from the inside and what was known about them came, in most cases, from studies conducted in high caste villages" (Deliege, 2001: 28).

The earliest sociologists and social anthropologist in India were from the privileged caste background. Most of them were Brahmins like G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas, T.N. Madan, R.K. Mukerjee, etc. Among them the G.S. Ghurye is usually credited for contributing towards "anthropologisation of Indian sociology" (Oommen, 2008: 60). They could not separate themselves from their own location and this is very much reflected in their understanding about reality. In an interview Srinivas says, "I am a Sri Vaishnava Brahmin by birth, but it will take me years to do a proper anthropological study of a Sri Vaishnava community, and a life-time to master the complex theology and ritual of different groups and subsects among them" (Ibid: 62). There is more concern towards objectivity and neutrality in his writings. Hence most of his writings are descriptive and analytical in nature rather than critical.

The social background had its effect in their theorization, conceptualization, and writings. One of the most important works on caste especially during colonial period is "castes of mind" by Nicholas dirks. This work has been heavily criticized because it out rightly blamed British for the invention of caste. Couple of years back Nicholas Dirks writes an article "G.S. Ghurye and the politics of sociological knowledge" in which he writes, "Ghurye has influenced my own work on caste and Indian society. He was the first anthropologist to turn his attention to the dangerous effects of colonial discourse and colonial institutions on the fundamental institutions of Indian society" (Dirks, 2013: 240). This clearly shows how the sociological knowledge and the sociologists had nationalist visions and character in their priorities and theorizations. They had their own pre-conceived notions, biases and prejudices which led them treat reality in particular ways. M.N. Srinivas did not stay in dalit *Basties* (Residential clusters) for his field works. At one place he acknowledges that "I would have obtained a new angle on the village (caste) if I had spent more time in their (untouchable) areas" (Deliege, 2001: 28).

It is very rare to find reference of the B.R. Ambedkar in Srinivas writings. The reality has been presented in a particular ways which deeply reflected his biases and position. His concept of Sanskritisaiton was criticized by Edmund Leach for its' being Brahmanic centric and did not reflect the *Sudra* or untouchable views. Srinivas Responds, "…my stressing of the importance of the backward classes movement, and of the role of caste in politics and administration, are very probably the result of my being a south India, and a Brahmins at that. The principle of caste quotas for appointments to posts in the administrations, and for admissions to scientific and technological courses, produced much bitterness among Mysore Brahmins. Some of these were my friends and relatives, and I could not help being sensitive to their distress" (Pandian, 2002: 1738). The early sociologist and social anthropologists were largely from the Brahmin caste which is reflected in their priorities, theorization and treatment. They could not separate themselves for their own social background and biases.

These earliest thinkers and their works not only failed to grasp the dynamism of the society but also failed to give enough attention to the deep relationship of caste ideology with other themes like gender, race, ethnicity, region, religion, sexuality, labour and work, etc. The degradation of women has been the direct consequence of the ideology of Brahmanism. The Brahmanic belief system and ideology does not see

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women to be equal to men therefore they are forced to live dependent, inferior and degraded life. According to Uma chakravarthi,

> "caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy are the organizing principles of the brahmanical social order and despite their close interconnections neither scholars of the caste system nor feminists scholars have attempted to analyze the relationship between the two…the sexuality of women, more than that of men, is the subject of social concern. Yalman argues that a fundamental principle of hindu social organization is to construct a closed structure to preserve land, women and ritual quality within it" (Chakravarti, 2013: 4-5).

Women are denied equality and there is strict control over their bodies, sexuality and behavior by an elaborate list of code of conduct. Caste and its ideology affect everyone in the society. Since caste come as a culture people do not realize its hidden coercion and power. They see its effects only when they try to exercise their free will. It affects and reduces human beings with a pre-determined choices and alternatives whether in the matters of selecting life partners, practicing faiths, eating and dining, sexual behaviour, friendships, marriages etc. Caste and its given codes affects everyone be it women, minorities, homosexuals when choices are denied to human beings. When one imagines caste it is often the imagination of someone we identify as Dalits or Adivasis. These images itself are evidence that caste issue has been reduced, Mis-conceived and narrowed down to some identities. The relationship of caste with other identities has not been looked seriously whether it is related to gender, language, ethnicity, work, sexuality, minorities and regionality.

BRAHMANISM, RESISTANCE AND CRITIQUE

The question of caste is very complex because it involves religion, culture, history, beliefs, institutions, morality, language, customs and complex hierarchal, patterned, and unequal relationships between human beings. It exists as an idea and ideology which is largely shared as a cultural norm and relationship. This ideology produces itself as a structure in various spheres of life. Caste divides human beings therefore it also divides their worlds, meanings, associations, relationships, visions, perspectives. It is a very expanded and pervasive phenomenon which virtually covers every sphere of human activity. It involves religion, language, practices, identities, history(ies), habits, opinions, work and occupations, food, eating, attitudes, symbols, duties, clothing and dressing, roles, icons, customs region, geography etc.

The ideology which is the back bone of caste is Brahmanism. The Brahmanism is an elaborated system of beliefs, customs and practices which give graded meanings to everything in this world as it is assumed that the universe is created by Lord Brahma. Theoretically it makes caste as old as the history of universe itself and the meanings, associations and relationship between objects and the subjects are pre-determined. This idea applies to all the human beings, natural objects and categories. The idea of caste or gradedness transcends the various socio-cultural and historic categories. This makes caste universal phenomena i.e. which comprehensively (i.e. universally) covers the consciousness of people. Everywhere in the world people have hierarchal meanings and relationships with the nature, objects and people but these are dynamic. The caste in India is a deeper, pervasive and stronger than other identities like gender, class, region, race; sexuality etc.

The justification for this hierarchal, inequal and unjust division of society comes from the Brahmanic interpretation of this world. The hierarchal division does not appear as problems as this social divide is assumed to be a natural categorization between human beings on the basis of their capabilities, talents, and potentials. The philosophy of caste is based on a notion which holds that the world is outside of the will and control of human beings as it is externally determined. This justifies violence as natural, normal and inevitable and human outside from the purview of human will and control. This view transforms the human world into animal world and produces social Darwinism. The animal's world reality of "The survival of the fittest" is reproduced in and as caste in the human world. The social Darwinism is based on the same principles of biological, physical, and genetic superiority. In the animals world the stronger one eats and fed the weaker one and the same principle is also applied in human world where the stronger one eat and fed on the weaker one.

According to Brahmanic belief birth is not an accident; it is pre-determined, calculated, divine will which transcends from one world to another. Therefore human being cannot do anything in changing the nature of experiences, order, meaning by their independent will. The Hindu world view theoretically justifies inequalities as being divine and external to human will. Opposite and contrarily to this, there lies some parallel, plural, dialectic, opposite traditions called Sramanism. The Sramanic practices were unorthodox set of beliefs and customs directed towards living a life based on morality and ethics and compassion.

"Sramanic atheism is not a variety of irreligion. It faces the evil and suffering of life, squarely and attributes it to human failings rather than to the mysterious design of an unknown being. It stresses the inexorableness of the moral law. No prayers and worship are of any avail against the force of karman…this is quite different from the Vedic view where illumination comes from outside, either from an eternally revealed word or from the grace of god" (preface, Pande, 1978).

The fixed idea of the world has been imposed by Brahmins on people. Therefore violence and grading of people into different caste is not a problem to overcome rather a normal, natural and inevitable truth to be accepted. If the violence, exploitation and suppression are accepted as un-natural or cause of human actions, this means the rejection of pre-determined and divine will. The idea that people are low and high on the basis of birth has never been accepted by people. In Indian history, people have rejected the idea of people being high and low on the basis of their birth. They defined themselves as per their convictions and experiences from society. In the distant past there were many plural and heterogeneous traditions and school of thought which were against Brahmanic version of reality often collectively known as Sramanas. According to Romila Thapar, the Sramanas 'believed in universal egalitarian ethics which radically "differed from the tendency to segment religious practice by caste which was characteristic of Brahmanism" (Thapar, 2010:7). While other religions like Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, at least in principle, accept that all human beings are equal, Hindu world view justifies inequality in principle, it sees exploitation, inequality, suppression as a matter of divine will rather than human construction. Contrasting Brahmanic and Sramanic view, Upadhyay, says,

"various dissenting traditions like Jainism, buddism, ajivikas, charvakass and lokayatas, which differed from Brahmanism in a comprehensive manner, and later islam and the bhakti movement, provided strong alternatives for the subordinated and oppressed groups in Indian society" (Upadhyay, 2010: 37).

The medieval Bhakti movement was an attack on the caste ideology. Bhakti was held to be an egalitarian pre-vedic religion practiced by the original inhabitants of India, the adi-hindus, from whom the untouchables began to trace their lineage (Gooptu, 1993: 277). The Indian history is full of example of parallel, diverse and egalitarian philosophies and ideologies. Some of them emerged in the medieval period known as Nirguan bhakti. These traditions and world views rejected the caste and the violence exploitation and suppression in the name of birth. They considered caste

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being an irrational, inhumane, exploitative and divisive idea. The idea of equality and justice came from many of the *nirgun* bhakti saints like kabir "Ramanand And Raidas in The North; Chaitanya and Chandidasa in The East; Eknath, Chokh Mela, Tukaram And Narsinh Mehta in The West; And Ramanuja, Nimbarka And Basava in South India" (Shah, 2001: 199).

In some parts it was more influential like in north india where this orthodoxy was at its peak. It was the popular *bhakti* saints like kabir, ravidas, Rahim, nanak, dadudayal. These saints came from different social categories but when they talked about equality, justice and they were readily accepted by lower castes who were suffering from various social disabilities. All these saints criticized caste and rejected brahmanical interpretation of the world. The Brahmins are proud of their high origin and their sacred texts, but they are the real ignorant people who are far away from truth. Bhakti sought to renew faith on the basis of principles rather than resort to textual authority by passionless Brahmins. Kabir says "pandits sat and read the law, babbled of what they never saw"…it's all one skin and bone, one piss and shit, one blood, one meat. From one drop, a universe. Who's Brahmin? Who's shudra" (Mandelsohn & Vicziany, 1998: 22).

The legitimacy of caste and superiority of Brahmins have never been accepted by the people in the society. There have been social movements against it throughout history in different regions, groups, and periods. In the Punjab region when Sikhism emerged it spread the message of love, peace and equality. It appealed to the lower castes that were carrying the burden of identity for centuries. They accepted Sikhism and Sikh gurus with open arms and became its disciples. Stephen Fuchs (1965) mentions numerous social movements in different part of India against the orthodoxy, brutality and exploitation that has been going on for hundreds of years. Many of these regional movements were reformist in nature and were directed to raise consciousness and restore the dignity of people who have been labeled as degraded. Most of these movements were regional in character and used vernacular language, popular culture, mythical icons and symbols to raise awareness against exploitation.

One of the first and most critical conceptualization about caste came from Jyotiba Phule. He was another great social reformer who led attack on caste and Brahmanical hegemony over knowledge. According to Phule,

> "Hindu religion as the worldview of specifically Brahman social groups. This worldview served Brahman interests both in matters of religious authority

and in the secular spheres of administrative power, occupational competition, and the ability itself to comprehend the realities of political relationships within society. Although other castes might accept it, Brahmanic religion could represent for them only a false consciousness and an unknowing servitude to the interests of brahmans themselves" (O'hanlon, 2002: 123).

Jyotiba Phule opposed the idea of graded hierarchy of human beings. He critiqued caste for dividing society, creating slavery to the masses and privileging few. He was the first person who openly defied the Brahmanical hegemony. He educated his wife going against the Vedic and Brahmanic traditions which denied women rights to education. Phule identified women and untouchables as the most marginalized in the society. He along with this wife opened many schools for the upliftment of these sections. In his book called "*Gulamgiri*" considered peasants and untouchables together as a community of the oppressed, suffering under Brahman slavery (Omvedt, 2004: 12). Kumar says,

> "Jyotiba Phule was the first to assert a unity with other oppressed people throughout the world, and it is not an accident that in dedicating *Gulamgiri* to the abolition of slavery in the United States, he was one of the first few men of his time to identify with Black Americans" (kumar, 2009: 1-2).

After the combined and parth breaking efforts and works of jyotiba and Savitri Bai Phule Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maraharaj of Kolhapur state was one of the most important figures who fought against the tyranny of caste was. He bitterly fought against social disabilities, superstition, caste atrocities. It is during his tenure that a lot of steps were taken for the empowerment of masses. He was one of the rare kings who went against the culture, customs and traditions. One of the most important areas where he invested his energy was the removal of social, economic inequalities and untouchability. He introduced various kinds of reforms for the welfare of the masses during his tenure from 1894 to 1922. During his visit to England in 1902, he issued an order from England, to the effect, that 50 percent posts of the state services should be reserved for the backward class candidates. This was indeed a landmark in his career as a social reformer (Khane, 2006: 6). He opened the gate of public services, education and employments for the large sections of people including women and untouchable. In 1908 he founded an education society with the object of spreading education among the untouchable classes of the Kolhapur state.

One of the most profound and organized attack on caste and caste determined inequalities came from B.R. Ambedkar. He theorized caste as violence and rejected it as being divisive, sectarian, and harmful for the society. He said that hindu social

order promote inequalities it is very much against freedom and fraternity. It divides human beings into various castes who are arranged hierarchally with each others. He says if the caste has survived it is due to "graded inequality", "the soul of caturvarna (Chaturvarna)', is very dangerous, because everyone, every caste, has internalized it; it gives every one social advantages, expressing its difference from the others, creating its identity, its uniqueness" (Ambedkar, vol. 7: 307). When the human beings are graded it also grades every activity which they do. Hence this gradedness is carried forward in other spheres like work, identity, politics, customs, eating and sharing etc.

According to Ambedkar caste is the biggest obstacle in the formation of a shared, collective identity. He attacked Hindu scriptures, religion as it promotes hatred, violence and killed the human spirit of fraternity. He says

> "Hindu society as such does not exist; it is only a collection of casts, each caste is conscious of its existence. Its survival is the be all and end all of its existence. Castes do not even form a federation. A caste has not feeling that it is affiliated to other castes except when there is a Hindu Muslim riot. On all other occasions each caste endeavors to segregate itself and to distinguish itself from other castes…hindu must be like a rat living in his own hole refusing to have any contact with others. There is an utter lack among the Hindus of consciousness of kind. Every hindu the consciousness that exists is consciousness of his caste" (Ambedkar, 2007: 17-8).

He defied caste and its customs which denied equality to the Dalits by raising many specific movements like 'Mahad Tank Satyagrah' in 1927 to open public sources of drinking water for the untouchables, burning of Manu Smriti in 1927 to reject the "sacred" text which preaches discrimination, Kala Ram Temple Satyagraha in 1930 to assert the equality of Dalits to access public places. Ambedkar could visualize a society where there is no caste or discrimination at a time which was so conflict ridden. He wrote "annihilation of caste" in 1936 which was a speech which could not be delivered due to its very bold and aggressive message. One of his most deep impacting acts was his conversion to Buddhism in 1956 in Nagpur. This was a revolutionary act in itself as he exercised his free will and expression and right for self-determination.

In south India the crusade against untouchability, social disabilities and ignorance were initiated by many reformers. Some of the prominent faces were Narayan Guru, Ayyankali and periyar. Caste was regressively practiced in south India. The religion and ritual ranking was the demarking principle in allocation of

resources. The Brahmins had the absolute monopoly and hegemony in every sphere of life. Narayan Guru protested the injustice that has been melted out on the large section of people. He founded Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) yogam to do the social work among the masses. He established 'counter temples' which were open to all the section of the society. In these temples young boys from untouchables, particularly *pariah* and *pulaya* communities, were employed to chant the *upnishads*, offer worship in the temple and cook and serve food to the residents and visitors (Omana, 2005: 20).

In kerala, Ayyankali was another great radical leader emerged from a humble background. He resisted the oppression of caste in his life. Ayyankali approach was more aggressive against the discrimination and social prohibitions that have been imposed on a vast section of population. He showed deviance to the social codes and violently resisted against the feudal lords. The untouchable were not allowed to use public roads. In 1893 he willfully broke the institution by travelling though a public road in a *Villuvandi* (bullock cart) and showed resistance against discrimination. His defiance led to moral boosting of the untouchable which led to series of riots in different parts. It turned out to be a civil war kind of situation, these riots are popularly referred as *Chaliyar riots* (Kandasamy, 2007: 69-70). He also fought for the education and land rights of the untouchables. In 1904 he opened a school at *Venganoor* but this school was burnt down by the caste-hindus on the first day itself.

E.V.R. Periyar clearly recognized the pervasive role that caste ideology plays in keeping people bondage. In an article titled "women enslaved" he explains how the brahmanical ideology denies women equality in various spheres of life by imposing them irrational customs, beliefs, superstition and ignorance. These customs and beliefs favour male over female and reduce women as a property of men. He attacks both the Brahmanic religious texts, doctrines and religion for being sectarian, biased and slavery promoting. Periyar throughout his life consistently attacked caste for being a divisive and violence promoting institution. In one of his earliest pronouncement on the nature of caste society, periyar observed how,

> "In our country no one is spared the horrors of untouchability, unseeability, unspeakability and unapproachability. It is customary for a case to consider the one below it [in the hierarchy] to be untouchable and unseeable, whereas the same caste is views as untouchable and unseeable by the caste above it" (*kudi Arasu*, 21/06/25). In such a society, there could no mutuality, only an eternal warring of interests" "while one class is constantly looking to advance its claims through any means whatsoever, other classes are anxious to avoid

being victims of deception" *(Kudi Arasu*, 6/12/25). For periyar and his self respecters, what seemed most distressing was that self loathing which seemed to hold captive the hearts and minds of those consigned to the lowest levels of caste system" (Geetha, 2015: 5).

In the recent past, there has been a great social and political reawakening due to the efforts of kanshiram. He was a radical thinker, visionary, activist and great ideologue and a staunch critique of caste. Kanshi Ram emerged as one of the most important figures after Ambedkar. The untouchable castes had social awareness but no political alternatives therefore they were always manipulated by the existing political parties. Kanshi Ram gave them a dream and aspiration to have a casteless and caste free society. He single handedly created a strong political movement and alternative to the suppressed masses. He organized the untouchable caste across different parts of India and gave them political alternatives in the form of BSP. He seriously checked the conservative sections and political parties and changed the political landscape of India by bringing radical political alternatives to the masses.

LABOUR RESEARCH AND STUDIES

One of the most important aspects of caste is the hierarchal, differential and unequal notions of work and labour. Hence the social inequalities in India are deeply organized in the spheres of work and labour. There is strict, rigid and pervasive division of labour on the basis of social ranking. There is strong relationship between work and caste. The notions, nature, forms of works differ group to group in the social hierarchy. There is differential values associated with works which correspondent to differential social status of each group in the social pyramid. All the occupations are not accorded equal and same status. The notions and value of work differ by their social and religious importance. The occupations are graded differential values on the basis of their spiritual worth. Work therefore is not merely an economic activity or a matter of livelihood. It is much deeply related with the idea of the world and one's place in the world and universe.

In this arrangement those who are located at the top in the social pyramid have cumulative advantages over the others while those located at the bottom have cumulative and disadvantages. This arrangement is not seen as a social construct rather an inevitable and necessary arrangement for the proper functioning of the

society and universe. Hence it is religiously sanctioned, culturally accepted legitimate social order. Thorat & Despande say,

> "economists have paid scant attention to the issues related to caste based economic inequality and its link with economic discrimination as compared to the other social science disciplines which did substantial research on economic inequality and discrimination associated with caste, race, ethnicity, gender and other institutions…although economists have recognized the prevalence of caste based economic inequality, the present stock of understanding explains very little about the various dimensions of the problem" (Thorat & Despande, 2001: 44-45).

The inequalities are not merely economic or empirical rather imbedded in history, relationships and associations with events, phases, symbols, icons, customs, practices and identities. People are divided into thousand of groups with each group differing from other on the basis of history, location, origin, identity, social status, prestige, economic assets, rights, privileges etc. Each caste and group has a fixed, rigid and predetermined position assigned to them by religion and sacred texts. Each caste has a defined and specific occupation which is to be carried out in order to smooth function of the world. There are certain works which are accorded higher, greater and superior value therefore reserved for certain group of people. In opposition and contradiction lie some works are considered to be lower, degraded, and impure therefore reserved for similar kinds of people. The relationship between work and caste is so deep rooted that people judge the caste of a person by the nature of work they do or the nature of work defines the caste of a person. The work largely determines one's caste and one's caste largely determine their work choices and availability. The association has not been broken even till now and People are identified with their traditional occupations whether they are actually engaged with it or not.

The labour research in India so far has not been able to grasp the diverse, heterogeneous and hierarchal nature of the society in India. The labour studies have not given adequate attention to the history, religion and cultural practices in shaping the dynamics of work and social characteristics of the labour force in India. There are serious theoretical and methodological issues associated with labour research in India. Most of the influential works on labour are historical in nature, approach and treatment, time specific (colonial time), specific working class sites (state regulated organized sector) (histo-anthropological sites for researchers), 'India' centric, ethnographic in nature, archival dependent, interpretive in analysis, largely qualitative in content, taking a 'timeless' 'class' perspective and highlighting gender, poor and

caste(s) (within some frame), and the important role of 'state' and officials. The Focus is more on the 'working class' struggles, politics, and ills of 'capitalism' particularly 'colonial capitalism' in its various manifestations. The Marxian conceptualization dominates the discourse on labour which is very much evident in the nature of the literature. It has its effects on the site selection and treatment of the labour research in India.

When one imagines of labour one is naturally directed to some sphere of economic activity or some economic structures. The very notions of labour also bring some cultural imagining of people along with certain fixed attributes. When we think about them we do not think about ourselves it is rather some other person. Therefore there is some exclusivity and grantedness in the way the relationship of work and workers have been constructed and theorized. The symbols and associations are culturally created therefore they shape up our relations with them. This relationship is carried out more specifically in the field of work and labour. When we think of shoes it is the leather workers image that comes to mind rather than a priest. Similarly it is very difficult to imagine temple or temple priest as a reference for labour site or labour. On the same line, when we imagine about nurse it is the women image generated rather than men. There are certain works which are imagined to be a matter of pride, identity and respect like the defense work, priestly work etc. Sex work specially the high profile sex work can be lucrative but seen with indignity and degradation. The works cannot be seen mere by its economic values rather it has to be defined in relation to history and culture of any society. The worth and value of any occupation or work is not economically determined it is rather socially and culturally controlled and determined. There are certain works where the monetary gains are huge but still people do like to engage with them.

One of the important issues which have narrowed the labour research in India is its theoretical and philosophic imagination of labour. Labour research in India is drawn on the western patterns and experience to a largely extent. It is therefore both ideological and imperial in nature. The regional, cultural, and political factors have been overlooked while producing such works. Therefore it lacked the comprehensive and holistic view of reality in India. This has huge theoretical and methodological implications for the labour research itself. Morris, an labour historian says,

> "Group tensions and conflicts in Indian industry take on the characteristics of western industralisation and do not require any analysis specifically

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developed to suit the requirements of an distinctively Indian situation…the group tensions which will confront Indian industry will not be strange to the scholar. They will remind him very much of those which affected other regions in early periods of economic development" (Morris, : 160).

The relationship between culture and economy has not been taken seriously in industrial research in India. There are certain works which are outside of the purview of labour laws as these are not wage works like domestic work, priestly work, self employed artisans, farmer's work etc. Labour research in India since the beginning was more directed towards organized and state regulated sector i.e. large factories, coal mines, tea estates, textiles and textile mills etc. It left out the unorganized sector completely where more than 90 percent of work force employed. The small artisans, farmers, self-employed were left out from labour research as it was more fragmented, scattered and unevenly distributed. Acknowledging the problems in labour research in India, Bhattarcharya & Lucassen say,

> "In India, almost all research has been limited to workers in factories, plantations and mines, where nine out of ten in the working population are even today outside of this formal sector, and there were many more so in colonial times. We need to consider people beyond the boundary of the working class thus defined. Apart from the empirical consideration that we tend to leave out the vast majority, there are theoretical considerations" (Bhattarcharya & Lucassen, 2005:7).

The sites of inquiry in labour research have been large factories and state regulated organized sector which constituted less than 10 percent of the working force. Even at these working sites there was lack of "working class" consciousness. The workers were divided into numerous groups on the basis of region, religion, caste, race, ethnicity, etc. This often resulted into violent conflicts and clashes on many occasions like the festivals, lock outs, recruitments, etc. Dipesh chakrabarthy's important work on Bengal jute workers clearly shows this aspect of industrial labour in India. It is well understood and documented by labour historians at many scattered places. This is more visible from the some of the writings of some of the Marxists. V.V. Giri, one of the prominent figures on labour in India and under whose name V.V.Giri labour institute has been named, while discussing the problems in trade union movement he says,

> "casteism is another feature, which is sometimes see, is the formation of trade unions on communal lines. Foreign rule was mainly responsible for this development. In the Indian trade union movement, there has not been so much of class consciousness as in some other countries. But in India there is caste consciousness, which represents the occupational classification of the

society. Communalism and casteism have been the worst enemies of trade unionism" (Giri, 1958: 52-54).

The labour movements and labour research so far neglected the role played by religion and caste in organization of work in India. Rather than bringing religion and culture to the very inquiry of labour these factors were kept out of labour inquiry as these were considered to be political. There is no surprise wherever trade union movement emerged the caste question became extinct or successfully suppressed.

Some of the highly qualitative, profound and influential works on labour are historical in nature and are based on colonial records and located in period. Peter Robbs (1993) says, "The colonial laws formulated during nineteenth century severely restricted the meaning of work as referring to wage work outside home. This excluded from the category of workers not only house bound women but also artisans, servants and those working under debt-bondage" (Robb, 1993: 45). Labour is not an obvious and natural category it is a constructed ideological category. There are considerable variations about the notions of labour across cultures, societies and histories. These variations also reflect in the perceptions and notions across different social groups and communities. These variations also reflect in the ways people associate with different phases of history. Many groups and people see colonial period as a period of freedom and emancipation as land rights were extended to many oppressed. David Washbrook considers colonial period as a "golden age for pariah" groups as these groups to some extent get rid of slavery, bondage and subjugation and got significant independent during this period from the clutches of monarch, dominant groups.

Brahmanism as ideology has never been the interest area for Indian working class historians or trade union movement in India. They have treated caste as structure therefore their focus was more on to notice the structural patterns and its relationship with the means of production. Morris says, "In studying the economic history of industrial workforce mobilization, it was inevitably tempting to consider influence of caste on that process and the impact of industrial employment on caste. Specifically concerned with the cotton textile industry of Bombay city and the iron and steel industry of Jamshedpur, I discovered that the vast official literature – going back to the 1870s in the case of the cotton industry and to the first decade of this century in the case of the iron and steel industry- contains no significant references to the phenomenon. Except for some casual references, the institution of caste is wholly ignored" (Morris, 1960: 124). Clearly the issue of caste has not got enough attention

by the labour historians as they were more focused on the class formations and its relationships with the factory workers. The moral, ethical and cultural world is not explored in the working class narratives.

There was a conference organized in Amsterdam from 10 to 13 December 1997 on 'the world of Indian industrial labour'. "Breman argued that India's early planners had "ignore(d) the non-industrial way of life of the large majority of the working population". thus the category 'working class' was implicitly defined not only as the industrial working class but, far more narrowly as that part of it which was in the 'formal' (Protected) sector. Further, the term 'labour' for India's planners in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s connoted formal sector industrial workers. thus an extraordinarily narrow view of the 'working class' arose and , breman argued, is implicitly at work, even today…Mark Holmstrom took a rather different stance from breman, in his delineation of the categories of Indian labour. He argued, instead, the need for new maps of Indian labour. He stressed that the context of industrial employment had changed radically in recent years and –rather controversially- claimed that access to formal sector industrial jobs had increased. He rejected giving analytical importance to caste, because "hierarchical caste system has gone, leaving only castes and competing groups" to a large extent, the caste ideology of inequality had lost its social legitimacy, he argued" (Kapadia, 1998: 3305).

Labour studies in India has not been produced or studied by labour it is rather produced by intellectuals or educated and politically well aware class. Therefore it is largely an external, descriptive and analytical literature taking a second and third party narration. This has huge theoretical and methodological implications to the labour research itself. Holmstrom(1976) narrate a romantic imagination of a Brahmin communist who says,

> "Agriculture is 'a free life' and (he) dreams of dividing the family farm among the labouers and educating them politically". 'These are educated people, from the prosperous rural middle classes, who idealize country life as middle class townsmen do. I never heard the same nostalgia for rural life from men whose families were landless labourers or small tenants. They are lucky to have a factory job and they know it" (Holmstrom, 1976: 29).

An important piece of writing has been dug out by Nandini Gooptu while working on the textile mill workers of Kanpur. A mill worker called Kashi Baba articulates his view in an article titled '*chhoote aur bade ka sawal*' ('the question of the big and the small people') written in 1938. He identified caste status as significant determinants

of producing deprivations and exploitation at work sites. He introduced the 'big person' as *shoshak chand* . A '*shoshak*' is an exploiter and '*chand*' is the colloquial version of Chandra, a name prevalent among the higher castes. The 'small person' he called *Dalit Ram.* 'Ram is a second name widely used by untouchables. while the term dalit (literally the downtrodden), had gradually come to denote the untouchables in the early twentieth century. Kashi Baba described shoshak chand as a wealthy person, capable of *chori*, or stealing, not in the sense of thieving, but as one who appropriates social resources and deprives people like Dalit Ram and thus becomes rich. Shoshak Chand was also educated and therefore, *Shaktishali*, or powerful, for he was able to deceive and dominate Dalit Ram by dint of his education. Kashi Baba also presented Sita Ram bajpaye, a high-caste person (likely a Brahmin), to whom maikulal was always forced to be subservient, the latter being an untouchable and considered to be low in status. In identifying the differences between 'big' and the 'small' people in this way, kashi Baba indicated low-caste status as a significant determinant of being poor, illiterate and powerless. (Gooptu, 2001: 143-144).

The Kashi Baba's articulation is important because it is not an external, romanticised and nostalgic account of reality. It is well grounded in a particular and specific history, culture and location. It clearly identifies an oppressor and an oppressed and theorise on the basis of a larger ground reality in India. In a more specific ways, it is the original self expression of a mill worker about the inner dynamics of the life inside and at the work sites. The external realities outside factories affect the work sites, relationships, and mode of behaviour. The very sites are affected and governed by the cultural ethos and customs. There is a clear continuity and reproduction of same relationships between different sets of people and groups on the basis of their ritual and cultural ranking in the social ladder. The traditional social identities have weight over their work identities even in the modern sites of work. There is a clear reproduction of the same identities and relationships inside the factories parallel as it exists outside of the work sites.

The labour research and studies heavily used the Marxian concepts, theories and conceptualisation to study this area. The Marxian approach to labour is based on his understanding of society in terms of class. The relationship between "haves and haves nots" are defined in terms of their relation to means of production. This category is narrow as the site is largely the factories. This excludes the large category of workers who are in informal, unorganised, self employed, service class professions.

It ignores the diversity of the society hence is applicable to only limited sets of people. In excessively hierarchal and diverse societies, there are variations in the perceptions of people on the basis of their social, cultural and historical factors. People do not always see and associate labour with contempt, resistance and marginality. It becomes a pride category due to the variations in the social and cultural locations. There are many who associate labour with dignity and pride. In the writing of Hira Dom, who is considered to be first dalit poet in Hindi, wrote a poem in 1914 entitled 'the complaints of an untouchable' (*eik achchoot ki shikayat*). In which he asserts "we don't beg like brahmans, don't oppress other by wielding sticks like kshatriyas, don't cheat like baniyas…we earn our bread by sweating, and the whole family eats, by equally sharing it" (Upadhyay, 2009: 165).

CHAPTER 2

CASTE, DALITS AND LABOUR PROCESSES: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

RELIGION, IDEOLOGY AND IDENTITY IN INDIA

In Hindu cosmology and worldview, People are divided into different Varnas on the basis of their Gunas. "These three Gunas (qualities or nature) are *Satva* (goodness), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (darkness). When one of these three qualities predominates, the body becomes distinguished by that quality" (Ketkar, 1909: 114). In this classical division certain human beings (as Varna) represent Satva, some Rajas and some Tamas. The Satva is a quality of supreme Varna, Rajas is the quality of higher yet lower Varna while the Tamas is the quality of inferior Varna. These qualities are intrinsic and permanent to the nature of human beings therefore are universal and non-contestable. These are ontological in nature therefore cannot be transferred, altered and changed by human consciousness and acts.

This worldview divides and defines human beings into Varna on the basis of these pre-defined permanent qualities and nature. This graded classification of this world was derived from the sacred religious texts. Hindus attributes these to the divine creation which are beyond of human will and control. "In this passage, the four classes (Varnas) are sharply defined and said to be created from part of the *purusha*, the creator" (Woodburne, 1922: 525-6). The theological explanation and justification for this view is derived from the sacred texts like the Vedas, Manusmriti, Puranas and other scriptures, 'The Hindu sacred writings record that the author of it was the god Brahma, to whom they attribute the creation of the world, and who is said to have established this (categorization) system when he peopled the earth" (Dubois, 1906: 47).

The lord Brahma created this order in which "The Brahmins were product of his brain; the Kshatriyas or Rajashs issues from his shoulders; the Vaisyas from his belly; and the Sudras from his feet" (Jodhka, 2015: 59). This division into high and low are the essential design of the Varna. Therefore graded privileged and duties are assigned on the basis of their place in the Varna order and also the order of their creation. The upper three Varna are called *Dwija* or twice born. They have to

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compulsorily undergo purification ceremony after their birth to attain higher ritual status. The fourth Varna is called Shudra the lowest and at the bottom of this graded division and it was not prescribed for them.

The Shudra was considered to be of inferior origin and conduct. He is labeled meanest of the above three Varna. "In the institutes of Manu they (Shudras) are contrasted with the Brahmans, as being the opposite pole of the social order. The Sudra is declared to be unable to commit an offenses involving loss of caste (they are so low to lose their castes), to be unworthy, to receive a sacrament, and unqualified to hear, learn, recite, or teach the Vedas. The only occupation open to him is that of humble service to the three higher castes" (Woodburne, 1922: 529). The Shudra were further categorized into high and low on the basis of their purity. "Sudras were of two kinds, "pure" or "not excluded" (Aniravasita) and "excluded" (Niravasita). The latter were quite outside the pale of Hindu society, and were virtually indistinguishable from the great body of people later known as untouchables" (Basham, 2004: 144).

The scared religious texts also mention a category of people usually called *Avarnas* (without varna) as contrasted with *Savarna* (with varna). The avarnas were not part of Varna system they are known with different names like *Chandals, Pischaha, Acchut, panchama*. They are often called "untouchable" in contemporary world and are identified as Dalits or SCs in government records and documents (Wagmore, 2007: 9, Thapar, 2002: 63). According to Deliege, "Untouchables were known as Chandala, *Nishad*, a term that designates those who were not allowed to dwell in a town or a village but had to live in special quarters outside the village or town limits, in theory, their main task was the carrying and cremation of corpses…the law books stipulate that chandalas must eat their food from broken vessels and avoid any contact with higher castes, high castes individuals could be reduced to the stats of chandalas by merely touching the latter" (Deliege, 2001: 11).

The Brahmins are located at the top of this social pyramid. "They stand apart from, and above, the others in the social hierarchy for four principle reasons according to the Brahmin authors of Vedic texts: (1) they were created prior to others therefore take precedence; (2) they are the most complete and perfect instance of the human being; (3) they are learned in the Veda; and (4) they had a monopoly on the priesthood and control of the powerful sacrifice" (Smith, 1994: 32). This hierarchal and differentiated power arrangement was based on the basis of origin, order of origin and the Gunas (nature) they possess. Therefore, "the studies of Vedas, austerity, and

knowledge, and purity, etc. are of the quality of goodness. Delighting in adventure, want of firmness, indulgence in sexual pleasure are marks of the quality of activity. Cruelty, covetousness, evil life, etc., are marks of dark qualities" (Ketkar, 1909: 114). Hence, According to Manu the scared law giver, Different categories of people have different kinds of role, duties, and function in this world. Therefore, Brahman has the exclusive right to 'knowledge' (Vedas). The *Kshtriyas*, as the warriors, have to rule the world as per the *Dharmashastra*, he has to preserve the (given) order, the *Vaishyas* to do the business and trade, and the fourth one the Shudra to serve the above three categories (Thorat & Despande, 2001:71).

The birth in the world is predetermined on the basis of their previous Karmas. Schwartzberg argues "birth into a particular caste, be it high or low, is the cardinal element of one's karma-that, reward or punishment for deeds performed in previous earthly existences. In the Indian view, which regards reincarnation as axiomatic, karma is both just and immutable. To play one's proper role in life, according to one's karma, is the basis of dharma, or the duty. In the fulfillment of dharma, largely through the meticulous observation of the manifold rules of one's caste, lies the key to rebirth in a higher state than that presently enjoyed" (Schwartzberg, 1965: 475 & 478). The categorization was devised to for the smooth functioning of the world without any conflict. Ketkar says, "the law of proper conduct was, according to Sanskrit writers ("divine" texts), twofold. Proper conduct for every order (*Ashrama*) and proper conduct for every Varna….propriety of conduct for a person was supposed to be determined by his origin. Every creature was supposed to be endowed with some peculiar nature at the time of creation. Then he (god) turns to duties of the four orders (Ashramas) is treated along with the duties for brahmanas, as the former was likely to be followed by brahmanas only" (Ketkar, 1909: 45-6).

This vertical, hierarchal and differentiated division of human beings and their duties into different Varna (strata) is called *varnavyastha*. Each Varna is assigned separate domain and activity which was called karma which was their dharma. This system is called *varnaashramdharma*. The first one is the ordering of the people into clusters and the latter one is the duties which are prescribed to them. The birth in the each Varna or caste is predetermined by their previous deeds or karma. These karmas are non transferable, modifiable or alterable by human will, consciousness and actions. Krishna in Gita describes how society is ordered and each one has defined duties to fulfill one's karma in the society. It is not in their capacity to do otherwise it

is a divine will. Whenever there is loss of dharma (Order), lord Vishnu takes incarnation to correct it and re-establish the truth in the world. Gita (Geeta) is not a theory of karma rather a theory of dharma or order. It reveals the divine will and truth of the god and how that 'truth' or order is maintained in the society. One has to fulfill one's ascribed duties and work sincerely in order to maintain the divine truth and structure. Whenever that order is lost, destroyed or corrupted the gods incarnate to correct that according to Gita.

This hierarchal division is inevitable and essential for the order and proper functioning of the society and cosmology. Smith, says, "The Varna system was first and foremost a scheme for dividing society into separate, if functionally interdependent, classes and only secondarily a means for similarly classifying other realms by projecting social truisms into them. When applied to these other domains, to the "natural" and supernatural worlds, the system follows a consistent logic: the invariable traits, characteristics, powers, skills and functions that defined the Brahmin priests, kshatriyas warriors and rulers, and the commoner social class were recast as templates for divisions within these other realms. Moreover, relationships (ideal, if not actual) between the social classes-usually hierarchically governed- were also reproduced in other realms subject to the Varna scheme" (Smith, 1994: 26).

According to the sacred texts and the largely Hindu beliefs soul is immortal. It cannot be destroyed or killed the soul travels across time i.e. past, present and future and changes bodies without losing the essence. Opler observes, "A companion theme to rationalism can be characterized by term "transcendentalism". This theme not only supports the glorification of mind and the de-emphasis of the body, but it argues that reality not to be found in the things of this earth. It's essential message is that the soul, rather than anything else, should be the object of our concern and that salvation, or final liberation of the soul from rebirth is determinate forms should be goal, all else is beguiling appearance, or maya, which will pass only to make way for other, insubstantial and fleeting apparitions" (Opler, 1998: 8).

The sacred text called Gita justified this ordering by its own theological explanations. According to Gita, all people (in group) have some defined duties and roles which were assigned to them for the proper functioning of the world. Each Varna has pre-defined duties and functions which one has to carry out in order to achieve *mokshya* or salvation. One has to continue their duties as dictated and ascribed to them by the divine order. These duties and functions are, permanent, non

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transferable and unalterable as these are based on the innate nature of people. One's birth in a particular caste or Varna is pre-determined and fixed. Therefore different caste (s) people having different traits and attitude are natural for them. In other words all the people born in particular Varna have fixed and similar nature, aptitude and attitudes. Therefore if there is any doubt about the Varna or caste or attitude of a person, one can refer to its nature "A Shudra not cannot be of noble quality; servitude is his nature. If there by any doubt regarding the Varna of individuals it would at one be revealed by his nature or by actions which are due in his nature" (Ketkar, 1909: 113).

It is, therefore, necessary to continue one's defined duties, roles, functions and occupations for the uninterrupted cycle of incarnation of soul. The sacred text Hindus called *Gita* legitimized this order when it says that one has to do one's predetermined *karma* which has been assigned to them as duty. *Gita* says, "according as each man devotes himself to his proper work does he obtain consummation…better one's own caste duty ill done than another's caste duty well done" (Farquhar, 1919: 160). "One can become a bird or beast, or 'low caste' person respectively if one does not follow one's present karma strictly" (ketkar, 1909. 114). Those who fail or deny their caste specific conduct would be punished in their next birth. "the Brahman who consumes intoxicants will be reborn as an insect, an unclean bird or as a destructive animal and a Brahman who neglects the duties assigned to his caste may look forward to rebirth as an evil spirit that lives on what others vomit" (Woodburne, 1922: 527).

This design is functional (involuntary) in nature and it divides people into different functional categories which differentiated, unequal and hierarchal life orders. The Varnavyastha therefore takes a functionalist, positivist and exclusivistic perspective of human beings and cosmology. All human beings have fixed nature, attribute and functions in this world.   As each part of the body is fixed and has a specific function, people are also imagined to have some fixed role and function in the world. There is a possibility of attaining higher position in the next birth if one act as per dharma or prescribed duties. Those who defy their caste defined duties will be punished in their next birth. Smith says, "Vedic classification according to Varna, like all other religiously oriented taxonomies, is rooted and legitimated in cosmogony. The Varna or classes that comprise Indian society, as well as realms in the natural, supernatural, and ritual worlds were supposedly created in the beginning, often by procreative act of the creator god" (Smith, 1994: 59).

According to M.N. Srinivas, Birth in Hindu world view is not a biological event; it is a religious and ritualistic event and related with the theory of karma, dharma and samsara (Srinivas, 2014:3). Therefore birth is a particular family is not accidental; it is pre-determined. The birth brings joys, happiness and series of ceremonies. "at the birth of a male child, the occurrence is immediately announced by *Sanka Dhani* (sound of a conch); musicians without being sent for, come and play the tom tom; family barber bears the happy tidings to all the nearest relatives, and he is rewarded with presents of money and cloths" (Bose, 1881:24). According to theory of transmigration of soul and theory of karma Birth in a family is related with one's previous karma. If one is born in a particular family it is due to their previous deeds and karma.

As birth is outside of the control of the individuals in the same way the family and caste are also outside from their control. Family especially the joint family is the fundamental unit of caste and Varna. One has to carry out their defined duties both within families and also within castes as per their defined customs for the continuation of the life cycle. It is, therefore, necessary for every Varna to carry their defined duties for the continuation of the cosmic order. Hence, "Each member of a caste is bound to preserve his purity to the utmost. Pollution is dangerous not only to himself but to all the members of his family, dead, living and unborn, and in less degree to other members of his caste. Purity is preserved by the faithful performance of the domestic sacraments, the *Sraddha* ceremonies, and Vedic sacrifices, and the daily devotion prescribed, and by the avoidance of any breach of caste rules in the matter of marriage, food, social intercourse, or occupation only if a man faithfully obeys all these rules does he make good karma for himself and so secure a good birth in his next life" (Farquhar, 1919: 164).

Since birth and death are part of the cyclic incarnation of the soul which is signified by the ceremonies at different life events. "The group was bound together by Sraddha, the rite of commemorating the ancestors, at which balls of rice called panda were offered. Sons, grandsons and great grandsons of the deceased joined together in Sraddha, and three generations of the dead were believed to participate in the benefits of the ceremony. Thus the dead and the living were linked together by this rite…Sraddha defined the family; those who were entitled to participate in the ceremony were "co-pindas" (Sapinda), members of the family group. The rite, which is still practiced, goes back to Vedic times" (Basham, 2004: 157). The role of sons is

important in this ceremony and it is specially the eldest and oldest son who is expected to perform the rites.

The role of women is important in this world as procreation is dependent on them. There is strict control over women and their sexuality as any breach will lead to disappearance of purity of the family. "A woman, according to most authorities, was always a minor at law. As a girl she was under the tutelage of her parents, as an adult, of her husband, and as a widow, of her sons" (Basham, 2004: 179). It gave undisputed rights to father in the early age, husband in the reproductive and adult age and son in the old age. The *Padamapuran* says, "There is no other god on earth for a woman than her husband. The most excellent of all the good works that she can do is to seek to please him by manifesting perfect obedience to him. Therein should lie her sole rule of life. Be her husband deformed, aged, infirm, offensive in his manners; let him also be choleric, debauched, immoral, a drunkard, a gambler; let him frequent place of ill repute, live in open sin with other women, have no affection whatever for his home; let him rave like a lunatic; let him live without honour; let him be blind, deaf, dumb or crippled, in a word, let his defects be what they may, let his wickedness be what it may, a wife should always look upon him as her god, should lavish on him all her attention and care, paying no heed whatsoever to his character and giving him no cause whatsoever for displeasure…"(Mayo, 1927: 73).

Family is given much importance in Hindu social order because it is the pillar of caste. Family and caste are deeply inter-lined, family determines one caste and caste determine one's family. There is differential power arrangement between different members on the basis of their role, duties and functions. A bachelor or unmarried person, childless couple, widows are not allowed to do certain rituals as they are not recognized as complete. There are variations between different families among different castes in terms of customs, ritual positions and beliefs. There are variations in the status, power, privilege and the ritual status of the widows of different castes. Ketkar says, "a caste from whom a Brahmin widow may accept water, or one whose members she can touch without being polluted is the best of all, a harder the rules of ceremonial purity, the more easily they are broken. The more extravagant the notions of purity are, the more easily is the purity defied. The castes are good in proportion to the harness of the ceremonial rules of purity of the people they can touch without being polluting them. The ceremonial rules of purity of a

Brahmin lady are harder than those of men, and of widows harder than the ordinary women; and caste could be graded accordingly" (Ketkar, 1909: 25).

There are strict restrictions on women and their movement both in the house and outside. Bose writes, "no married female is permitted to leave the house even for a single moment…so great is the privacy, and punctiliousness with which female honor is guarded in the east…a social line of demarcation is drawn around the *Zenana* which a genteel hindoo female is taught never to overstep, either in her conversation or bearing…as a rule, women take their means after the men have finished theirs…the idea of an extravagant hindoo mother is a solecism that has not existence in the actual realities of life. She is a model of economy, devotion, chastity, patience, self-denial, and a martyr to domestic affection" (Bose, 1881: 6-13)[1].

The hierarchy, separation and division are not between male and female but also has to be carried out in the matters of the age as well in marriages. Marriage was one of the important events which is considered to be sacred in Hindu scriptures. It is mandatory for girls to be virgin at the time of marriage as symbolizes purity and given in gift. "the hindoo have a strong belief that to solemnize the marriage of their children at an early age, is a meritorious act as discharging one of the primary obligations of life. They are, therefore, very anxious to have their sons and daughters formerly married during their own life-time" (Bose, 1881: 41). "The Smritis recommend that while a husband should be at least twenty a girl should be married immediately before puberty. So philoprogenitive had Hindu orthodoxy become that it was even declared that a father who did not give his daughter in marriage before her first menstruation incurred the guilt of one procuring abortion (a very grave sin, worse than many kinds of murder) for every menstrual period in which she remained unmarried. The general views was that the idea marriage was one in which the bride was one third the age of the groom- thus a man of twenty-four should marry a girl of eight" (Basham, 2004: 167). Child marriage was allowed and the huge difference in age between the girl and boy was recommended.

The upper caste women although lower in status, privileges, power and rights compare to their male counterpart but they were still not so polluted to be equal to lower caste men or women. Upper caste women are not accorded a permanently

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[1] For more details, see, Bose, S.C. (1881). The hindoo household (chapter one). in *the hindoos as they are: a description of the manners, customs and inner life of hindoo society in bengal* , Calcutta: W. Newman & Co.

polluted position like untouchables. Had it been so, it would have led to the very collapse and end of caste. "For caste Hindus impurity is either a temporary or a limited affair. Thus women are polluted during menstruation, and on this account may not cook food for their family, daily pollution arises from the secretions of the body, and the left hand is permanently polluted by its use in cleaning the body, birth and death engender great pollution, and the new mother must be sequestered for a period of some days before she will be fit to be seen and touched…the untouchables are permanently polluted people" (Mandelsohn & Vicziany, 1998: 6-7).

The higher caste women were considered to be lower and polluted but their pollution was temporary. They could become purer after the passage of their menstrual phase. But this pollution was permanent for the untouchable castes which included untouchable women as well. Mahar says, "The stigma, congenital according to one's caste last a lifetime and cannot be eliminated by rite or deed" (Mahar, 1998: XXX). This marks a deep relationship between gender and caste. Caste cannot be produced without controlling women and sexuality. The oppression of women therefore is the necessary condition for the perseverance of caste. Caste ideology as an organized system of exploitation cannot sustain without controlling women. The women of lower castes were exploited physically and sexually by the upper caste men at various sites. As it has been observed "Untouchable women was never so degraded or ritually polluted as to be sexually unapproachable: Untouchability was always a curse, never a protection" (Mandelsohn & Vicziany, 1998: 11). It is a well known fact that the low caste women have working as *devadasi* for centuries in temples. Many of them were sexually exploited by the priests and others under the cover of scared service to the god.

The differences in women of different castes are marked by their customs, habits, beliefs, practices and conducts. Ishwaran writes, "The economic and caste status of a woman can also be seen from her ornaments. A low caste woman is not expected to wear certain ornaments like gold armlets (*Vanki*). She uses silver ornaments whereas women of higher castes wear gold ones. The ornaments serve both aesthetic and ritualistic purposes" (Ishwaran, 1966: 61). This separation is maintained in all other spheres and it is marked by different symbols. Mahar writes, "Clothing also serves to distinguish the Chamar women, whose distinctive blouse and skirt stand in sharp contrast to their saris worn by other women of the village. In 1954 the young wife of a shoe maker, a woman of city origin, appeared in the village wearing a

necklace made of gold. While silver ornaments are worn in abundance by untouchable women, the use of gold was "known by all" to be forbidden to untouchables. Accordingly, the shoe maker's wife was called to account by Rajput women who told her to remove the necklace or she should be beaten, she complied" (Mahar, 1998: 23).

This separation, gradation, categorization in accessing resources, assets, privileges, rights, duties, and spaces occur at different sites, forms and levels with different degrees, magnitude and volume. Women have been the source of power for many while women themselves were powerless. They were considered to assets and those who hold the social and economic power used to have as many wives as possible which was both culturally accepted and socially sanctioned. But there is a grading as per customs the number of wives one is allowed as per the holy books "In the law of Manu, a Brahman is allowed four wives, a Kshatriya, three, a Vaisya two…the kulin Brahman of Bengal, who until quite recently used to marry scores of women, were a lonely and ghastly exception" (Farquhar, 1919: 92). There was more specification within this order. "The Brahmin could marry a woman from any of the four Varnas, but the Shudra was allowed to wed only a woman from his own Varna. A Shudra woman could be taken by any of the four Varnas as their wife, but a Brahmin woman was reserved for a Brahmin man only" (Pujari, 2011: 16).

To maintain the hierarchal notions of the world there were prescribed hierarchal codes, conduct and punishments. "According to Brahmanical textbooks the chief duty of the pure Sudra was to wait on the other three classes. He was to eat the remnants of his master's food, wear his cast-off clothing, and use his old furniture. Even when he had the opportunity of becoming wealthy he might not do so, "for a Sudra who makes money is distressing to the Brahmans" he had few rights, and little value was set on his life in law. A Brahman killing a Sudra performed the same penance as for killing a cat or dog. The Sudra was not allowed to hear or repeat the Vedas. A land where Sudras were numerous would suffer great misery" (Basham, 2004: 144-5).

The Brahmins were more privileged than others in various matters. They could change and take up any other occupations where the same choice was not there for others. "The Brahmans are the priestly class and, by virtue of their origin from the mouth of *Purusha*, are above the others in authority and sanctity alike. The Brahman (masculine) who aspires to union with the Brahman (neuter) must faithfully perform the six works , study the Veda, sacrifice on his own behalf, make gifts, teach the

Veda, sacrifice for others and receive gifts. If a Brahman is not able to obtain a livelihood within the regulations prescribed for his own caste, he has the alternatives of adopting the pursuits of the Kshatriya or Vaisya, or of becoming a mendicant" (Woodburne, 1922: 526-7). "The vicious punishment laid down by Manu for religious crime (for example a Sudra who "arrogantly teacher Brahmans their duty" shall have boiling oil poured in his mouth and ears)" (Basham, 2004: 81). "The Brahmin Varna was exempted from tax. Enjoying tax exemption indicated the superiority and privilege of the Brahmin. The *Atharvaveda* declares that levying tax on the Brahmin condemns one to hell" (Pujari, 2011: 16).

This categorization and ideology of high and low is not notional and restricted to human being only. It involves the whole ecology, nature and universe within itself. It associates each and everything with a certain fixed values and attributes whether living or Non-living, dead or alive, matter, object, space/site (settlements) or yug (time) an. Hence, fire, water, air, sky, land, animals, trees, metal, food, vegetables, colour, body, direction, natural objects and events etc. have some hierarchal, ritual and spiritual values associated with it. These beliefs, values and ideology cover and apply all the spheres of one's social and economic life. Smiths says, "A natural world categorized into dominating feeders and dominated food was reprojected as the paradigm for the order of the social world. The eater is superior to his food, in society as well as in nature; the social world, no less than natural, is one of rulers and ruled, of consumers and consumed, of exploiters and exploited, of the strong and the weak. No text puts the case of continuity between nature and culture more starkly than Manu 5.29: "immobile beings are the food of those who are mobile, those without teeth are the food of those with teeth, those without are the food of those with hands, and the cowards are the food of the brave" (Smith, 1994: 46).

This grading of the universe applies to human and physical and natural world equally. Hence metals like gold is considered to be superior to iron therefore gold is offered to gods and goddesses, *peetal* (brass) is considered to be purer than other metals therefore used in worshiping utensils, cow is considered to be auspicious and sacred than buffalo so worshipped, white is considered to be purer than black hence preferred, *tulsi* is considered to be sacred and purer than lemon or chilly so more visible in orthodox Hindu houses and so on. This categorization applies to animals as well. Animals are permanently categorized on the basis of certain inherent nature and quality. Cow represents goodness therefore auspicious while crow represent darkness

therefore inauspicious. Similarly, morning is associated with purity and goodness while night is associated with impurity and evilness. East is considered to be auspicious while south is considered to be profane and so on and so forth. "Hindus ritually classify the consecrated places into various components and assign value to them. The eight point of the compass have guardian deities, *Dik-Palas*, who not only provide protection to the quarters they rule but also covey specific values and prosperities to them. To reinforce the security and sanctity of oriented places there are eight *Dik-Gajas* (elephant guardians of quarters) corresponding to the eight *Eik-Palas*" (Singh & Khan, 1999: 23).

This hierarchal categorization creates an unending cycle of categorization within itself as a principle. Hence, although cow is considered to be sacred animal but not all cow have the same and equal value. A white cow is more purer and preferable than the black one. The ideology of hierarchal division applies to those spaces/areas/sites as well where vertical division is not possible. It can still assign some hierarchal values to those events, phenomenon, objects, parts or human etc. The left and right hands like the left leg and the right leg have the same relationship and function for the body. But it can still categorize and assign them a hierarchal value. Hence right hand is considered to be auspicious than the left. Similarly the right leg/foot is held to be auspicious than the left one.

The Brahmanical system justifies violence by theorizing it on the principle of the fittest. "It is by the means of mouth of the Brahman that the gods are said to consume the sacrificial food, and that the spirits of the departed ancestors consume the offerings made to them" (woodburne, 1922: 526-7). Smith writes, "The creator god *Prajapati* is manifest on earth in the form of a series of hierarchically ordered mouths: "The Brahmin is one of your mouths, with that mouth you eat kshatriyas. With that mouth make me an eater of food. The king is one of your mouths. With that mouth you eat the Vaishyas. With that mouth make me an eater of food". The encompassment of the lower by the higher in society is here articulated in alimentary (and elementary) terms; you are more than the one you eat, and less than the one by whom you are eaten" (Smith, 1994: 46).

There were punishments prescribed by the various *Smritis* to maintain the hierarchal order of this world. Basham writes, "The legal system envisaged by the Smritis would impose graduated (read hierarchal) punishment according to class (read caste). Thus a Brahman slandering kshatriyas should, according to Manu, pay a fine

of fifty *Panas* (currency), but for slandering a Vaisya or a Sudra the fines are only twenty-five and twelve Panas respectively. For members of the lower orders who slander their betters (read higher/superior) the penalties are much more severe. Similar gradations of penalty according to the class of the offender are laid down for many crimes, and the equality of all before the law was never admitted in ancient India 'The evidence of low-caste was not valid against persons of higher castes" (Basham, 2004: 117). The various religious texts laid down fines for various crimes. "the sutras laid down fines for the punishment of murder- 1,000 cows for killing a Ksatriya, 100 for a Vaisya, and 10 for a Sudra or a woman of any class; the killing of a Brahman could not expiated by a fine" (ibid: 118). In the case of caste hindu, if they happen to commit some sins which lowered their position, there was always a possibility to make themselves pure again by doing *praisyet*/penance which involves, going to the pilgrimage centers, having a holy dip in the sacred rivers, and giving a collective feast to the Brahmans which sometimes can bring huge monetary sufferings.

Hardgrave notes, "It was seen as a closed stratification system, in which the various castes (jati), each symbolically related to the other within the framework of Varna, formed an organic whole. Ranked hierarchally on a scale of ritual purity, each caste enjoyed differential access to religious privileges and civil rights" (Hardgrave, 1968: 1065). In this ritual and social hierarchy those groups which are located at the top have the multiple and cumulative rights and privileges over the lower ones. Those at the bottom had the multiple and cumulative duties and servitudes. Thorat says, "In this sense, caste does not exist in a single number, but only in the plural. Castes exist as a system of endogenous groups, which are interlinked with each other in unequal measures of rights and relations in all walks of life. Castes at the top of the order enjoy more rights, at the expense of those located at the bottom. Therefore, the untouchables located at the bottom of the caste hierarchy have much less economic and social rights" ((Thorat, 2013: 8).

The differential treatment and rights and privileges theoretically made it an inhuman system. Farquhar argues, "The whole system rests on the belief that mankind of not a unity but consists of a large number of species each of distinct origin, and that each man is born into that species or sub-species for which his karma fits him. If he is a very far advanced, in virtue and spirituality, he is born a Brahman; if less advanced, he is born a kshatriya; and so on" (Farquhar, 1919: 164). The Brahmanical system

does not sees equality as a problem as it alters/modifies/replaces the traditional benefits and privileges associated with differential (de)graded positions. Inter-mixing of people leads to intra and inter-redistribution of resources among different groups in the society. Therefore there were restrictions enforced through customs so that there are minimum social interactions among different groups. Each group recognizes and legitimizes each other to so as to justify its own separation from others. This ideology can be found in each and every group in India irrespective of their social and cultural locations. But this regressive resistance is particularly stronger among those groups who have traditionally been beneficiary of this caste based division of privileges, rights and monopoly. They are likely to lose their hegemony over superior positions, and therefore they are the ones who oppose it violently. Therefore marriages were prohibited among different groups. Women were the worst sufferers of this system. Therefore there is much resistance against any attempts which brings equality and liberates people from the clutches of caste.

According to Leach, "caste ideology presupposes that the separation between different castes is absolute and intrinsic. People of different caste are, as it were, of different species-as cat and dog. There can therefore be no possibility that they should compete for merit of same sort" (Leach, 1969:7). The caste as ideology denies equality and freedom to people by making their status fixed in the society. It forces caste (graded division) on the people as it has religious sanctions therefore it is spiritual, moral and legal according to *shastras*. There is no sphere of life which is not regulated by this principle of graded inequality (Moon, 1987: 107). Hindu religion does not accept equality of human beings in principle. It rather takes inequality (graded subjugation) as a matter of identity and pride. It justifies inequalities in the name of customs by explaining and attributing it to divine sources. Therefore it does not see inequalities as a problem. Inequality and graded (dehumanization) is internalized as a matter of identity, culture and religious practice rather than some problems to get rid of.

CASTE: PERVASIVENESS, RIGIDITY AND CONSEQUENCES

Caste is a pervasive phenomenon and it covers all spheres of life. According to Schwartzberg, "caste rules virtually all major aspects of life: whom and when one may marry; what, how, and with whom one may or may not eat; what forms of

respect one ought to show to, or receive from, members of higher or lower castes; what rituals one shall perform and how; and, for most castes, what forms of work one may or may not undertake. In current practice, if not in principle, caste also tends to decide with which faction a man will throw his lot in intra village disputes and how he will vote at the local, state, and national levels. Obviously, there can be no understanding of Indian society, economy, or political life without an appreciation of the pervasive role of caste" (Schwartzberg, 1965: 478).

One of the most severe implications of caste and Varna based division led to huge disparities between different groups. The Varna ideology categorized the roles, duties, functions, assets of different groups according to their place in the Varna. This resulted in clustering and concentration of resources in few hands. The Varna based division brought the Dharma, ritual purity, soul, reincarnation and transmigration of the soul in the central stage. People gave more importance to devotion, worship, maintaining ritual purity, *bhakti, paap, punya, daan-dakshina*, *pooja-path, havan, karma-kanda, moh-maya, tap, mokshya, samskara* etc. to achieve or raise their position in the next birth. The accumulation and acquisition of Punya, austerity, departure from the present became more important in achieving the higher position and mobility in the next birth. One has to continue the dharma prescribed duties, roles and functions in order to fix/reserve or achieve a higher position in the next birth.

The Varna based division made kings or Kshtriyas as the ruler of the land and the preserver of the divine and just order. It was their duty to look after the temple from which they derived their power and justification of their rule. Temples were not mere a place of worship but a political institutions which controlled both the order in the society. From the fifth-sixth century onwards specially during the Chola rule, there has been huge growth of temples in different part of India particularly in the south India both in terms of numbers, size, area, height, geography etc. Huge money was spent to construct these temples. Huge lands were donated to various temples in different parts of India for the maintenance of the temple and looking after the interests of priestly castes.

The kings acquired the status of god or the incarnation of the god. They acquired huge power and control over the subjects. Geetha writes, "Monarch was considered either the representative of god or next to god. Before the emergence of god as an entity the monarchs considered themselves to be living gods on earth. It was their duty to protect the interest of the people. In course of time the monarch wanted

to perpetuate this by justifying the ways of god to men through the institution of religion by constructing temples and maintaining them by grants. Temple became a major institution, hence required a high income. Temples seem to have been well placed because of the grants made by the kings, royal family members, chieftains, officials, corporate bodies such as sabha, Ur, nagaram and rich and poor individuals…The Pallavas, the Pandyas and the Chola kings were great patrons of temples. The king used to make grants on the day of his birth day, coronation, at the time of leading expeditions, on the occasion of victory in a battle, on the birth of a son, for the prosperity of his son, at the time of renovating, or setting up of divinities, at the time of visiting the temple, while he was camping, for long life, health and victory, while performing Hemagarbha and Tulabhara and at the request of others" (Geetha, 2008: 1-18)[2].

The main reason for these grants and gifts was to earn the religious merits or punya. The gifts that were given to the temples includes, food offerings, perpetual lamps, supply of articles to temples, villages or the revenue of villages, gold and jewellery, money, utensils, animals, food grains, human slaves, grants on special festivals and recitation of holy texts, grants for repair and renovation, feeding the Brahmins, flower gardens etc. over a period of time the temple acquired so much of wealth, land and power that it goes well beyond the domain of religion. Temple transformed as an activity of economic, social and political activity. The aristocracy was dependent on temple for legitimacy and their support and the priests were dependent on aristocracy for their material needs. Ruling class supported them and in return the priestly class supported the ruling class. They both became complimentary to each other and maintained their interests. The power of temples and priestly class increased so much that it started controlling the aristocracy.

Land, temple and ritual hierarchy became the source of power and status. Therefore in the matters of temple ceremonies it is Brahmins who govern the authority, in the matter of village rule and order, it is governed by the kshtriyas due to their traditional position. They both hold power in their own separate domain and they both are connected to each other that they both legitimize each others domain. Varna based scheme brought temple as a centre of economic and political activity. The kings

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[2] For more details on this, read Geetha, V. (2008). *Land Grants To Temples In Tamilnadu, 550-1200 A.D.* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis). School Of Historical Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamilnadu, (India).

were the de-facto owners of the whole property in their kingdom. It was their responsibility to maintain the 'order'. They were the patrons in the villages due to their social ranking; they were also the patrons of the village temples. Menon writes, "The development of land relations under the feudal Cholas is of importance, when in a certain period grant of villages were made to groups of Brahmins, in order to maintain them. The further development of this practice, for various reasons, seems to have led to a deliberate attempt by certain rulers to restrict land ownership to only the Brahmins caste in such Brahmadeya villages. This meant that exclusive land ownership rested with a particular caste in certain villages" (Menon, 1979: 57).

The land started being concentrated in the few hands and there emerged huge disparities between different sections and segments in terms of ownership of assets and means of production. Kalugumalai is in Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu state for centuries its temple to kalukacalamurtti enjoyed the patronage of the Rajas of Ettaiyapuram, the local Zamindars, within whose ancestral estate it lay. "The records show that in December 1849 the Raja donated the whole village to the temple, agriculture revenue, as well as land and building rents, thenceforth went towards the temple's upkeep. At the same time he instituted the main festivals, built car streets for procession by temple deity and granted house sites around them to temple servants" (Good, 1999: 70). Temples were free from tax so were its servants. Not only they were exempted they were also attached with additional villages so that there is proper maintenance of the temple.

The Brahmins had an absolute control over the land especially in some villages which were exclusively reserved for them. "Apart from land monopoly, the incidence of landownership by Brahmins has traditionally been high in Thanjavur. In 1807, the Tanjore committee in its report recorded that "there is hardly a family of this colony which does not hold land on ordinary Mirasi tenure in Tanjore". To substantiate this statement, they quoted the fact that the Brahmins constituted over 27 percent of the total number of Mirsadars (62,048). An 1876-77 Jamabandi is even more revealing. Out of 136,532 Pattas the Brahmins held 37,736, although the entire Brahmin population formed only 6.42 percent of the district's total population" (Menon, 1979: 58).

The Brahmins became the virtual landlords and became so powerful since the Chola kingdom. "The extent of feudalism in Wadakkancherry village could be gauged from the fact that the upper castes had a monopoly over access land during the early

20th century. The upper caste such as the Nambudiris, Nairs, kshatriyas and the institutions like temples held the majority of the land (these four categories together hold 89.3 percent of total land). The economic power of the Nambudiri landlords or Malaya Brahmins also stems from the fact they had control over not only their own lands as Brahmaswom, but also temple or Devaswom lands. The Nambudiris managed the Devaswom lands as trustees of the temples. They held around 28 percent of the land, the temple had a share of 26 percent, Nairs had around 23 percent land and the share of kshrtiyas was around 13 percent" (Scaria, 2010: 192).

The superiority of the Brahmins and kshtriyas virtually established all the other human beings inferior. Both of these castes were assigned the role of maintaining the order in the society though the powers vested in them by the sacred scriptures. The Brahmins and the kshtriyas exploited the people in every way possible. While the Brahmins exploited the masses in the name of religion the kshtriyas enjoyed lavish life on the hard work of the masses. They imposed various kinds of taxes on the people. On the other hand laymen professions were taxed and taxes were of primitive in character. "*Enikkanam, Thalakkanam, Menipponnu, Polipponnu, Mulaivila, Thalaivila, Mulayattikkaram*, etc. were the taxes that levied from the occupational Jatis during the pre-colonial period. The above first two taxes were collected from toddy [intoxicating drink produced from coconut and palm tree] tappers and the subsequent one, Menipponnu, was a tax paid by the subaltern women for wearing gold ornaments *Polipponnu* was tax levied for marriages, Mulaivila, was a tax paid by workingwomen and Mulayattikkaram from beautiful subaltern [keezhala jatis] women. Thalaivila, was the tax collected from every individuals of the subaltern jatis. In addition to it all phases of economic activities were taxed and the Brahmins/Nambootiris and Nairs were exempted from all sorts of taxes" (Philip, 2005: 77-8). The vast taxes which were collected from the masses were making the temples rich, powerful and were spent in the maintenance and lavish lifestyle of the Brahmin priests.

Religion promoted superstition and superstition promoted religion. These both fed on each other. The mythical origin of the caste and its legitimization led to expansion of orthodoxy, superstition and irrationality among the people. This was visible in the beliefs, customs and practices of people. The caste ideology has made people into a superstitious, narrow and orthodox in their beliefs and practices. Monier Williams, while narrating about the beliefs of Hindus, he says, "if the priest were to

threaten to bring down the sun from the sky or arrest it in its daily course in the heavens, no villager would for a moment doubt his ability to do so…one of their number once swallowed the ocean in three sips, another manufactured fire, another created all animal and another turned the moon into a cinder…a cow given to him secures heaven of a certainty to the luck donor. The consequences of injuring him are terrific. The man who does him the smallest harm must make up his mind to be whirled about after death, for at least a century; in hell of total darkness. This sill suffice to account for the respect paid to the priest by the simple-hearted peasantry, who sometimes drink the water in which his feet have been washed, by way of getting rid of their sins with the least possible difficulty" (Williams, 1883: 457).

While exploring the social and economic life of the people in India, Briggs found certain beliefs and customs like, "New cloths must not be put on a Wednesday, to lend, or to borrow, on Saturday, Sunday or Tuesday is unlucky; and it is not wise to return from a journey on these days. Horses or cattle, or anything pertaining to them, such as leather, *Ghi* or cow-dung, should not be bought, or sold on Saturday or Sunday; and if cattle should die on one of these days, they should be buried. The year's plowing should not be begun on a Tuesday, a Wednesday, a Thursday or a Friday, or on the first or eleventh of the month, and reaping should be begun on a Thursday and finished on a Wednesday…the south is unlucky and the cooking-floor should not face that way, neither should a person lie with his feet to the south…when one is starting on a journey, it is inauspicious to see a jackal cross the road from the right, a crow on a dead tree, or a dog shake his head so as to flap his ears. Under such circumstances a man should return home at once…to see a cat or a crow throwing water on itself is a good omen" (Briggs, 1920: 158-60)3.

The Brahmanical belief system and orthodoxy made people superstitious, irrational and dependent. This dependence was exploited by the priestly castes to extract as much from the masses."Natural calamities were interpreted as a divine wrath, and the people did not raise any doubt about absurd explanations for such calamities, Captain MacMurdo, a political Agent in Kutch, had given, a graphic description o f the attitude of the people of Kutch. When a severe earthquake in June 1839, took a heavy toll of property and people particularly in Kutch, and made people panicky. Belief of the people in divine wrath was exploited by the greedy Brahmins,

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[3] For more details see chapter VII 'The mysterious' in *the religious life of India* by Briggs, G.W. pp. 158-197.

who declared that those who did not offer feasts and alms to them would be punished, Even the publicity of a letter supposed to be written by a person from Kashi was enough to convince the people that after the year 1819, Satya Yug would dawn on the earth, only pious people, would be spared and sinners would meet their fate. In fact, people prepared themselves mentally to die on 24th September, 1839, the fateful day, The frightened Muslims declared that a letter from Mecca also indicated the imminent doomsday. The Hindus attributed the cause for this earthquake to a war between gods and demons. Thus, this earthquake gave an opportunity to many charlatans to exploit the superstitious beliefs of the people" (Raval, 1983: 9).

The caste not only made people superstitious and orthodox but it also made them cruel and violent which was reflected in their day to day behavior. Murdoch narrate an incident observed during colonial times, "A traveler falls down sick in the streets of a village, nobody knows what caste he is of, therefore nobody goes near him, least they should become polluted. He wastes to death before the eyes of the whole community, unless the jackals take courage from his helpless state to finish him a little sooner, and, perhaps, as happened in the case to which I alluded, the children are not allowed to pelt him with stone and mud" (Murdoch, 1896, 28). The castes made difficult for people to relate and associate with other human beings on the basis of some common human emotions like pain, sufferings and empathy. In fact others pain becomes someone happiness and someone happiness becomes someone pain. In Maharashtra, it is said that a fort built by the warrior king Shivaji failed to remain standing; the solution was to bury alive a young Mahar couple in a wall of the fort (Dandekar, 1983: 397-8).

Caste created division led to the development highly inhuman and cruel customs and practices. While writing about the religious life in India, Debois writes, "In some districts there are castes which are not to be met with elsewhere, and which may be distinguished by peculiarities of their own. I am not aware, for example, that the very remarkable case of Nairs, whose women enjoy the privilege of possessing of several husbands, is to be found anywhere but in Travancore. Among these same people, again, is another distinct caste called Nambudiri, which observes one abominable and revolting custom. The girls of this caste are usually married before the age of puberty; but if a girl who has arrived at an age when the signs of puberty are apparent happens to die before having had intercourse with a man, caste custom rigorously demands that the inanimate corpse of the deceased shall be subjected to a

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monstrous connexion. For this purpose the girl's parents are obliged to procure by a present of money some wretched fellow willing to consummate such a disgusting form of marriage: for were the marriage not consummated the family would consider itself dishonored" (Dubois, 1906: 16).

The obsession to preserve the caste turned into a severe oppression and violence for women who suffered immensely. The girls were married off at an early age and many a sometimes before attaining puberty. Risley writes, "as we leave the great recruiting ground of the Indian army, and travel south-easterward along the plains of the Ganges, the healthy sense which bids the warrior races keep their girls at home until they are fit to bear the burden of maternity seems to have been cast out by the demon of corrupt ceremonialism, ever ready to sacrifice helpless women and children to the tradition of a fancied orthodoxy. Already in the united provinces we find the three highest castes- the Brahman, the Rajput, and the kayasth- permitting the bride, whether aptaviro or not, to be sent to her husband's house immediately after the wedding" (Risley, 1915: 194). A Bengali defender of caste in the Calcutta review says, "one thing is quite clear, if girls be not married early enough, there is no certainty that they won't marry outside the caste community" (Murdoch, 1896: 22).

It was not only the lower or impure castes who became the victim of Brahmanical belief system. But the most powerful authority of the time the empirical British officers too became its victim. "In Maratha country, it is only the touch of the lower castes which polluted food. But soldiers from many northern castes are known to throw away their food simply because the shadow of an English officer falls on it. The pretensions of madras Brahmins go farther than that: their food is polluted if a man of low caste looks at it" (Ketkar, 1909: 25). People preferred extreme sufferings and pain rather than defy their caste defined rules. Bose writes, "should a Hindoo of inferior caste happen to touch one of the superior caste, while the latter is cooking or eating, he throws always everything as defiled: even in cases of extreme sickness, the one will seldom condescend to drink water out of the hands of the other" (Bose, 1881: 170).

Purity and impurity is very technical in Hindu beliefs. The obsession to purity and sacredness reached to a point where it turned into highly foolish behavior. There are five substances called *Panch-Gavia* which can make things purer or help you get rid of your sins. Dubois writes, "to complete his purification, he is made to drink the panch-gavia, the five things or substances derived from the body of a cow; namely,

milk, curds, ghee (clarified butter), dung and urine, which are mixed together. The last named, urine, is looked upon as the most efficacious for purifying any kind of uncleaness" (Dubois, 1906: 42-3). Rubbing urine on body cleanse away all the external uncleanness, and drinking it to cleanse all internal impurity.

The prejudices against each other were at his height, the same Varna and caste people were not able to accept or tolerate each other. "One subdivision of a caste feels strong repulsion to another subdivision, because among the latter the use of tobacco is customary; two sections of one caste do not intermarry and feel strong repulsion for each other because they use different kinds of shoes" (Ketkar, 1909: 28). The prejudices and repulsion to each other was so deep and strong that 'the five tribe of Brahmans in the north, known as Gour, would be excommunicated if they partook of a meal sitting together on the same carpet, sir W.W. Hunter says: "in 1864, I saw a Brahman felon try to starve himself to death, and submit to a flogging rather than eat food on account of scruples as to whether the birthplace of north-western Brahman, who had cooked it, was equal in sanctity to his own native district…Mr. Sherring says, "the curse of Brahmanism has fallen on all native society and blighted it. Each caste, down to the lowest, is eaten up with self-satisfaction and self-admiration. Indeed, it is a notorious fact that the most debased castes yield to none in the punctilious strictness with which they observe caste prejudices and carry out caste regulations"(Murdoch, 1896: 20).

The women lost their status as human beings and became a commodity into the hands of Brahmins. The Brahmins used to keep numerous wives it was socially allowed to them through customs; the same right was not available to the Brahmins women. "Ishwarchand Vidyasagar collected 133 Kulin Brahmin data on this practice in Hooghly district, Bengal. He was horrified to find the magnitude of the problem. One fifty year old man had married 107 times, Bholanath Bandopadhyaya,(age fifty-five) had 80 wives, Bhagaban Chattopadhyaya (age sixty four) had 72 two wives and so the documentation continued" (Forbes, 2004: 22). This data only revealed the situation in Hooghly district, the situation must be horrible and beyond imagination in the rest of India.

The upper caste women were definitely the victim of brahmanical orthodoxy but they were also the beneficiary of the exclusive upper caste privileges like their men. But the condition of the lower caste women was beyond imagination. The lower caste women were not allowed to wear cloths as mark of respect to the upper caste

men and women. "As an instance a women by name Yesudial of Vilavancode Taluk went to the market at Kaliyakkavilai for purchasing household goods with the upper part of the body covered with cloth. On seeing this, Palamadan Chetty, Pandaram Andipillay and Mallenpillay belonging to the upper class (caste) got angry and she was beaten by them and forced to rid off her upper cloth… even upper class women also did not like the low class (caste) women to cover the upper part of their body in front of them. They even behaved worst than men in performing this injustice. For instance, when the Attingal Rani went to attend a temple festival, a woman of a lower caste appeared in front of her with her body covered with cloth. On seeing her, the Rani got infuriated and ordered to cut off her breast" (Mila, 2009: 92-3). The Rani offended for two reasons one is seeing a polluted caste women in front of her, secondly she covered her body with cloths which was prohibited as per customs. The lower caste had to fight a fierce struggle to cover their body by cloths. During colonial times various government acts were passed in phases and parts to give them this right.

The young girls became the worst victim of caste and its prejudices. Risley while talking about Bengal, says, "Here the influence of woman's tradition (Stri-Achar) has overlaid the canonical rites of Hindu marriage with a mass of senseless hocus-pocus (performed for the most part in the women's apartment at back of the courtyard, which in India, as in ancient Greece, forms the centre of the family domicile), and has succeeded, without a shadow of textual authority, in bringing about the monstrous abuse that the girls of the upper classes commence married life at the age of nine years, and become mothers at the very earliest time that it is physically possible for them to do so" (Risley, 1915: 194). The reason for the early child marriage and reproduction in India was more to preserve the caste especially among some particular communities and this was more rigid in certain regions.

One of the most disastrous implications of caste was for the women. This ideology degraded and deteriorated the position of women in the society. Women were trapped into cluster of castes and they were bound to preserve their status by avoiding and intermingling with others. Women were controlled though various physical, social and economic customs devised to subjugate them. "In the second decade of the nineteenth century, stray cases of widow-burning were recorded in the town of Broach. In some castes the Hindu widows, instead of burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands, were buried alive with the dead body. Even some time it so happened that men in the prime of life and surrounded by every comfort

voluntarily immolated themselves to their deities. Female infanticide: Another social evil was a crime of female infanticide practised mainly among the Jadeja Rajputs of Kathiawad and Kutch, and also to lesser extent among the Kumbis of Gujarat. There was a queer notion among the Jadeja Rajputs that a Jadeja could marry from the Rajput caste below him, and give a daughter to the Rajput caste above him, and as according to the Jadejas, there was no Rajput caste above them, female infanticide became their only remedy" (Raval, 1983: 11). Rajputs used to kill their daughters so that they could keep their pride intact. Besides that, Sati was one of other such institution which emerged due to the caste.

The condition of widows was even more pathetic. Monier Williams writes, "When I was in Gujarat, in 1875, a man named Lallu Bhai a cloth merchant of Ahmadabad, was proved to have committed a heinous crime. He had married a widow of his own caste, and to marry a widow is, in the eyes of a Hindu, a most awful offence. A woman belongs to one husband, for time and eternity. Forthwith, he was sentenced to complete excommunication. No one, either of his own or any other caste, was to be allowed to associate with him; no one was to eat with him; no one was to have any trade dealings with him; one was to marry any of his children; no temple was to receive him as a worshipper' and, if he died, no one was to carry his body to the burning ground. On the morning after the sentence was passed, he went into the bazaar as usual, but not a person would buy from him or sell to him; he could get no home to live in; and none of his debtors would pay him their debts. It was impossible to sue them, as no one would give evidence. He was a ruined man, and had to leave the country, and obtain government employment in a distant city" (Williams, 1883: 472).

The caste created such huge divide in the society. In south India the society was divided into two large distinct groups called left hand and right hand. Mines observe, "The kaikkoolars of Tamilnadu state, south India, are a caste of the left-hand section living in a social world that is divided between left and right. Right-hand and left-hand symbolic classification, a worldwide phenomenon, is perhaps nowhere more elaborate (ed) than in India" (Mines, 1982: 467). The left hand division and the right hand division of the society was so clearly marked, deep and concrete that it led to violence fights between these groups. Beck says, "quarrels usually focused on ritual usages: such matters as one division's right to wear a red ribbon, to take a procession

through certain streets, or to display certain banners and temple flags at festivals" (Beck, 1970: 779).

The division was so deep that those who considered themselves purer than others have their own subdivisions within themselves. Mr. Sherring, in his work on Hindu tribes and castes, enumerates nearly 2,000 sub-division of Brahmans. Mr. Sherrings thus describes the divisions among the Brahmans; "hundreds of these tribes (castes), if not at enmity with one another, cherish mutual distrust and antipathy to such a degree that they are socially separated from one another as far as it is possible for them to be,- neither eating nor drinking together; not intermarrying and only agreed in matter of religion and in the determination to maintain the pride and secularly dominancy of their order. The Brahmans display all the vices of a family divided against itself with more than ordinary intensity, for each one presumes on his purity of caste and birth, affect the air and ostentation of an eldest son and heir" (Murdoch, 1896: 20).

The obsession to preserve one's caste purity was so paramount concerns that people avoided touching each other due to the fear of defilement. This was also carried in the sphere of food. They had strong views about the acceptable and unacceptable food, "when, about a century since, bodies of sepoys were being brought from madras to Calcutta, the provisions (food) ran short, till at last the only food consisted of slated beef and pork. Though a few submitted to the necessity of circumstances and defiled themselves, many preferred a languishing death by famine to a life polluted by tasting forbidden food. The "Mussulman" governors often took advantage of this prejudice, when their exchequers were empty the hindoo would submit to the most excruciating tortures rather than disclose his hoard, but the moment his religious purity was threatened, he complied with any demand, if the sum asked for was within his means; if not, the man being linked to his caste fellows, the latter raised the required sum by subscription" (Bose, 1881: 169-170).

The caste Hindu considered the British lowly and polluted and therefore of same status like the pariah caste of India. "The most refined Englishman is an Mlechcha. When Monier Williams, the oxford professor of Sanskrit, first visited India, he was struck by the fact that pandits always came to see him early in the morning. He learned afterwards that it was to save an additional bathing from the pollution they had contracted by meeting him. Even a Sudra has been known to beg European not to enter his house, to avoid the expense of getting it purified. This

would not be required in the case of a dog… The very shadow of a European is defiling to a felon in a jail, and will make him throw his food. The same thing happened when a little English girl, by chance, touched the wooden platform on which two prisoners were preparing food: the whole food was thrown away" (Murdoch, 1896: 29).

In the grave situation like illness, diseases and pain, people preferred to suffer rather than consulting doctors. People avoided the contact of the doctors as they were considered to be impure. "Rev. Samuel Mateer recorded a fascinating experience of a European Physician who was invited to attend and treat an ailing Hindu Prince. The doctor was appropriately warned not to touch or approach the noble patient; but in his apprehension about the case he forgot the warning and in the course of the consultation drew his chair nearer and nearer. Finally touching the bed, as he requested the patient to show his tongue, a whimper of compassionate disgust and distress was uttered by the native attendants of the prince for their master had now become polluted, and it would be necessary, notwithstanding the suffering and the danger, to use cold water to bathe before he could again partake of nourishment of any kind" (Philip, 2005: 51-2).

Caste created such fixation to the place of birth that it became a sin to go beyond certain limited both physically and ritually as it resulted in loss of caste. The crossing of the "black ocean" was forbidden for the caste Hindus, those who did, were severely penalized and prescribed atonement. "During in 1824 when the 47 regiment at barrackpur was ordered to go to Burma. To the religious Hindu, crossing the sea meant loss of caste. The Sepoys, therefore refused to comply. The regiment was disbanded and those who led to opposition were hanged'…in the same ways, Sitaram who had gone to Afghanistan found himself an outcaste not only in his village, but even in his own barracks. The prestige of being in the pay of the company was not enough to hold his position in the society; religion and caste proved to be more powerful" (Chandra, 1989: 34).

The colonial officials, authority and staff found it very difficult to rule the country due to the superstitious, irrational belief and customs of the natives. British were not related with caste nor they believed in that but they were also affected by its presence. They were the authority and supreme ruler of the country but they were helpless in controlling this menace. The colonial rulers were not aware of the Indian etiquettes found themselves confused as there was no "servant for all work", every

work was associated with different castes. Irving writes about the encounter and experiences of rulers with the native people. "There is no such thing as a "servant of all work". His dressing boy will not light or extinguish the lamp. His palanquin bearer will not hold his horse. His cook will not wash his own utensils; he wants collies and chuprasi(es), to bear burdens and go errands. His khamsa, or butler, must have his matey, his groom must have his grass-cutter, his gardener his water drawer, his washerman his ironing man. The man who supplies him with milk cannot furnish him with butter: they are distinct offices, which must not be confounded. He soon finds that he must necessarily keep about six times as many servants as in England. He proceeds to hire them, and here usually commits a blunder, which has, perhaps, done more to restrain our intercourse with the natives, than any other circumstances" (Irving, 1853:92-3).

There were strict penalties and punishment if one dares to question or show resistance. Such people were excommunicated and heavy fines were imposed on them irrespective of their caste location. The fear of excommunication was so deep in the psyche of people that that they spent thousands of rupees sometimes Lakhs during colonial times in purification ceremonies to restore one's caste. Excommunication or outcaste at many a times was used as a tool to extract money from the people by those who had the authority to do so. Bose narrate an incident in which a mother of a wealthy, western educated, rich and reformer person offered *Noybidhi* (offerings) to the Brahmins. "They all refused to accept it by declaring that Mr. Ram Gopal was not a hindoo which was tantamount to declaring that he had no faith in hindooism, and was an outcaste from hindooism. Ram gopal, who with strong common sense combined the benefit of a liberal English education, suggested that every noybidhi should be accompanied by a sum of five rupees. The temptation was too great to be resisted, the very Brahmins who, two hours back, openly refused to take the offerings, now came running in numbers to Ram Gopal's house for their share, and regularity scrambled for the thing. In fact, he had more demands than he could meet. Thus a few rupees had the marvelous effect of turning a sahib into a pure hindoo, fully illustrating the truth of Ramdoolal key's saying, that "caste was in his iron chest" (Bose, 1881: 177-78).

The social beliefs, customs and racial purity were supreme to orthodox people. "The most educated and enlightened persons of their time like Ram Mohan Ray went to England, he sought to preserve his caste by taking a Brahman cook with him"

(Farquhar, 1915: 420). Crossing the boundaries of one's native place was so strong that, "Mohandas karamchand Gandhi was outcasted from his community modh bania in 1888 When the community came to know about his proposed trip to London for study; they never rescinded the proscription" (Zelliot. 1998: 71). Hindus did not have much problem to working under authority, but came to revolt when their religious feeling were hurt, the 1857 revolt started just for that. Sepoys proclaimed, "it is all well known that in these days all the English have entertained these evil designs- first, to destroy the religion of the whole 'Hindustani' army, and then to make the people by compulsion Christians. Therefore we, Sepoys on account of our religion, have combined with the people, and have not spared alive one 'infidel'" (Chandra, 1989: 33).

People were deeply fixed in their beliefs, location and privileges and there was no scope and room for any negotiation. It created deep distrust, repulsion, and antagonism among people that it often becomes a public menace. In south India the division of people as 'right hand caste' and 'left hand caste' become a difficult issue to handle for colonial authorities. There emerge strong antagonism, disagreements and conflicts on pity issues, these disagreements become violence in cases for example in madras, 'it was found necessary to mark the respective boundaries of the right and left hand castes and to forbid the right hand caste in their procession from occupying the streets of the left hand, and vice versa'. Similarly Dr. Cornish mentions "there was a great disturbance in 'masulipatnam', because certain castes whitewashed their houses. The magistrate refusing to prevent this, a telegram was sent direct to the governor" (Murdoch, 1896, 27).

It is usually understood that hunger, pain and sufferings transcend the social and cultural barriers but not so in a highly rigid society. Famines were one of the results of British colonial rule and policies. Millions of people died in these famines, in some state it the death is in terms of percentage. But interesting enough, caste manifested and showed its brutal face there also. "nearly, all hindoos so rigorously refrain from animal food, and look upon swine with such especial disgust that, in the great drought of 1770, when it has been calculated that more than one-fourth of the teeming population of Bengal perished of famine, thousands died rather than violate their religious scruples; yet all these, with perhaps the exception of the very highest caste, will east the flesh of the deer and wild boars, if not killed by their hands. In

kumaon all will east the short-tailed sheep of the hills, but none will touch one of the long tail" (Irving, 1853: 27).

Food and water were one of the most important areas where caste rules were strictly applied. The magnitude and degree of fear of loosing one's caste was so strong among Hindus was such that people often preferred to suffer/die rather than accept food and water from caste they assumed to be lower than their's, "If a Brahman feel thirsty and has no other water but such as is brought by a Sudra near him, he cannot drink it; for caste forbids it at the pain of excommunication" during the times of famines, when there was shortage of food, they abide by their caste rules, they refused food offered to them by Europeans" (Murdoch, 1896: 26). Similarly, "should a Hindu of inferior caste happen to touch one of superior caste, while the latter is cooking or eating, he throws away everything as defiled: even in cases of extreme sickness, the one will seldom condescend to drink water out of the hands of the other…number of outcaste abandon their home and wander about till death. Many other instances might be given in which the fear of losing caste had led to the perpetration of the most shocking murders, which in this country are easily concealed, and thousands of children are murdered in the womb, to prevent discovery and the consequent loss of caste, particularly in the house of the koolin Brahmins" (Bose, 1881: 168-70).

The Brahmins and other upper caste groups considered and treated low castes and tribal worst than animals. Sir Lepel Griffin says, "Much of central India is inhabited by Bhils, an ancient people of singularly gentle and simple ways. But it is exceedingly difficult to persuade the Rajput chiefs and their Brahman ministers to treat their subject Bhils with common humanity. They look down upon them as dogs, whom only the eccentric philanthropy of the British government can find excuse for protection" (Murdoch, 1896: 30). There was no sympathy towards them of any sort; rather they were exploited through various means whether in the agricultural fields or taking work without giving them any payments.

The fixation that was created by religion and culture was very strong which led to the non utilization and inefficient use of the natural resources. As was observed by a colonial author he says, "The population in India is very unequally distributed; so much so, that while enormous tracts of country are waste and wholly without inhabitants, population in others, is, as it were, lumped. The characteristics of the people, their love of father-land, and place of birth, caste restrictions and prejudices,

famines, inundations, poverty, ravages, of disease, and of wars- all these have combined to assist in maintaining in the midst of large provinces unsurpassed in fertility of soil and natural capabilities by any country in the world, a stagnation unknown in Europe" (Lees, 1867: 195).

The social customs devalued labour and work by grading occupations. It branded certain works as dirty, filthy and impure which carried on to those who do that work. There is no possibility to change one's status by adopting certain other occupations on the basis of interests and specialization. Max Weber says, "The caste system has had tremendous consequences for the whole social organization of India, because it is anchored in ritualistic and hence religious institutions. It has stereotyped all craft work and thus made impossible the utilization of inventions or the introduction of any industry based on capital. The introduction of any technical improvement whatever at any time would have presupposed the founding of a new caste below all the old serious previously existing. When the communist manifesto says of the proletarian that he has a world to win and nothing to lose but his chain, the expression would apply to the Indian except that he can only get free of his chain in the after world, through the fulfillment of the last detail of his caste obligations in this" (Madan, 1959: 83).

The Brahmanical belief system and religious beliefs killed the aspiration of the people to rise up. It forced people to accept their destiny and be contented by doing their ascribed function in the society. This fixation led to the collapse of hope, optimism and brought passivity in their life. The labour was devalued and there was no possibility and hope for raising one's status in present by doing hard work. This resulted in devaluation of labour and achievement. People were looking to devotion in god, Bhakti, and penance for their salvation in the next birth. This led to loss of the value of labour; as it was not one's labour rather their ritual purity which defined their status in the society. "The ambition and enterprise of individuals is absorbed in the general feelings of their caste, which is a torpid mass, little influenced by the genial spirit of improvement, or the wish of ameliorating its condition. It presents no obstacle to their pretensions or tyranny of a ruler, but after a fashion, by its apathy and stationary nature, confirms his authority…The secret cause of this disregard of country and want of patriotic feelings, to which, more than perhaps to any other cause, we owe the acquisition and retention of our Indian empire, is to be found in the institution of caste" (Irving, 1853: 40-2).

One of the most sever and serious impact of caste was the stunted growth of science and technology in the society. There was no completion between different castes as the place of every caste was already fixed. There was no motivation, curiosity, and quest to go beyond what has been given to them. In fact those who defied their caste rules were punished and excommunicated. Weber says, "Every new technological process which an Indian employs signifies for him first of all that he leaves his caste and falls into another, necessarily lower. Since he believes in the transmigration of souls, the immediate significance of this is that his chance of purification is put off until another re-birth. He will hardly consent to such a change. An additional fact is that every caste makes every other impure. In consequence, workmen who dare not accept a vessel filled with water from each other's hand, cannot be employed together in a same factory room. Not until the present time, after the possession of the country by the English for almost a century, could this obstacle be overcome. Obviously, capitalism could not develop in an economic group thus bound hand and foot by magic beliefs" (Madan, 1959: 100-1).

One of the most visible symptoms of Varna system based division of society was the non development of capitalism and industries in India. People were forced to accept and be content with the explanation given by the Brahmins. They did not try to find reasons and cause and reasons for their sufferings. Dr. K. M Banerjea says, "in civilized countries, every encouragement is held out to the cultivators of the arts, specialty the fine arts. Their professions are esteemed honorable-their labours are simply rewarded by men of taste and refinement…the pernicious system of caste taught a different lesson to the Hindus. The civil architect is branded as a bastard. The carpenter and the goldsmith are accursed, because the Brahmans chose to take umbrage at them. How could the arts flourish in such a society? How could a person of sensibility aspire to distinction in the cultivation of arts which are considered so low?" (Murdoch, 1896: 23). Col. Munro the British Diwan in the Travancore state says, "The most important cause against the growth and progress of India as nation was its casteism (Philip, 2005: 7).

The religion and cultural beliefs transformed society stagnant, passive and superstitious. The society discouraged reasoning, adventures and questioning the status quo which resulted in slavish mentality. In one of the most brutal critique of India was written by Katherine mayo in a books called "mother India" originally published in 1927, this book has been reprinted thirty three times till March 1931

signifying it's popularity. She writes, "Meantime the British government, in administering the affairs of India, would seem to have reached a set rate of progress, which, if it be not seriously interrupted, might fairly be forecast decade by decade. So many schools constructed, so many hospitals; so many furlongs of highway laid, so many bridges built; so many hundreds miles of irrigation canal dug; so many markets made available; so many thousand acres of waste land brought under homestead cultivation; so many well sunk; so much rice and wheat and millet and cotton added to the country's food and trade resources…the population of all India is reckoned, in round numbers, to be 319,000,000. Setting aside Indian states ruled by Indian princes, that of British India are 247,000,000. Among these peoples live fewer than 200,000 Europeans, counting every man, woman and child in the land, from the viceroy down to the haberdasher's baby. The British personnel of the army, including all ranks, numbers fewer than 60,000 men. The British civilian cadre, inclusive of the civil railways administrators, mint, assay, educational, agricultural and veterinary experts, etc., total 3,432 men. Of the Indian police service, the British membership approximates 4,000. This last figure excludes the subordinate and provincial services, in which the number of Europeans is, however, negligible. This is the entire local strength of the body to whose oppressive presence the Indians attributes what he himself describes as the "slave mentality" of 247,000,000 human beings" (Mayo, 1931: 19-21).

There were many people who realized the harm that has been caused by caste and its institution. Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri while talking about the ill effects of caste on Indian society says, (1) "it has produced disunion and discord, (2) it has made honest manual labour contemptible in this country (3) it has checked internal and external commerce, (4) it has brought on physical degeneracy by confining marriage within narrow circles, (5) it has been source of conservatism in everything, (6) it has suppressed the development of individuality and independence of character, (7) it has helped in developing other injurious customs, such as early marriage, the charging of heavy matrimonial fees, & c, (8) it has successfully restrained the growth and development of national worth; while allowing opportunity of mental and spiritual culture only to a limited number of privileged people, it has denied these opportunities to the majority of the lower classes, consequently it has made the country negatively a lower, (9) it has made the country fit for foreign slavery by previously enslaving the people by the most abject spiritual tyranny" (Murdoch 1896: 35-6).

HISTORY, CASTE, DALITS AND MARGINALITY

Dalit is a socio-historic cultural category that emerged at a certain point of time in history to denote or refer to those people who have been cut off from the society and were forced to live a marginal and disadvantageous life in the society. It is a cluster of castes who share similar experiences across different regions, religions and geographies. In contemporary times they are collectively known by the term Dalit. This broad category people are known by different and specific names in different part of India, but their experiences across all parts are similar which is captured by the term Dalit meaning crushed, broken or marginalized. They are imagined to be permanently polluted people therefore they have a specific relationship with other caste people. They all were suppressed and exploited in history.

Although their names are different but they all share common experiences of marginalization and violence. Everywhere they located at the bottom of social hierarchy. Everyone in the society maintained 'safe' distance from them due to the fear of pollution; nobody will associate with them or maintain relationship with them except in the cases of labour. This category of people are known by different names like outcaste or pariah which tell their location, *acchut* which tell their experiential status, "*harijan*" as reconstructive imagination by Gandhi, untouchable is a English term to define *asprashya*, *Dalits* as counter construction, resistance and assertion, scheduled caste in government records and documents, *panchama* as integrative and nationalistic phenomenon, *Avarna* as isolative and differentiative category etc.

All these terms have specific meanings and historical significance. "Except for the stark word "untouchable" there never was any single name to cover this great mass of people. In the various Indian languages they were known by many versions of worlds that mean "untouchable" or "outcast" or variations therefore: *pamchamas, atishudras, avarnas, antyajas, namashudras*, etc. one also comes on "pariahs" "unseeables", and "unapproachable". In British officialese sometime late in the last century the term "depressed classes" was introduced and remained the most commonly used, though vague name of the group for many decades…it was not until 1932 that the term "depressed classes" was officially defined as meaning only the

untouchables. But it was just about at this time that "depressed classes" was replaced by "scheduled castes" (Issacs, 1998: 384).

The Caste Hindus declared that chandals as evil people or people of low origin. They were associated with darkness (quality/nature not colour) and impurity and they were considered permanently polluted people. "Fa hsien/Fah hian, a Chinese writes, that the untouchables had to had to sound a clapper in the streets of the town so that people were warned of their presence; and that if an untouchable came into close rance, the upper caste person would have to perform a ritual ablution. Similarly, Huesen Tsang informs that butchers, fisher-folk, theatrical performers, executioners and scavengers were forced to live outside the city and their houses were marked so that they could be avoided" (Waghmore, 2007: 10). Similarly, "The *code of manu*, prescribes *chandalas* to be excluded from living in villages, they constitute a servile class, dress in rags, eat scraps and must be kept in a state of abjection" (Deliege, 2001: 12). According to the law books the '*candala*' (chandala) or *Mleccha* "must not approach a high caste man; for their very shadow pollutes, in south India they must not come within thirty yards of a Brahman; and they are usually denied the use of public wells, roads, bridges, and ferries. They are not allowed to enter Hindu temples" (Farquhar, 1919: 162).

In different regions these people had different kinds of disabilities but their experiences were same. Bayly, says, "these were the people who had come to be known collectively such titles as chamar, chuhra and mahar in the north and the Deccan, and as paraiyan, palla, mala, holeya and cheruma in the south. In the south, these tillers of the lands of seigniorial wet-zone grandees were depicted by missionaries and colonial scholar officials as slaves or near slaves. Caste as a 'system' was held to designate these people too as permanently unclean and impure by virtue of the defiling labour which they performed, not as free labourers, but as providers of obligatory service to landed proprietors" (Bayly, 1999: 193).

The caste ideology virtually reduced them to the status below even to animals. They were treated as an object with no subjectivity, feelings and emotions. The caste degraded and pushed them at the bottom in every spheres of life which brought only sufferings, pain and destitution. The basic requirements and natural resources like water, food, cloths, shelter were barely available to them although many animals like rats, snakes, peacock, cow had access to them as they were considered to be sacred. They were treated worst than animals. They face the various disabilities and

sanctions in different parts of the country. They could not choose place of their living and were pushed to the most undesirable and non-habitable places. "the candala (Chandala) was not allowed to live in an Aryan town or village, but had to dwell in special quarters outside the boundaries…according to law books the Candala should be dressed in the garments of the corpses he cremated, should eat his food from broken vessels, and should wear only iron ornaments…by Gupta times Candalas had become so strictly untouchable that, like "Lepers" in medieval Europe, they were forced to strike a wooden clapper on entering a town, to warn the Aryans of their polluting approach" ((Basham, 2004: 146).

The English word pariah has been adopted from the caste name paraiyar which was used to refer to all Dalit caste, not just pariyars. They were virtually the slave and were mercilessly exploited by their master. "Pariahs in madras throughout the nineteenth century, were kept in miserable conditions, subject to violent physical discipline, often tied to particular plots of land, and actively prevented from absconding or obtaining land of their own, and their condition was permanent. They were also ideologically construed as outsiders to native society; symbolically degraded; and portrayed as immoral, lacking intelligence, and unfit for anything but manual labor. They were forced to live part from all others, and even their touch was considered polluting" (Viswanath, 2014: 23).

The oppression against them was so brutal that they lost their value as human beings and became a commodity which could be sold or mortgaged as per the will of their masters. Alexander walker drew upon his year of experience in Malabar to make the following observations, "the Chermas are absolute property; they are part of the livestock on an estate. In selling and buying land it is not necessary that they should follow the soil; both kinds that of property are equally disposable and may fall into different hands. The Chermas may be sold, leased, mortgaged, like the land itself or like any cattle or thing" (Menon, 2002: 1665). This clearly reveals that the Dalits were treated like animals and they were sold without their consent like animals.

The colonial officials and missionaries recorded the heinous crimes and inhuman practices against the untouchable castes. "In 1801 Buchanan remarked that in south Malabar, …by far the greater part of the labour in the field is performed by slaves, or churmar4. These are the absolute property of their devarus or lords and may

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[4] Buchanan's term *churmar*, or more properly *cheruman*, is the name of the caste that formed the bulk of the agricultural labourers in malabar

be employed in any work that their master please. They are not attached to the soil but may be sold or transferred in any manner that the master thinks fit. Only husband and wife can be sold but children may be separated from their parents and brothers from their sisters…Buchanan mentions three modes of transferring slaves here: i) Janmun, or sale, where the full value of the slave was given and the property entirely handed over; ii) Kanam or mortgage, where the proprietor got a loan and the quantity of rice, to show that his property in the slave was not extinguished, but could be resumed once the loan was repaid; iii) Pattam or rent, where the slave was hired out for an annual sum, the hirer paying the cost of maintenance" (kumar, 1962: 343).

The condition of untouchable castes was so pathetic that they could not manage even basic necessities like food and water. They were bought and sold in the markets like a commodity like fruits and vegetables. "The Parayas were at the bottom of the social ladder. They wore leaves and ate the flesh of wild animals. The Parayas used to eat the carcasses of all domestic animals. Their ordinary profession was cultivation of paddy fields, cleaning of ponds, and tilling the ground using bullocks. Also they engaged themselves in skinning animals, making baskets, bamboo mats, umbrellas and such other menial occupations. They were at the mercy of their masters by whom they were bought and sold like cattle and were generally treated inhumanly. Majority of the slave populations in Travancore sprang from the Pulayas and Parayas. They could even be killed by their masters with impunity. Even in the courts of law justice was denied. They could not put up huts near public roads. Also they were not permitted to use sircar ferry boats to cross the rivers in times of flood. In order to avoid pollution they were required to keep away from public places, roads and offices" (Beena, 2011: 37-8).

The untouchables faced many social prohibitions and disabilities. They were not allowed to cover certain parts of their bodies to show respect to their masters. "According to nineteenth-century missionaries and anti-caste polemicists, both men and women from client laboring populations were expected to appear before lordly or Savarna thread-wearers in the bare-bosomed garb of suppliants, and to use a special language of self-abnegation when speaking to those they served. Where landed groups had adopted more brahmanical styles of lordliness, these accounts also said that those of unclean birth contaminated water and food stuffs by touch and were therefore banned from wells used by their superiors; residential hamlets were far removed from those of the non-polluting. Even the shadow of a so-called untouchable was held to be

ritually defiling. The Malabar and Konkan regions were said to be so strict in caste matters that the lowest groups were unseeable as well as untouchable, wearing bells, on pain of death, to warn others of their approach" (Bayly, 1999: 196-7).

There were various kinds of customs to control their mobility and access to public resources. There were time restrictions on their mobility and they could not spit on the road it their spit could pollute the land. "The untouchable jati Mahar were not allowed to enter the gates of towns after three O'clock in the afternoon and before nine O'clock in the morning because the shadows are at their longest at this time and there was the fear of the higher jatis being defiled of it. In Maharashtra the Mahar jati could spit only in small containers tied around their necks because of the fear that their sputum upon the road might defile some superior Hindus by touching feet. Often if some Brahmin passed their way the Mahars had to destroy the imprints of their feet with brambles and lie down at a distance in order to protect the Brahmin from their shadow" (Philip, 2005: 9). Not only touch, their shadow was impure, people take special care not to get their shadow on them. Consequently they were not allowed near upper caste hearths or wells and they were prohibited from entering the village temple.

They were not allowed to accumulate wealth and resources. The only source of their survival was physical labour. It was only to prevent their mobility and keep them as slave as long as possible. "There are vast areas of wasteland in the district, speaking generally, none may be taken up without the consent of the Mirasidars of the village; those Mirasidars are caste people, and they will consent to the acquisition of land by a stranger, sometimes if he is a caste man, never he is a pariah…I do not know how to describe [this] otherwise than by saying that the possession of land is closed to pariahs" (Viswanath, 2014: 131). The condition was so severe of these castes that in the time of scarcity and famines they did not hesitate to sell off their children. "For petty sums of money, the parents used to sell their children to work in the house or in the fields of the rich during the times of famine. Later these rich people converted them into slaves. In case where the women of higher castes associated with men of low castes they were reduced to slavery and were removed from their parental community. This was depicted by Francis Day in his book "The Land of Perumals'" (Beena, 2011: 61-2). The upper caste women although were privileged in many ways to the untouchable women but they were also punished

severely if they dared to cross their limits. Caste therefore appears to be more stronger than gender.

The caste Hindu adopted some highly violent and inhuman markers, symbols and practices which separate them from untouchables. During the regime of peshwa, "if a caste Hindu walked on the road, the untouchable was not allowed to tread, lest his shadow should defile the high caste Hindus. The untouchable had to tie a black thread on his wrist or nest as a mark, lest the Hindus touch him by mistake. In Puna, the capital of the peshwas, the untouchables were decreed to move about with a broom tied by their waist; and, while walking, they were required to sweep off their foot marks with that broom, lest a hindu be defiled by stepping on those foot marks. In Puna, an untouchable had to tie a clay pot by his neck when he walked so that he would spit in that pot, for if he spat on the ground and a hindu stepped on it, the later would be defiled" (Pujari, 2011: 60). "In south India they were forbidden to enter the streets in which houses of the upper caste were situated" (Velassery, 2005: 8).

The cooked and uncooked or *kuccha/puccka* food was a marker of social position one has in the society. Those who are located at the top give cooked food to their inferiors while those who are inferior but not untouchable give uncooked food to their superior. Food is a major markers of status in the society, for example "The higher castes do not accept fried or boiled food from Chamars… they are also not allowed to sit on *charpai* (cot) with higher caste people" (Lapoint & Lapoint, 1980: 3). The Dalits are associated with left hand while higher castes with right hand. The superior use their right hand while giving food to their inferiors, left hand is considered to be impure, therefore it was not supposed to be used while taking or giving food from superior castes. In south India it often gave rise to enmity and there were fierce conflicts between these two groups.

The use of utensils and ghee was a marker of social status and ritual hierarchy. "In November 1935, some untouchable women of "well to do" families started fetching water in metal pots. The Hindus looked upon the use of metal pots by untouchable as an affront to their dignity and assaulted the untouchable women for their impudence, Similarily in Chakawara in Jaipur state the untouchable of *chakwara* who had returned from a pilgrimage had arranged to give dinner to his fellow untouchables of his village as an act of religious piety. The host desired to treat the guest to a sumptuous meal and the items served including ghee (butter) also. But while the assembly of untouchable was engaged in partaking of the food, the Hindu in

their hundred, armed with *lathis*, rushed to the scene, despoiled the food and belabored the untouchables, who left the food they were served with and run away for their lives. The reason given is that the untouchable host was impudent enough to serve ghee and his untouchable guests were foolish enough to taste it. *ghee* (butter) is undoubtedly a luxury for the rich. But no one would think that consumption of ghee was a mark of high and low status" (Ambedkar, 2007: 7).

In the late 19th and 20th century, Mukerjee observes, "In the united province, the Chamars can obtain only the worst and most distant plots and the worst wells, and must pay the heaviest rents and rate of interests, their land holding are, as a rule, the smallest. They cannot even in the best years make ends meet by cultivation" (Mukerjee, 1937: 380). Due to the concerns of purity and impurity, there was a spatial isolation of the untouchable's residential quarters which are scattered about periphery of the village settlement (Mahar, 1998: 18). In the past the kings and Rajahs used to forcibly get menial services from the untouchable castes. If they resisted or refused they were treated with utmost cruelty. The Rajahs levied many kinds of taxes on their subjects. "After the grain had been harvested and cleaned, and the sudras had measured out to the Madigas the part of the harvest that was theirs, on the principle of mutual service, the servants of the rajah came and put a seal upon it. The women would not use it for cooking until after they had paid their tax. If they bought a cloth, about one-eighth of the cost had to be paid as tax, and often rajah's servant went to the washer men to look over the clothes, and if any were found without the seal, they took them away" (Rauschenbusch-clough, 1899: 39).

Water, one of the most essential components for human survival was denied to them. This basic right which is available even to the animals was not freely available to them. For untouchables it always remained a commodity and object of desire. "They were not allowed to access public wells, ponds, upper streams of the rivers because their touch could pollute the water and its sources. Due to this, they were pushed to live on the outskirts of the village, and they did not have easy access to the water resources which were generally under the control of dominant caste supervision or under the control of panchayats" (Lapoint & lapoint, 1980: 3). Whenever Dalits tried to access water they were beaten and humiliated. In Chakwada, Rajasthan, the *Bairwa* are prevented to use the *ghats* for taking baths, whenever they tried to do it they were humiliated and suppressed (Bhatia, 2009: 31).

They were prohibited to reside in the main villages; they used to live in separate hamlets which were away from the main villages. The hierarchal and vertical division of people turns into spatial as well. Some groups are forced to live on the outskirts while others enjoyed the core areas of the villages. The lower have been pushed to the periphery while cleaners remain at the centre of the village. Some groups were concentrated more in some areas while in others areas. (Das, 2002: 149). This segregation and division carried on other areas as well. "Traditionally, the Paraiyans were not supposed to sit on the top of a bullock cart when carrying paddy through a village street. By 1967 many Paraiyans did this in MM, though older men often dismounted when nearing the Brahman street or the houses of prestigious Naickers. Similarly although Paraiyans were not allowed to walk down the main Brahman street in the past, by the 1960s young men would walk on this street but the older men and women still avoided it"(Mencher, 1998: 44).

The 'sacred' scriptures prohibited them from accessing education and land ownership.   Therefore they always lived on their labour specially providing compulsory services to the dominants groups and village community. Their main task was the carrying and cremation of corpses, "the Candalas who have the duty of laying out and shrouding the body (dead) and carrying it to the cremation ground, are the most inauspicious of creatures and the lowest of the low" (Basham, 2004: 178). Since the resources were traditionally owned by the upper caste groups they were the virtual slaves of them, who were dependent on upper caste for their survival. "When a cow died in a central Indian village, the owner tied a rope to its, dragged it as far to the edge of the village as he could, and informed the Mahar. The latter then dragged it out of the village and flayed it. He could 'keep the hide free in return for services performed for the village community" (Roy, 1999: 161). It is quite clear that removing dead animal was not their occupation it was their compulsory duty forced through customs.

The commissioner of scheduled castes and schedules tribes discussed 'complaints' reported that a "harijan' family was harassed and beaten because of 'their refusal to lift the dead cattle" (Mandeasohn & Vicziany, 1998: 48). The traditional duties of the untouchable castes are to do the menial and manual works. Mayer observes, "his (Metaphor for caste) duties are to remove any carcass of an animal which does not divide the hoof and to clear away night soil from any latrines that may be in the village, he should also sweep the ground at public places when a

meeting is to be held…this is all work for the village as a whole, and in return he begs food daily; he is never given uncooked stores, but rather cooked food and the leavings from the plates" (Mayer, 1966: 68). Besides removing dead animals, carrying and cremation of corpse and performing the cremation rites, they were also involved in those processes which others found degrading and low in status as it required greater physical strength and power like making thatch roofs, carry palanquins or involving birth related profession like mid-wife (Roy, 1999:).

While untouchables are considered to be permanently polluted people but their labour is not imagined to be so. "Reiniche has shown that pallars or pariayars can be considered impure only with respect to certain criteria associated with Indian society; and it is never said of an untouchable that he pollutes land he tills" (Deliege, 2001: 10). Their labour remained touchable but they remain untouchable. The distinction between them and their labour blurred to such an extent that they became synonymous with labour. They lost their value as human beings. They were traded like commodities like animals and products. Dharma kumar work on Agrestic servitude in Tamilnad contains some observations, "it is clear that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the pannaiyals (unfree laborers) in some Tamil areas were in a condition of servitude. They were born into servitude, and they died in it…they could not leave their master's land; this was so generally recognized that in the early years the collectors would help to catch runaway labourers…pallans and paraiyans did enter into contract of slavery, in return for maintenance throughout their lives; they could be sold, though not to distant parts of the country" (Mencher, 1999: 40).

In Himachal Pradesh, where SC constitutes second largest community in terms of percentage are not allowed to access the public places frequently. They can't access temples and are discriminated in every walk of life. Even the elected Scheduled caste representatives feel the discrimination and they cannot enter in the houses of upper caste families. Their role and function in the social and religious life is fixed. They are victim of untouchability and differential power arrangements. (Jodhka, 2015: 64). They are prevented from accessing public roads, main village streets, their marriages were not allowed from main streets, whenever they tied to break the traditions they were melted out with punishments, sanctions and excommunication (Hayden, 1983: 294). "Most of the *Ezhavas* were tappers and tenders of coconut palm. They followed the customs of Nayars, in Public offices, temple roads and in the houses of the Ezhavas. Their women were prohibited from covering their breasts and wearing

certain clothes and ornaments till the second half of the nineteenth century. Keeping cows, using metal vessels, wearing sandals and fire clothes were not allowed for them. In general, they were a people despised by the high castes" (Beena, 2011: 28).

In cases of any dispute, disagreement or conflicts the punishments are given as per the ranking of the caste in the social hierarchy. Philips writes, 'The harshness of the penalty varies with the caste rank of the offender. Punishments are most severe in the case of offences against person of higher caste, for these challenges the moral order of the village as a whole. In a village disputes most of the time it is the lowest castes that are accorded the severest and humiliating punishments. Gough notes, in a village dispute in Tanjor district of Tamilnadu involving some different caste groups. "A *pallan* (untouchable) was forced to drink human dung (excreta) mixed with water while in the case of others, they were forced to drink cow dung mixed in water" (Gough, 1969: 48). Samuel Mateer explains the story of a 1780 criminal justice by quoting Bartholomew. "One man from *Shannan jati* made a theft of three coconuts from the garden of a Nair at Kollarn. The coconut thief was hanged and the stolen property three coconuts was tied on the neck of the hanged man in order to teach others a good lesson" (Philip, 2005: 62).

In the traditional economy land is one of the major sources of employment and income. Traditionally, The Land in the villages was virtually owned by Brahmins, Kings, Rajas, Zamindars. The peasants did not have title rights over the land; they were cultivators, share croppers and tillers. The Dalits did not own any land whether residential or agricultural historically. Mukerjee says, "In northern India, on account of the heavy population pressure, such depressed castes as the Chamars, who represent 12 percent of the total population in the united provinces can obtain only the worst and most distant plots and the worst wells, and must pay the heaviest rents and rates of interest. Their holdings are, as a rule, the smallest. They cannot even in the best years make ends meet by cultivation, and resort to keeping pigs and flaying dead carcasses, occupations which prevent their rise in the social scale" (Mukerjee, 1937: 380).

The untouchable castes did not own any land traditionally. Due to this they have been a landless and their relation to the land was of worker. They were attached to the land as labourers. Due to the marginal status in land holding and other assets, they were largely dependent on manual work in agriculture. Bayly, writes, "The lands of a typical Anvail desai would be tilled by household farm-servants whose displays

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of deference confirmed the status of their patron-proprietor. Most of these receivers of the big man's largesse were known by the jati title *Dubla*, and also as *Halis*, a term implying service and maintenance ties which were perpetuated through the institution of hereditary debt-bondage or *Halipratha*" (Bayly, 1999: 198). There were certain agricultural processes where their entry was not allowed. Pandya, says, "no caste restrictions exists in the field of agricultural labour where all sub-caste are found to be working together. Ploughing, sowing and winnowing operations are, however, prohibited to all scheduled caste persons in some parts of Ahmadabad district" (Pandya, 1959: 1).

The sources of income were limited, temporary and fluctuating and there was pressure to feed the family. This was not possible with their limited earning and opportunities. Many of them took the risk of cultivating the waste land at the risk of their health. "Certain dangerous agricultural terrains were wholly populated in this way. At the mouth of the Godavari delta, the riverine system occasionally threw up silt islands, which, though immensely rich, were hazardous to cultivate due to 'fever' (probably malaria). They were known as 'pariah islands' because they were almost exclusively cultivated by pariahs (parayan) who were prepared to stand the risks in order to take of the chance of making a quick financial killing" (Washbrook, 1993: 72). The mortality and morbidity among the untouchable is relatively more than any other groups due to their residential and working patterns. This clearly reveals a strong link between health and caste.

The structural of the society is such that the most productive, profitable and lucrative opportunities are monopolized by the upper caste groups. This also applies to the quality, quantity and physical landscape of the land which is available to the bottom sections. Mencher writes, in Chinglepur, "paraiyans constitute almost one third of the population, and in other rice producing areas in the broader region of tamilnad, the paraiyans and other schedules caste provide most of the agricultural labor The status of paraiyans' as categorized by Ellis and others was that of a agrestic slaves bound to the soil. Treated as untouchable by all caste Hindus, and even by many other semi-untouchable castes such as Ambattan (barbers) and Wannan (washermen), the paraiyans lived outside the main village in separate cheris or "harijan" hamlets. The cheris were generally located on the least desirable lands, such as areas subject to flooding by the monsoon. Often overcrowded, they rarely possessed such rudimentary sanitary facilities as clean source of drinking water'…in

the past, some Paraiyans were owned by individual landlords, some by a village community, and others were "free". Records tell of pariyans who, in times of severe scarcity, sold their brothers, sisters and even themselves into slavery" (Mencher, 1998: 38-9).

It was a customary practice in the society to use the labour of impure castes without payment. The untouchable castes were forced to provide their labour with or without their consent. It was compulsion and no one could deny to their masters. They were paid at times and at times were not paid. They were completely at the mercy of the dominants that used them as per their will. Rauschenbusch-clough writes, 'to the *Madigas* fell the lot of being the burden-bearer; for, when roads were few and often impassable, the camp-baggage was placed upon the *Yettis*[5], to be borne from place to place…Yetti-service was not confined to the time when Rajah came, or when he sent his Dewan; those in authority could at any time demand the service of the Yettis, and it was always service without pay (Rauschenbusch-clough, 1899: 36).

They looked poor, helpless and vulnerable due to their marginal status. This symbol was utilized by the aristocracy for some specific purposes. Rauschenbusch-clough write, "The madigas were given additional responsibility to deliver the taxes to the districts because they looked so poor and ragged and none suspected that they had money concealed about them (ibid: 41). They were so productive to the society yet so powerless due to the complex value system of the society. This dichotomy and tragedy was visible by the nature of taxes collected from them by the rulers. "The women slaves were compelled to pay a tax called the breast tax and the slaves were compelled to pay for the hair they grew and moustache they had…The slaves were considered as their property by the masters and their position was less than that of animals. The masters employed their slaves in their fields and kept them away from their houses in the later periods. The slaves were never permitted to touch the masters. If they happened to touch them accidentally they were given death punishment" (Beena, 2011: 65).

The impure and lowest castes used to play many skin or leather made instruments on many occasions. Some of the specific drums and instruments are associated with them. Gough, observes, "before 1843 *pallans* (untouchables) were agricultural serfs of landlords of the dominant castes, and today are landless laborers.

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[5] Yettis are the group of people within the untouchable castes who exclusively do the manual and labour intensive work for the kings, officials and the other dominants

The *paraiyans*, who were also agricultural serfs in addition beat tom-toms for non-brahman funerals, guard cremation ground and remove dead cattle from the streets of landlords" (Gough, 1969: 17). These castes were considered to be so impure that they were not touched by any due to fear of pollution. But in certain parts of the they could not even approach to ther masters and have to maintain huge distance. Philip mentions, "Untouchablity was acknowledged in every part of India but adherence to unapproachablity was a special privilege of the caste Hindus of Kerala. Untouchability and unapproachability and fear of pollution disabled the lower castes. The untouchables were not supposed to dress neatly, nor walk on the public roads where even animals like cattle and dogs free to stray wherever they pleased. Thus condition of slaves in Kerala was indeed very dreadful" (Philip, 2005: 50).

The Dalits have faced all kinds of violence historically be it psychological, physical in the form of atrocities, social, when they are denied and prevented certain privileges which are otherwise available to others like access to water, lands, residences etc. occupational when they are not allowed to change their demeaning occupations and economic when they are not allowed to decide the wages, timings, schedules of their work. They are massacred often whenever they try to assert their right for dignity. This has not changed much even to this day. In 1968, in Tamilnadu, the Dalit women organized themselves to demand higher wages, "the Brahmin landlords barricaded forty two women and children in a hut and burnt them to ashes. The culprits were set free owing to 'lack of evidence" (Meera, 1979: 418). Despite the laws and acts these are mere symbolic or are hardly pressed into action. Similarly "A Dalit woman was stripped naked and beaten to death by two upper backward caste men in Negla village in Agra district, this woman made the mistake of crossing the path of Virendra pal and Vijay pal, carrying empty pot'…similarly, in Hasnapur of Varanasi district, five Dalits were beaten to death by the Thakurs because one of them 'defied the dictates of the Rajputs' and filled FIR against the criminal assault made by a Rajput of the village. This enraged the dominant Rajputs and they took law into their hands against the 'erring untouchables of the village" (Louis, 2003: 17).

The violence and atrocities against them continued despite the presence of laws and presence of enforcement agencies. In karamchedu village in 1985 an upper caste boy bathed a buffalo in a tank from where Dalits took drinking water. When they protested, the upper caste retaliated by killing six Dalit men and injuring more than 25 men and women. In 2001, Nirmal devi of Damauli Paswan Tola in Purnea

district of Bihar was tortured, tonsured and paraded naked by upper caste men for refusing to work as a domestic main in an upper caste household. In august 2001, a Dalit man Tonsi Pasi, refused to work in the fields of a particular landlord at Piprahi village of the Gopalganj district in Bihar. His wife was stripped naked and paraded in the village. In Aligarh district a Dalit woman and her five children, who were between three months to seven years, were burnt to death because her husband demanded wages from the brick-kiln, where he had worked for long without receiving wages. In 2001, when Dalits in Thinniyam village of Tiruchi district demanded higher wages, the upper caste men forced them to eat faeces (Rao, 2009: 67-8).

Dalit women have been one of the worst victims of caste and its allied systems historically. In many parts it was common for the dominants Zamindars and Thakurs to coerce the Dalit women for sexual advances. Briggs, says, "The Zamindars, often has liberties with the chamar's wife in consideration for his payments to the Chamar" (Briggs, 1920: 43). Samita Sen work on the Bengal jute industry reveals, 'most temporary migrants were men. Of women migrants, it was mostly widows and deserted wives of low caste like *Haris* and *Muchis* who came to alone to Calcutta…there were lodging-house keepers, washerwomen, barbers, sweepers, midwives and large numbers of women were reported as prostitutes (Sen, 1999: 25). The lower caste women were beyond doubt were sexually exploited by the dominant groups whether in the agricultural fields or in modern factories or religious sites. The dedication of young lower caste girls to the temple in the name of *Devadasi* is one of the most striking examples.

The caste Hindus devised various methods to humiliate them collectively. The Dalit women become the soft targets of their lust and ego. Every now and then these are reported in the electronic and print media. There are many institutionalized systems by which theses untouchable women are sexually exploited. One of the most highlighted is the *Devadasi* system in south India. In many parts similar system exists and one of them is the *Dola* system. The "Dola" system was an institutionalized system of sexual exploitation of Dalit women. Such was the stranglehold of the feudal order in the village that upper caste landlords were supposed to have an undisputed right over Dalits and backward caste women. As such every newly married Dalit women had to pass her first night after marriage with the village landlord. Thus those who escaped being raped by the landlords had to undergo the trauma after getting married. These were extra-economic methods devised by the landlords to

continuously remind this lower in the caste hierarchy of their 'Aukat'"(Umakant, 2014: 68).

It is not only the society but state also plays an important role in the perpetuation of these crimes. It adopts various ways and mechanism to confront the caste directly like conscious ignorance, mute/silence, or laxity to punish the culprits, thereby indirectly promoting this violence. The Dalit women are the most neglected people who are the most vulnerable and can be easily exploited both by the state and other sections. "In 1973, four Dalit women were labeled as witch, 'they were abused and kicked and in front of the entire village which watched curiously. The four women were stripped naked and hot iron branded on their bodies for four hours. Later, the local police refused to register a case and the hospital staff would not touch the burnt women'…'two young Dalit women of parbhanizilla (Maharashtra) who dared to ask the landlord for water from his house since their wells had dried up. They were, instead, paraded round the village naked for 'having got above themselves'…in 1973, 'an ASI in Uttar Pradesh took a young Dalit woman to a nearby temple for interrogation and raped her brutally. Later a hue and cry was raised in the village because the sanctity of the temple had been violated by the presence of an 'untouchable' girl" (Meera, 1979: 418-9).

In June 2003, the Dalit *Sarpanch* of Batira village in Kendrapara district of Orissa was beaten up, stripped naked and paraded through the village for refusing to hand over the cement and iron meant for the construction of houses for Dalits, to the upper caste (Rao, 2009: 69). "The discrimination faced by Dalits is manifold: they cannot wear shoes in higher caste streets, they must drink from separate receptacles, they are not allowed to wear clothes below the knee or above the waist (untouchable women were historically barred from wearing blouses). They often still cannot cycle through high caste areas, spit in the streets, use the drinking water wells frequently by higher caste or sit on benches in the common areas of the village (Pothu manthai)…In November 1998, in Podhukottai district, south Tamilnadu, three Dalit men dared to marry higher caste women. "They were tied to the tree, beat them, shaved their hair off and made them roll three times around the temple to set an example to others" (Gorringe & Rafanell, 2007: 102, 107).

Knowledge is one of the most important sources of mobility, income, opportunities and consciousness. Historically, education was denied to the untouchable caste as it was prohibited to them. "Official reports in the late 19th and

20th century are replete with the accounts of the many trials and tribulations of untouchable children who persevered to receive an education even in 'special' schools set up exclusively for them. It is reported that the boys of Cherumar, that is, the ancient slave caste boys used to have their books snatched out of their hands as they went to schools established for them in Calicut in Kerala. In kaira district of Gujarat, five or six large schools were closed down and the crops of the depressed people burnt when they attempted to avail education" (Louis, 2003: 22). There are attempts and stiff resistance against Dalits getting education, availing opportunities and achieving mobility.

The denial and restrictions to education kept in dark for hundreds of years. They lived under slavery, Brahmanical orthodoxy and lack of education for such a long time that they have also developed inhuman, superstitious and humiliating beliefs and customs. "some inhuman practices concerning women (e.g. nude worship as in the case of savadatti temple, the devadasi system or the practice of *ajalu*- feeding Dalits with human hair and nails) in Karnataka, Maharashtra and elsewhere have been banned"(Karanth, 2012: 27). *Made Snana* is one of such heinous, superstitious and cruel practice. "a group of Dalits rolls over leftover food eaten by Brahmins every year in the belief that all troubles and ailments will be cured. This year, on November 29, an estimated 25,000 people rolled over the "spit" of Brahmins" (Aji, 2011)[6]. In Karnataka, the ritual is performed during the three-day annual celebrations at Kukke Subrahmanya in South Canara district of Karnataka sometime between November and December. In Tamil Nadu, devotees carry out the ritual in April every year during the annual Aradhana festival of the Nerur Sadasiva Bharmendrai Temple in Karur district (Deccan Cronicle, 2016)[7].

It is very much evident that Dalits are not considered to be human beings. They live a life under constant fear and threat. They live a life of a 'slave' who to fit to be exploited in one pretext or other. while writing about the experiences of Dalits, Abbe Dubois says, "their masters may beat them at pleasure; the poor wretches having no right either to complain or to obtain redress for that or any other ill

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[6] http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/karnataka-Dalits-rolls-over-leftover-food-eaten-by-brahmins/1/165656.html

[7] http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/130916/ban-inhuman-ritual-of-Dalits-rolling-over-brahmins-leftover-food-centre-tells-sc.html
For more details, visit the following links
https://scroll.in/article/680938/karnataka-bans-temple-ritual-that-involves-rolling-over-brahmins-leftover-food
https://www.telegraphindia.com/1111207/jsp/frontpage/story_14848695.jsp

treatment their masters may impose on them. In fact, these pariah are the born slaves of India; and had I to choose between the two sad fates of being a slave in one of our colonies here, I should unhesitatingly prefer the former" (Dubois, 1906:49). Tonybee, defines the untouchables (Dalits) as "the internal proletariat', and as 'people who are in the society but not of the society" (quoted in Nesiah, 2000: 38). They are not allowed to change their occupations nor could they change their masters. They could not decide their employment conditions, wages, timings, leisure, could not say no to performing those humiliating services. They are not allowed to change their villages and avenues for mobility are restricted. They have been completely over powered and transformed into a body which had economic value but no social existence.

COLONIALISM, INDUSTRALISATION AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES

The situation in India has been more or less stagnant and there was no dynamism except the frequent wars between kingdoms, conflicts and competition in the luxuries to each other. Social life and economy did not change significantly even during the Muslims' rule. Although there was growth in the trade and the commerce but the larger village life remained stagnant and largely unaffected. The village economy was stagnant, there were superstitions of all kinds, social evils of human sacrifice, inhuman and cruel practices like female feticide, sati, illiteracy, lack of industralisation, absolute power of the Brahmins and the aristocracy, lack of means of transportation, the under utilization of the resources, no improvement in the science and technology front, poverty etc.

Like any primitive society, India too, was heavily dependent on agriculture. The agricultural has been the backbone of the economy and all the other subsidiary activities were dependent on it. Majority of the people were dependent on it for their survival and livelihood. The other economic activities too were dependent on the products of agriculture. Aloysius writes, "complex and advanced agricultural societies were broadly marked by an unequal, hierarchal distribution of power among diverse groups, following somewhat rigid, hereditary occupations this ascriptive inequality permeated all spheres of social relations and tended to divide the entire society into relatively isolated segments such as orders, status-groups, caste etc" (Aloysius, 2010: 24). The same is true for India as it had been an agriculture based society, like any other society it also had huge inequalities in land and resources.

The land has historically been dominant sections and groups. The land was virtually owned and controlled by Brahmins, kings, Rajas, Nawabs, Zamindars and others. The farmers and peasants were cultivators of the land without the ownership rights. Therefore the economy, occupations and labour were socially controlled and regulated which marked differential power arrangements between groups. When British came, they gradually brought whole of India under their jurisdiction. This structural unification came along with economic transformation, expansion of civil society and introduction of liberal, secular ideas and reforms affected the social, cultural, economic and political spheres. They introduced the legal system which was applied to the whole of British governed India. "Without the aid of a new legal system it would have been impossible for the English to rule distant and heterogeneous million with a handful of military personnel" (Prashad, 1964: 76).

They forcefully or though coercion made the princely class accept their dominance in various spheres. "After the mutiny (1857), British rule and military preparedness became stronger than ever and the rural upper classes of landlord and prices were either crushed totally or co-opted by the British through concessions" (Gough, 1974: 1392). Numerous Indian rulers were deposed and puppets installed in their place, with each of the latter paying "compensation" to the British. The British demanded such wealth which they claimed they would have otherwise had from the plunder of each particular territory. Many of India's rulers preserved their people and territories from British rule by agreeing to pay this tribute. Others, yet to be disposed, were made to pay for the British armed forces used to keep them in bondage. When they had impoverished themselves due to these extractions, the rulers were loaned money by the British officials and others, with interest of around 50 percent per annum. Such payments forced the rulers to raise tax rates or to surrender portions of their land to the lenders (Shastri, 2014: 4).

British needed money to run the administration and pay salaries to their huge army, civilian security and administrative staff. Hence they focused on areas where they could get that money. Land revenue was a top most concern of British to sustain themselves here. They appointed and trained huge salary class of people whose work was to measure land, estimating the possible land revenue, appointed staff and instituted mechanism for its collection. Aloysius says, "The revenues concerns led them measure every piece of land, affixing it to individuals, estimating the revenue to be paid and the like involved tremendous amount of paperwork for which trained

personnel were required. Once trained, these men wielded enormous power over the illiterate rural majority. Commoditization of land and commercialization of crops are the other development pertinent to agrarian relations" (Aloysius, 2010: 35-6).

The British simply looted the wealth of country in the initial year. They imposed huge taxes on the masses to consolidate their rule. Gough observes, "The early decades of rule by the east Indian company saw outright plunder of the country's wealth coupled with ruinous taxation of the peasantry, in some areas up to twice that imposed by the moghuls…the collection of heavy revenues was subsequently regularized in the permanent settlement of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1793 and in comparably harsh settlements in other regions" (Gough, 1974: 1392). They introduced various system of revenue collection on the type, nature, productivity of the land. These systems are called Mahalwari, Ryotwari and Zamindari (Dutt, 1904: 273-323)[8]. "The British gradually transformed land ownership into private property and established the legal basis for capitalist production relations among landlords, tenants, village servants, and agricultural laborers. After various experiments, the government made household of the managerial castes separately responsible for specific amounts of revenue in 1822-23. In 1865, it issue individual tile deeds to share of varying sizes in the village lands, although actual field were not permanently parceled out until 1891-92" (Gough, 1978: 29). British actions led to the commoditization and commercialization of the land and the crops.

The British rule broke the monopoly of some groups in the land by attaching an economic value to it. They transformed land into a commodity which had a value and that value can be transferred to anyone who could provide them their revenues. They auctioned land rights to those who provide maximum land revenues to them. This broke the traditional monopoly of the kings and Brahmins and other dominant groups but it also created a special class of oppressors in the form of money-lenders, taxation staff, zamindars, administrative and bureaucratic officials. "Under the new British administration, each Ryot had to pay his land tax to the government in cash

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[8] for more specific details about the revenue settlements and colonial policies to land see further,

Dutt. R. (1902). *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule* Vol. I Trubner: Kegan Paul.

Dutt. R. (1904). *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule* Vol. II Trubner: Kegan Paul.

and this enabled money lender to gain an effective control over village landlords for the first time (Beck, 1970: 791).

This structural unification led them to control the local kings and Nawabs who always kept enmity with each other and had a continuous conflict. This was a hurdle in promotion of trade and commerce and a loss of revenue. They opened various ports, built road network on the commercially important sites. Intelligence, army and police personnel were deployed for the safeguard of trade and controlling crimes. The British policies brought significant changes in the life of peasants, workers and village community due to their policies of land, crops, trades and commerce. "During and since British rule, there have been increasing encroachment on tribal hill territories and oppression of tribes people by European and Indian planters, by government usurpation of forest areas, by landlords, merchants, and money lenders from the plains and by the government agents. To the loss of large tribal areas was added exploitation in such forms as rack-renting, unequal terms of trade, usury, corvee and even slave labour, and the obligation to grow cash crops for little or no return" (Gough, 1974: 1393).

They needed standard laws and codes which could be applied universally in India. "Till the east India Company became a political power the problem of law and administration was not complex. The English pattern was generally followed. When the company became a political power the question became complicated. Experiments were made; opinions were divided; difficulties had to be faced. With the march of time and with the expansion of the company's rule the need for a codified and uniform law became increasingly urgent. The interests of the British industrial capitalism too demanded a uniform legal system. The purchase of cheap raw materials and the sole of finished goods could not be possible without a stable and strong government and a codified law in India" (Prashad, 1964: 76). They needed systematic and concrete information about the country. They took huge studies on the people, land, habitations, animal livestock, climatic conditions, census, flora and fauna. They gathered information about the land, environment, types of soil, crops, revenue systems, cultivated area, forest area and barren lands. These studies were the base on which they started exploring the possibilities of extracting and exploiting resources.

On religion and culture, they studied the people, their customs, manners and attitudes, their social relationships, beliefs and practices, rituals and village structure. Before the British there was no attempt to study India it its fragmented diversity

human population, animal livestock and natural resources. They introduced various social legislations to ban certain practices which they considered to be inhuman. Under the Diwanship of Col. Munroe the slavery was abolished in Travancore in 1812, By the royal decree, It became illegal to sell or buy the lower caste slaves in the territory of the state (Jebakany, 2011 :144). A similar measure had been undertaken by the rulers of the State of Cochin under the leadership of its able Diwan Nanjappa in the year 1821 of CE (Philip, 2005: 36-7). Later in 1843 the viceroy and his council decided to enact an act for the emancipation of slaves throughout India in 1843. (Beena, 2011: 188). In 1829 Widow burning was prohibited, in 1856 government passed an act legalizing the marriage of Hindu widows, in 1891 age of consent act was passed raising the age of marriage from ten to twelve. Under the pressure from the Christian missionaries and the British authority, the king of Travancore issued a Proclamation in 1863 that the women of Ezhavas and all other caste had the right to cover the upper part of their body (Mila, 2009: 113).

They opened schools, colleges, universities, medical colleges and hospitals primarily to cater the needs of British officials and staff which were later extended to other as well. They set up courts for addressing conflicts and disputes, created strict enforcement agencies i.e. police and bureaucracy. They introduced railways, spread the rail network, connected it to major cities, built roads, connected it to ports, and started telegram services to exploit the resources and avoid unnecessary wastage. They set up their military base and cantonment areas in major cities like Delhi, madras, Calcutta, Bombay, Kanpur, Agra, Allahabad, Lucknow specialty after the 1857 uprising. These cities later became centers of great commercial activities. These changes were phenomenal in Indian history. It was probably the first time that the whole of India was unified under single authority and jurisdiction. The changed political conditions brought with it change of relationship between different groups and people. The village economy started changing, the land relations between different groups saw a phenomena change.

These changes were phenomenal as it started affecting common masses. "The British began to recruit civil servants for coveted government jobs on the basis of education and not (in principle, at least) on the basis of caste affiliation, as had previous rulers. All this, plus the development of new markets, and a rapid increase in transportation and communication facilities, served to multiply the possible routes to prestige and power" (Beck, 1970: 791). The industralisation brought significant

mobility, flexibility among the lives of people "While this process of disintegration was going on the British rule (backed by a more powerful techno-economic power in the wake of the industrial revolution) delivered the final blow. The introduction of centralized administration and the revenue system, the institution of police and law-courts, the extension of modern means of communication (railway, motor bus) broke the isolation of the villages. Local produce began to be exported and the imports found their way in the country side" (Singh, 1960: 95). These changes had huge implications to the wide mass of people which controlled and sufferings from the bondage of traditions and customs. There were more new openings in the public works in constructions, railways network, ports, mines, factories, small scale works in the cities.

British paid enough attention to the unused resources in the country. A British officer writes, "India is extremely under populated, and that the crying want of the country is a population in some degree proportionate to its immense area, the vast tracts, the thousands of square miles of rich, highly productive, and cultivable land, which are now lying waste, for the simple reason that there are no people to till them are a sufficient proof" (Lees, 1867:193). This free or non-cultivated land was used for industralisation, public transport, public works, building offices and barracks, laying rail network etc. One of the most important features of British induced industralisation was that it transformed unused or underused resources like land, animal livestock, mines and minerals and labour as source of income and revenues. "during the colonial rule the policies and legislative measures enacted enabled an indisputable appropriation of the local resources, the economic motive behind the abolition of slavery in princely states and British India was to appropriate the emancipated slave labour in the newly opened sectors of plantations, public work department, factories etc" (Thresia, 2000: 84). They needed labour to extract or exploit these resources. In this whole process labour also commoditized and commercialized.

The British rule brought some fundamental changes in the country in different spheres and areas. It shattered the foundation of the Indian society to the deep. "England" Marx wrote in 1853, "has broken down the entire framework of Indian society without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing" it has, however, "a double mission to fulfill…one destructive and, and the other regenerative- the annihilation of old Asiatic society [or despotism]- and the laying of the material

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foundation of western society in Asia." . it has begun the latter by imposing political unity, now [1853] to be strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph; by introducing the first free press in Asia, a " a new and powerful agent of reconstruction" by creating private property in land; by educating Indians and thereby producing " a fresh class…endowed with the requirements for government and imbued with European science"; by connecting India through steam navigation with itself and the world, thereby breaking the isolation " which was the prime law of its stagnation"; and by gifting India "with the means of irrigation and of internal communication [railroad] which will, when completed, liberate her productive powers by revitalizing agriculture and enabling her to exchange what she produces" (Rudolph, 1965: 976-7).

The British rule disturbed the whole equilibrium of the society and replaced by a new one which suited their interests. In these new changed conditions the collaborators with the British capital were the dominant and economically affluent castes and groups. The organized industry in India had emerged during the colonial times due to expansion of trade and commerce. The phenomenal increase in trade and commerce, revolutions in transportation and communication technology led to the higher demand of various goods like textile, jute bags and gunny sacks etc. It was the British capital and the capital of the traditional dominant and economically well off castes and communities like the Jews, Parsis, Bhatias, Gujarati Jains, Brahmins, Banias, Khoja Muslims that invested in the emerging opportunities and trade and commerce. These caste and communities absolutely owned all the factories and mills. In Bombay city alone, out of the 40 mills 17 were owned by Hindus, 13 were Parsis, 3 by Mohammedan, 3 by Jews, and 5 by Europeans. Some of the most important managing agents among the Parsis were Petits, the Wadias and the Tatas. Among the British merchants Messrs. Greaves cotton & co., and Messrs. Bradbury, Brady & co. most actively joined the industry. Most of the Hindus were Bhatias, neither Gujaratis nor Marwaris being active in the industry of Bombay during this period. Mohammedans were represented by the Khoja family of Ibrahim Currimbhoy. Jews were the Sasson family.

In the Ahmadabad, the Gujarati Banias, specially the Gujrati Jains thronged and actively engaged themselves in the trade, commerce and finance. But the first and the third cotton mill of Ahmadabad were started in 1859 and 1877 respectively not by the hereditary merchants but by a Brahman Mr. Ranchodlal Chhotalal, a retired

government servant (Fukazawa, 1960: 228-230). Similarly, in the case of jute industry, the first investors in the jute industry were the British and the upper caste groups in Bengal. "The first jute spinning machinery was installed in 1855 at Risha near Serampore in Bengal, by George Acland, a former British marine and owner of coffee plantations in Ceylon, in collaboration with a Bengali financier, Babu Bysumber Sen" (Sethia, 1996: 77). Two business firms, Cox brother and Gilroys pioneered in this venture.

The successive British policies commercialized and commoditized the land and crops. There occurred significant changes in the land relations both the land owners and the British authority and the labourers who worked on those land. The land became a transferable commodity subject to the payment of the revenue. Many were displaced due to non payment of the revenue or through coercive measures like succession. This also changed the relationship of people with the land. The jajmani system started collapsing which were the backbone of the traditional village economy and also the source of sufferings for the poor masses. The old system were collapsing, there were significant changes in the villages as there were now more means to seek employment in different areas which arose due to industralisation, emergence of railways, opportunities in public works and increase in the trade and commerce.

The labour acquired a new meaning and value during the rule of British; it became a scarce resource and a commodity. Those groups who were traditionally slave and attached to land though Jajmani system benefitted as new opportunities arose outside the village. Roy says "Large streams of migration began from the mid-nineteenth century, aided by the railways and the telegraphy after 1850, to facilitate this huge reallocation of labour. Men increasingly had to leave home for careers elsewhere. And as competition for land intensified, those with inferior rights to land had to do so more often than before" (Roy, 2005: 9). The labour which was till now controlled and regulated by the traditions and customs got freed from the village based traditional economy. The migration was not merely caused to get better livelihood but also caused by the famines, failure of crops, shrinking of agriculture activities, caste oppression in the villages etc.

Famines were the result of the British land and economic policies. The frequency, intensity, degrees of famines increased during British rule. The notorious Bengal famine of 1770 caused the death of 1/3 of the population of Bengal. "The worst famines occurred between 1865 and 1899, and the most severe of all in 1896-

97, when 97 million were seriously affected at least 4.5 million died. Another 650,000 died in 1898. And further 3.25 million in 1899. In 1860s the principle victims were landless labourers and unemployed weavers…there were 20,687,000 famine deaths in India between 1866 and 1943" (Gough, 1974: 1393). In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh which were traditionally agricultural areas, Samita Sen says, "in Saran, Chamars, Nonias, Jolahs, Dusads, Binds and Ahars (Ahirs) were the one who applied for relief due to famines. In Patna, 75 percent of relief workers were landless, and in Bhagalpur, too landless laborer predominated. Except in the case of about 10 percent of the workers, most were accustomed to earthwork" (Sen, 1999:65-6). One of the major reasons for the migration was the failure of the patrons towards their client. There was no responsibility of the patrons towards their clients. Whenever there was drought and famines, they simply pulled their hand off to take the moral responsibility to support the poor artisans and workers families. Therefore marginal groups tried to find alternative arrangement for their survival.

The frequent famines during British rule were also responsible for the large chunk of migration. Washbrook writes, "The climate was highly unstable; markets were extremely imperfect; and the fortunes of war blew hot and cold. In the event of famine a continuous threat- notionally large wages and crop-shares might turn out to be worth nothing. Labourers then turn to their patrons for protection and to see them through their difficulties. However, by the number of starving itinerants and vagrants who flooded into the fort and temple towns begging food and charity whenever crops failed, the generosity of regular patrons and employers was not particularly extensive and its quality suffered very little straining. Causalities during famines tended to be heavy, and composed, principally, of the 'labouring' and pariah classes" (Washbrook, 1993: 68).

The famines and drought forced people to search for other alternatives for means for survival. The migration happed in all directions wherever there were opportunities whether it was mineral rich areas of Bihar and Bengal or new emerging opportunities in the cities, ports or public work constructions. Those sections who have been exploiting the labour of the marginalized communities in the name of traditions and customs got a serious setback. Their exclusive rights to exploit their labour were broken; the labour became loose from their control. Since the resources and opportunities were scattered at different places it led to mass migration in different directions. It was perhaps first time in history that there was inter-region

mass migration. People were leaving their homes and going to distant places which were far thousands of kilometers away from their native places. These migrations changed the demography and composition of city population. Niehoff observes, "In the early days of kanpur's industrial history the labor for its factories was provided by Chamars, the traditional leather working caste; in fact, Kanpur was known as Chamar town in the early days. Until this taboo, more than any other, affected the labor population in Kanpur" (Niehoff, 1959: 499).

The conditions in which migration took place were horrible but what actually happened during the migration of the workers was even more horrendous. Thousands of workers died before reaching to their destinations. A British official writes, "False representation, corruption, oppression of every and the worst description, were used to swell the number of the contractor's recruit. The old and decrepit, the young and tender, the halt, the maimed, and the blind, nay even the infested, the diseases, and the dying, were pressed into the service of these most degraded of crimps. There was no government agent, no medical examiner. On arriving at the depots, these unfortunate creatures were located in places, the pestilential vapours of which, generated by the ordure and filth with which they were filled, were deadly to human life. Many, in these cess-pools contracted the germs of distemper and disease, and in this state were placed in gangs on board boats to be sent to their final destination. Here, crowded and huddled together, and compelled to live in a state of uncleanness revolting to human nature, as might be expected, cholera and other malignant diseases broke out with fearful effect. In some instances ten percent of these wretched victims were carried off (dead) in as many days. In others the mortality reached to forty or fifty percent. In a three week's voyage with some truth may it be said that the horrors of the slave trade pale before the horrors of the coolie trade of Assam and Cachar in the years 1861-62…The system under which the tea plantations of Assam and Cachar are supplied with labourers from Bengal has attracted the serious attention of the government during the years. It was reported that "in almost every shipment of labourers from Calcutta, a fearful amount of mortality occurred from cholera and other diseases during the journey. In one case the mortality was said to have reached even to 50 percent" (italics original) (Lees, 1867:205). Those who died in the famines and the dangerous migration condition were from the lower caste groups particularly the Dalits and Adivasis as they were the first one to leave the village and look out for other means of livelihood.

Another cause of morality of the working groups was the frequent outbreak of epidemics like the plague, cholera and influenza. Twenty three million people died of the disease (cholera alone) in British India between 1865 and 1947. It is estimated that 10 to 15 million deaths occurred during the previous fifty years. "Moreau calculated that cholera struck one tenth of the population of the British India and killed one-sixteenth. For the period 1817-31 he postulated an average annual mortality of one and a quarter million, amounting to eighteen million deaths in all. The other commentators elaborated on Moreauy's figures, suggesting that the whole of Indian the number of cholera deaths might have been as high as forty million in only fourteen years" (Arnold, 1986: 120-1). The "Guntur famine" in the madras presidency in 1833, cholera killed over two million.

MIGRATION, WORK CONTINUITY AND SEGREGATION

The industralisation and migration are complex processes. It involves displacement, identity formation, changing of relationship between work, families, villages, community etc. Migration is a culturally significant process and event as it brings new meanings, associations, experiences and opportunities at the same times create insecurities, fears, inner and outer conflicts, moral dilemmas etc. It is not an easy decision in anybody's life. The workers adopt new culture, learn new language, adopt new behaviour and create new associations at work places and living places. People have to adjust new conditions and change themselves accordingly to suit the new conditions. Migration and industralisation cannot be understood within the narrow frame of class. One has to go beyond class and involve culture, region, religion, polity and customs to understand the processes that workers go though in their lives. It is important to bring caste, history and culture while understanding industralisation and migration in India.

The industralisation in India was introduced from outside by the colonial authority for its own vested interests and motives. It did not evolve on its own therefore the values, beliefs, identity, customs, practices and characteristics of the people did not change. The workers carried their traditional identities at the new sites of works. These identities, relations, associations carried forward and adopted, adjusted and reinforced in newer forms. Caste played an important role in the whole process of industralisation and migration in different forms and diverse ways. This

can be seen in the phases of migration, composition of migrant workers, caste and occupational continuity, employment patterns, segregation, segmentation, mortality and morbidity patterns, residential patterns etc. The workers were not able to disassociate themselves from their past identities, relations even though they changed the work sites. All these factors are related to caste and they all contributed to production of caste in urban areas. Industralisation enhanced mobility, created employment opportunities, but it could not alter the attitudes and notions of people regarding work and fellow workers. It rather reproduced caste in a more stringent and rigid ways.

The caste produced huge socio-economic disparities between different groups. "The pattern of landownership in rural India is such that the bulk of the arable land is concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of big owners as against a large number who either own very little land or no land at all. The big landowners are patrons of the bulk of the poor villages" (Srinivas, 2014: 11). The landed and dominant groups were not the first one to leave the villages. It was rather those groups who did not have much source of employment, livelihood and who are already feeling distressed. Some groups were living in extremely vulnerable conditions. The drought and famines worked as push factors for them to search for alternative livelihood.

The traditionally marginalized groups experienced the impact of famines and drought more than others. Therefore, when new areas of employment were emerging in cities, these marginal communities were the first ones to utilize those opportunities. Roy says, "They went to the mills, the mining towns, urban small scale industries, overseas, public works, plantations, urban services or the railways…when rural artisans cum laborers left the village for work, they left almost always to take part in wage labour. Therefore, migration gave a significant push towards the break up of customary terms of employment" (Roy, 2005: 9). Clearly not all groups shared the same conditions. Some stayed back in the villages specially those who had significant interests in the land and village economy.

The introduction of railways brought both opportunities and mobility for those who were traditionally controlled by the village traditions. The fast and convenient transportation made people to cover greater distance in search for employment. Now they could move freely in search for new opportunities. "the movement was something like an exodus: ' in some part of the country as many as 25 percent of the (the rural male Chamar) are away from home half the year', they were not all working

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in the tanneries, though tanning remained the occupation where they were most naturally acceptable. The western Indian Mahars moved to 'the cotton mills, gin factories, and railways'. The Malas and Madigas of southern Andhra went to the gins and presses. Chattisgarh Chamars were found in the Assam tea gardens, in the railway workshops of Kharagpur and Chakradharpur, as porters in the railways stations all over the east, and of course, as labourers in Calcutta. Chamars and moshis (mochis) formed the largest relatively homogenous component of labour in the mines and factories in Bengal" (Roy, 1999: 170-1). The railways brought new wave of hope, employment and opportunities especially to the untouchable castes. They could travel to great distance which was not possible earlier.

Railways played an important role in industralisation and migration. On the one hand it connected different regions and cities where raw material could be produced and on the other hand it offered opportunities for migration. Saritha writes, "british took interest to develop the hinter lands as raw material producing areas for british industries, mainly due to the pressure created by the Manchester and Lancashire textile mills. It became important to link these hinter lands with the ports-Madras, Beypore, Cochin, Quilon and Mangalore" (Saritha, 2012:7-8). The initiative helped these cities and regions connected and the raw material from deep inside of the rural areas started reaching to the cities. Some of the important aspects of railways were its regional and directional aspects. As the railway lines were laid to connect the coal, mines, and livestock rich regions it started pulling people from these regions to the cities.

The workers migrated in groups, often related with each others on the basis of caste, village and kingship. Chandavarkar says, "The dominant image of Indian workers has been cast in terms of their peasant character. Migration occurred within the framework of caste, kinship and village connections. Migrants to the city lived with their co-villagers, caste fellows and relatives and sought work with their assistance. In times of distress, it was within these social connections that they found relief. Caste and kinship appeared to form indivisible social units in the city's working class neighborhoods" (Chandavarkar, 1994: 10). Caste, kinship and villages association provided that security in distress but it also worked in as divisionary ways when it separated people from each others on the basis of same. Those who migrated had their own social and occupational identity and history which determined their preferences in finding employment which suited their social status and identity.

Even while people were migrating in search of employment and opportunities, they did not lose their traditional identities. Some groups were more inclined towards certain kinds of work. They picked certain works which correspond to their traditional identity and status. People could not cut off their ties with their traditional occupation. When they moved to new working sites they carried their traditions and customs with them. The nature of work was changing; the sites of work were changing but not the notions about work and identities. The old association and identities were reproducing itself in new working sites in the matters of work and occupational preferences. In the early decades of the twentieth century, workers from artisanal castes were predominant among factory workers in kanpur. "In 1906, koris constituted 21 percent and Muslims 33 percent of the total workforce in two textile mills. Koris were traditional weavers, and about a third of the total number of Muslims in the mills were julahas or handloom weavers" (Joshi, 2003: 78-9).

In Gujarat, "There was significant presence of 'scheduled caste' who found jobs though jobbers or village fellow men in the emerging textile industry of Ahmedabad… Dalits constituted 35 percent of the survey population…Most of them were vankars and chamars, two castes which were previously known in the Gujarati rural economy as weavers and leather workers respectively. Some processes like spinning, which was known traditionally as an unclean activity, was almost exclusively the domain of the Dalit castes as were many of the tasks that preceded it (working the frame and throstle, reeling). In the same way, a number of steps had to be taken before the actual weaving started (winding, warping, sizing and drawing-in). The specialists in these tasks were largely baxi panch and Muslims" (Bremen, 2005: 183-9).

Caste maintained its rigidity, and got produced in different work spheres. In most of the unorganized industries the employers get significant advantage of the situation. Structural factors like class, caste and gender have a decisive role in determining one's position in the employment hierarchy. Uma Ramaswami observes, "Mill workers come from wide variety of castes. Perhaps, the only notable aspect of the caste composition of the workforce is that there are very few Brahmins. The villages in the vicinity of the mills once had a large Brahmin population. But Brahmins accorded a poor rating to mill jobs. Most of them acquired education and moved out to the big cities" (Ramaswamy, 1979: 368).

Brahmins had a clear avoidance to the manual work in the mills and factories but they had a preference towards sitting jobs which did not require much manual labour. For instance, in the study of South Indian factory workers in Bangalore, Holmstrom observes, "high-caste Hindus (mainly Brahmans) are more represented in managerial and skilled occupations especially in one factory, and middle-caste Hindus are distributed in most jobs except cleaning while Harijans are mostly engaged in technically unskilled and menial jobs like cleaning and in the posts of watch man" (Thresia, 2000: 37). There was a clearly production of Varna based caste hierarchy in the occupations and administrative jobs. Those Brahmins who were ready to do the technical, skilled and managerial works "tend to be the sons of clerks, lower government officials, small businessmen or village landlords" (Holmstrom, 1976: 34).

The traditional association with certain work, the traditional villages hierarchies were also produced across different segments and work processes. Morris says "there are some suggestions that in the spinning department of the Bombay mills, although untouchable groups are a significant proportion of the labour force, there they tend to be restricted to the least skilled classification of those departments" (Morris, 1960: 131). Kelman writes, "In many mills in Bombay no untouchable are allowed to work, but in other mills they are employed in the same department as caste Hindus and Muslims. There are curious distinctions, however. A group of Mahar working on front rows by themselves on the coloured side in a winding department "would not be tolerated" among the grey winders in the same room" (Kelman, 1923: 86-7).

In Mumbai, "The caste distribution within the workplace was related both to managerial preferences and to workers practices. The dominance of particular caste in certain departments, koris and julahas in weaving for instance, represented an effort by weaving castes to preserve their space within higher paid category" (Joshi, 2006: 83). In Bombay, "Mahars made up slightly under 10 percent of this workforce, maintain from the districts of Satara, Tatnagiri and Ahmednagar. They were concentrated in the spinning depart and menial forms of work, since the more highly paid weaving department barred them from entry due to pollution prejudices (the practice of holding a broken thread in the mouth while repairing it) that in the end were broken by automation rather than any struggle" (Omvedt, 2010: 141). Clearly caste has affected not only the composition of the workforce, but also its distribution across various processes within different industrial sites. These different processes

were ranked high and low with differential economic gains. Those processes which were the elementary, unskilled, dirtiest, labour consuming and lowly paid were left out for the Dalits. The traditional caste structure was produced in a more secular ways within factories and industrial sites.

The settlement of British officials, their families, military staff in certain cities brought new openings and opportunities. The caste Hindus and other orthodox sections let off those opportunities. The Hindus kept away from serving the British as their servant. Irving says, "British were eaters of veal and beef, and a habitual offender against hindoo religion. Hence the better class of native domestics prefer the service of one of their own nation and religion, where their position and the duties which they have to perform, are by no means so degrading. Those who present themselves to our parvenu, are individuals of but doubtful character, pariahs accustomed to every indignity, or infamous wretches who have forfeited their standing in society, by disgraceful crimes. From these, without requiring any testimonials or character, he usually selects those of the lowest class- maters, choomars (chamar), and such like – as they are more willing than others to neglect the order of caste, and perform any service that is expected here is an affectual bar at one put upon all intercourse with the superior castes of natives. How could a high caste Brahmin visit and eat with a man whose viands he knows are dressed by a mater cook (Muslim), perhaps brought to the table by a choomar (chamar)" (Irving, 1853: 93-4). British employed Muslims and pariah groups to their services not due to some ideological concerns rather it was more due to their practical needs. The Caste Hindus although worked with British but they never left their culture, identity and caste privileges. They let go the opportunities created by British.

Industralisation created huge employment opportunities in various spheres like mines, public works, railways, industry etc. Industralisation changed the nature of work, site of work, but it could not alter people perceptions about work. The economics of the work was changed but social notions remained intact. One of the most important features of industralisation was that it converted work into a wage work. The work became a waged employment; but the work did not loose its traditional meaning. "The breakage of traditional forms of caste bound occupational relations has been replaced by new forms of wage labour in equally or more deplorable employment situations" (Thresia, 2000: 84). The social produced itself in the economic domain in a more subtle and covert ways. When the cities were

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expanding both horizontally and vertically, it required some 'specific' labour to do some specific tasks. Not all people were equally interested to do the 'dirty' work of scavenging even though it was a wage work; clearly the preference of people was guided by their traditional values. "Urban territorial growth was coupled with the expansion of sanitary infrastructure and municipal services, which created a demand for scavengers, sweepers and conservancy workers" (Joshi, 1993: 279). It was the 'scavengers' known as halalkhor or bhangi who were employed for such services" (Chandavarkar, 1994: 37).

It was not the colonial authority alone which produced or reinforced the traditional structure in the cities. It is rather cultural beliefs, fear of excommunication and control of caste associations which prevented others to pick these occupations. It was not that these particular groups had specific caliber to do this work. When other groups kept away from these occupations thereby it came into the domain of these specific caste groups. Similarly "in the case of leather work in tanneries, the main body of manual workers, it would seem, was drawn from the agrarian labour castes, chiefly the Paraiyans. The while collar jobs, on the other hand, were sometimes performed by people who had land. In such cases the interactions between the 'tannery men' and the 'factory men' reproduced, in a much milder way, the hierarchy in the villages that both had left behind" (Roy, 1999: 178). The cultural institutions played a vital role in producing and reinforcing the traditional order even within cities. The cultural beliefs played greater role in producing the differential attitudes towards certain kinds of jobs. The Hindus were more rigid, selective in their approach. They had more choices and alternatives to be employed in certain other 'dignified' works. The same choice was not available with Dalits.

The coal mining industry was a highly labour intensive industry which emerged during colonial period. All the processes like cutting, hauling and loading were mostly done manually. Since its inception in 1774 in 'Pachete and Birbhum' to its expansion in Raniganj coal mining area, the labour was supplied by the adjoining villages who were known as "Bauris" There are references to the fact that during the earlier stages of coal mining in India, few miners were brought from England but they died very soon due to fever and vacancies thus created were replaced by local labour working under European supervision. The Bauris belonged to a low caste of mixed Hindu origin and, proved successful coal cutters. They were appreciated both for underground and surface work. Later certain other castes such as the Dhangars and

Koras, who specialized in digging earth to uncover the coal seams and in raising coal from the quarries, but avoided to drive a gallery into a pit or to cut coal underground. They were acquired from the villages possessed by the collieries, either as zamindars (patnidars), or acquired on lease. But the expansion of the mining industry especially with the coming of the railways in Raniganj coalfield by 1855, the character of labour supply in the coal industry underwent a change. The next stream of coal cutter came from the Santhals, pure aboriginal tribe from Santhal Pargana who were lured by offer of free land for cultivation. They were joined by their women folk. (Athar, 2011: 37-38).

The caste Hindus perceived physical work beyond of their dignity. Gooptu notices, "The aversion of the upper castes to physical work or manual labour as demeaning is also likely to have tainted all the laboring poor, not just a casual fringe, and probably partly explains the universal stigmatization of the poor" (Gooptu, 2001: 66). Caste Hindu due to their attitude left the menial, physically exhausting, polluting work for Dalits and Adivasis. Coal and mine extractions require great physical strength and endurance. These occupations were picked by those groups who were living at the fringe of the society like Dalits and Adivasis. They upper castes kept away from this work as it was hazardous, accident prone, life threatening and physically demanding. Simeon says, "The outset employment patterns in the mines were affected by ethnic factors. They were worked by a seasonally fluctuating workforce, a majority of whom (up to 90 percent) were of low caste and tribal origin, recruited mainly from the immediate hinterland, and which maintained strong rural links" (Simeon, 2005: 106).

The untouchable worldview was more flexible, tolerant and open in its approach. towards work. They were not governed by orthodox notions about work. Dalits and Adivasis did not have many choices nor did they have strong preference about work. They accepted any work which gave them stability and security which they never got in the traditional economic arrangement. They picked up any occupations which gave them employment even though the working conditions were harsh, dangerous and physically exhausting. Gupta says, "Ever since the beginning of the colliery industry the mind workers- overwhelmingly sandals, bauris and other so called aboriginal groups-used to work in family groups consisting of husband, wife and children. While the adult males or miners proper cut the coat at the pit face, women and children loaded in into baskets or tubs and carried it to the shaft bottom.

Women were employed in a variety of work on the surface too. Available data show that in early 1920s women constituted around a third of the total mine workers: (Gupta, 1985: 19). Work in factories or mines were still better than the villages where they were continuously humiliated, harassed and exploited. The life in city was competitive, harsh and tough but it was still far better than villages. These opportunities were valuable and significant for those groups who were living a marginal life in the villages and subject to oppression and discrimination.

The Dalits were not treated with dignity and empathy by their employers and colleagues. They were subject to humiliation, discrimination and stereotypes. The owners of the factories had chosen the sites of their factories on disregard to the settlement population. Garratt writes, "When the cotton industry began to expand in area like Ahmadabad, Sholapur and Surat, the factory were chosen without any regard for the industrial population which must ultimately settle round them. The owners started with such casual labourers as they could obtain in the neighborhood, and this was supplemented by landless men and women of a rather "Jungly" type who drifted into the area, bilaspuria, Chamars, etc." (Garratt, 1932: 400). In Sholapur mills, the workers (specially the criminal tribes and castes) were forced to live separate settlements. "The entire settlement was fenced by barbed wires. The settlers worked as indentured labour and were made to run the textile mills of Sholapur. There were over seventy such settlements in whole of India" (Kumar, 2004: 1083). The growth of the textile and cotton industry was possible due to the cheap labour which largely came from untouchable castes. The textiles industry was heavily dependent on the labor of the untouchable castes specially the Chamars and other Tribes who have been landless historically.

In Bombay, Mahars, were probably over represented among the casual and unorganized sections of labour in the city as a whole. They were prominent in construction, sanitary forces and the docks. "A study in 1941 revealed that recruitment was linked not only to caste but also to region: for dock workers, Satara mahars dominated in shore labour; Sholapur, Poona and Satara Mahars in cola labour; Nasik and Ratnagiri mahars in the dock railways. Mahars as a whole were 12 percent of shore labour on the docks but 98 percent of the lower paid, more menial coal labourers" (Omvedt, 2010:141-2). Similarily, In kanpur, "chamars and mochies, traditionally leather workers, were employed by the newly developing leather factories and tanneries set up by the government and British industrialists" (Joshi,

1993: 279). The Dalits were employed in 'dirty' work not due to their history but because these works were not done by other due to ritual reasons even though leather work was considered to be considerably high paying job than others.

One of the most visible impacts of caste can be felt not only in the work processes but also in the residential segregation of urban spaces. These workers although may be sharing same working sites, working under the same roof but they are socially divided on the basis of their social identity. This social division also manifest in their residential clustering also. Chitra joshi says, "Urban spaces came to be spatially segregated, with different communities inhabiting different areas. The pattern of distribution reflects two kinds of separations: between Hindu and Muslims and between lower and upper caste Hindus…Workers from lower caste groups were generally excluded from Hatas where brahmans and thakurs were predominant. In rare instances, when workers from 'low' castes happened to be living with other 'high' caste workers, special arrangements for segregation were made" (Joshi, 2006: 238).

The division in living was strictly marked and followed and reinforced though power structure. Besides, living people also avoided each other or liked to roam in their own groups. An official report on labour supply noted in 1906: "Men like to live among their own caste fellows and this is a point to which attention is always drawn when houses are allotted". At a much later period, too, similar preferences were expressed. Higher caste workers were reluctant to go to the Allenganj settlement where the inhabitants were mostly Chamars" (ibid: 239). In the villages people are segregated on the basis of their social identity and occupation. In urban areas too, these identities are produced in physical spacing between different communities. There was not so much of change, the same patterns visible in cities. "The untouchable had lived on the village periphery; in the towns, they similarly had no access to the residential areas of higher castes. Untouchable settlements were concentrated in secluded pockets on urban outskirts, in unreclaimed insanitary areas, almost invariably devoid of water supply and conservancy facilities" (Joshi, 1993: 281).

The caste was not restricted to work patterns, segregation but also reflected in the attitudes of the workers who shared more differences with each other rather than a common working class identity. The caste identity often led to violent clashes between different groups within the factories on pity issues. Although they were all

wage workers but their remained deep enmity between them on the basis of their traditional identity. Workers often seen each other with repulsion and suspicion and often avoid each others in many matters including eating food. T.W. Johnstone, chief inspector of factories for Bombay presidency noted, "some years ago in Ahmedabad I happened to visit a mill and I found 70-80 people fighting with rods they use in the blow rooms; half a dozen of them were laid out. They were all low caste untouchable people, wagris and dhed's. The trouble arose through a wagri touching a dhed's food" (Morris,1960: 128).

The upper caste workers avoided contact with lower castes during lunch time. the caste was so rigidly practiced that even within lower castes there were taboos against touch. "A kori worker avoided any contact with nats or pasis. Higher caste workers considered it almost their prerogative to be reimbursed in cash if a chamar or a Muslim worker defied their rotis. Many Brahman workers refrained from carrying cooked food into the factory. Lunch consisted of uncooked food like dry chabena, not subject to the same pollution taboos…Mangli Prasad of the kanpur cotton mills felt a common dining space was of no use, all he himself would not eat there if a bhangi cleaned it. He preferred a kahar for the job" (Joshi, 2006: 241-2). The workers were divided, had stereotypes, kept prejudices against each other and maintained caste practices in different forms. "gounders are rough and ready and simple minded. 'Muttal gounders' literally 'foolish gounders' is a common epithet. Naidu are clever, ambitious, intelligent, and clannish. Thevar are untrustworthy and tight-fisted. So are the konar who would put their children to employment rather than educate them. Pallar are rowdy and ready to blackleg. Chakkiliar are dirty, untrustworthy and compulsive liars" (Ramaswamy, 1979: 369).

There were certain factories which did not give employment to Dalits due to their identity, some restricted them to particular departments, sections and area. Kelman says, "in many mills in Bombay no untouchables are allowed to work, but in other mills they are employed in the same department as caste Hindus and Muslims. There are curious distinctions, however. A group of mahars working on front rows by themselves on the coloured side in a winding department would not be tolerated among the grey winders in the same room" (Kelman, 1923: 86-7). Since there was high rate of absconding of the workers from the working sites due to pathetic conditions. 'Schemes for recruiting cheap labour from criminal tribes constantly came up against the problem of absconding. Employers complained that Barwars had a

"tendency to suddenly throw up their employment and return to their village or seek work in the bazaar'. Six barwars employed by Muir Mills left work, saying the climate did not suit them. The managers of Cooper Allen and company demanded additional disciplinary powers: only corporal punishments could control the barwar workers. Some managers congratulated themselves for social social service by employing barwars" (Joshi, 2003: 76). The attempt to employ criminal tribes into the factory work did not work. Under these earlier experiments, in which the control of the workers was given to mill companies, grave abuses occurred and the method has been entirely abandoned (opcit: 88).

There were serious biases, prejudices and conflicts within the workers doing similar works. Most of the time the differences had their origin in the caste beliefs and customs. Chandavarkar (1994) points out that "during the first decades of the 20th century, Maratha weavers refused to work with 'untouchables' in the Bombay mills, the reason being that replacing a weft bobbin implied sucking a yarn on to the yarn on to the shuttle, thereby violating the norms of caste purity and pollution" (Ciotti, 2007:327). Besides discrimination in the factory work, whenever there were opportunities where Dalits could have been employed as loaders, collies and carriers, "Touchable Hindu low caste groups had a near monopoly over manual work in the trading sectors, for high caste Hindus merchants seldom employed untouchables in the bazaar and mandis" (Gooptu, 2001: 146).

In the public works and railways construction, it was the convicted or criminal groups whose labour was utilized because it was cheaper. Joshi says, "by the second half of the nineteenth century, the idea of public good that gave a moral sanction to the convict labour system was itself under question. Supporters of the convict labour system operated with two sets of assumptions. One, physical labour has a redemptive potential: it purifies the body and redeems the individual. Two, labour on public works in doubly virtuous: it has a symbolic reciprocal function of giving back to the public, of paying for the economic and moral cost of criminality: (Joshi, 2009: 13).

The Industralisation led Dalits and other marginal groups to escape from the brutality of village customs and life. They were no more dependent on the landlords who exploited them ruthlessly used their labour as a customary right approved though traditions like The wage work gave them dignity; their labour was more valued here and was paid in cash rather than kinds like grains, paddy unlike in villages. In villages they were on the mercy of landlords, patrons and money lenders who exploited them

in whatever way possible. They had to do menial and degrading works in the villages most often against their will. They were no more in control of their traditional masters; earlier they were dependent on money lender and landlords who charged high interests and made them do works for which they were never paid. They enjoyed the ambiguity of city life which gave them some freedom to express themselves. The city life was a different experience from the village; here they were paid in wages that too cash which was not the case in villages.

Industralisation did not change much in the society rather the very processes was also badly affected by the institution of caste. From Dalit point of view, industralisation was not something which changed their lives radically. The only positive effect it has was that they got liberation from the exploitative village relations. Their experiences in the city were not different from villages. In cities they worked in the most degrading working conditions, living in the dirtiest surrounding, accepted in those works which other found demeaning to their social status. "The experiences of segregation and exclusion of the untouchables in rural life were not reversed in the urban context, they were absorbed almost entirely in ill paid, menial service jobs or in work… and alternative avenues of employment for them were virtually non existent" (Gooptu, 2001: 146).

Even while they migrated to cities but here also they were subject to discrimination, exclusion and violence even in modern industrial sites. They experienced continuity of caste in various spheres of their lives. Their experiences did not change much in cities; here they witnessed violence and discrimination both at work sites and also segregation in residential spaces. There was a continuity of caste in various forms and manifestations. The only difference here was that of its forms, the caste was produced in such a manner that it acquired a more secular form by which it became invisible yet present in all spheres of life. The disadvantageous position of Dalits continued in cities as well and got produced in both in residential and occupational choices, segregation and segmentation. They were employed in certain works which were considered to be 'dirty', manual, hazardous, unskilled, polluting, lowly paid, and degrading.

CASTE CONTINUITY, INDUSTRY AND SEGMENTATION

Caste ideology works in such a way that it not only categorizes human beings but categorizes their economic opportunities. The working of caste can be felt in economic sphere when it creates segregation and segmentation of people in various economic spheres. Caste never disappeared or weakened by industralisation and urbanization. It rather got concretized, reproduced and reinforced in different forms and levels at different work sites, domain of activities and occupational categorization. The industralisation failed to change the basic nature of the people and society. The Dalits and Adivasis face the same segregation, segmentation and exclusion in different spheres of their lives. Industry reflect that both segregation and segmentation in India. There are considerable variations in terms of labour characteristics in different economic processes.

There is disproportionate presence of some groups in some specific work processes. The economic opportunities are not equally accessible to different groups in the same ways. Dalits are disproportionally engaged in those processes which are highly labour intensive, unskilled, dangerous, physically exhausting and ritually "unclean" occupations. Some works which are considered to be 'dirty', manual, unskilled, hazardous and polluting have excessive Dalit representation. Those work which are non-manual, 'dignified' and superior have marginal Dalits presence. The graded social hierarchy is produced in industrial and occupational divisions of work in India. Caste plays a prominent role in producing those hierarchies across different spheres of economic sectors and activities.

The caste and work are inversely related in such a way that the higher the caste status lower the presence and concentration in hazardous, 'dirty' and manual work, lower the caste higher the presence and concentration in menial works. There is a deep relationship between caste and work. One's location in the caste hierarchy largely determine the availability and accessibility in terms of job availability, economic opportunities, wages, occupations etc. "The labour markets discrimination coupled with high poverty and lack of access to physical capital assets led them to continue supply wage labour" (Thorat & Despande, 2001)[9].

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[9] Thorat & Despande, (2001), 'Caste System And Economic Inequality: Economic Theory And Evidence' In G. Shah (Eds), Dalit Identity And Politics. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

The lack of ownership and marginal ownership led them to be completely dependent on wage work. Due to their marginal position in the agrarian structure, Dalits are largely dependent on their labour. They work on wages whether it is in agriculture, mines and mineral extractions, factory employment or service sector. They are involved bottom level which are menial and labour intensive segments where they are exposed to tough working conditions. These menial and labour intensive works are hazardous, accident prone and physically tedious. These work processes are irregular, insecure and are underpaid. Dalits are overtly dependent on wage labour as their main source of income. The high landlessness, illiteracy, discrimination in payment of wages, discrimination at work places, discrimination in recruitment in employment, non-availability of credit, access to markets etc are many issues that Dalits face.

Land has been one of the most important sources of power and opportunities since ages. Caste has created huge socio-economic inequalities among different groups. In traditional village society, the social structure was such that the wealth was concentrated in select and exclusive groups. The wealth in the form of land, money, and animal livestock was concentrated in dominant communities. Dalits have traditionally been deprived from owning land for hundreds of years which resulted in marginal and lack of ownership. This is one of the reasons that there is disproportionally high percentage of Dalits in the landless category. "Land distribution in India closely follows social hierarchy. While the large landowners invariably belong to the upper castes, the cultivators belong to the middle caste and the agricultural workers largely to the scheduled caste and tribes" (Mohanty, 2001: 3858).

The social and religious ranking is a major determinant of economic assets including land. Dalits have traditionally prohibited from owning resources. Therefore, there is proportionally high landlessness among Dalits. "Only a small proportion of SC household owned or cultiviable land. Among them also as many as 73 percent were marginal farmers with average of less than 2.5 acres of land. Another 13 percent were landless households. So nearly 86 percent of SC households in 1991 were landless and near landless households" (Thorat & Deshpande, 2001: 62). The situation is more or less similar in almost all the states in India. According to various reports by NCEUS (2007, 2009) out of the total population of Dalits, 59.61 percent are involved in agriculture sector as workers. Of the total 59.61 percent, more than

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half i.e. 56.4 percent are sub-marginal farmers owning less than 0.4 hectare of land and 29.1 percent of them do not possess any land and work as landless laborers. So 85.5 percent of the Dalits in agriculture are either landless or marginal farmers (NSEUS, 2007, 2008).

The situation of Dalits is graver in some of the states that have been poor in general. A study on the caste and agrarian class in Bihar shows that the Bhumihar as a distinct caste control over 79.1 percent of the total land in Aghanbigha in 1979 when they are only 12.7 of the total percentage of household. The scheduled caste own only 1.3 percent of the land when they are 23.7 percent of the total household (Chakravarti, 2001: 1454). The average land per Bhumihar household would be 6.2 acres whereas it will be 0.054 acres per Scheduled caste household. This difference is huge in terms of distribution, quantum, and percentage. In another study in Buxar district of Bihar, there were vast economic inequalities between different groups. Out of 24 castes and Muslim communities, the five castes i.e. Brahmin, Rajput, Yadav, Koeri and Bania put together owned 87.7 percent of land. Of these Brahmin alone own not less than one third of the total land followed by other four castes in that order. The bind, Gond, Bari, Paneri and Dom own no land at all and the Dhobis and Sonars, are nearly landless. The same inequalities were also found in ownership of means of production like of pumpsets, threshers, and tractors (Sahay, 2002: 199-200).

In an important study in Senapur in eastern Uttar Pradesh by Cohn, it was found that the Chamars did not own any land in the village prior to 1952. All the land was owned by the Thakurs. After the land reform act of 1952, however, a few chamars acquired some land. The inequalities in land and other means of resources also reflect on their lives. Cohn says, "chamars, specially males, have low life expectancies. Out of 319 chamar males, in village Senapur only 19 were above the age of fifty. Out of 338 females, only 25 were above the age of fifty. Clearly a three generation family is impossible if the third generation is non-existent. My impression was that those chamars who survived childhood usually died between the age of 35 and 45. Among the Thakurs, where the joint family is much more prevalent, my impression is that life expectancy is much higher" (Cohn, 1961: 1052). In another study in Abupur, a village in the Muradnagar block in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh shows, that out of the 1000 Acres of land in the village. 800 Acres is owned by Jats, 160 by Brahmins and 20 by Muslims, the kumahars, Lohars, Telis and Nais own 10 acres together. The Jatavs (untouchable caste) own only 10 acres whereas the Bhangis

own nothing (Ghosh, 2001: 48). It is precisely the reason that most of the migration happen from Bihar that too from Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes.

In Haryana according to 1991 census only 8.06 percent of SC (Dalits) owned the land while 55.08 percent are landless agricultural labourers (Malik, 1999: 323). In Punjab where the percentage of Dalits in the total population is around 28 percent their share in the landholding is highly low. Mohanty observes, "of all the states, scheduled caste are the most disadvantaged in Punjab. Constituting 28 percent of the state's population they control only 2.4 percent of the operated area. The landholding position instead of improving has declined further" (Mohanty, 2001: 3866). In a study on agricultural laborers in Orissa, it was found there were huge difference in land ownership between different social groups and categories. It was observed SC, ST and OBC are in disadvantaged condition in comparison to the upper castes. In all the five study villages the bulk and proportion of the landlessness was highest among SC, ST and OBC households. In village A, it was 100 percent, village B, it was 84.4 percent, in village C, it was 91.4 percent, in village D, it was 89.1 percent and in village E, it was 91 percent. The upper castes were in better and privileged position in terms of land ownership compare to the OBC. When comparing the differences between upper caste and the SC and ST it was huge and severe. Besides that, there were huge differences in landholding in terms of size, proportion and volume. Majority of the SC and ST who actually owned land have an ownership below 2.5 Acres and they make a higher proportion in this category as a group (Daspattanayak, 1996: 82-6).

Kerala has been one of the states where caste oppression was most severe and worst. The inequalities that have been created by caste still continue even today without much change. "The overwhelming majority of the tribal communities and Dalits in Kerala continue to be entirely landless. Most of the tribal people were, through the past centuries, drafted into agrarian society as workers - bonded and otherwise. Through a much longer stretch of history, Dalits have been the backbone of kerala's wetland rice cultivation: initially as slaves, and following the ban on slave traffic in the mid 1850s, as attached labourers" (Rammohan, 2008: 15). A paper on the land ownership in a Wadakkancherry village in Kerala shows that the landholding patterns have changed significantly over a period of time. But there is still huge difference between the Nambudiris and the Pulayas and Paraiyas. The average household landowner for a Nambudiri Brahmins was 0.79 acres where it is 0.10 for Pulayas and 0.15 for the Paraiyas (Scaria, 2010:193). While this is only an average

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ownership but there may be huge variation between these categories. The landlessness in kerala is highest among the Scheduled caste due to historical reasons.

Majority of the Dalits are either are landless or marginal farmers. Dalits either do subsistence farming or work on other fields as they hardly own enough land to generate surplus. Besides the ownership patterns, there are particular peculiarities in the quality of the land that the Dalits own. Mencher says, "Whatever the land the Dalits owned has peculiar characteristics like land being dry, non-irrigated, away from villages" (Mencher, 1998: 47). Besides the agriculture land ownership, homestead land is one of the important parameters to measure landlessness. The NSS 2003 data shows, "41.36 percent of the rural households in rural Indian did not own any land other than homesteads. The incidence of landlessness was higher among Dalit households than among Adivasi households and non Dalit/Adivasi households. While 56.5 percent Dalit households did not own non-homestead land, 35.5 percent Adivasi households and 37.8 percent non Dalit/adivasi households did not own non homestead land. The data generally substantiate the impression that while Dalit households are landless, Adivasis household have small plots of land of low productivity. The proportion of Dalit households that do not own any land other than homesteads is highest in Punjab, Kerala and Haryana, where above 80 percent Dalit households do not own any land other than homesteads" (Bakshi, 2008: 102).

Agriculture broadly a highly a labour intensive work, where demand for labour arises during the sowing and harvesting season. There a very high and disproportionate representation of Dalits in the some selective agricultural processes. The Dalits engaged in agriculture in more labour intensive processes like the ploughing, tilling, transplantation, weeding, harvesting, manuring, carrying manure and any other work connected with agriculture (Saradamoni, 1981: 1466-7). In non-mechanized agricultural farming some of the most physically exhaustive processes like sowing and plantation are done by both male and female of Dalits. They do low level processes like weeding, threshing, winnowing and shelling in the agricultural field of others. All these processes are seasonal, temporary, casual, informal and highly tiresome. Besides these being unskilled they are also underpaid.

The agricultural work is mostly done with bare hands, in this process they are exposed a lot of dangerous chemicals especially in those regions which have benefited from green revolution. Their work involves handling fertilizers, pesticides, Rodenticides etc. which pose threat to their life. They have high reported cases of skin

related diseases. They are involved at the elementary and labour intensive processes which are physically exhaustive. Moreover, the agricultural work is seasonal in nature and dependent on rain for irrigation therefore there is uncertainty of harvest. There is very high uncertainty, fluctuations and irregular employment in this sector and earnings of the workers are limited. "Even among the broader group of agricultural labourer, the agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Caste to be at the lowest rung in the context of poverty. They are deprived in terms of both economic and social opportunities to overcome the constraints of poverty" (Deshpande, Jyotishi & Narayanamoorthy, 2001:160).

The MSME10 sector is one of the major indicators of the ownership and participation of different groups in the various sectors of the economy. The MSME enterprises are located in different sectors of the economy like manufacturing and service sector. The fourth MSME Survey reveals gross inequalities and the marginal position of Dalits and Adivasis. The SCs do not even have a proportionate representation in the micro (which is the smallest unit) units. They own only 12.83 percent of the enterprises in the rural areas. It is very low in the urban areas where they own only 9.21 percent of the enterprises. Altogether including the rural and urban it is only 11.39 percent. In the small enterprises it is even worse; it is 6.83 percent in rural areas and 0.96 in urban areas. Altogether including the rural and urban it is 2.17 percent (MSME, 53). The representation of Dalits in the medium sector must be much worst as per the trends. This is not revealed by the MSME final Report. The share and number of Dalits decreases as the limit of investment increases and their share and number increases as the investment decreases. This clearly there is very high poverty among them compare to other groups. This reveals that they are not only marginalized in the agricultural field they are also marginalized in the other spheres. There is a historical continuity of their poor marginal status but also there is discrimination both by the state and the non state agency which control their access to resources.

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[10] MSME act 2006 defines enterprises in manufacturing sector, micro enterprises - fixed investment in plant & machinery up to Rs. 25 Lakh, small enterprise- fixed investment in plant & machinery above Rs. 25 Lakh, Medium enterprises- fixed investment in plant & machinery above Rs. 5 Crore & up to Rs. 10 Crores
In service sector, micro enterprises fixed investment in equipment up to Rs. 10 Lakh, small enterprises- fixed investment in equipment above Rs. 10 Lakh & up to Rs. 2 Crores, Medium enterprises- fixed investment in equipment above Rs. 2crore & up to Rs. 5 Crores.

The opportunities in agriculture and MSME are limited due to their marginal land ownership, seasonal nature of the work, lack of economic assets and social capital. Organized sector is one of the major and better paid sectors of the economy. The terms and conditions of employment to an extent are regulated through various acts and laws. There are relatively more employment security and social security provisions. The works in this sector includes both the white and blue collar jobs. The work conditions are relatively better than agriculture. The Dalits are broadly underrepresented into these jobs. They are recruited in those processes, segments and works which are dangerous, hazardous or unskilled. The Dalits are discriminated in the organized sector companies and factories.

In a field based study carried out by John Harris in 1980 in Coimbatore finds huge differences between different social groups across different categories of work. kammavar Naidus and Kongu Vellala Gounders are strongly represented in permanent wage workers than the short term wage workers. Agricultural castes in general are more prominently represented amongst the permanent wage workers than short-term workers. The lower ranked Konars and more prominent amongst the short-term wage workers. Harris says, "scheduled caste although they are more strongly represented amongst the short-term wage workers are still not strongly represented. It is noteworthy that one of the companies amongst the organize sector units selected for study, even though it is in many ways a quire exemplary employers, prefers, unofficially, not to employ scheduled caste people. Even amongst the workers in 'unregulated' workshops scheduled caste are most likely to be found working in the moulding shops where work is rather unpleasant and little skilled, or incasting gangs, where the work is physically hard and somewhat dangerous" (Harris, 1982: 994-5). The Sharma (1973) study among the blue-collar in direct production workers covering eight companies of nature across different regions, reveals that "eighty-two percent of the workers were Hindu and among them, 46 percent belonged to upper castes" (Sharma, 1973: 38). The Hindus dominate the blue collar jobs, while even within those jobs it is largely the upper castes. Thus minorities and lower castes were under represented and excluded.

Employment in the public sector is one of the most secured a symbol of representation of different communities. Nathan says, "Caste in India is much stronger than religion. Muslims helps a position fairly similar to that of the intermediate Hindu castes. That there is such a dominance of upper caste Hindus also

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in public sector employment can be inferred from the fact that in class III and class IV jobs in the public sector scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the backward castes,, who together constitute about 75 percent of the population, account for only 47 percent of the jobs. And one can be sure that the religious minorities are not over represented in public sector jobs. That would then give a figure close to 50 percent for the jobs held by the upper caste Hindus. The backward castes who are 52 percent of the population had, it should be noted, only 15.77 of these class III and class IV jobs in the public sector" (Nathan, 1987: 803).

A "Report on the sample survey of socio-economic condition of castes/communities in kerala" conducted by bureau of economics and statistics and reported in sivanandan[11] (1979) shows huge differences between different social in landownership, employment, wages, literacy, occupations, employment, earnings, income, salaries and jobs. There is disproportionate representation of different groups in the government and quasi-government sectors. According to backward commission report 1970, "more than two-third of the 'Gazetted' over one-half of the 'Non-Gazetted' and nearly half of the 'last grade' jobs are held by member of this (upper caste) group alone, which constitutes only a third of the state's population. The representation of the other backward communities in salaried jobs has not been quite close to the 'norm' (i.e. their proportion in the total population) and the disparity is most significant in the case of appointments in the 'gazetted' category…the representation of the harijans and their converts to Christianity is the lowest in all categories of salaried jobs except, perhaps, in the last grade jobs of certain departments" (Sivanandan, 1979: 479-80).

The organized sector specially the government sector has been one of the main sources of employment. Reservation has been one of the most important policy initiatives which ensured some presence of the SCs and STs in the public domain. Mondal says, "Reservation in public employment has played a crucial role in the process of advancement of the Dalits. Due to reservation the share of Dalits in various government and semi-government services have increased substantially in all the groups or classes during the last six decades. As per the available data, representation of SCs (Scheduled Castes) in Groups A,B,C and D as on 1965 was 1.64%, 2.82%, 8.88% and 17.75% respectively which has increased to 11.9%, 13.7%, 16.4% and

[11] For more information see, sivanandan, 1979, 'caste, class and economic opportunities in kerala: an empirical analysis', EPW, annual.

18.3% respectively as on 1.1.2005. Available data indicates that the representation of Dalits in group A and B services has not yet reached the prescribed quota even after 66 years of our independence. Moreover, the representation of Dalits in other fields like bank, insurance, judiciary, educational institutions etc. is significantly low than the non-Dalit people" (Mondal, 2014: 6). Thousands of the posts of the reserved categories are lying vacant as there is hardly any effort to fill those. There have been cases when the reserved categories post have been converted into general and then filled.

There is very high poverty, illiteracy, lack of assets, marginal social capital, and discrimination against them in various sectors. It is precisely the reason that they don't have any secured source of income and have to depend on other activities for their livelihood. These disabilities led them to the unorganized sector which working conditions are harsh, employment is irregular, higher rate of accidents and injury and lower wages and excessive sufferings. A large proportion of them are pushed to the hard and labour intensive works in factories, mine and mineral extractions and other labour intensive works. This is one of the reasons that majority of the works which are physically exhausting, unskilled and low paid are performed by the Dalits and Adivasis. Those occupations which require physical strength or those occupations which are physically tiring or exhausting like the agriculture, mineral extraction, one is likely to find monopoly of Dalits and Adivasis in those work processes. As first these groups are easily accepted in these works secondly, other groups find it demeaning and degrading to their self-belief and self-respect. The women of these communities also engage in these physically exhausting occupations along with their men.

Stone crushing is highly labour intensive, hazardous and accident prone work. Workers work without safety equipment, guidance and training. In a study on child labour in stone crushing industry in Orissa it was found 65 percent of the child labourers come from ST category while SC constitute 25 percent, OBC were 10 percent and Upper castes were nil (Patniak, 2000: 142). "In coal mines the hard physical labour of loading and pushing the coal tubs is done by Dalit, Adivasi or Muslim workers. In steel plants the production work in the intense heat of the coke ovens and blast furnaces is done mainly by Adivasis and Dalits. In the coir processing industry it was pointed out, "persons belonging to the scheduled caste were employed mainly in 'unclean' operations such as shelling and roasting. Women are assigned the

lowest paid and the most uncleanr jobs" (Quoted in Nathan, 1987: 803). In the plantation work in the hill region is highly a labour intensive and physically exhausting work. "the plantation work itself, such as digging, hoeing, planting, weeding, plucking, etc, was (and even today, is) essentially agricultural in nature. Consequently, for the labourers coming from various forms of peasant and tribal background there was no radical change in the pattern of occupation" (Gupta, 1986: 2).

Mineral extraction is one such hard work which is highly labour intensive. There are frequent injuries, accidents and mortality and morbidity due to the nature of work. "the mine labour protection campaign revealed that over 1.8 million persons work in the mines and quarries in Rajasthan for obtaining 65 minerals including lead, tungsten, phosphorite, marble, sandstone and granite. Fifteen percent of the workers are children, 22,000 of whom are between the ages of ten and twelve, and they earn Rs 10-12 per day (about 30 percent at the then prevailing exchange rates). Thirty seven percent are women, earning Rs 18-22 per day. Wage discrimination is based on gender as well as caste. Between 80 to 90 percent of the workforce is low caste or tribal and official records underestimate the size of the workforce by two- thirds. Over 95 percent of the two thousand odd units function in a primitive way without modern safety methods, between January and June of 1994, 130 workers died in accidents, and 175 suffered injuries. None of them compensated by the employers or the state and only ten cases were registered by the police" (Simeon, 2005: 115). These low levels have low income and high hazards and accidents. They do all those works which are considered to be hazardous, socially low, prone to accidents. Since the labour force in these dangerous sectors come from the lower caste the mortality and morbidity of them is higher than any other group.

Tea plantation is a hard and labour intensive work. "In the tea plantations an almost watertight division confines the Dalits, Adivasis and, in this case, Nepalis to the bobs of workers and "substaff" while staff jobs are reserved for upper caste Bengalis in west Bengal and upper caste Assamese in Assam. The Dalits are represented in the labour and unskilled work where the wages are low and the work is physically tiring" (Nathan, 1987: 804). On a study on casual workers in construction industry and domestic service, Ansari (1986) found that 51 percent Adivasis, 15 percent Dalits, 19 percent backward caste and 15 percent "others" (including religious minorities). Similarly, Vaid (1969) found that while among construction workers

Dalits accounted for 60.7 percent of the work force, for industrial workers "the caste structure of the work forces at kota showed that the higher caste could obtain higher jobs in better factories in large proportions" (quoted in Nathan, 1987: 804).

Handloom and weaving is labour intensive works but it is not a ritually impure occupation. A Study on handloom and weaving industry in karur (Tamilnadu) reveals the social characteristics of the work and workforce. It is carried out by the women. Mudaliyar caste women constitute 54.7 percent of the workers in the weaving units followed by gounders, there was no scheduled caste workers in the weaving segment due to pollution taboo. The scheduled caste women are segregated in the dyeing segment where they constitute 54 percent of the total work force (Vijaya, 2006: 143-4)12. Dyeing is a dangerous work process where workers come in direct contact with the chemicals and salts. Women have to handle hazardous chemical with their bare hands. Workers specially the migrant workers mostly the SC groups take the risk of doing it manually due to their vulnerable condition.

The handloom and weaving work itself is hazardous work as the micro particles are inhaled by the workers in the work processes. There are certain more hazardous processes like the dyeing which pose threat the workers health. The more dangerous processes are executed by those castes which are located at the bottom of caste hierarchy. Caste is inversely related with hazardous and dangerous work in India. The occupational choices and volume of hazards decreases or increases according to the status of group in social ranking. The caste works in such a way that lucrative and non manual works and processes are segmented and monopolized by the dominant while the non-lucrative, manual and hazardous works and processes are left out for socially marginalized groups in the society.

In a study on the textile industry of Bengal, khakha observes "The post weaving process consisted of several processes, which were equally important and had acquired high degree of specialization, and it is these processes that gave the Bengal cloth its final look. Washing and bleaching was carried out by "the bleachers (who were) all Hindoos of the caste of Dhobee" (Khakha, 2006: 90). While it reveals that the caste and work relation has remained intact. The dhobi caste is involved in washing the cloths which was their traditional calling. But more importantly these

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[12] Vijaya, S. (2006), 'Interplay Of Factors In Influencing The Health Of Women Workers: A Case Study Of Handloom Weaving Industry'. [Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation]. Center Of Social Medicine And Community Health, Jnu, New Delhi, (India).

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processes are executed in most of the time bare hands or without safety equipments. Therefore ranking of the caste in the social hierarchy determines not only occupational choices but also determines the hazards, diseases, opportunities, leisure, wages etc. The lowest castes get the minimum earnings and get major share in diseases due to the structural patterns of the division of work both in the industry and also in the society.

Glass bangle industry is highly labour intensive and dangerous work. Workers are exposed extreme hot temperatures at different levels. When the minerals and chemicals are heat up at extreme temperatures to make glass, it releases dangerous gases. Workers are directly inhaling those gases since safety measures are hardly applied to keep the production cost minimal. A study on the child labour glass bangle industry in Firozabad found that 80 percent of the child workers belong to the SC and OBC castes (Sharma, 1996: 180). Children are frequently employed in such works as employers get off by paying them meager wages. Child labour is a rampant phenomenon in India. It persists in varying degrees in the unorganized sector such as small plantations, restaurants and hotels, cotton ginning and weaving, stone breaking, brick kiln, handicrafts and road building, leather industry, Lock industry. Many industries use child labour in one form or the other with different magnitude. But it is the lower caste children specifically who lost their childhood due to their poor economic conditions of their families.

Brick kiln is an important and significant industry in India. Indian brick industry is the second largest in the world, next only to china and has more than 100,000 operating units producing about 100 billion bricks annually. It is a labour intensive work where men and women do hard work from morning to evening in difficult conditions. A study by Chopra (1982) on economic bondage in the brick kilns in Muzaffarnagar district in Uttar Pradesh found that the majority of the labourers were from scheduled castes, of whom over 75 percent were illiterate. The working hours were extremely long, none of the respondents reporting less than 12 hours a day. 40.4 percent said they worked between 12-18 hours a day, 78.8 percent of these workers were in debt. A study was carried out in five district of the Hissar division of Haryana between March 1999 and December 2001. In the sample of 547 brick kilns were surveyed to find out the lives of women workers. The study revealed that 87 percent were below 45 years, 36.34 were between 26 to 35 age group and 30 percent were in between 15-25 age group. The caste composition reveals that 84.15

percent of the women workers were from scheduled castes (Chamars, Valmikis and Dhanaks), 15.36 percent were from the backward castes (mainly Kumhars) and just 0.49 percent were from the higher castes. Most of the women workers (91.22 percent) were illiterate (Singh, 2005: 87).

Salt making is one of the harshest and highly labour intensive works. India is the third largest producer of salt in the world. Gujarat contributes 76.7 per cent to the total production, followed by Tamil Nadu (11.16 %) and Rajasthan (9.86%). It is an unorganized work to a large extent. Government allocates land on leases to the manufacturers. This work is done by a scheduled tribe called agariyas, it is one of the most poor, marginalized and educationally backward communities in india. 'They pump up water 10 times as salty as seawater from bore wells into the pan, and wait for it to evaporate. Then they rake the salt left behind into piles, and let it drain further. From each plot of roughly 25 metres by 25 metres, they can harvest 10 to 15 tonnes of salt every 15 days. Their reward is just 60 rupees, or 90 US cents, per tonnes. The brine burns their skin, and in the monsoon months many are without work' [13].

Agariyas for eight months, are exposed to direct sunlight with temperature above 45 degrees in the daytime. The rain disrupts the work and workers go without employment during this period. There is a high chance of occupation and environment related illnesses breaking out during this period. The study point out, the Agariyas are exposed to unexpected rains, declining brine yields, fatal gases from wells and high velocity winds during the course of salt production. The study reveals that digging of wells is a risky task for male members due to the release of different fatal gases from wells sometimes leading even to death (Kaushik, 2016)[14] But fulfilling India's salt needs comes at a price, as the salt pan workers face problems such as abnormally thin legs which become so stiff that even after death, they do not burn in the funeral pyre (Surajbari (Gujarat), January 29, 2013)[15].

Beedi industry is one of the major area where a large number of workers are involved. one such work. beedi industry is highly labour intensive work, majority of

[13] https://www.newscientist.com/article/2076590-indias-salt-harvesters-toil-for-crystals-under-the-baking-sun/?utm_source=NSNS&utm_medium=SOC&utm_campaign=hoot&cmpid=SOC|NSNS|2016-GLOBAL-hoot

[14] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Agariyas-of-Rann-languish-in-poverty-suffer-malnutrition/articleshow/51026638.cms

[15] http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/salt-pan-workers-of-the-rann-of-Kutch/article4355337.ece

the workers are women and children. Workers are employed in very inhuman conditions and they are paid very little compare to the work they do. A study on Beedi industry in two district of Madhya Pradesh (Sagar) and Chhattisgarh (Rajnandgaon), found 87 percent of beedi workers were scheduled caste, 12 percent OBC and 1 percent ST. (Sen, 2008: 95). According to latest wage revision affected from October 2000. Workers earn from 20 Rs to maximum 40 Rs for rolling thousand beedi per day. There was discriminatory wage payment which various according to region, gender, age etc. the annual income of 50 percent of families is less than 20,000 thousand per annum. There is a motto in Sagar that "when nothing is available for a person to survive, he or she resorts to beedi ro11ing and once in beedi ro11ing then there is no escape".

A study by Bindu Nair (1999) on the coir industry of kerala found the inter-sectionality of caste, gender and religion. It was found, 90 percent of the workers were Hindus. The lower caste called Ezava constitute 92 percent of the total workers and 70 percent of the workers were women. As per the Economic Statistical Survey of 1981, the female workers predominate (i.e. 67 per cent) in coir operations such as beating, cleaning and spinning (Nair. 1993: 53). Coir work is considered to be a dirty work and his highly volatile in nature. The coir yam spinning sector does not provide employment for more than seven months in a year, thereby leading the coir worker to a life wrought with starvation and poverty. Most of their suffering is caused by low wages, lack of security and non availability of regular employment. The women workers in the industry are malnourished due to inadequate quantity of food and long working hours in addition to the dual role they have to play. They are usually made to work over time without extra wages and malpractices of various forms continue in the industry in spite of unionization among the workers (Nair, 1999: 83).

Aligarh is famous for its lock industry in India. This is one of the highly labour intensive works. This industry is also known to be heavily dependent on the child labour for its requirement. This industry employs between 80000-90000 workers involved either directly or indirectly in the lock industry in Aligarh. Out of the total workers, approximately 7000 are children below the age of fourteen years. In this industry the most labour intensive works are done by scheduled caste and Muslims. In the occupational and hierarchy of process, the physically exhaustive processes like casting/moulding (dhalai) is done largely by koli caste (Dalits) and polishing which is also another dangerous process is done by Muslims. "The Kohiies (perhaps koli)

(scheduled caste community) are involved mainly in casting activities and the Muslims do, more or less, polishing work. The other caste people are engaged in doing works at the intermediate stages like manufacturing levers and making keys. The assembly of final product is done by the Muslims. The big lock industries owned by the Hindus are located at the outskirts and the smaller units owned by Muslim are located in the interior part of the city. Also, owners of the big manufacturing units are Hindus and the labourers are either Muslims or Scheduled Castes" (Sahay, 1998: 60).

Fire crackers and match box making industry is highly dangerous due to frequent accidents and injuries. It is also a highly labour intensive work and child labour is heavily used in this industry. This industry is notorious for employing children of tender age and frequent fires and accidents especially during the Diwali season. In a study on the child labour in Match box and firework industry of around Sivakasi, it was found that more than 75 percent of the child workers belonged to Dalit castes particularly the Parayar and Sakkiliyar and converted Dalit Christians, followed by Naduvoor (a backward caste). These child workers accompanied by their families who also do the same work in the factories. It is interesting to note that the fireworks are dangerous work as in general but within that the firecrackers is more dangerous and life threatening. Hence Dalits have a major presence in the firecrackers manufacturing. "The children from the Konar, Naicker, Asari and Thevar families usually go to the match units. While talking to the people one could sense that working at a fireworks is not considered as prestigious as working in a match unit" (Radha, 1988: 36-7). Every year one can hear cases of huge accidents and deaths reported while making the crackers. Majority of the workers are temporary and in case of any accident or death the factory owners are not liable to pay them any compensation.

In another study on the stone quarries in Faridabad in Haryana found that "eight out of every ten laborers in these Faridabad quarries are untouchables, and most of the others are tribals. The social composition is characteristic of the least attractive sites where the new proletariat work…here within some 20 km of the capital, workers labour in conditions which can only shock even the most inured observer of Indian industrial conditions. The area has apparently been mined for most of the present century now appears as a dreadful moonscape… the large rocks have been produced by blasting the Cliffside, a job performed by the same rock choppers. They have to make a fast escape (usually barefoot) one the fuse has been lit, since it is

very short for reasons of economy. Smashed or merely injured limbs turn out to be a daily occurrence" (Viziany & Mandelsohn, 1998: 177-8).

Women and large children work alongside the men, while smaller children play in the dust and dirty puddles. But what gives these quarries their almost surreal horror is the pall of snow like dust that practically whites out vision when the crushers are operating. These are the large and primitive machines which shiver the small stones produced by the smashing process into still smaller stone for use primarily in road construction…there were in 1983 some seventy crushers operating within the one area and they produced an intense fog and level of noise which made speech difficult., instinctively one could believe the claims of almost certain respiratory disease, including asthma and tuberculosis for those who worked and lived here long (Ibid: 177-8). They work in the dangerous working conditions, with minimum facilities. This work is physically exhausting and workers come from different states like Rajasthan and Haryana.

In a study on cashew industry of Kerala, it was found that it is a women centric activity and involves 94 percent women workers. The scheduled castes make 20.9 percent of the total workforce. 'Majority of the scheduled caste workers are employed in shelling, the most unclean and arduous job (81.3 %) followed by OBC (40.1 %). Muslims are concentrated in the peeling section of the work with (66.3 %) followed by OBC with (39.2%). Grading is a less arduous work and clean job with a time-rate wage accommodated the highest number of caste Hindus accounts more than (33 %). There is huge wage discrimination, a male workers is paid 100 to 125 Rs. Per day while for women it ranges from Rs. 60 to 80. Thus women are paid only 60 percent of the men's wage even for the same kind of jobs (Thresia, 2000: 179-80).

Brass product making is a hard work which requires skill and energy. Although this work is not a ritually polluting like leather work but majority of the workers in this work come from Muslim or untouchable castes. The workers are exposed to different kinds of chemical in the process and it has huge health implications. In an study on Brassware industry of Moradabad (2004) it was found that majority of the workers come low castes like Bagvan, Ahirs, Balmiki, and Lohar among Hindus and low castes of Ansari aur Qurashi among Muslims do this work as laborers but their product were being sold by upper castes Baniya and Punjabis. The employers, exporters, Karkhanedars and those who deal with clean and remunerative job belong to upper castes and well off sections of the community (Kumar, 2004:

66)16. Most of the raw material suppliers, dealers, exporters, manufacturers are from the trading castes like baniya or Punjabi where the workers are drawn from Muslims and Dalits. The upper caste groups dominate the most lucrative segments whereas those who are located at the bottom do not get their just share in the profits. The smaller factories and workshops or karkhanedar are exploited by raw material suppliers, dealers and exporters.

The effect of caste is trans-national and it retains its structure even in those regions and countries where Hindus are not even in the majority. This clearly reveals how deep, pervasive and stronger it is that it encompasses the physical, social, cultural and religious boundaries. In an interesting ILO study in Pakistan on the bonded labour in hazardous industries, it was found that the low caste Christian and khatik community are engaged in the most dangerous tanning work. "The tanneries sector qualifies a priori as a sector that involves high levels of industrial hazard, risk of Illness and injury, exposure to adverse environmental conditions, and generally unpleasant work. There is high stigma associated with the leather work" (ILO, 2004)17. Hence caste based hierarchal problem is not restricted to India only; it is an issue of international concerns. Dalits are marginalized and relegated dirty works and pushed to bottom everywhere.

Dalit workers are located at the bottom in all the social and economic hierarchy across all the spheres of economy. They are dominantly present in the labour intensive works. The discrimination against them is the function of the caste which reinforces their subjugation, bondage and stagnate their mobility attempt. They cannot raise their wages despite that other castes do not prefer to do the dirty and labour intensive works. This clearly shows there is social control over the labour of Dalits. In the occupational hierarchy there are certain work processes and services like skinning, flaying, sewage work, burning the corpses, dumping the dead bodies of animals, handling corpses, manual scavenging, cleaning the toilets, stitching the dead bodies of accidents victims etc. are exclusively done by Dalits. These works by

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[16] Kumar, S. (2004), 'Workers In The Brassware Industry Of Moradabad: A Study Of Their Health Status'. [Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation]. Center Of Social Medicine And Community Health, Jnu, New Delhi, (India).
[17] Working Paper, (2004), 'A Rapid Assessment Of Bonded Labour In Hazardous Industries In Pakistan: Glass Bangle-Making, Tanneries And Construction'. ILO: Karachi, Pakistan.

default are filthy, highly labour intensive, hazardous, accident prone, health wise dangerous, stigmatic and humiliating.

Manual scavenging is one of the most humiliating works in the society where the workers which include Dalit men, women and children handle the human feces/excrement with their bare hand. According to Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), there were 676,000 manual scavengers in India in 2002-03. The figure is contradicted by the socio-economic census 2011, according to it; India has 1.8 Lakh manual scavengers. Inexplicably, surveys done by states throw up a significantly lower figure of 12,226. In his forward to India stinking, Safai Karamchari Andolan leader Bezwada Wilson puts the total at 1.3 million. There are huge gender and age variations within the workers. According to MSJE official figures of 6.76 Lakh more than 95 percent are women who are engaged in what is called manual scavenging, that is, "lifting and removal of human excreta manually" (Gatade, 2015: 31). Indian Railways is one of the largest employer where the workers clean the human excreta with their hands which lies on the track. Gita Ramaswamy describes in her book India stinking, these communities are known as Bhangi, Valmiki, Mehtar, Chuhra in Delhi, Dhanuk in Uttar Pradesh, Han and Hadi in Bengal; Mehtar and Bhangi in assam; Mehtar in Hyderabad; Paki in costal Andhra; Thotti in Tamilnadu; Mira, Lalbegi, Chuhra and Balashahi in Punjab

The work is so filthy that it disturbs them psychologically. "I get up in the morning, and on an empty stomach, go to lift Mael (faeces). I take a bath when I return, but I still feel dirty. I don't feel like eating because I see faeces everywhere — on myself, in my food. The feeling of being dirty doesn't go away all day," says Suman. Pawan, aged between 10 and 12, says "I studied till Class V but then my mother (who is afflicted with polio) couldn't lift the heavy baskets. So I had to start lifting faeces," she says. Pawan is accompanied by her sister-in-law Babli who was forced into the profession after marriage. For Suman, Pawan and many others, the day starts at 8 am down the lanes of the village. They stand outside homes, or enter from a separate entrance earmarked for manual scavengers. Someone in the house drops dry ash on the mounting excreta that is usually piled up in a corner of the open courtyard separated from the house by a low wall that serves as 'dry latrine'. Babli scrapes the shit with a piece of metal, covers

it with grass and leaves, hitches it over her head in a basket before heading for the next lane. Each has 10-35 homes to cover (Dhawan, 2016)[18].

In urban areas the where sewage system is more prevalent the situation is more or less same. In an article published written by S.Anand which was published in Tehelka on 8th December 2007 under the tile 'life in a black hole, Anand says, there were 22,237 deaths of Dalits annually while doing sanitation work (George, 2009).The Safai Kamgar Vikas Sangh, a body representing sanitation workers of the Brihanmumbai municipal corporation (BMC) sought data under the right to information act in 2006, and found that 288 workers had died in 2004-05, 316 in 2003-04, and 320 in 2002-03 in just 14 of the 24 wards of the BMC. This means 25 deaths in every month in just 14 wards out of 24 wards. These figures do not include civic hospital workers, gutter cleaners or sanitation workers on contract[19].'There are no nation-wide data on such deaths. Navsarjan, a group campaigning for safer working conditions and compensation for such workers, estimates that there were six such deaths in Karnataka last year. Ahmadabad reported an average of 20 deaths every year. Many more cases go unreported. Sewage ducts and septic tanks have to be cleaned in other countries too, but why do so many people die in India doing this work? "People do not die in other countries because they provide safety equipment," said Martin Macwan of Navsarjan Gujarat. "Here it is a caste-based occupation (most workers are members of castes that traditionally cleaned dry latrines), so the deaths do not matter" (Nair, 2017)[20]

In one of the study on sewage workers in Delhi by CEC, found that 'sewage contains numerous toxic substances that can pose risks to the worker's health. The working conditions maximize the exposure of the *Beldars* to harmful ingredients, thereby increasing the mortality and morbidity rates of the workers at the workplace. Thirty-three worker have died in last two years owing in 2003-2005 to accidents that took place while they worked on blocked sewer lines… the workers are suffering from numerous health diseases due their exposure to poisonous gases, toxic compounds, metals, dangerous substances, unsafe working conditions. 80 percent of

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[18] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/For-1-8L-manual-scavengers-swachh-life-is-a-distant-dream/articleshow/51675927.cms
[19] http://assam.assamnet.narkive.com/wn9fVQst/from-tehelka-life-inside-a-black-hole

[20] http://www.Hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/why-death-continues-to-stalk-mumbai-s-sewer-workers/story-qYOtdhIOhaPpDfnV5aykcL.html

the workers die before retirement and there were 300 deaths in last 2-3 years according to Mr. Hargyan Singh, president all India Safai Mazdoor Congress, Delhi Pradesh Shakha Sewer-Nala (CEC, 2005).

The natural calamities do not affect everyone in the same ways. Some are over burden and affected more by their sudden disasters. Whenever there is natural calamity like cyclone, flood and earthquake they are employed to remove the garbage and dead bodies of animals and humans. "In 1999, following a devastating cyclone in Orissa, 2,00,000 animal carcasses were left lying in the open. No one was ready to remove the carcass of animals which were scattered here and there. The government officials approached locals to remove these carcasses for a higher pay. A villager responded, "I have some self-respect left". The officials flew 200 sweeper caste members from New Delhi for the work. (Spartanburg Herald -Journal November 12, 1999) The change of behavior over sanitation not only affects the public but, more importantly, affects the government too"(Bathran, 2015)21

The Dalits live in the most undesirable and low lying areas. Therefore water logging is one of the most common problems amongst many. The excessive rains bring disasters in their life and the water from high areas accumulates in their areas making it highly dangerous, stinking and filthy. The Chennai flood was one of the most damaging natural events in recent years. The city was filled with water due to excessive rains. "More than 2,000 sanitation workers from across Tamilnadu had arrived in the city to clean up the mess. They had to be called in because most of Chennai's sanitation workers hadn't turned up to work. Most of the slums they live in are also under the dirty water. The city has around 7,000 sanitation workers, according to R Anbuvedan, state president of the Republican Trade Union of India. "The population of Chennai is 85 Lakh, meaning one sanitation worker is cleaning the waste generated by around 1,200 people. The central government norms say that there should be three sanitary workers per thousand people," according to city corporation, each person in the city generates 700 grams of waste per day. Chennai generates the highest per capita garbage in the country. That is 870 kilos of garbage per sanitary workers per day. But that's on good, floodless days" (Mondal, 2015)22.

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21 http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/first-clean-up-the-caste-and-sanitation-equation/166815.html

22 http://www.Hindustantimes.com/analysis/flooded-chennai-s-dirty-secret-Dalits-clean-rotting-mess/story-nyqoydzM32dnCoR9C1wZQI.html

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUALIZATION, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

CONCEPTUALIZATION

The conceptualization for this study draws from an understanding that well-being is influenced and shaped by the cultural and material conditions in which people live and work. This understanding recognizes that in highly stratified societies there is a variation in the notion of well being both at objective and perceptional level. The notions and perceptions of wellbeing differ across different strata, sections classes and groups. One's position in the social and economic hierarchy largely determines their opportunities for growth and development. Well being therefore is a dynamic and socially conditioned phenomenon. Each person or group defines it according to their own social and economic location in the society. The notions and perceptions of well being changes as the status of individuals or groups change in the society.

Well being and health are two inter-related phenomenon but they differ significantly in their approach, methodology and solutions. According to Lee, "health, whether mental, physical, or social, is socially defined. Unless people label a condition as one of disease or abnormality, it is not a health problem in their society. In the past, some diseases, such as malaria or hookworm, have been so widespread as to be considered a normal condition" (Lee, 1967: 194). What is normal and abnormal depends on how it is perceived in any society. According to WHO definition, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social being-not merely the absence of disease and infirmity". This understanding sees health and well being as fixed state and condition rather than a process.

The traditional, orthodox and conventional understanding sees health (ill-health) as biological, physical or mental state. Hence the cause of ill-health, pain, sufferings and discomfort can be found in the germs or body metabolism or dysfunctional of the body that could be treated and addressed by extensive use of technology, medicines, hospitals and medical professionals. "criticism have focused

on the very medical nature of these scales-especially the Euroqol-emphasising that physical health is only one element of well being and therefore suggesting that a genuinely holistic measure of well-meaning must assess a range of other important domain"(Kinderman, Schwannauer, Pontin & Tai, 2011:1036).

The bio-medical model of health sees health as a personal and individual problem rather than a community determined phenomenon. It does not therefore bring in the social and cultural factors which influence and determine the health and health outcomes in any community. Health behavior is a complex outcome of the culture, history and material conditions in which people live and work. Hence it is historically, culturally and materially regulated, conditioned and controlled. Well being on the other hand is a comprehensive phenomenon which takes into account totality of life experiences of people. It has various dimensions and components like physical, mental, social, economic, material, psychological, etc. According to Waddell & Burton, well-being is ""the subjective state of being healthy, happy, contented, comfortable, and satisfied with one's life". It includes physical, material, social, emotional and development and activity dimensions" (Schulte & Vainio, 2010: 423).

Quality of life is an integrated and inter-sectoral approach which is often used to access the various dimension of people's life. It "conveys an overall sense of well-being, including aspects of happiness and satisfaction with life as a whole… Although health is an important domain of overall quality of life, there are other domains as well—for instance, jobs, housing, schools, and the neighborhood" (CDCP[1], 2000: 5). Quality of life and level of living depends on the consumption and spending on the basic requirements of life like food, water, housing, education, health care, leisure etc. Economic security is one of the major determinants of the quality of life one is able to live. It includes various other components like secured and regular income, stable employment, adequate and balanced nutritional intake, safe working conditions, adequate housing, food security, access to quality health care, safe water, sanitation, education, leisure etc. The lack of these or the denial of these results in poor health outcomes on the one end and sufferings, devaluation and negative self-assessment on the other.

Work is one of the major determinants of economic and material wellbeing. According to professor Michael Marmot, "employment conditions influence health

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[1] Centers of disease control and prevention

both directly and indirectly" and argued for structural interventions at workplaces, organizations and broader policies to make a significant contributions towards healthier work" (Bryson & Freeman, 2009: 70). Work is the basis of income therefore it directly affects the health and well being. The nature, quality, regularity and stability of work and employment affect the income one can generate. The irregular, unstable and lowly paying work also bring instability, insecurity and vulnerabilities in life. The working conditions in which work is executed also affect the health directly. Unsafe working conditions results in higher mortality, morbidity, accidents and occupational hazards. Work is not an independent, free and insulated of cultural influences. The social and cultural processes affect the structure, organization and distribution of work in any society. The notions, perceptions, attitudes, value, prestige and honor about work are culturally and socially controlled. The way certain occupations are divided, prestige associated, economic rewards attached and demographically distributed are all the reflection of the society itself. The ideas like patriarchy, class, region, caste, religion, identity, values, customs, beliefs, attitudes etc. play an important role in determining the availability and accessibility of work, income resources and assets in the society.

The Inequalities, disparities and injustice cause pain, suffering and subjugation to human beings. "The *Report On The World Social Situation 2005* warned of an inequality predicament and concluded that failure to pursue a comprehensive, integrated approach to development would perpetuate such a predicament, causing all to pay the price" (DESA, 2013: 21). Those societies that are marked by large socio-economic disparities and inequalities in the distribution of resources become unstable and violent by nature. When the resources in the society are controlled by selective groups it leads to stagnation and negative growth of others. William & Collins argue that "segregation is harmful to the health of minorities due to limited access to social, economic, political and institutional resources" (McFarland & Smith, 2011: 469). Research shows that "those with average or higher incomes show higher reported happiness than those at the bottom of the income distribution" (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004: 1440). This means those with lower than average or poor income suffer from unhappiness and ill health.

When the resources in the society are not distributed in a just manner it leads to poor health outcomes. Goldstein says, "Poor health is often associated with poverty, malnutrition, poor housing, inadequate sanitation, pollution and economic

and psychological stress, as well as with inadequate health services" (Goldstein, 1990: 121). The disparities in income, the unequal division and distribution of resources lead to segmentation, segregation and ghettoisation of certain groups. This results in marginalization, exclusion and suppression of people in the society. The inequalities, disparities and differential power arrangement among between different groups and sections lead to excessive presence of pain, suffering and subjugation in certain groups and section of the society. Such societies are marked by fear, stigma, pessimism, shame, guilt, stigma, protests, riots, disturbances and resistance on the one hand and low economic development, higher poverty, unemployment, low level of health and educational outcomes on the other hand.

The wealth in the society is one of the major indicators to judge the quality of life that people are able to live or afford to live in the society. Smith (1776/2003) proposed that wealth of nations be measured by the "product of the whole labour of the society" and the "quantity of capital stock" (Oishi & Schimmack, 2010: 464). The total wealth in the society is measured by the GDP and GNP to access the material well being at the level of nations. But it does not capture the full range of societal conditions. "GDP cannot distinguish between activities that have a negative or a positive impact on well-being. Also, GDP does not take into account the non-economic factors that add to well being" (D'Acci, 2011: 48). For instance, "an increase in industrial production often entails undesirable societal conditions such as environmental pollution. In addition, crime rate, personal safety, availability of health care and social welfare, homelessness, infant mortality, and longevity are not perfectly correlated with indicators of material well-being such as GDP" (Opcit: 464). GDP does not capture the distribution of resources and degree of inequalities in the society. Hence HDI came to be used extensively to measure the growth, opportunities and development of any country or society. HDI uses income, life expectancy and educational attainment as parameters to know the distribution of opportunities and wealth in the countries.

Culture plays an important life in determining the availability, accessibility to material resources, cultural capital and opportunities. Culture has a direct bearing on the quality of life, freedom, choices and alternatives that are available to people for their self development. Culture therefore is directly related and associated with well being. "Social integration is the evaluation of the quality of one's relationship to society and community. Healthy individuals feel that they are a part of society.

integration is therefore the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others who constitute their social reality…social isolation is the breakdown of personal relationship that provide meaning and support" (Keyes, 1998: 122-3). People feel dis-oriented, lost and lack motivations when they feel alienated.

The social integration is not possible without social interaction. According to Philips, "social interaction produces "positive feelings" and thus the greater the social participation, the greater one's happiness. Further, Philips argues, individuals will withdraw from social interactions which produce negative feelings" (Johnson, Thomas & Matre, 1990: 342). The social isolation, estrangement and non acceptance in the community affect the value, worth and self-esteem of people. It affects them physically when they are not able to access the community resources freely and fairly. It affects them psychologically as they tend to withdraw from the "normal" social processes and events. According to Poller, "individuals with recourse to friends or family exhibit higher levels of psychological and indeed physical well-being than their less socially integrated counterparts" (Poller, 1989: 92).

The Disrecognition, Nonrecognition and Mal-treatment/Discrimination of certain groups and communities in the society lead to social unrest. The Disrecognition and Misrecognition often lead to identity based politics and social justice movements. When these groups are treated differently or the normal standards are set in favour of dominant or majority or certain pre-defined homogeneity is imposed on them that results in their exclusion, marginalization and humiliation. Margalit, conceptualize "three elements of humiliation, (1) treating human beings as if they were not human-as beasts, machines, or subhumans; (2) performing actions that manifest or lead to loss of basic control; and (3) rejecting a human being from the "family of man"(Lukes, 1997: 39). The social and cultural institutions too humiliate people when it treats them differently. "an institution humiliates directly if it treats some people as second-class citizens , and denies them privileges in order to distinguish them from others" (Ripstein, 1997: 90). Humiliation and stigma are social and cultural processes which results when people are made to feel "other".

Caste is one institution in which is responsible for the gross man-made inequalities in Indian society. This institution has made India one of the most stratified, hierarchal and closed society in the world. . People are divided into hundreds of hierarchal groups and categories with their pre-fixed status in the society. It is graded and hierarchal division of groups and people with graded and hierarchal

privileges and rights. Social groups are divided into various unequal hierarchal categories with their own caste specific belief systems, practices, rituals, morals, ideals, symbols, philosophical worldview, traditions, faiths, religious practices etc. Each group differs from each other in terms of their origin, history, symbols and interests. According to Thorat and Despande (2001) caste system has five major economic attributes, these are as follows, 1) Fixation of occupations, 2) Unequal distribution of economic rights, 3) Grading of occupations, 4) Recognition of slavery and 5) Social and economic penalties to enforce caste based economic order. The works of each caste is defined as the duty therefore it is not an economic activity rather a religiously ascribed and culturally legitimized social arrangement.

In this hierarchal arrangement dalits are perceived to be people who are dirty, impure and degraded because of their past sins. They are therefore located at the bottom of social hierarchy and their place in the society is fixed by birth and customs. The ideology of caste degrades them and keeps them at bottom and inferior positions in the society. The caste status has a direct bearing on the availability of occupations, professions and opportunities. There is a hierarchal division of works in India and each work is associated with certain groups in the society. This is based on the theory of karma. According to theory of karma each caste has its defined duties which are to be performed dedicatedly in order for the perseverance of order in the society. Caste in the form of ideology, attitudes, beliefs, customs play an important role in determining the access and availability of works for different social groups on the basis of their location in the social hierarchy.

There is a clear and deep link between the caste, occupations and opportunities in India. Caste provides a framework in which division of labour, economic opportunities and assets are distributed and accessed in the society. Those who are at the top in the social hierarchy also hold the superior position in the hierarchy of work and those who are located at the bottom have inferior position in the hierarchy of work. As revealed and discussed in the previous chapter, Dalits have a exclusive presence in some of the occupations and works which are considered to be filthy, dirty, unhygienic and ritually polluting in nature like the manual scavenging and sanitary works, collection of hides and carcass, skinning and flaying of animals, leather tanning, removing the dead bodies both human and animals, funeral services etc. These are the works which are exclusively relegated to dalits as these are considered to be polluting in nature. These works are considered to be dirty and

unhygienic therefore by default are carried and executed away from the residential and core areas of the cities and villages. Therefore those people who are associated with these works carry deep stigma and discrimination by the society.

There are many works and occupations which are perceived to be ritually non-polluting but are highly labour intensive in nature. These occupations and works are hazardous and accident prone therefore relegated to the Dalits. The dalit workers - therefore have a disproportionally large presence in some of the industries like the mineral and coal extractions, shipping and dock, construction industry, brick kilns, glass and bangle industry, beedi industry, leather industry, chemical industries, textile and handloom etc. The work conditions in these industries and occupations are harsh and painful to the workers as these largely come under the unorganized sector where the government laws and rules are not applicable. The dalit women who are marginalized both by class and caste have to bear various kinds of hardships, humiliations, and harassments including sexual.

There is concentration of Dalits in some of the work processes which are dangerous, have huge health risks and cause diseases and deaths. They are exclusively and selectively recruited in those stages and phases of work which are avoided by other in the society as it involves dangers and exposure of dangerous substances and matters like exposure to toxic gases, handling the dangerous and heavy equipment, machines and chemicals, certain processes of leather tanning processes, removing the decomposed dead bodies of human beings and animals, cleaning the urban drains and sewage systems, certain processes of glass and bangle making etc. The work in the economy is organized in such a ways that it retains the traditional structure and characteristics. The occupations which are relegated to the dalits are temporary, fluctuating, seasonal and insecure by nature. Therefore their earnings are also temporary, fluctuating, season and insecure by default. Their occupations are largely manual in nature, which does not give them enough economic freedom.

The segmentation, segregation and ghettoisation of Dalits in certain works and occupations clearly reflect that they are kept away from opportunities and jobs, which are lucrative, regular and powerful. They still carry the bondage of traditions, culture and customs, which have been forced on them. They are treated as objects in the society and there are certain works and occupations, which are readily available for them and there is a ceiling against them, which operates through culture. Dalits are kept in the subjugation, marginal and inferior social and economic position in the

society through social control. Caste therefore is not merely about some unique traditions and customs it is a power relationship between individuals and groups. Dalits are objectified and treated as objects particularly fit for certain kinds of works and occupations. This ideology has on the one hand degraded the value of work in the society and created acute marginality for the dalits. It is one of the reasons for the presence and perpetuation of acute poverty and marginality among them.

Indian society cannot be studied without bringing caste into question. Caste is one of the major determinants of social reality in India and major parameters to understand the inequalities. Caste and caste identity play a major role in determining the social status, economic assets, opportunities, employment occupations on the one end and negative experiences like humiliation, stigma, abuses, physical torture, and social boycott etc. on the other. Caste therefore is one of the major determinants which affect them in numerous ways and spheres. They continue to face the caste in its various forms, levels, sites and spheres. Caste therefore is a major reason which affects their physical, social, economic, psychological well being. It has made unequal, violent and unjust.

DEFINING TERMS FOR RESEARCH

DALITS

Dalit is a social, cultural and political identity emerged in history to highlight negative experiences of some groups in the society. This is not mere an identity rather a critical category created to reject an identity which has been forced on them. It has all the components like resistance, rejection and critique. In a narrower sense it is associated with people who have been designated as scheduled castes or SCs in government documents and records.

LABOUR PROCESSES

Labour processes are understood to be the division and organization of work into different hierarchal and functional categories for both economic and social production. Labour is a social process and there are variations and difference about the meaning, notion and nature culture to culture, society to society and history to history. There are certain works which are held important because of their social reproduction rather than its economic value like the women work at homes, priestly

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work at religious institutions, military service to the country etc. These have certain economic dimension but they are largely seen as duties or services to the community. These therefore are not covered by the labour laws.

WELL-BEING

For this study, well being is defined as a state of being in harmony with oneself. It is far beyond of physical, mental, psychological fitness and more about being free from guilt, shame and vulnerability. It is a condition when one is free from internal and external coercion and conflicts. In a more specific term it is a state of self-containment, satisfaction, peace and happiness.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology in epistemological and philosophical terms is the means to know the truth or reality in the society. It is a tool to see the reality in the society but also the ways that reality (ies) or truths have to be understood and interpreted. It is one of the key factors which affect the knowledge generation processes. Methodology has a direct bearing on the knowledge generation processes and it directly and indirectly affects our understanding about the social reality in the society. It affects our understanding about society and also affects our relationship with the society. Methodology (ies) therefore are not free from power and politics. Our philosophic understanding about the world determines our methodology and also affects our relationships with the world.

There is a deep link between philosophy, theory and methodology. Each Methodology is based on some theoretical understanding and some philosophical assumptions about the nature of world and nature of experiences that people have in the society. Therefore philosophy is the base on which methodology(ies) are constructed which shapes up the way we understand and interpret something in the society. Methodology is not free from power in the sense; it has power to change our relation and association with the world. It can shape our experiences and actions and also affect our political positioning in various matters related to the society. The ways one understands the society also shape one's methodology to interpret it. Methodology therefore is not neutral. All methodologies come with certain granted assumptions and political consequences.

Methodology is a dynamic process; we are constantly trying to devise new methods/means/theories to understand society in a better ways. Our understanding about methodology is constantly changing as per the changing human reality. Methodology therefore is not a static or fixed phenomenon it has also changed with the gradual expansion of the understanding about this world with the discoveries of new facts, development of science and technological upgradation and inventions. Those facts and "truths" which were once considered to be indispensable and unchallengeable have been rejected with the modern discoveries, scientific inventions and new understanding about human reality. What was once considered to be a truth is now being challenged as ideology. Knowledge generations processes have also gone significant changes due to emergence of better theoretical and methodological models for understanding and explanations the human world.

Society is constantly changing due to the actions of human beings. There has been significant change in the approaches to methodologies and theories. Those methods which failed to grasp human reality have been challenged both for their inadequacy to understand human reality and also for their ideological and political consequences. Knowledge is a constant search of effective methods to understand human reality. Knowledge itself is not an end rather a process by which we keep searching new alternatives as we expand our consciousness and understanding about human subjects. Human society has changed so much ever since we tried to understand it; therefore the methods have also changed over times. Our understanding about society has passed through many phases of its development since its inception. The understanding about society has evolved through various phases of its development some of them have heavily influenced our understanding about society across disciplines.

Emile Durkheim was the French philosopher who first wanted to devise a science of society or knowledge. His seach led him to devise a method called **"social facts",** to explain human society by applying positivist philosophy and natural science principles. Therefore for him the objectivity and externality was important to produce an unbiased understanding about society. It is a descriptive method by which society is described 'as it is' through facts. This method of Durkheim leads to the emergence of "scientific method" and its application in human society. The scientific method itself is describing reality rather than questioning the reality. Therefore it focuses

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more on observation and fixed criteria and rules to observe social phenomenon rather than challenging it.

The method that Weber employs to understand society is called **"verstehen"** or **"interpretive method"**. This was a critique of positivism of Durkheim and historical materialism of Marx. According to Weber facts do not explain themselves, they need to be interpreted within a context. Therefore this method is more about explaining or interpreting human actions hence it simply does not question the status quo rather it only explains status quo. In terms of contributions this method although produce factual knowledge and enrich our understanding about society but it does not promote social change and transformation. This method itself has a limitation when it comes to transformation of the society.

Marx in the same way understood human society as dialectic opposition of interests between different classes. Therefore his method "**historical materialism**" or "**dialectic materialism**" based on the understanding that human society is driven by conflict of interests of two classes of people. Marxian understanding about human society was more towards changing it; therefore he wants a revolution which will lead to transformation of society to its desired end of socialism. The Marxian goal was emancipatory but his method was not. According to Bendix, "Karl Marx gave more emphasis to the scientific character of his materialist philosophy. Rejecting the tradition of German idealism, he held that in the long run, ideas and institutions are determined by the material conditions under which men work" (Bendix, 1974: 149). Hence history, ideas and institutions are seen as outside of human control and will. It predicts human beings being mechanically going towards socialism. It therefore reduces them as objects rather than subjects of their own conditions. The Marxian understanding about human beings is partial both because it sees reality in parts and also it does not critically engaged with the religion, culture and ideology.

The methodology that Frankfurt based critical theory employs is called **critical method**. It is critique of empirical, historical determinism, interpretive understanding about society due to their narrow, sectarianism and reductionist approach towards social reality. The purpose of critical theory is to emancipate people and transform society by critically engaging those processes which bring violence, subjugation and suppression. It see social reality in its totality therefore it critically engage itself with culture, religion and ideology as major determinant of social reality in the society. According to this school of thought the prime objective of knowledge

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is to transform the society. This framework therefore begins with a negative evaluation of the society. According to Gorman, "truth has only a negative function, allowing observers to critically understand and evaluate society without adopting conventional values" (Gorman, 2008: 67).

Critical method is both an approach and methodology as it involves judgments, evaluation, and opinion. It is a reflexive method which takes society in its totality rather in parts. It focuses on critically studying and evaluating socio-historical and political processes which hold people in subjugation, marginality and bondage. Dant writes, "To criticize the whole of a societal formation is to suggest that political action is not sufficient in itself to bring about changes in that formation…critical theory engages in a form of criticism of social formations that does not express itself as an agenda for political action. It arises precisely through the awareness of the failure of political action, even the most extreme and radical political action of revolution" (Dant, 2003: 2). Critique is not mere fault finding in something it is a methodology to challenge and critiquing the conditions and values which create violence for the subjects. Critique both as methodology and approach exposes the differential power relationships between human beings in the society. It seeks to reveal and uncover the processes by which subjugation, dominance and inequalities have been normalized and standardized.

Critique is not mere fault finding alone, but it is a constructive rejection of the present status quo thus leaving scope for a positive future Re-construction of the society. In other words it the rejection of 'is' to make way for 'ought'. Giroux says, dialectical thought argues that there is a link between knowledge, power and domination. Thus, it is acknowledged that some knowledge is false, and that the ultimate purpose of critique should be critical thinking in the interest of social change" (Giroux, 1997: 43). It is departure from descriptive in favour of normative visions of society. It is through critiquing of undesirable, unwanted and unpleasant that one can make something more pleasant, acceptable and desirable. Therefore it is more about having a desired and normative vision of society rather than empirical or descriptive understanding of contemporary society. It is often termed as emancipatory method or anti-oppressive method as it accepts that power in the form of beliefs, traditions, culture and ideologies heavily subjugate human beings and creates violence by controlling human beings.

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This study adopts critical theory as a larger methodological and theoretical design to critically study the subjects in the society and expose how their have been objectified by power. It approaches the problems in the society critically. Dalits are one of the most poor, historically marginalized and socially ostracized communities in India. They have been the victim of caste based discrimination, suppression and violence for centuries. Caste still plays an important role in determining the access to economic and cultural resources. They are still denied their personhood in the society and their experiences from the society are negative. This study therefore critically explores their lives and understand how caste and power determined their life experiences and their ways of dealing with it.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Methodology

It is the arrangement of conditions to organize research to acquire knowledge from field or to meet its desired end. In other words research methodology is a design by which knowledge in the form of information and data is collected from the field. Research methodology is the medium/means/tools by which we acquire our knowledge from field. Research methodology is a process in which one develops conceptual and theoretical understanding about one's research and criteria to meet an end. Acquiring knowledge from field is not free from power. Power whether intended or intended, hidden or open, direct or indirect play an important role in determining the results of the research. There are many ways the researcher also exercise its power over the subjects by shaping and affecting the responses of the subjects. The priorities and conceptual understanding of the researchers also shape the treatment of the research subjects. Besides that there are certain some methodologies which create coercion and control the researcher by controlling their subjectivity. There are many ways the research and researcher are constrained and pre-determined whether it is due to institutional restrictions, availability of resources, availability of funds and time, researcher intentional or unintentional biases etc.

Research design and methodology is a political statement in itself as it reveals the political positioning of the researcher and its conceptualization of the social reality. All research is political in nature in the sense all research has political implications to the society. Research is never without implications to the society in

the sense it can never be neutral. Every research either conforms or promotes status or rejects it. In this sense every research is politically motivated and no research is objective in its true sense. Therefore the methodologies and theories that one employs, data collection technique we use, the methods we employ, the questions that we ask to our respondents etc are all guided by our political priorities and visions. Therefore research is just not a venture to extract or generate knowledge only it is a political statement in itself with political implications.

Research Methodology is not free from power in the sense research methodology has implications to the society and the subjects. The way reality is projected in/though the field is determined by the theoretical, methodological and conceptual understanding about the social reality. A positive (ist) methodology produces a positive picture of the field and promotes neutrality. Interpretive methodology produces an interpretive or constructionist understanding about the field without taking a stand on it. Similarly dialectic methodology produces a conflicting picture of the field and promotes conflict. Critical methodology produces critical picture of the field and promotes critique which allows self reflections of the nature of the society.

Field is not a static, objective, fixed world of objects, it is a human world where people have subjectivities, they have opinions, beliefs, practices, views, faiths, conflicts, tensions, power, consciousness etc. what subjects feel about the research is as much part of research as the researchers own understanding about subjects. Research is not a monotonous, mechanical, one sided picture of reality. It is a dynamic process of knowing oneself and others by coming out of those insulated, isolated and fixed criteria. Traditional methodologies reduce field experience as a static, mechanical and fixed therefore the focus is always upon observation, interpretation and explanation of others from outside without being part and parcel of their lives.

Influenced from critical theory, critical research acknowledges rather than hide one's Positionality, constraints, dilemmas, subjectivity, treatment etc. critical research is reflexive in nature which means the researcher is aware of the pre-determined nature of field and subjects. Researcher is ever ready to accept the inadequacy of its own strategies, methodologies, tools, and understanding of the subjects. The "ethics" are not outside of theory rather they are very much part of the theory contrary to scientific research. The ethics are not simply about how research should be careful to

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the sentiments of subjects not to hurt them. But the whole research itself comes under the purview of ethics. The researcher takes the responsibility of the presentation of subjects, interpretation of data and researchers commitment to the subjects.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indian economy has changed phenomenally in the last few decades. It is specially changed so after the introduction of New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991. The introduction of NEP led to the collapse of economic and physical barriers for foreign and private capital in the economy and between countries. This process led to the beginning of the emergence of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) in the Indian society. The competition in the economy increased and intensified with the inflow of private capital. These processes started a chain reaction in the economy and it led to fundamental changes in the nature of the state and economic activities with huge social and cultural implications to the society. The New Economic Policy brought changes/alternation/modification in factory and labour laws, changes in the environment and forest regulations, withdrawal of the state from welfare, opening of sectors for private investment, downsizing, cutting, Casualisation and Informalisation in public employment, cutting in subsidies, reduction in public spending on health, education and social security, budgetary cutting on infrastructure and development and commercialization and Commodification of the basic needs like water, education, health, fuel, housing etc.

All these developments have huge social and cultural implications in a society which is already marked by huge social and cultural inequalities and disparities. These changes affected every person in the society directly or indirectly. These had huge negative implication to the vast section of population which is engaged in the organized and unorganized sector of the economy like farmers, peasants, agricultural labour, industrial and factory workers, small traders and self employed artisans and workers, socially and economically marginalized communities and groups and vast section of population which was dependent on government support for their basic requirements whether it is in the matters of health, education, food security and water. The inequalities and disparities between groups, sections, strata and individuals have increased, sharpened and intensified after the LPG processes were started in the economy.

Leather industry is one of the industries, which have witnessed phenomenal growth, expansion and development in the last few decades due to the forces of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. The processes got intensified and accelerated since 1991 when certain segments of leatherwork have been opened for private capital. Afterwards, there has been phenomenal growth of MNCs and Corporate houses in this work over the years. The industry has finally been opened for 100 percent FDI since 2002. The removal of trade restrictions, inflow of foreign goods both finished and unfinished, manufactured and raw material, changes in the labour laws, environmental and pollution concerns, standardization of the quality concerns, mechanization of the production processes, upgradation and modernization of the production structures, closure and shifting of polluting units due to environment concerns, entry of cheap leather goods from china have affected this industry. These developments brought significant changes in the nature, functions, forms and operations across leather industry.

Leatherwork has traditionally been perceived as dirty and ritually impure by the society therefore it was relegated to the Dalits. Dalits have traditionally been dependent on leatherwork for their survival for centuries. It was one of the most important sources of employment and livelihood for them. The commercialization and Commodification of this work has brought some drastic changes developments in their lives. There have been significant changes in the demography, labour characteristics, and ownership patterns in this work. The changes in the leather industry have affected them in different ways and in different spheres. The liberalisation and globalisation in the economy particularly in the leather industry has proved to be disastrous for them as they find it difficult to compete with the FDI and Corporate capital in India. The deregulations of the economy and withdrawal of the state from welfare has affected them badly. Liberalisation has resulted loss of opportunities and state withdrawal has brought double marginalization for them. These processes have pushed them further below both economically and socially.

Research Question

The main research question for this study is to locate the role and place of Dalits in the leather industry of Agra and study the impact of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation on their lives. The question explores the meaning and notions of being a dalit in the society and understands the world from their

perspective and standpoint. How the recent changes in the economy affected them and how they perceive these and its impact on their lives.

Objective of the Study

To study the structure, organization and social characteristic of the labour force in leather industry of Agra and understanding the perceptions and notions about (well) being of leather/Dalit workers

Specific Objectives

➢ To study the structure, growth and changes within leather industry in Agra

➢ To study the social characteristics of labour force in the industry in different segments, operations and levels of work

➢ To study the impact of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation on the industry and workers

➢ To study the perceptions of Dalit workers regarding society and well-being

Rationale of the Study

• Lack of qualitative literature and ethnographic studies on leather workers more so in public health

• Lack of studies in public health which directly linking Caste, inequalities and Well being

• Studies on industry and labour largely take Marxian framework to understand and analyze the social reality in the society. The Marxian framework does not give adequate attention to the role of ideology, culture, religion, customs, and beliefs in shaping the complex interaction of human beings in the society.

• The Buddhist epistemology and the critical writings and worldview of Ambedkar, Phule, Periyar and Kanshiram are interesting and political in nature in analyzing the social reality in India. These thinkers questioned and rejected caste and hold it to be a major source of inequalities and violence in the society. .

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Method

Ethnography is a traditional method emerged from the positivism and scientific method based research. It is based on the assumption that true/accurate/objective/neutral/unbiased description is the effective way of knowing society. Therefore neutrality, objectivity and externality are the major concern for this research method. This method by default creates duality when it divides and separates subjects and objects. It is not reflexive therefore it keeps power, ideology and violence outside from the purview of study. It describes the reality without going into depth the hidden coercion and power struggle among the subjects. It does not bring in the question of power, ideology and violence in the discourse. What is an objective reality in the society is a dominant reality which has been imposed on the people. Therefore in the name of objective depiction of the reality it actually produces the dominant reality as concrete knowledge. The intended or unintended biases of researcher are also concretized valid as stand standpoint of the researcher always hidden from the scrutiny of the enquiry processes. This method actually promotes status quo as it silent the counter narrative and ideological contestation within the society are not taken as a valid knowledge.

Critical ethnography method is inspired from critical theory. "Critical theorists believe that research is an ethical and political act. Critical research is intended to engage and benefit those who are marginalized in society. Along these lines, critical research can best be understood in the context of the empowerment of the individuals" (Morrel, 2004: 42). It is a method which assumes that field is not a static, fixed, insulated and stagnant world of objects. It is a world of subjects who are dynamic, thinking and constantly changing. It is part of a larger social world and the conditions outside affect and shape the world of subjects. Field is a dynamic life world where tensions, power, struggles, conflicts, contestations regarding different identities, religious practices, faiths, cultures, power and assertion, resistance, symbolism, beliefs co-exist. It is a world which is not free from power and dominance in fact contestation and resistance go on simultaneously. Critical ethnography has emancipatory implications and is depicted by Thomas (1993) as "a way of applying as a subversive world view to the conventional logic of cultural inquiry. It does not stand in opposition to conventional ethnography. Rather, it offers a more direct style of thinking about the relationships among knowledge, society and political action. The

central premise is that one can be both scientific and critical, and that ethnographic descriptions offers a powerful means of critiquing culture and the role of research within it" (Anverill, 2006: 3) Human beings are constantly rejecting and critiquing reality on the basis of their reflections. Reflexivity is the basis of all human knowledge. Human beings are not fixed by nature they respond on the basis of their experiences. If there is violence in the society there is also a counter action. People do not accept their subjugation as normal they reject, critique and resist against their suppression and exploitation. Hence critical ethnography is a method which capture the does not mere describe status quo of particular society rather it is interested in transformation of that world through active participation.

Critical ethnography is political in nature because it is not interested in mere description of facts rather it wants to transformation of those facts. It is opposed to conventional ethnography where one merely describes status quo or record the whole way of life of people, including how people are suppressed or controlled without any interest or motivation to change those realities. In critical ethnography one challenges this very status quo and uncovers the complex power relations between the dominant and dominated, in other words particular focus is on how common sensical meanings and interaction between different people are determined by ideology or dominant cultural beliefs. In critical ethnography the gap of objective and subjective, facts and values, theory and practice is collapsed. The researcher does not disassociate itself from it subjects it rather identify itself with subjects. Therefore research and researcher are part and parcel of larger goal of fulfilling the aims of knowledge where transformation of society is the objective of knowledge itself.

Critical ethnography sees the role of ideology and culture in determining the reality. Therefore it is concerned with how people have been controlled or their subjectivity is suppressed, therefore it highlights not what it is rather how it should/ought not be like that. It seeks to liberate its subjects by exposing the power relations between different sets of people. Therefore it merely does not accept what is perceived as reality rather it focuses on ideology in determining that reality. Reality is not a matter of empirically observable relations therefore it taken into consideration historical, culture and social framework to come to any understanding. It seeks to liberate and emancipate subjects by uncovering and exposing how power is exercised and domination is produced.

In addition to speaking on behalf of subjects, critical ethnography also attempt to recognize and articulate their own perspective as a means of acknowledging the biases that their own limitations, histories, and institutional standpoints bear on their work. By studying something our own perception and attitudes also change hence one is not insulated of the consequences of the study it affects us in many ways. In contrast to conventional ethnography which describes what is, critical ethnography also asks what could be, in order to disrupt tacit power relationships and perceived social inequalities. Therefore it is moving away from 'is' to 'ought' or from descriptive to normative social formations. It is more action oriented theoretical position which given new meaning to research.

Data Collection

The secondary data for objective one regarding the history, growth, structure, organization, and changes in the industry have been collected from books, journal articles, government documents, reports, colonial records, thesis, dissertations, DIC, etc.

The information and data for second objective regarding social characteristics of the labour have been collected from colonial documents, reports, historical records, archives, previous studies etc.

The data for the third objective regarding the impact of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation on the industry and the leather workers have been collected from planning commission documents, published research works, journal articles, books, etc.

For the fourth objective, the primary data regarding their notions, perceptions about themselves, wellbeing, experiences etc. has collected through interview schedule, case history, narratives, direct observation, group discussion, key informants interview, unstructured discussion at places like shops, markets, areas of living and factories, field notes.

Area of Study

The city of Agra is in Uttar Pradesh, which is a state located in the northern part of India. It is located at a distance of about 200 kilometers from New Delhi. In geographical terms, the exact location of the city of Agra is 27.10° north and 78.05°

east. The city of Agra is built along the banks of the Yamuna, one of the subsidiaries of giver Ganga. The city is located at an average altitude of 171 meters or 561 feet above the sea level. The geography of Agra is such that it is surrounded by the city of Mathura on the northern side. To the south of Agra is Dhaulpur. Firozabad is located on the eastern side of the city of Agra. Fatehabad lies on the south-eastern side of Agra city. To the west of Agra lies Bharatpur. The city of Agra forms a part of the great northern plains. (MSME, Agra, GOI).

It has area of 4027 Sq. km. It has a population about 4,418,797 persons with male comprising 1,285,184 and female 1,109,418. The sex ratio is 869 according to district census handbook 2011. The schedule caste population in the city is 991,325 with males comprising 531,641 and female 459,684. The total percentage of the SCs in the city population is around 22.4 percent (district census handbook, 2011). Agra is the third biggest city in Uttar Pradesh. It is a major and one of the biggest industrial cities in India. Agra is famous for tourism and its historical monuments. Besides tourism, Agra is known for its footwear industry. It is one of the major production centers of leather products like shoes, non-leather footwear and leather goods. Agra is a dominant supplier of footwear in India. According to some studies and government reports roughly 65 percent of the footwear in India is supplied from Agra. Dalits have a disproportionate presence in the city population due to the present of leather industry. It is one of the major sources of livelihood for the dalit workers.

Footwear is a major segment but beside footwear, there are also other leather goods produced like leather sandals/slippers (*Chappals*) purses, wallets, belts and non leather footwear etc. Due to its location and proximity to major commercial cities, it caters to the demand of other cities both in terms of labour supply, supplying parts of shoes and also technical skills. It largely caters to domestic market specially the medium and small factories but it also exports quality leather shoes and other articles to other countries through large and organized factories. Besides leather and non leather shoes, it also exports parts of shoes, raw material and other subsidiary goods to other cities.

The field work sites for this study were the large and medium factories, small karkhanas, home based units dalit basties and markets. The industry is largely in unorganized sector with majority of the production happen in the small and home based enterprises scattered in the dalit and Muslim settlements and clusters. The large and medium factories are located at *Bodla, Nunhai, Sikandara, Jeevni Mandi*. The

field work areas that have been selected for the study are *Nai ki Mandi, Nala kaji Para, Panchkuyein, Ratanpura, Sundarpara*. These areas are exclusive dalit and Muslim settlements where workers live and work.

Duration of Study

Leather work is a seasonal in nature with huge variations in demand in certain months. The peak season starts from august- September to February and March. The field work for this study has been done for seven months starting from October 2014 to March 2015 and again in the month of December 2015.

Population/Universe

The research populations or universe covered people who were directly or indirectly related or engaged with the leather work or had some information regarding it. The respondents were largely Dalits leather workers and their families. However it also included non Dalits who made up the universe as their views about Dalits, leather work and caste also make part of this research. The universe therefore comprised various sites whether it is large and medium factories or small and home based enterprises. The markets, shops, manufacturers, factory owners, government officials, local politicians, leather trade fairs, NGOs, professionals, residents in the dalit *Basties* comprised survey population. The population covered adult male, female, children, aged and non-active former workers, illiterate and educated, home makers and workers, respondents, merchants etc.

Sample

A total 40 interview schedules have been collected from the workers representing different segments and hierarchies of work. 10 case studies have been collecting from the workers and residents from the dalit basties. 5 group discussions have been organized from various segments of the population. Some key interviews have been done with government employees, NGO workers, ward member and local leaders.

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Sampling Design

According to working report of the department of industrial policy and promotion (DIP&P) 12th plan. Leather industry is dominated by the micro and small

units with bigger units accounting for just around 5 percent of the total registered manufacturing units. Although the number is insignificant but the production output and labour utilization is huge in the organized sector. According to same report around 15-20 percent of the registered footwear units are from big and medium enterprises. The footwear industry of Agra is largely dominated by the small and home based enterprises. These are largely unregistered units running from homes and dalits and Muslim localities. Keeping in mind the structure of the industry based on government reports and studies. 8 (20 %) interviews schedules have been collected from the workers of large and medium sized factories. 32 (80%) interview schedules have been collected from the small and home based enterprises and self employed workers.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique has been used to select the respondents as it was very difficult to get records from government institutions and owners of factory regarding the number of workers to do a systematic sampling. Most of the workers are contract employee; hence proper records are not maintained. Secondly, the factory manufacturers do not cooperate in giving data due to fear of inspection and other reasons, thirdly, the workers are highly suspicious of outsiders therefore they sometimes avoid direct interaction unless they know them well. Fourthly, given the nature of work which is highly organized on caste lines, hence purposive technique allows to select a more open/vocal and cooperating person.

Nature of Data

The nature of data is largely qualitative in nature. The base line data covered information about their age, marital status, religion and caste, family type, establishment of working, specialization at work, locality of living, accommodation, parent's occupations, education and schooling, details about their family members.

The other information regarding their asset base, quality of facilities, income, place of living and working, occupation related information, employment and wages, quality and quantity of work, material possessions and assets, living and working conditions, basic infrastructure and amenities in houses and basties, nature of their work etc.

The qualitative data covered their perceptions about themselves, the question of identity, beliefs, practices, their worldviews, relationships at work sites and basties, their problems, their experiences, expectations and aspirations, the changes that occurred in their lives, mobility, their views about discrimination and segregation, fear, deprivations and exploitation, their ideals, role models, political affiliations and views etc.

Focused Group Discussion

5 focused group discussions have been arranged from the study population. or organized from the Dalit workers spread across various hierarchies of work processes. 1 group discussion consisted of women workers at homes, one from youths who are engaged in leather work, 1 from Dalit adults living in basties, 1 from organized factories workers and 1 from home based manufacturing units. There was variation in respondents in terms of their age, education, locality of living, and their employment status and work segment. The respondents will be selected in such a manner that they represent as much diversity as possible like gender, age, work, segment, operation etc.

Case Studies

10 case studies have been collected from the workers who were open to share their life experiences without any hesitation. These caste studies covered various aspects of their lives i.e. their experiences, work, identity, discrimination, their self-identity, symbols, deprivations, events in life, turning points in life, their expectations from life, How they developed particular understanding about themselves, their critical experiences in this world, their regrets and complains, aspirations, perception of other towards them, how they manage their lives, cope with day to day struggles, deprivations and violence in their lives.

Unstructured Discussion

One of the tools that was used I will be using the unstructured general discussion which is general discussion happens anytime, anywhere. This tool will be used to get the general information not only about the respondents but also about others. This kind of discussed has no particular timing, place, context, situation, conditions. It can happen with any kind of person like the pan/cigarettes vendor, the

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breakfast vendor etc. rickshaw puller, shops keepers, police personnel, auto drivers etc.

Key Informant

Informal Interviews with some key personnel were conducted to understand many issues which otherwise not possible through interview schedules. 1 interview was organized with the Agra cant MLA who was a supervisor in a leather factory earlier. One interview with a local corporator was organized who represented Ratanpura ward. He was very much active in raising the issues of Dalits locality and directly associated with the events and celebrations of Ambedkar Jayanti and Bhim Nagri. 2 interviews were organized one with a faculty in Agra University who is also a resident of Ratanpura a dalit settlement and another with a dalit engineer who lives in a high caste colony and works in PWD department of Uttar Pradesh. Some informal discussion with some government employees and businessmen who are not directly related with the leather work but are relatives of leather working families to know about their experiences as dalits in the society.

Recording and Transcribing

It was possible to record very few life stories as most of the respondents were uncomfortable with the idea of recording. They were suspicious about the purpose of such exercise. Some people who were quite open and vocal allowed to record their stories. Some of the studies were very rich in nature but could be recorded due to fear and suspicion. All the focused group discussion, key informant, life stories and histories will be recorded if allowed by the respondents and transcribed later.

Observation and Field Note

Field observation is one of the major sources of data collection. It is a major tool which is very help to collect the information which otherwise cannot be collected by interview schedules, caste studies or group discussions. The caste, gender, class, colour, sexuality etc. play a major role in determining the experiences of people in the society. These identities also simultaneously overlap with the identities of workers and non-workers. These can only be understood and analyzed in a particular local context. Beside that, the unequal relationship between different sets of people particularly between the workers and the factory owners is expressed in numerous

ways. These are observed in areas like Body gestures, behavior, language, pitch and tone of voice, language, words, abuses, content of arguments etc. The variations are also observed when the sites of location change from workshops, to markets and homes. Besides that there are many events which happen spontaneously which cannot be recorded or written but can only be observed. There are many areas which can be directly observed by the researchers and verified with the facts and observations and written. Field notes are one of the imports sources of data. Field notes have been made whenever it was possible to do so.

CHAPTER 4

LEATHER INDUSTRY IN AGRA

The district of Agra is situated in the extreme southwest corner of the State of Uttar Pradesh. It lies between the parallels of 26° 44' and 27° 25' north latitude, and 77° 26' and 78° 32' east meridians of longitude. Rajasthan bounds it on the west; it is bounded on the south for some distance also by Rajasthan, and thereafter by Madhya Pradesh. The district of Firozabad bounds it on the east and it is surrounded by districts of Mathura and Etah in the north. It is located on the bank of river Yamuna a subsidiary of river Ganga which makes it suitable for many works which require huge water supply like agriculture, animal husbandry, paper industries and leather work. Its' location in plain and fertile region of rivers system gives it a natural advantage of having a well built railway and road network, access to major whole sale markets and abundance of natural resources and access to productive labour supply.

It is also an important industrial cluster in north India and some of highly labour intensive industries are located in the city and nearby areas like brick kilns, glass making, bangle making, metal foundry, paper mills, leather industry etc. It is part of golden triangle of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur a major and popular tourist places. It is located 120 miles away from Delhi, proximity to Delhi gives Agra advantage of being close to wholesale market of Delhi for various products and goods.. Its location close to Delhi has gives it many advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages was accessibility of vast wholesale market both for raw material supply and also market for finished goods. Delhi has been a center great political and commercial activity for centuries. It is especially during medieval and colonial times that it got itself established as a manufacturing and commercial hub for various industries. The disadvantage of being closer to Delhi is that, Agra has also been affected by political and social disturbances throughout its history.

Agra has history of political, social and cultural ruptures throughout its history. It gained prominence during the Moghul Empire as a centre great significance. "Agra was no real importance politically until 1502, when sikandar lodi moved the capital of his kingdom from Delhi to Agra. Sikandar's successor surrendered Agra into the hands of the emperor Babur (babar) after the battle of

Panipat in 1526" (Lynch, 1974: 20-21). Babar defeated Sikander Lodi at Panipat in 1526 and founded the modern Agra in 1558 on the left bank of the river Yamuna. Under the rule of Babur, Agra became the capital and center of political activity during the Moghul Empire in India. Akbar built the fort and part of the palace inside it. The famous edifices of *Fatehpur Sikri* were also his creation. In 1658, during the reign of the emperor Aurangzeb, the capital of the empire was moved from Agra to Delhi. Jahangir, his successor, held his court most of the time. Shah Jahan begins the greatest epoch of Moghul architecture. Shah Jahan built the master piece Taj Mahal, besides many other such magnificent buildings, such as. Jama Masjid and Red Fort at Delhi and Moti Masjid at Agra. "After Emperor Shah Jahan's death, Delhi became the seat of government and Agra gradually lost its political and cultural eminence, but never the magnificence of its monuments. In 1803, it came into British possession" (Bhambhani, 2003: 95). "The British in 1835 made Agra the capital of what was then the north-western provinces" (Latifi, 1896:65). It remained so until 1868 when the capital was shifted to Allahabad and Agra was reduced to the status of district headquarters.

The Moghuls and British contributed immensely to the development of Agra. The city acquired prominent and important commercial, economic and political position in India because of the contributions of moguls and British. After the moguls, the "British came and left their imprints and presence in the form of various institutions like establishment of university, setting of cantonment areas and military bases, medical colleges, hospitals, missionary schools, railroad stations, a telegraph office and ginning and spinning mills and construction of many other monuments" (Lynch, 1974: 21). The diverse historical and political processes have influenced the social, cultural and commercial atmosphere of the city. The effects of such processes are very much evident in the plural practices, diverse belief systems, numerous faiths and religious traditions, different sets and their origin etc. These historical and political events shaped up the social and cultural experiences of people and influenced their association with the city. It can be visible in the form of demography, composition, and commercial activities beliefs and practices of contemporary Agra.

Today Agra is a known tourist destination in India. Tourism is one of the important sources of income for the city people specially the Taj Mahal. It is also known for its carpets, gold thread embroidery, marble, limestone and particularly for leather footwear. The location of leather industry in Agra is part of its history. It was

moguls who encouraged and supported leather workers to manufacture goods for them. This patronage was continued and supported by the British. The location of leather work in Agra is politically determined rather than due to some particular economic reason. Therefore the leather work as economic activity is connected with history, culture and politics. The historical events, political developments have affected the demography and composition of the city. This is very much reflected in the origin, location, composition, demography of the leather industry and workers. History and polity have shaped up the industry through various social and political and cultural developments in the country. All these processes have affected the city and its commercial activities to a great extent.

HISTORY OF LEATHER INDUSTRY IN AGRA

The leather industry of Agra can be categorized in different phases on the basis of major development i.e. origin, growth, expansion, diversification, structural changes, international developments and state policies induced shifts. Therefore, the industry can be categorized in pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial period corresponding different phases of social and political development in the country. The pre medieval period was of stagnation and stunted growth of the industry. The medieval specially the latter half of medieval period was more productive. The colonial period brought opportunities, growth and modernization of the industry and post colonial period brought significant changes in the structure, operations and organization of the work in Agra. The post colonial changes were significant for industry as it changed the dynamics of the industry in a large ways.

PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

The pre-colonial period more or less corresponds to the influence of "hindus" and Muslims. These two religious systems differ from each other in beliefs, traditions and practices. Both religious systems had contradictory and differential impact on leather work. While in the case of Hindus it remained stagnant and undeveloped contrarily in the case of Muslims it achieved progress The Muslims did not have very orthodox notions about purity and pollution. They were not governed by complex

religious and cultural codes regarding work. They are more flexible and tolerant towards leather and other occupations. The case is not same with Hindus who were obsessed and governed by their orthodox notions about purity and pollution. They never saw this work as art and science and always kept themselves away both from the work and the workers.

HINDU: STAGNATION AND DISCRIMINATION

The impact of Hindu religion on this work was negative and discriminatory. The work was considered to be impure and dirty for the people in the society. The Hindus kept themselves away not only from this work but also from those who were involved with this work. "The stigma of working with leather was so deep and pervasive that it never motivated kings and patrons to develop this industry" (Lynch, 1974). It always remained as a stigmatic work particularly fit for some particular castes. Any association with leather work was enough to bring one's social status and reputation down. The kings and aristocracy who were powerful in many ways kept themselves away from this work due to the fear of stigma and pollution. The religion and fear of social degradation proved to be more powerful than the political authority. This work never got any support and encouragement from the Hindu kings and patrons.

Leather workers have been victim of social ostracism and discrimination in India for centuries. Hindus had firm beliefs in the caste, pollution and purity. They considered leather work to be filthy, ritually impure and degrading. In the ritual ranking leather work has been designated at the bottom among the Hindus. It is considered to be a filthy and lowly profession within the occupational hierarchy of work. Therefore all castes have avoided it specially the twice born caste Hindus. This work was relegated to some specific groups collectively known as untouchable or dalits who are located at the bottom of social and ritual hierarchy. Because of the pollution taboo the caste Hindus maintained safe distance from this work and avoided it as much as possible. According to Wiser, "hindus (would) not deal in hides by reason of religious prejudice" (Wiser, 1936: 78-9). The religion sentiments were very strong against this work and workers.

The world views of Hindus was guided by the notions like *paap punya, ucha, neecha, hinsa, ahinsa, lok, parlok* etc. This world views emphasis on the non material

aspect to achieve salvation and god. The status of the people was fixed by birth therefore there was no possibility to change it. Therefore labour and money lost its value in raising or changing the status of people in the society. This view led to the degradation and devaluation of the labour in the society. The aspirations of people were curtailed and there was no input and motivation in the inventions, discoveries, development in science and technology and development of trade and commerce in India. It brought stagnation, immobility and inefficiency in the society. This fixed notions led to degradation of leather work in India. This occupation was not considered to be a dignified and respectable as it deals with dead animals. This is perceived as heinous and degraded as it pollutes the body and soul. They always associated leather work with hatred and repulsion rather than interests or economic opportunity. The impact of Hindu religious beliefs was negative as people did not see this as work as craft/skill/art/science it rather branded it as lowly work. The religious notions became a barrier for not only for this occupation but also for those who were involved with leather work. It is precisely due to religious sanctions that caste Hindus see it as dirty and degrading work therefore there was more repulsion and hatred rather than interest.

Due to their religious prejudice, this occupation got branded as dirty and impure. The Hindu considered it low occupation unsuitable for their social ranking. Therefore they always avoided it, the avoidance was practiced to such an extent that, "the touch of a Chamar (leather worker) renders it necessary for a 'good' Hindu to bath with all his clothes on" (Prasad & Rajanikanth, 1991: 48). The concern for pollution prevented them from having any positive association with the work. This pollution was not temporary that could be corrected with any ritual. The leather workers were permanently branded as impure. This permanent branding made them keep away from them or having social relationship with them. The caste and occupations rules were very rigid. No one was allowed to change their caste defined occupations and profession. It was considered to be a sin if one changed their caste defined occupations. Such people were penalized with fines and were outcaste from the village and community.

The belief that leather is an impure matter and association with it leads to impurity was a serious taboo. Because of these beliefs the use of leather in the daily life was also limited or restricted. In many parts of the world leather was extensively used to store oil, animal fat/ghee, grains, water etc but it was not such case with

Hindu that were more inclined to preserve their ritual superiority always avoided it. Leather products have been extensively used in wars; it was an important component of army accessories in Europe. Given the religious coding to leather, it is highly improbable that leather goods were every used at mass levels as neither slaughter of animals was allowed nor eating of animals was a accepted practice. The Muslims used leather extensively as they were very mobile people opposed to Hindus. Latifi, while comparing European and Indian leather says, "An industry which commanded highest knowledge and technical skills in Europe, was the monopoly of the meanest, poorest and most degraded order of the people" (Latifi, 1911: 104-05).

The traditional values associated with leather work never motivated people to associate with neither work or with Dalits workers positively. The interactions of these groups with larger society was limited and controlled through customs and traditions. The leather working castes were seen with disgust and stigma; they were stereotyped as dirty and filthy by nature. While narrating the position of Chamars, W.G. Briggs, "He occupies an utterly degraded position in the village and he is regarded with loathing and disgust by the higher castes. His quarters about in all kinds of abominable filth. His foul mode of living is proverbial. Except when it is absolutely necessary, a clean living Hindu will not visit his part of the village" (Briggs, 1920: 11). The leather workers did not own the large cattle like buffaloes and cows. They were not allowed to keep big animals as big animals were the sign of economic status and prosperity in the society. They used to rear small animals like hens, pigs and dogs. These castes were dependent on agriculture and the agricultural castes for the supply of animal skins. Roy mentions, "When a cow died in a central Indian village, the owners tied a rope to it, dragged it as far as the edge of the village as he could, and informed the Mahar. The latter then dragged it out of the village and flayed it" (Roy, 1999: 161). Carcass removal was their customarily duty instead right. They could not refuse it due to village customs.

The trading community which was otherwise flexible and tolerant in trade practices also avoided this work. They could travel to great distance, do business of various kinds of commodities and meet with different kinds of people. But they could not break the religious and social taboos associated with leather work and workers. Social and religious values were above than the monetary gains. The hold of religion was so strong that traders hold back from involving with this work. Roy says, "the Hindu money lenders would scarcely advance credit for tanning… the mobility of

Chamars was restricted by exclusion from existing business institutions…in Chattisgarh, the village tanners are below the status in which more than the most trifling credit is available" (Roy, 1999: 174). They did not give credit for leather work and it is also doubtful if ever traded in leather goods.

The attitudes of 'purer' castes to them were so rigid and orthodox that they always tried to avoid their touch. This was carried on to the work as well and never engaged with this work. These "dirty" castes were not allowed to inter-mix with the other groups. The interactions were restricted and each caste interacted with each others on the basis of their social ranking. The "respectable distance from the villages of the caste people' was universal, and necessitated by the Hindus' aversion to the craft because of its association with flesh" (Roy, 1999: 159). The association with leather work with social ranking was a major discouragement which was responsible for not being able to transform leather work into a big industry. Rau writes, "the leather industry, though an ancient one has never been considered as an honourable trade. The leather workers were known as "*Chandalas*" in the ancient books and were specially looked down on as a degraded class" (Rau, 1925: 4). They were deprived of credit and money which could have transformed it into a profitable venture. Leather work could have been a profitable venture due to the fact that India being agriculture based economy traditionally and there were enough raw materials in the form of cattle. It could have brought fortunes to both the upper caste traders and the workers had they collaborated to its development. In the absence of capital and credit the work always remained as subsistence work. The positive association of moneylenders with leather work could have brought monetary gains to them.

On the one hand Hindus were against of slaughter as it causes pain on the other hand they brand their animals which also caused pain. However seeing animals die due to old age and disease was more acceptable than slaughter them. RSEAMC Sources observe, "Hindus are very averse from killing animals, and they allow their castle to linger on in sickness and old age. The animals suffer and naturally their hides deteriorate, but the most fruitful source of injury is the merciless way in which cattle are branded this is carried on to such an extreme that many thousands of hiders are absolutely ruined, and large number of them are depreciated fifty percent. In value through branding, which is done to satisfy the owners' aesthetic eye or calm his troubled mind. It is supposed to be efficacious in keeping away evil spirits and preventing diseases" (RSEAMC, 1919: 647). The branding was done so extensively

that it ruined the value of the hides and skins. Rau writes, "The brand usually consists of double semi-circle lines covering the best part of the hide and extending to the shoulder. The superstitious Hindus believe that branding is efficacious in keeping away evil spirits and preventing disease such as staggers and fits. This branding reduces the value of the hide by one to three rupees each hide. Sometimes the whole hide is rendered useless by branding" (Rau, 1925: 29).

Leather work remained undeveloped during the pre-medieval period it is due to religious taboos. "By and large tanning was rural because it needed to be so. Consumption of beef being restricted so was the slaughtering of cattle for consumption" (Roy, 1999: 158). Vegetarian food is considered to be superior and higher than the meat. Due to religious taboo, there were no slaughtering of animals; therefore the availability of hides was limited. "The workers were dependent on 'fallen' animals (naturally dead animals) that died either due to starvation, diseases, old age or injury" (Opcit: 8). The workers were not allowed to slaughter the animals even if the animals were non-productive in agricultural work. Leather work was limited in nature and it was not sufficient for workers to earn their livelihood out of it. These beliefs and customs became a hurdle in acquiring animal skin and restricted the demand. Besides that the use of leather goods and skin in the life of people was restricted due to pollution taboos. Hence there was never a steady demand generated for the leather work to make it their full time economic opportunities. This work always remained to be a peripheral, seasonal, temporary and part time occupation. It could never emerge as a full time economic and business opportunity.

There were restrictions on changing caste ascribed occupations for people, same applies to leather workers. They could not take up any other caste occupations due to customs. They could not become traders even though they were making leather goods. There were taboos on changing occupations, villages and patrons. They were attached with their fixed patrons in the villages. They could not change either their patrons or their occupations nor could they change their villages. Their place in the village economy was fixed, that is to provide the compulsory services to their patrons. They could not leave their villages nor could they negotiate to set timing, remunerations, conditions, and price of their labour in the village economy. If they dared to negotiate hard or dared to challenge the village customs they were severe punished and huge penalties were imposed. They were living a life of a slave who was controlled through traditions.

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Wiser investigations show that leather workers "most nearly approximate the position of slaves of any of the menial castes in the village…along with duty of supplying leather goods to his patron, the Chamars were called upon to do all kind of field and house work including manuring field, making bricks, building and plastering mud walls, making baskets and ropes, feeding cattle, clearing cattle sheds, cutting stones and digging wells, the Chamar women were expected to serve in the households of the Jajmans…most of the time, Chamars were at the back and call of their jajmans, particularly of the most powerful of the Brahmans who utilized most of the Chamars time" (Sinha, 1986: 1061). Besides Brahmins, kings, landlords, state officials and servants also laid claim to the labour of untouchable castes. Roy writes, "The landlord, the petty officers, and the upper castes all freely laid claim on their time" (Roy, 1999: 173). These involuntary services were often in the form of "Begaar (Begar)" (work without payment). Lynch writes, "The position of the Camars (Chamars) in India is very low indeed. In the villages they work as general menials for some traditional payment in grain, clothes and food. They were, and in some places still are subject to forced labour" (Lynch, 1974: 29).

These workers were never allowed to accumulated material resources. There were restrictions on them to own anything in the society. Labour was the only source of income and livelihood. In the traditional village economy different castes were related to each other though a system called *Jajmani*. In such system each caste specializes in particular goods or service which they exchange with others on the basis of their requirements. In such arrangement the transaction happens though exchange rather than cash. In this goods and services are exchanged for goods and services. The transaction is not balanced and accurate. Therefore the economy runs without cash which makes it difficult for people to venture in any other trade. There was no cash available either in the form of credits or in exchange of their services. They were dependent on money lenders and the powerful people in the village for their survival. The payment was not fixed, and it was not in cash. "The lower castes were paid in kinds like grains, sorghum at harvest field, threshing flour, but any further amounts of wheat, sugar etc depend on the generosity of the landowner" (Mayer, 1966: 68). This system was constructed in such a way that the lower castes always remained dependent on their masters. They always remained without cash, and thus were on the mercy of their masters. They never had sufficient cash in hand which they could invest in their occupation. Therefore they always remained in the servitude

to upper caste groups.

Due to the strong values associated with leather and workers. These groups have been forced to live on the outskirts. The places where they lived were unsuitable for living. This religious distance then transforms into an economic barrier for the development of this work. This "respectable distance from the villages of the caste people' was universal and necessitated by the Hindus aversion to the craft because of its association with flesh while the craft needed space; it had perpetually limited access to it" (Roy, 1999: 159). The work needed resources like land, capital, water and market for development of this work. These were by default not available to them. Leather workers lived on the outskirts of the villages and were always away from water resources which are one of the major requirements for tanning and cleaning animal skin. The structure of the society largely affected the structure of this work. It always remained at periphery both structurally and economically.

There was acute poverty among the traditional castes which were involved with leather work. These caste groups were denied right to own the resources like land, cattle or acquire education. Therefore the avenues for mobility and development were restricted though religious scriptures. They were dependent on their labour for their survival. Although they were leather workers but they did not own the cattle. Therefore they were dependent on other groups who owned these resources. They had the skill but no raw material of their own and those who had raw material could not do this work. This was a mismatch which meant the skill and raw material both remained under utilized and unproductive even though there were possibilities. These groups lived in utter poverty and destitution and they were completely dependent on their masters for their survival.

They have been removing dead animals, flaying the skin; therefore some of them also started eating the flesh of a dead animal in distress which is very much prevalent in their folklores in which they hold famines as one of the reasons for starting the practice of eating the meat of dead animals. for example in Andhra Pradesh, "by right of the trade *Madiga* secures not only the hide of cattle, the carcass too is his, as the death of animal is always caused by disease, never by slaughter the flesh is poisonous and loathsome in the extreme, especially in a country where decomposition is a rapid process…hungry many a day in the year, living by the month on one meal a day, seldom in possession of the means to buy meat fit to eat, they do not shrink from the loathsomeness of the meal which furnished them by the carcass

that is theirs by right of trade" (Rauschenbusch-Gough, 1899: 41).

The reason for the eating the meat of dead animal was not due to some preference rather due to the distress and extreme poverty that they lived with. The drought and periodic famines brought huge disasters in their lives. The level of their marginality was such that in the times of famines and drought they often sold themselves and their family members to slavery. They themselves became commodity and often trade their own slavery to other castes Mencher says, "in the past, some *Paraiyans* were owned by individual landlords, some by a village community, and other were "free", records tell of paraiyans who, in times of severe scarcity, sold their brothers, sisters, and even themselves into slavery" (Mencher, 1998: 39). The scarcity of resources was so much wide prevalent among them that it acquired cultural meanings. It is very much evident in the folklores traditions where water, hunger, food, scarcity, famines and violence are the prominent themes which are reflected in Dalits literature.

MUSLIMS: ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

The impact of Muslims was positive on the leather work. When Muslims came in India, they brought some new religion, culture, beliefs and practices. They did not have a complex institution like caste which permanently categorizes people low and high on the basis of their birth. There was no practice of untouchability among them. Their views regarding occupations and work were not governed by purity and pollution taboo. They were quite flexible in term of occupational choices. They could pick up any occupations which suited them. Because of their pragmatic views regarding occupations and work there was no aversion to working with leather or leather artisans. In fact leather work was one of the most important and developed works in Muslim societies.

They came from dry and difficult terrain where water and vegetables was a scarce commodity. Therefore animal meats were one of the main components of their food habits. They used animal meat in different forms like dry, wet and spiced. It is quite common to eat dry meat in different part of world as dry meat can be stored for a longer time. In some parts of the world it is a practice to apply spices on the meat. This kind of meat can be stored for longer duration. Akthar notes, "The spices were being supplied to Agra mainly by the Indian merchants from the Deccan, though the

Dutch too got interested in this trade for some decades in the middle of the seventeenth century" (Akthar, 2009: 117). Spices and meat are one of the main and important ingredients of their diet therefore it was one of the important commodities in their trade parlance. They developed great cuisine from animal meat. It is one of the major reasons that Muslims all over the world are known for their non-vegetarian dishes. Besides being fond of meat they were also the great traders of spices and other goods.

They were very mobile people who were involved in fighting wars, traveling long distances in extreme weather conditions. They were dependent on animals for many reasons like for transportation, carrying loads, food requirements etc. Besides all these factors, animals were useful to them for making leather goods especially for army requirements. i.e. making armory, leather mats, leather shields, belts, hard leather head covers, storing oil, water and grains etc. Leather was one of the most widely used items among Muslims. Leather shoes and slippers were the most important and inseparable part of their culture due to their lifestyles. "Marco polo records that leather trade flourished to a great extent in the province of Bombay and especially in Guzarat. Barbosa the English merchant says that the leggings of good think leather used by Mohammed Bagadas cavalry were worked up with gold knots and embroidery. Terry, an English traveler records that the natives are 'full of ingenuity and that they can make any new thin by pattern however hardsoever it seems to be done, the natives there make shoes, boots and clothes of English pattern and make them all exceedingly neat' the art of tanning must have been known to some extent and numerous tanneries of large size must have existed to produce leather harness and saddler required for the army of the Moguls emperors ad the irregular troops of the Zamindars and Rajahs of the 16th, 17th , 18th and 19th centuries" (Rau, 1925:3-4).

It is due to these reasons leather was one of the most important cultural symbols for them. Wherever they went they took leather art with them, they encouraged the artisans, promoted diverse goods and helped it acquire prestige and status symbol. If leather became a prominent cultural symbol for Muslims it is due to practical requirements rather than religious. "Marco polo states in A.D. 1290 that "curing of hides and the manufacture to leather were two of the most important of Gujarat industries. For every year a number of ships went to Arabia laden with the skins of goats, of oxen, of unicorns and other animals. The leather was used for

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sandals and was cleverly worked into red and blue sleeping mats exquisitely inlaid with figures of birds and beasts, and skillfully embroidered with gold and silver wire" (Prasad & Rajanikanth, 1991: 19). It was probably the Muslim traders who were engaged in this trade and business.

Under the rule of moguls some cities emerged as important political and trade centers like Agra, Kanpur, Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad etc. Agra became an important centre of commercial and political activities during that period. Mughals were known as great lovers of art. They constructed many world famous monuments during their rule. They are also known for their food culture. It is quite common to find specific *mogulai* dishes in food and catering industry. The establishment of leather industry in Agra owes its history to the moguls. In 1530, Babur, the Great Mughal emperor, established the Mughal rule and culture in India. "The spice called 'Hing' (Asafoetida) was a major ingredient of the food of Mughals, which was then imported from Afghanistan and Iran in leather containers that are generally called '*Mushak*', these were then dumped there. The leather containers gave an idea to those craftsmen of Agra to design and use that leather (Mushak) for protecting their feet. That is why the main market of footwear is now called 'Hing Ki Mandi" (Bhambhani, 2003: 99). Today Hing ki Mandi is the biggest wholesale market of leather shoes in India.

The Moguls spent significant time and money in Agra to develop it as an aesthetic and commercial center. Their rule had a positive impact on the trade and commerce. To promote trade they built *Caravansarai* all around on the trade routes. " a pool of water, a well, a mosque, stables, trees, flowers, and a *Katra* (walled closure) for storing travellers' goods were found in most Sarais…these were open to merchants, scholars, religious specialists, and other travelers but not to soldiers. A average sarai had room for eight hundred to a thousand travelers and housed barbers, tailers, washerman, blacksmiths, sellers of grass and straw, physicians, dancing girls, and musicians. To establish order and security the Mughals posted an official with a contingent of soldiers to each Sarai" (Akthar, 2009: 90). One of the other significant is the establishments of *Mandi* for specific items and goods in different regions. These mandis became great centers where buyers and sellers meet regularly. Rezavi writes, "Excavations and exploitations have revealed much information regarding the shops and markets in these towns, especially *Tughluqabad* in Delhi and *Fathpur Sikri* in Agra. Textual evidences as well as old maps also provide us much information on themarkets and bazaars in the towns of Agra Shahjahanabad" (Rezavi, 2015: 62). The

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commerce and trade increased significantly during their rule which also brought huge revenues to the state.

The worldview of Muslims was quite different and in many cases opposite from the Hindu. Muslims due to their religious and cultural worldview did not have much aversion to the leatherwork. Since moguls came from difficult terrain therefore, shoes were an important and valuable item of their dressing culture. "Shoes were considered an integral part of the daily dress and this led to an increase in its demand" (Sharma, 2003: 14). They required leather artisans for making various goods which are required by army like leather shield, which was busy in fighting wars. "They opened many slaughter houses in nearby areas for their food requirements" (Verma, 1965: 11). Earlier the leather workers depended on the fallen cattle or hides of animals that had died a natural death. During mogul time the supply got regularized as now there was slaughter of animals for meat requirement which formed an important part of the diet of Muslims. "A very important class of professionals, the butchers or *qassabs* made an appearance in this period" (opcit: 12). They not only promoted this work but also allowed traditional artisans to settle in city which was quite unimaginable previously. "The Muslims paid attention towards the development of this industry and brought shoe-workers to prepare shoes for themselves, their ministers and for military purposes" (Sisodia, 1960: 4).

The Mughal emperor Babar also brought some leather workers and provided them all amenities of life. "These workers were settled in localities like Bagh muzaffar khan and Naubasta in Agra. The Mughals impact on the leather industry can be imagined by the fact that some of the varieties of shoes are named after their emperors like *Salimshai* shoes, gout shoes, *Punja* shoes (a kind of Chappal cum Shoe) and *kimer khar* (Marriage Purpose)" (Sharma, 1958: 3). The moguls were fond of art and leather shoes were one of the most prominent items of their luxurious life. Prasad writes, "Moguls being the lovers of art and craft promoted the leather workers who produced '*jooties*' and leather ware for moguls and the elitist society of the Moghul court" (Prasad, 1991: 19). The Awadh province was center of commercial activities and a major city during mogul empire. While the moguls made favourable conditions for the industry in the form of opening of slaughter houses, encouragement to the artisans. The leather workers benefited by their association with them. the leather workers held a very high and respectable position in the court of Shahjehan. The skilled leather workers were appreciated for their skills and art. "Once Shehjehan

gifted one hundred gold coins to a skilled leather worker who prepared a rabbit skin in such a manner that Shehjehan got a toga (a long coat, Ulster) stitched with it and wore it during his hunting trips in Kashmir" (Himesh & Vasishth, 2001: 203).

The leather craft during this period made its appearance in the urban locales flourishing in the karkhanas under royal patronage, looked after by a separate department, known as the Rikabkhana. In these karkhanas of the Mughal period specialization process advanced to a great extent. During this period there was in India a considerable variety of arts & handicrafts which indeed exhibited a more advanced economic and financial organization than the contemporary Europe. 'In the first place in several handicrafts, the specialization of task advanced to the extent that particular groups of artisans came to undertake distinct processes in the chain of production. Such integration and coordination of production were hardly reached in European handicrafts. Secondly there were whole villages and Mohallas of cities and towns which devoted themselves to the production of specialized projects, whether cotton or silk fabric, gold, silver or brass manufacture, *bidri* work or ivory to mention a few that commanded both Indian as well as foreign markets. Thirdly, the foreign trades in products of Indian arts and handicrafts developed a corresponding organization of production, under which master artisans or entrepreneurs brought together groups of artisans who worked for them on wage basis ... artisans worked on their own account as well as in Karkhanas, big and small, under master artisans, dealers and financers.' In certain industries including the leather production in these Karkhanas continued even in the British period. In the Karkhanas "the shoemakers engaged workers and apprentices paying them a certain amount of advance which was deducted from their salary every month. The worker could not leave so long as the advance was not paid. His services were transferred to another shoemaker on the new master paying the old" (Sharma, 2003: 13-14).

The impact of Muslims was not limited to economic sphere only but spread to cultural realm also. They not only influenced the political atmosphere in the country but significantly influenced the cultural practices also. Lower castes were attracted to Muslim culture because it does not discriminate people on the basis of caste. They did not have caste like institution and had tolerant views towards Dalits and other marginal groups. In medieval Kerala, Dale writes, "the great majority of conversion (to Islam) must have come from the lowest castes, who most strongly felt the "inconvenience' of their subordinate, degraded status…the most orthodox members of

the Nambudiri and Nayar castes, and especially women from the castes, would not even enter urban areas for fear that they might be polluted, whereas lower castes were free to work for and interact with foreigners because of their lack of concern for ritual purity" (Dale, 2007:60). When the caste identity became a burden and liability, people especially the lowest castes did not hesitate to convert themselves to religions which were more egalitarian and practice were simple. Islam was one of such religion which did not have complex belief system.

COLONIAL PERIOD: GROWTH AND EXPANSION

The Mogul rule brought significant opportunities to the leather workers in Agra. The status of leather craft and work improved. However, it did not change the structure of the society nor the traditional taboos associated with untouchable castes or the work. The majority of the "untouchables" were still engaged in the manual and physical works. Agra was still known around the world for its stone works instead of leather craft. Shastri observes, "The stone-work of the province had acquired a world-wide reputation. Khairagarh and kiraoli Tahsils of Agra district were noted for rough stone manufacturers. Large quantity of stone was imported from the neighboring states of Bharatpur and Jaipur. Much of that was worked up into articles of rough manufactured such as beam, pillars, mill-stone etc." (Shastri, 2014, 52). The transition from agriculture and stone based economy to organized manufacturing is related to the political developments in India.

Leather work emerged as one of the most important and essential industries during British rule. The demand and supply of leather products during colonial increased phenomenally. Roy says "Leather probably the most important quasi-services that commercialized during the colonial time" (Roy, 1999: 156). The British made some permanent settlement in those areas which were prominent both historically and politically. Agra was one of them due to its regional and political significance. The arrival of British colonial army in 1803 in Agra led to a high demand for repair of boots, and later also for what was called 'English' style footwear. Latifi observes, "Demand for latter soared especially between 1835 and 1868 when Agra was the capital of the north-western provinces" (Latifi, 1896: 65). The demand for repairs of shoes and other goods created new opportunities for the leather workers. The Watt's *dictionary of economic product* notices, before 1860 it

existed only as a village level work. "each village has its own workers in leather, who are also, to a large extent, their own tanners; and it is part of their recognized duties to keep their patrons in boots, and to cure and make up the hides required for the leathern buckets made for irrigation" (Roy, 1999: 156-7).

The demand for the leather goods was continuously rising as colonial authority maintained huge police personnel, military, intelligence and bureaucracy. Besides that British were engaged on many fronts. They were fighting constant wars both within and outside India besides various regional uprisings. They were dependent on the imports from the overseas markets particularly from Europe. It was an expensive affair, moreover frequent disturbances in transformation, delays and increasing cost of import made them to think about producing leather goods in India itself. "The uprising of 1857 and the growing demand for military and civil administrators necessitated the establishment of government harness and saddlery factory at Kanpur in 1867 to undertake tanning of leather to make harness and saddlery for the British army in India" (Bhambhani, 2003: 1). Agra simultaneously emerged as one of the stiff competitors of Kanpur both in textile, leather and many other agriculture based industries. The settlements of the British troops in Agra led to greater demand for leather products. It became more prominent after the 1857 mutiny as Agra was one of the most disturbed regions. It emerged out to be one of the major hubs not only for manufactured goods but also for exports and trade related activities. Lynch says "in the immediate post-mutiny era, Agra reached a climax in its development when the first industrial exhibition of 1867 was held. At the exhibition "the manufactured industries and natural products of the district were largely displayed" (Lynch, 1974: 21).

The emergence of Agra as a major centre of leather products attracted many outsiders. "The first factory was established in Agra in 1892 by two Kashmiri Pandit brothers, Mr. Mohan Krishna Dar and Pyare Krishna Dar under the name of 'The Stuart Boot & Equipment Factory Limited' in Tajganj on the banks of river Yamuna" (Sharma, 1958: 3). Mr. Stuart was a British general who then stationed at Agra helped in obtaining order from military and hence the factory was named after him. "This factory was under military patronage and was supervised by the British. After about six years the company failed because of the absence of patronage because of retirement of Mr. Stewart and other reason was tough competition from Kanpur. This factory was, later over taken by the 'Dayalbagh Satsang Sabha', a closed mercantile

sect which promote the values of its 'gurus' and renamed it "Dayalbagh Taj Tannery" (Swarup, 1952: 5).

The venture of Dar brothers gave a lead to traditional castes and groups who had a deep relation with the leather. "The Muslim shoe makers and Jatavs established factories on piece work system. It led to huge migration from rural areas to urban and from one region to another. Thousands of Muslims and untouchable castes particularly Chamars came and settled in Agra to avail opportunities. Most of the owners of the factories and shoe dealers were Muslims from Punjab and Delhi province. The change of shoe manufacturing from *Desi* shoes to the English shoes attracted many outsiders. One of the prominent was amongst the persons who came was late Haji Sayed Munsi Raja Sahib with a humble and moderate background, was one of the foremost famous local manufacturers" (Sharma, 1958: 4).

Hindus never realized the potential of their own resources as they were governed by their traditional beliefs. They controlled huge livestock without being aware of its hidden value. They let the animals suffer and die natural death rather than put to some productive use. In India most of the animals die due to starvation, diseases and old age causing much suffering to the animals. Whatever leather was available and produced came from naturally dead animals. The value of the hides and skin of naturally dead fetch less price compare to the slaughtered one. Roy says, "The raw hide came exclusively from the 'fallen' animals, that is, naturally dead cattle, or *murdari* as opposed to *halali* in north Indian trade parlance" (Roy, 1999: 158). The animal skin which was acquired from naturally dead animals was not sturdy and firm. It was not suitable for making goods which required toughness and could tolerate pressures. The British required standard quality of leather which they required for their army and civilian purposes.

The British ate beef and many other kinds of meats. The beef particularly was a regular part of their routine diet and it was specially so for the British troops. They were very strict administrators and firm rulers. They had both authority and power to reinforce their will. They opened slaughter houses in various cities undermining and ignoring the religious beliefs of Hindus. Besides that they also started thinking of exporting the animal meat to foreign markets. To achieve that they opened slaughter houses in many parts of the country. "in the central provinces and the united provinces, "jerked" meat for export to Burma is prepared on a large scale, and there are a number of slaughter houses at Agra, Damoh, Rahatgarh, Khurai, and other

places, where thousands of cattle are slaughtered every day and a trade not very dissimilar from that of the meat packers of Chicago is carried on" (JRCA, 1919: 647). The opening of slaughter houses and tanning units it led to a significant change. The economy which was so far controlled and regulated due to religious and culture belief systems started witnessing changes. The animals did not remain mere animals including cows it became a commodity which had a commercial value. It drastically changed the commercial landscape of the cities.

The requirement for leather goods was increasing due to constant demand of British troops but also in civil and domestic sphere largely due to the increasing penchant to acquire the British taste and life styles. The opening of the slaughter houses, tanning factories and manufacturing facilities created huge opportunities for employment. The rural leather workers who were earlier dependent on natural death of the animals now started getting more and more employment in the cities in these modern establishments. The employment increased in the industry which is reflected by the huge increase in the number of slaughtered animals. Roys writes, "According to an estimate about one-quarter of the total 20 million hides produced annually in the early 1920s came from the slaughter houses" (Roy, 1999: 167). Agra also emerged as one of the most important centre for leather tanning, collection and supply of hides and skins. The hides of Agra were superior in quality and were known by the same name because it came from government regulated slaughter houses therefore good in quality. "In hide and skins trade the commissariat hides are the best possible hides in their class and are confined mainly to Agra and were so named because of the best hides come from commissariat slaughter houses" (Tiwari, 1938: 9).

One of the important developments which affected the leather industry was the introduction of railways. Railways played an important role in the transportation of the hides and skins from the inner hinterlands. The animal's hides start rotting if they are not treated soon. "The undressed hides started moving from these regions to cities like Bombay, Calcutta and kanpur, Agra. The impact of railways was stronger in leather compare to textile in india" (Roy, 1999: 166). "The first railways line in Agra was opened on 1st April 1862 from Shikohabad to Tundla and the branch from Tundla to east bank of the river jamuna" (Shastri, 2014: 161). Now due to railways not only the collection of hides improved but these were reaching the tanning cities more quickly. It changed the industrial dynamics in many ways; it promoted inter-region trade which was limited earlier. "The tanneries were set up at the ports and major

point of hide trade. The opening of the trunk railways was a clear inducement for this movement. Railway stations at source had special godowns for hides. The agents of merchants in the port cities operated at these points; Bombay's merchant, for example, had agents stationed as far as Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Aligarh and Agra" (Roy, 1994: 471). The traditional centre of hides like Punjab, united province, central province, and western Bihar were connected which were traditionally agricultural regions with abundance of animal livestock benefited from railways immensely. Agra emerged as a economic centre due to railways. "In 1880-81 the total value of the railways traffic of Agra district amounted to over 3 Crores of rupees" (opcit: 169).

It led to huge movement and increase in trade and commerce both within the regions, outside the regions and also across the countries in terms of exports. The hide and skin trade emerged one of the prominent goods exported from India. "Sir Henry Ledgard showed that the total value of India's whole export was 162 million pound of which six commodities accounted for 140 million pound sterling, hides and skin being fifth in the list" (RSEAMC, 1919: 646). It is further mentioned that in 1846-47 the total value of hides was rupees 22,423 which increased to rupees 13,450,913 in 1912-13. The raw hides exported from India valued at Rs. 8,05,86,105, or an average of Rs. 6 each. The promoted not only the trade but also controlled its direction, location and form. Initially, Tiwari writes, "the exports of Indian hides are mainly to great Britain. But in the case of skins Indian occupies a superior position in the world market as she produces about 1/3 of the world's exportable surplus of goat skins. No doubt goat skins are also exported by south Africa, china, brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Russia, morocco and turkey, but the position of India is strongest of all" (Tiwari, 1938: 2). "India emerged as one of the world's largest exporters of tanned hides, and an importer of boots and shoes from Europe. The scale of export trade, at Rs. 60 million in 1890 was many times that of domestic rural-urban trade, estimated at Rs. 8 million by a source cited in Watt" (opcit: 157.)

The activities of British commercialized leather trade and transformed leather as a commodity. The collaboration with British enabled these so called untouchable castes to acquire freedom and monetary gains. Some Chamars took to the profitable trade of shoe making and saddler, trading in raw hides and skins as legitimate entrepreneurs. Knorringa says, "These artisans acquired the additional skills that enabled them to work independently" (Knorringa, 1999: 305). The village level work is now transformed into an organized activity. The decentralized and fragmented

industry started getting structured and organized. There were more openings in the cities and new areas were being opened up for employments. Gupta writes, "They also found new outlets in large tanneries, especially around Kanpur and Aligarh, with relatively higher wages. In Agra, some families of the chamar caste came to be accepted as credit worthy merchants" (Gupta, 2010: 313). It started transforming a traditional caste which was earlier dependent on fallen animals for their livelihood to a caste which now working as a partner in leather trade. The disadvantage of low caste was transforming into an advantage and privilege as they did not have competition from other castes. Now the leather work started getting diversified and specialized and interconnected to various specialized activities like slaughter houses, carcass collection, tanning, footwear production, harness and saddlery, leather goods etc. Given the associated values against slaughter it was the Muslims and untouchable castes who were employed in these units.

They encouraged and promoted research and development in leather. One of the major achievements of transforming the leather industry in the 19th century goes to *Charles de Susa*, a French Eurasian of Pondicherry. He introduced improvements in the native methods of preparing skins which he had learned Mauritius. He started a tannery in Madras in which the French processes were introduced. He was able to check the tendency of coloration found in the Indian tanned hides on exposure to air. Encouraged by these results, a number of people took up tanning on a large scale. The first modern tanning unit was established in madras in 1845 in madras. This laid the foundation of the tanning industry in Madras but did not extend beyond this presidency. Until the end of the 19th century it enjoyed the monopoly of this segment, of the 48 tanneries in India were located in Madras, while 11 were in Sind, 3 in Calcutta and 2 each in Kanpur and Bangalore" (Sharma, 2003: 15).

The British brought new ways of making leather goods in India due to their specific requirements. They introduced scientific method of cutting animal skin so that there are maximum extractions and utilization of skin and less wastage. They brought new designs and patterns in shoes and other leather goods. The old tool like *raphi* was inadequate to do all the processing of leather work like flaying skin, cutting leather pieces, making shoes and other goods by a single tool. Therefore they devised new tools and machines which were necessary for standard military quality and requirements. These processes prevented large scale wastage of animal skin which incurred due to traditional techniques. They introduced new designs, patterns and

shoe making techniques. The traditional leather workers benefited from it as it provided them not only employment in these factories but also help them establish links with the British directly. Besides working for them as collies, porters, and workers, "many of them became contractors and agents who supplied labour of their own caste mates in the stone cutting, building and bone meal industries" (Lynch, 1974: 33). They also ventured into other activities like some became agents in collection of hides, suppliers, transporters etc. in many parts of country there emerged huge economic opportunities in trade.

They saw great potential and opportunities in animal live stock. To tap it properly they carried out huge exercise to know the exact number of animals in the country. They systematically collected data on the animal livestock in India to know the exact numbers, types, and its abundance in different parts so that these resources are used to the optimum. British were the first one to systematically collect animal census in India. According to RSEAMC sources, "there were 180 million cattle and 87 millions sheep and goats in India in 1913" (RSEAMC, 1919: 646). Similar numbers have also been given by cattle census. "According to it, "there are about 180 million cattle and 87 million sheep and goat. The estimates placed before the hides and Cess enquiry committee very between 30 million and 12 million. Due to the uncertainly and speculative nature of the data, there, the committee could not make any definite estimate. But it has been recognized that the figure of 25 million is not an overestimate" (Tiwari, 1938: 1).

The commercialization of hides and skins, leather goods also had its impact on the residual parts of animals. These also acquired some commercial value over a period of time. Every single part of animal has some specific value, characteristics and use. The blood, bones, horns, taller, hairs, tail etc. have different use in the various industries. For example Bones are used in making ceramic goods and whitening sugar, blood in pharmaceutical industry for making Syrups, hairs for making paint brushes, horns for decorative pieces, combs, pen stand etc. and fat for making confectionary items and candles. These activities also increased simultaneously along with the growth and expansion of the leather trade. "Latifi writes, "Few municipalities derive profit from the blood of animals. Delhi gets a paltry sum of Rs. 300 every year for the blood of 20,000 cattle and 160,000 goats and sheep, while in Lahore, Multan, Sialkot and few other places it is used for manure"

(Latifi, 1911: 120)[1]. The economic value of the Indian livestock increased due to commercialization of the leather trade. The table below shows how the leather trades particularly the exports of tanned hides, skins and leather grew phenomenally both in volume and percentage while the raw hides and skin reduced due to the emergence of local manufacturing.

Table 4.1 Average Annual Value of Exports from India

Period	Raw hides and skins		Tanned hides, skins and leather		Total
	Value Rs. (Lakhs)	Percentage to total	Value Rs. (Lakhs)	Percentage to total	Value Rs. (Lakhs)
1909-10 to 1913-14	1,032	70.6	430	29.4	1,462
1914-15 to 1918-19	988	57.9	719	42.1	1,707
1919-20 to 1923-24	945	60.2	624	39.8	1,569
1924-25 to 1928-29	781	49.4	811	50.6	1,602
1929-30 to 1933-34	483	44.2	610	55.8	1,093
1934-35 to 1936-37	390	38.8	616	61.2	1,006

Source: Ramlal, 1938: 37

The start of World War in 1914 proved to be a boom for this industry as the above table shows. It brought huge opportunities to the local leather industry of Agra. The imports were stopped due to political disturbances and now there was pressure to fulfill needs from the internal sources. The production grew rapidly due to increase demand. "In 1914 there were 4 large factories which grew to 29 in 1929" (Sharma, 1958: 5). "In 1917 Dayalbagh footwear factory limited was established which the largest manufacturing factory was that time (Ibid, 4). The increased demand for more shoes lead to more production thus the competition from kanpur and imported goods from Japan and Germany was over. The Cooper Allen Company of Kanpur, a major competitor (of Agra) had to divert its attention to the military requirements. Many new factories were established and leather trade grew significantly. Besides military requirements, these factories also started manufacturing many other goods for civil market. This brief saw drastic changes in its structures. The war period opportunities attracted many outsiders from different parts. Many came and started large factories and karkhanas. A thesis on leather industry of Agra reveals that "the trade now passed

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[1] For more details about this, see further chapter IX in Latifi, A. (1911). *The Industrial Punjab: A Survey of Facts, Conditions and Possibilities*. Bombay and Calcutta: Longmans Green & Co.

on to the *Khwajas* and *Bohras* of Bombay to Punjabi Muslims from the local Muslims and Chamars. These enterprising people soon threw the local trader and dealer to the background and they occupied the most prominent place in the industry" (Swarup, 1952: 7). However, As soon as the war stopped the industry started seeing stagnation. The import of shoes from Japan and Germany resumed and factories started finding difficult to sustain.

The industry also suffered from the world wide depression of 1930s. The demand decreased, large factories and Karkhana were shut down creating huge employment crisis. Thousands of workers lost their job and livelihood. The situation improved little when the world economy was stabilized to some extent and the exports and imports resumed again. The table below shows the quantity, direction, volume of trade from India to various countries from 1934-35 to 1936-37. The British Empire particularly the United Kingdom was the biggest importer of the hides and skins from India. In the dressed and tanned cow hides it consumed almost 100 percent while in the case of buffaloes it was almost 90 percent. Similarly in the case of tanned sheep skins the British Empire consumed more than 83 percent of the exports.

Table 4.2 Direction of Exports from India of Hides, Skins and Leather

Raw Hides And Skins	Countries	1934-35	1935-36	1936-37
		Tons	Tons	Tons
Buffaloes Hides	United Kingdom	379	467	278
	Total British Empire	384	487	330
	Germany	357	530	775
	Bulgaria	218	193	597
	Greece	609	220	548
	Egypt	357	199	644
	Total Foreign Countries	2,454	2,206	4,150
Grand Total		2,838	2,693	4,480
Cow Hides	**United Kingdom**	**2,839**	**4,258**	**5,149**
	Total British Empire	**2,875**	**4,342**	**5,223**
	Finland	**1,216**	**1,073**	**1,025**
	Germany	**4,841**	**5,878**	**6,547**

	Italy	**4,681**	**2,239**	**1,570**
	Greece	**797**	**787**	**1,064**
	Total Foreign Countries	**16,396**	**15,120**	**14,194**
Grand Total		**19,271**	**19,462**	**19,417**
Buffalo And Cow Calf Skins	United Kingdom	18	18	34
	Total British Empire	19	18	36
	Total Foreign Countries	461	504	278
Goat Skins	United Kingdom	2,475	4,358	4,158
	Total British Empire	2,904	4,851	4,664
	United States Of America	9,604	13,583	11,410
	Total Foreign Countries	10,969	15,257	13,321
Grand Total		13,873	20,108	17,985
Sheep Skins	United Kingdom	65	56	73
	Total British Empire	75	82	85
	Germany	173	329	145
	Italy	797	277	37
	Total Foreign Countries	1,101	851	518
Grand Total		1,176	933	603
Leather (Tanned Or Dressed)				
Buffalo Hides	United Kingdom	638	824	975
	Total British Empire	666	861	1,015
	Total Foreign Countries	79	305	430
Grand Total		745	1,166	1,445

Cow Hides	United Kingdom	9,486	11,702	14,787
	Total British Empire	9,516	11,738	14,814
	Total Foreign Countries	63	46	53
Grand Total		9,579	11,784	14,867
Buffalo And Cow Calf Skins	United Kingdom	1,046	1,066	1,509
Goat Skins	United Kingdom	3,505	2,908	3,550
Sheep Skins	United Kingdom	2,106	2,541	2,981
	Total British Empire	3,200	2,589	3,020
	Japan	596	471	539
	Total Foreign Countries	632	482	546
Grand Total		3,832	3,071	3,566

Source: Ramlal, 1938: 38-9

The disturbances in the Europe in the middle and late 1930s disturbed the exports. The fortune of the indigenous and local leather goods manufacturing industry changed with the start of World War II as military leather goods increased in demand and also the availability of the hides and skins increased due to the disturbances in the exports. The supplies had to be acquired from the local manufacturing units. There was significant rise and expansion of the manufacturing and huge increase in employment and jobs. "In the year 1939 the number of workers in the Agra leather industry was 37,000 which grew to 50,000 during 1943-44" (Sisodia, 1960: 6-7). The small karkhanas were meeting the demand of civil market while the large firms looking after the military demands and requirements. Sharma writes, "The military demands were fulfilled by big factories like Bata and Flex and hence the civilian demand was left for Agra shoe industry. The demand increased to such an extent that factories started functioning during day and night shifts and the number of workers increased further significantly. Advances were made to the workers to make them work hard and regularly. Many unskilled workers were employed from outside (Sharma, 1958: 5).

POST COLONIAL PERIOD: MODERNIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION

The post colonial period was very important for the industry as it brought sudden, significant and drastic changes due to the departure of the British. Agra had been one of the most important and dominant city in the leather goods production. It had an edge over other cities due to its location which is near to major whole sale markets and hide collection centers. One of the most important and sudden changes was brought by the partition of country. The leather industry of Agra was particularly disturbed as it was located in the region which was badly affected by riots. There were wide spread communal riots in Agra and nearby towns. The communal disturbances hit it badly and the workers got divided on communal lines between Hindus and Muslims in Agra and nearby cities. The trust, cooperation and harmony were replaced by fear, enmity and hatred. Thousands of Muslims particularly the skilled workers migrated to Pakistan. "They took with them cash, jewellery and other valuables leaving their factories in charge of servants" (Sharma, 1958: 6).

The industry lost its skilled and trained workers, efficient managers and administrators. The cottage workers were the worst affected by communal polarization and riots as they lost both markets and raw material. According to Raj kumar Sharma, secretary "factors Federation" and Sri kadin Ali, president Agra shoe market, "the industry got reduced by 40 percent after the partition. In big factories the number of Muslim workers decreased from 200 to 75 while the Hindus grew from 100 to 130. Similarly in organized karkhanas the number of Muslims decreased from 200 to 50 while Hindus remained same in the small cottage workshops number of Muslims decreased from 500 to 300 while Hindus decreased from 1500 to 1000" (Sisodia, 1960: 11). The figures are perhaps the sample of some particular market or factories of a particular place within Agra but it showed the huge impact that partition brought to the industry.

The volume, magnitude and social cost of this partition were huge on the workers particularly the Muslims and dalits. The industry lost its traditional clients and patrons, skilled workers and suppliers. Hundreds of manufacturing units were closed down or temporarily suspended their operations creating huge unemployment. The raw, wholesale, retail network and supplies chains were disturbed. There was huge damage to the property due to arsons, riots and looting. It shattered the

foundation of the industry as the industry lost its huge opportunities in terms of traditional markets, skilled workers and artisans. The Muslims lost their traditional set businesses and dalits particularly the Jatavs as traditional leather workers lost their employment and other property. Before partition the areas which are now within Pakistan used to consume about 50 percent of the Agra produce. The enmity created by partition continued in political and economic sphere. After partition, the Pakistan government imposed the customs duty on Indian leather goods. The Agra made goods were not in a position to compete with the Pakistan made goods as custom duties raised its cost. Moreover, the traditional markets like Persia, Australia etc. that were connected though Muslim network have also been lost. These caused and brought huge economic and monetary disasters to the Dalits.

The partition brought huge structural and organizational changes in the operations and dynamics of the industry. The partition led to migration and displacement from both sides of the border. The Muslims migrated from the northern part of India to Pakistan while the Punjabis and Sindhis migrated from Pakistan due to wide spread communal riots. The properties which were left by the Muslims who migrated to Pakistan were sold to the migrants populations consisting of Sindhis and Punjabis. These communities settled in Delhi and nearby cities Agra was one of them. These communities entered into business of shoes this gave rise to new division of labour. Muslims and dalits particularly the Jatavs remained confined to production of shoes while the Punjabi traders with their strength in finance gained prominence in the business (Hashim, 2010: 74-5). They started manipulating and changing the equilibrium of the work in their favour by introducing some of the highly exploitative *purchi* and *katauti* system in the industry.

The Muslims and Dalits already suffered hugely due to partition however one of the major blows came with the introduction of the cow ban. Cow was very dear to Mahatma Gandhi and he was in favor of cow protection. The cow protection was an emotional and sentimental issue picked up the nationalist movement to gather crowd around it. Ban on cow slaughter therefore has been one of the demands of nationalist movement. In the overall leather trade, cow hides was the major and most significant items exported from India. Soon after independence regulations were imposed against cow slaughter to appease some sections. After independence the constitution was drafted and protection of cows and calves is included in the directive principles of the state policy contained in Article 48 of the constitution. Cow hides has been one of the

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important source of raw material and a major item of exports for this industry for a very long time particularly so in British period. This resulted in the shrinking of the raw material base for the industry and raising the price of animal skin and hides due to the ban. It is a prominent issue even now. A report prepared by Deloittee in 2009 which was submitted to the government finds cow ban as one of the major issue which is hampering the growth of the industry. The report says, "Ban on cow slaughter is one of the reasons for the lack of raw material for the industry" (Deloitte, 2009: 36).

There is a blanket ban on cow slaughter in states like Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi, Maharashtra. Uttaranchal, Jharkhand. Chattisgarh, Manipur, Haryana. It is allowed in kerala, Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Bihar and Manipur with certain conditions and 'fit for slaughter' certificates. There is no ban in states like Mizoram, Sikkim, Meghlaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura with no conditions. Strict punishment in the forms of huge penalties and imprisonment are enforced though law against those who were involved in cow slaughter. There is jail term of up to 10 years against cow slaughter in different part of India like Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand and Rajasthan and it is Non-bailable offense in Maharashtra (Indian express, 2015)[2].

The departure of the British resulted in the change of ownerships and control. The British controlled factories were now in the control and possession of government. The harness and saddlerery factory of Kanpur which manufactured good for the military and police came into the passion of government of India. The political change also brought changes in the governing patterns, priorities and vision of state. After the departure of British the leather trade also changed. The relations with the USSR have been one of the important thrust of the socialist and Nehruvian developmental planning. Post-independence, USSR emerged as one of the important importer of goods from India particularly of leather goods. "According to one estimates the leather industry of Agra alone met 13 percent of the total exports of leather goods to Russia (USSR) and satellite countries in 60s" (Lynch, 1974: 33). Leather industry of Agra was one of the biggest beneficiaries of this partnership. This alone was responsible for the running and sustenance of hundreds of small karkhana

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[2] http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-no-beef-nation/

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and factories.

The international changes in the economic and political areas affected the leather work. "First, the international leather industry saw two major relocations which have been referred to as the first and second 'migrations' of the industry. In the late sixties, the developing countries of the world were major exporters of hides and skins and the advanced countries such as USA, Germany, France and Italy were the manufacturing nations. Developed countries started to close down their tanneries due to stringent pollution measures on the one hand and the rise in labour cost on the other. From the seventies, a migration of the tannery segment to countries such as Korea and Taiwan was witnessed, as also to countries such as India, which had raw material base, and where pollution norms were not a major consideration" (Damodaran, 2003: 164). This development in the west became a lucrative opportunities for the developing countries. They planned their policies to suit the needs of the western countries.

The government appointed Seetharamaiah committee to study the leather industry. The committee submitted its report in 1972 with 18 recommendations. These recommendations were meant to stop the export of semi processes hides and skin so that the organized manufacturing could be developed in India. It recommended huge concessions, subsidies and penalties in the form of duties. These had far reaching implications to the industry and economy as India had been the one of the largest exporter of untreated semi-finished hides and skins since colonial times. These recommendations proved to be milestone as it completely changed the landscape of leather trade in India. The changes that were started with Seetharamaiah committees were further pushed and accelerated by other committees. The Kaul committee (1979) recommended for the reduction of import duties and tariffs in importing the machines and technology. This resulted in the mechanization, upgradation and modernization of the manufacturing units. The manual processes were replaced by highly sophisticated machines in different segments of the industry.

One of the major developments that affected the leather industry was the disintegration of USSR. In the early 1980s Soviet Union was single largest importer of footwear from Agra, purchasing shoes worth Rs 1200 Crores from 150 odd shoe exporters. After the fall of Soviet Union in early 1990s the shoe exports suddenly declined to Rs 100 Crores leading closure of 60 percent of shoe exporting units of

Agra[3]. It was a big setback and economic collapse for the leather industry of Agra. Thousands of workers lost employment opportunities and hundreds of factories and Karkhanas were closed down (Knorringa, 1999: 309). The collapse of USSR brought huge economic disaster to the exporters and workers. The western countries specially the European Union emerged as a major market for leather products from India. It was precisely due to the various environment movements, health hazards particularly cancer, water and air pollution, rising cost of labour and the tough environment laws and legislation forced many hazardous industries in the west to shift their operation in the third world countries. (Castleman, Madan & Mayes, 1981: 1057-58). Indian leather industry benefitted from these developments in the west. It became one of the major suppliers of leather products to the western countries particularly to European Union and America.

Government appointed another committee to look out for the needs of raw material. The Pande committee (1985) recommended the creation of raw material data base and improve the quality of hides and skin. It favored the import of finished leather so that the industry does not suffer due to shortage of raw material. It recognized footwear as an important segment of the industry and pushed for its mechanization and upgradation. It recommended for the creation of institutions for the training of human resources to meet the international standards in the areas of engineering, design and pattern making. Murthy committee (1992) recommended for consumption of non leather material in the domestic markets so that quality leather could be exported. Certain specific products which were reserved for the small sectors were abolished and opened for large factories. It asked for strategic alliance with the developed and developing countries through joint ventures and collaborations across countries to achieve 10 percent share in the global leather trade.

The recommendations of these committees had far reaching implication to the working of the industry. It changed the nature, structure and composition of the leather industry in a very significant ways. It led to the integration of leather industry of India to the other economies of the world on the other hand it started modernization of the industry. These developments led to the commercialization, concentration, consolidation and diversification of industry in selected regions and locations. It was the emergence of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation into the economy and

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[3] http://www.ihdindia.org/formal-and-informal-employment/paper-4-a-case-study-of-footwear-industry-in-india.pdf

also within the industry. Large scale manufacturing factories came up in different part of the country with sophisticated machines and technology. It led to phenomenal increase in the manufacturing and exports. The shifts were structural in the sense the home based work got structured on the modern lines. It shifted from homes to outside, from rural to urban from dalits and Muslims areas to economic zones and regions.

Table 4.3 Aggregate and Concentration of Leather Industry by Major States.

	1979-80	1984-85	1988-89	1994-95	1999-2000
No. of factories					
Tamilnadu	379	464	630	1138	907
Uttar Pradesh	128	123	184	222	226
West Bengal	127	118	115	136	212
Total	**634**	**705**	**929**	**1,496**	**1,345**
Employment					
Tamilnadu	18,276	27,283	38,285	60,894	53,564
Uttar Pradesh	8,931	10,199	13,914	15,749	15,728
West Bengal	11,258	9,637	9,557	7,111	11,155
Total	**38,465**	**47,119**	**61,756**	**83,754**	**80,447**
Output (Rs. Crores)					
Tamilnadu	344.92	277.10	513.36	1034.01	1,281.87
Uttar Pradesh	69.97	84.12	165.16	322.67	216.76
West Bengal	89.99	85.56	112.17	189.34	511.12
Total	**504.88**	**446.78**	**790.69**	**1546.02**	**2,009.75**

Source: (Damodaran, 2003: 137)

There was a huge increase in the number of factories in different parts of country after 1972. In Tamilnadu the number of factories increased from 379 to 907, in Uttar Pradesh from 128 to 226 and in west Bengal from 127 to 212 between 1979-80 to 1999-2000. The emergence of mass production factories led to huge increase in the volume of trade and exports. The gross output of these three states increased from Rs.504.88 Crores in 1979-80 to 2009.75 Crores in 1999-2000. The leather industry registered a growth despite some periodic fluctuations. The organized factory segment registered a consistent growth. The total output of factory sector at current prices was 622.66 Crores in 1979-80 to 8421.64 Crores in 1999-2000 (Damodaran, 2003: 135).

The recommendation and changes in the government policies changed the nature of the work. The home based small, rural, self employment work got structured

and organized into a factory based wage work. The policies of government led to the emergence of organized large scale factories in the industry. The work started getting concentrated in some selective regions, states and cities. There has been gross increase in the number of factories from 1979-80 to 1999-2000 in different regions and segments. The factories saw a phenomenal increase and the numbers increased phenomenally registering more than 100 percent increase from 1979-80 but there are regional and segment wise variations within this growth. There has been large reduction in the number of factories from 1994-95 to 1999-2000 in Tamilnadu due to various environmental and pollution concerns. Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal continued to grow during these periods despite periodic fluctuations.

This trend is similar in the case of employment. There has been gross increase in the employment in the organized factory sector but there are regional and segment wise variations. Uttar Pradesh witnessed a phenomenal increase in employment while there were periodic fluctuations in west Bengal but it has maintained its share in employment. The output during these decades has registered almost four times increase. Despite huge reduction in number of factories and employment the output of Tamilnadu has not declined over these decades. It has rather increased from 344.92 Crores to 1281.87 Crores registering a growth of 371.64 percent in output. Uttar Pradesh registered a more than threefold increase in output while west Bengal registered more than five fold increases during these periods.

The process was further accelerated with the introduction of New Economic Policy of 1991. The policy allowed the entry of multinational corporations (MNC) and corporate sector in this work. Many new products added to the leather product portfolio like the non leather shoes and slippers, sports shoes, leather hand bags, fashionable goods etc. Mass level manufacturing factories came up in different part of the country employing hundreds and thousands of workers at single sites. It further changed the landscape of the leather industry. It was not only the foreign companies but also the foreign goods that made an entry in the leather markets in India. The government went ahead further and in 2001 de-reserved and de-licensed many of the products which were earlier reserved for small scale industry in India. It allowed 100 percent foreign direct investment in leather industry from 2002. This resulted in the imports of foreign goods particularly Chinese goods in the Indian market.

As the economy was opened for private investment it led to phenomenal expansion in the production capacities of the manufacturing units. The output grew

significantly so was the pollution. The leather industry particularly the tanneries are highly water consuming work. Each ton of hide/skin tanned requires over 40,000 liters of water. Tanneries were hold responsible for pollution of ground water and toxic discharge into the rivers. "Public interest litigations were filed in Courts against the tanneries under the water (prevention and control of pollution act 1974) in different parts of India. the supreme court order of 1996 forced tanneries either to have individual affluent treatment plants (IETP) or connected to common affluent treatment plant (CETP) or face closure" (Sankar, 2006: 2475). Many of the tanneries were closed down or were shifted outside from the main cities like Kanpur, Kolkata, Chennai, Ranipet, and Agra. Ganga action plan and National green Tribunal (NGT) further cracked down on the tanneries and forced hundreds of tanneries to shut their operations in Kanpur, kolkata and Agra. "The mass scale closure of tanneries especially in Tamilnadu and Uttar Pradesh under pollution control act affected the exports" (Bhambhani, 2003: 74). There were seven tanneries in Agra functioning prior to 1996. These tanneries were Wasan tannery, Mahajan tannery, Agra tannery, Dayalbagh tannery, Park exports, Hits exports. All the tanneries have been closed down due to pollution control act. All these tanneries have been closed down to preserve the Taj Mahal and to prevent pollution in the Yamuna.

The industry further suffered due to Global warming concerns, emergence of green politics and competition from china and Vietnam. Increased competition from china, Thailand, Vietnam and Bangladesh has hit the industry hard. It increased the competition within and outside of the industry. The campaign by PETA and campaign against child labour and dangerous working conditions further affected the industry as it led to boycott of Indian products by the firms in the developed countries. The foreign firms and western countries took these as opportunities to extract favorable concessions from third world manufacturers. All these affected the exports to a large extent and under the WTO agreement the larger economies were able to dump their products in the smaller and weak countries. The worst sufferers from these developments were the smaller and home based artisans and karkhanadars as they were not able to compete with the large manufacturers and cheap imports from china.

LEATHER INDUSTRY IN INDIA: A BROAD OVERVIEW

Leather industry is one of the prominently industries in India. It has great

potential for growth in terms of the trade, scope for foreign exchange earning capacity and potential for employment. This sector is known for its consistency in high export earnings and it is among the top ten foreign exchange earners for the country. "The export of leather and leather products multiplied during the past couple of decades-from US $ 1.42 billion in 1990-91 to about US$ 4 billion in 2010-11 and further US $ 6.5 billion in 2014-15" (Exim bank, 2015: 12). "India is the ninth largest exporter of leather and leather products in the world. it is the second largest producer of footwear and leather garments, with annual revenue of USD 8,500 million for 2011-2012 with exports of 4868.71 million" (ONCRA, 2014: 2). According to council of leather exports (CLE), "the leather industry of India ranks 6th largest in the world with exports of 5.25 billion Euro" (ITC, 2010: 3). Leather sector reported the total sales of nearly US $ 13 billion, of which exports accounted for US $ 6.5 billion in 2014.

The global trade in leather and leather products has been increasing from a mere 4 billion USD in 1972 to USD 221.3 billion in 2012. Although the exports of Indian leather and leather products have grown many folds during the past decades, India's share in the total global trade is 2.5 percent occupying 8th place. India produces 2 billion Sq. Ft of leather annually and it is the 2nd largest producer of footwear and leather garments in the world. It ranks third in the production of harness and saddlery items and 6th place in export of hides and skins. Despite the phenomenal growth and achievement of the industry over the decades it is very low given the fact that India has the largest livestock in the world which is the base for the industry and huge assets. Although there has been phenomenal growth of the leather industry in India but India's share in the total global leather trade has been declining despite the growth over the years. "It was 8.8 percent in 1981 which has come down to 2.5 per cent in 2014-15. Contrastingly, in the same period the share of china in the world leather trade was 0.41 percent in 1981 which has phenomenally increased to 31 percent now" (Deloitte, 2009: 10). China has registered a 75 fold growth in the leather trade while India which was much ahead of china has lagged behind.

Footwear (leather and non leather and components) is a major and dominant contributor in the overall leather exports. This segment occupies number one position with 40 percent in the overall exports, followed by leather goods at second with 20 percent. Finished leather occupies third place with 22 percent in total exports, leather garments with fourth position with 12 percent and finally saddlery & harness with 2 percent. According to CLE (2014) data 38 percent of the leather products are exported

whereas 62 percent were consumed within India. According to national skills development corporation (NSDC) report, the employment in this industry stood about 3.09 million in 2013 including both the unorganized and organized sector. The National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) has identified the sector as one of the twelve focus manufacturing sectors in terms of competitiveness and untapped potential in the country.

According to a report (volume 16) by Ministry Of Skill Development And Entrepreneurship, leather sector employs 3.09 million or 30 Lakh 90 thousand people. These jobs are both in organized and unorganized, formal and informal sector covering different segments and operations together. In segment wise Finishing of leather employs 0.23 million, Leather goods with 0.30, Footwear 0.78, Leather apparel 0.01, Micro enterprises in leather based goods manufacturing (including artisans) 0.92, Unorganized sector employment in leather-based goods repairing (cobblers etc.) 0.85 million. This is one of the most important manufacturing industries in terms of employment. These are the numbers which are directly getting employment from leather products. There are hundreds of thousands of people who are indirectly dependent on leather industry for their livelihood like the retail marketing, small parts and components industries, tools and light machines industries etc.

India's place in the overall leather trade in the world is eighth. It is far below to the potential of India's livestock resources.

Table 4.4 Major Exporters of Leather in the World

Country	Value (US $ billion)					Share (%)		CAGR (%)
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2014	2010-14
World	149.2	180.8	182.9	199.4	217.9	100.0	100.0	9.9
China	56.5	68.6	74.6	81.0	86.1	37.9	39.5	11.1
Italy	14.8	18.4	17.7	19.7	20.8	9.9	9.6	8.9
Vietnam	6.1	7.9	8.9	10.4	16.6	4.1	7.6	28.4
Hong kong	11.6	12.6	11.9	10.9	10.2	7.8	4.7	-3.3
France	7.0	8.9	9.2	9.7	10.0	4.7	4.6	9.4
Germany	5.6	7.1	6.0	6.7	7.5	3.7	3.5	7.8
Belgium	4.8	5.5	5.5	6.1	7.0	3.2	3.2	9.8
India	**3.1**	**4.1**	**4.0**	**5.1**	**5.5**	**2.1**	**2.5**	**15.6**

| Spain | 3.4 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 4.3 | 5.0 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 10.2 |
| Netherlands | 3.6 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 7.4 |

Source: (Exim bank, 2015: 22)

China is the largest exporter of leather and leather products. It has a hegemonic presence in highly lucrative leather trade in the world. European Union is one of the major markets for the Indian leather products which had a share of 65.57 percent of all India exports of leather and leather products in 2008-09 amounting to Euro 1722.46 millions. Germany is the largest importer of Indian leather products with 14.12 percent followed by Italy. UK has a share of 11.48 percent. Other major important trade partners are China and USA (ITC, 2010: 8-9).

Table 4.5 India's Export of Leather & Leather Products 2013-14 Vis-À-Vis 2014-15 (Value in US $ in Millions)

Country	2013-14	2014-15	Growth (%)	Share in leather exports in (%)
Germany	756.56	800.20	4.52 %	12.32 %
USA	680.22	768.06	12.91 %	11.83 %
UK	664.92	751.33	13.00 %	11.57 %
Italy	518.04	504.26	-2.66 %	7.76 %
Hong Kong	471.61	422.11	-10.50 %	6.50 %
France	354.72	371.75	4.80 %	5.72 %
Spain	308.07	351.27	14.02 %	5.41 %
UAE	180.54	281.07	55.68 %	4.33 %
Netherlands	218.55	224.92	2.92 %	3.46 %
China	153.63	194.26	26.45 %	2.99 %
Others	1,622.11	1,825.18	12.51 %	28.10 %
Total	**5,937.97**	**6,494.41**	**9.37 %**	**100.0 %**

Source: Exim Bank, 2015: 38

Figure 4.1: India's Exports Country Wise in Percentage in year 2014-15

The Export Share of Different Countries in India's leather and Leather Products in 2014-15
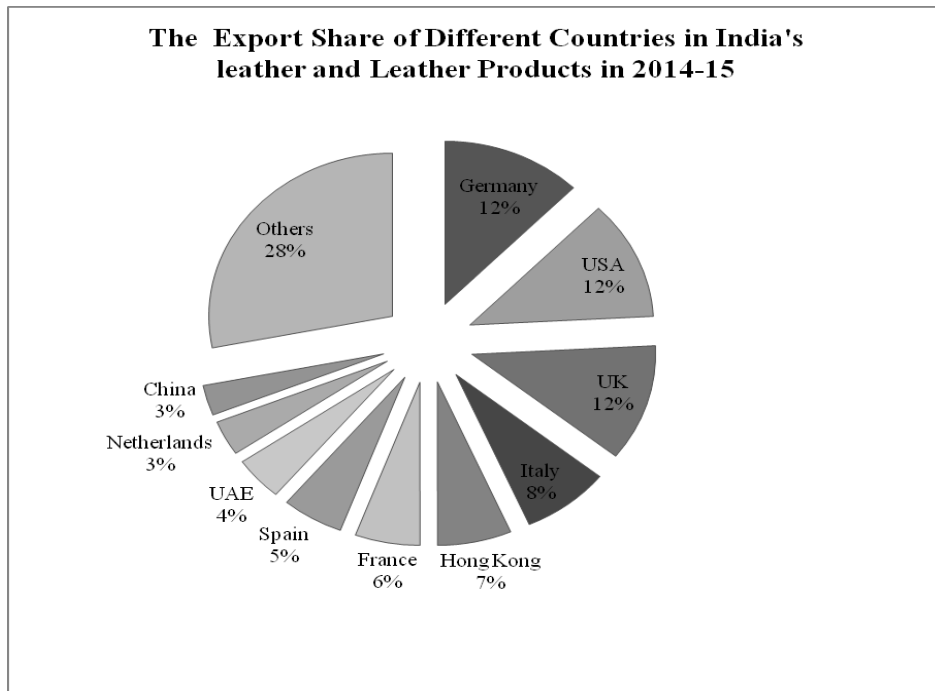
Source above table

Figure 4.1: India's Exports Country Wise in Percentage From 2001-2005
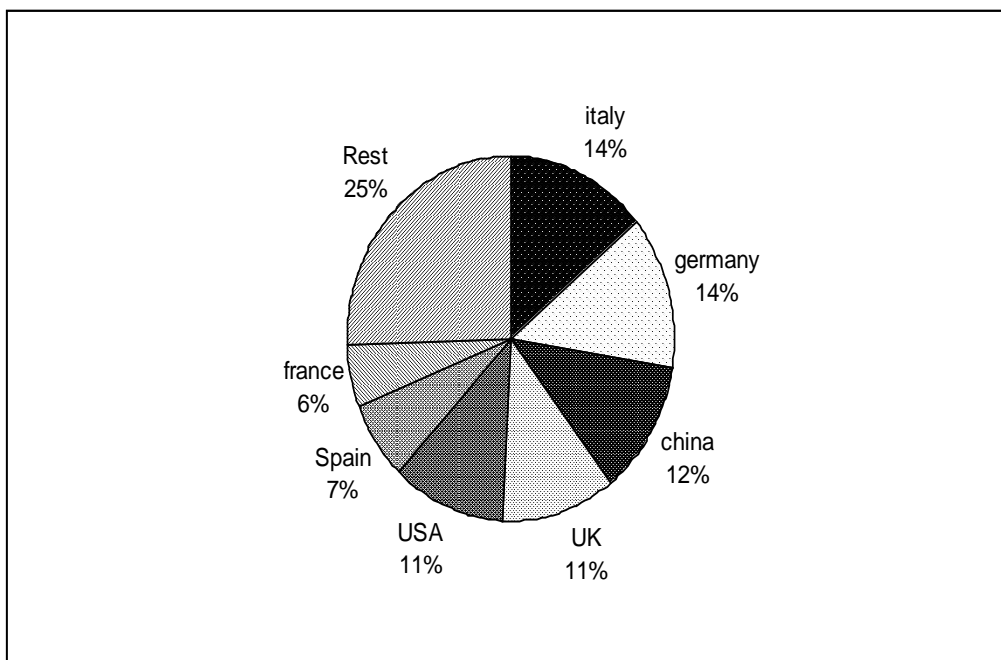
Source: Deloitte, 2009: 11

* Round off in percentage

RAW MATERIAL

The leather industry gets its raw material from the animal livestock. Hence this industry is directly dependent on agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy and food processing industry for the supply of hides and skin. The presence and availability of animal livestock therefore largely determine the supply of raw material for the industry directly. The raw material for the industry is largely extracted from the hides of large animals like cows, buffaloes, bulls, ox which largely categorized as cattle. The skin of these animals is sturdy, strong which makes it fit to make heavy duty products. Camel, kangaroo, fishes, donkey skin is also used at many places but these are not widely used. The cattle population has been increasing along with world human population. The animal and human ratio has remained largely unchanged over a long period of time despite the fact there has been a phenomenal increase in the production and consumption of meat all over the world.

Table 4.6 Cattle Stock and the World Human Population

year	World population	Cattle stock	Ratio population/cattle stock
	Millions	Millions	
1910	1,686	482	0.29
1920	1,810	500	0.28
1950	2,504	663	0.28
1970	3,580	1,114	0.30
1980	4,432	1,344	0.30
1995	5,200	1,450	0.28
2000	6,100	1,580	0.26
Growth per Annum	2.9%	2.5%	

Source: UNIDO, 2010:16

Figure 4.2 Country Wise Share Of Bovine Animals in 2005 (Value in Percentage)
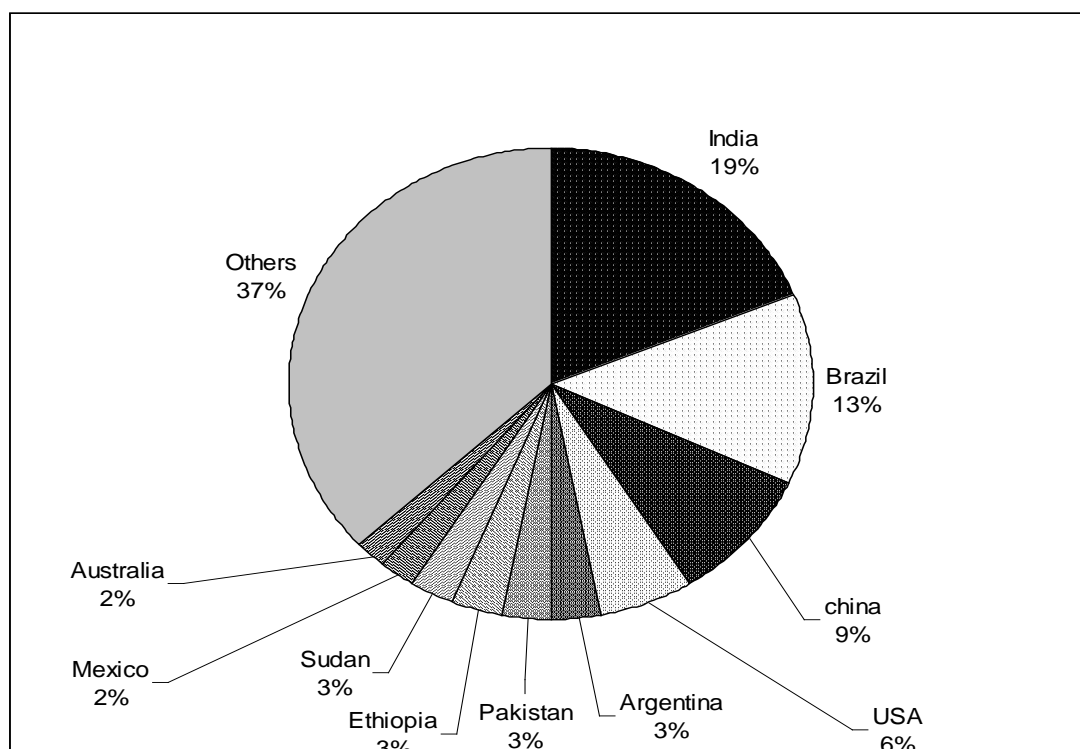
Most of the animal livestock located in the developing world especially in the third world countries. Agriculture and agricultural products play a dominant role in such countries. It is one of the most important and major sources of livelihood and employment. These countries are mostly dependent on animal's power for executing different agricultural processes. Hence developing countries especially the Asian and African countries hold largest stock of animals. The developing counties accounted for around 78 percent of the total population of bovine animals and 93 percent of the world population of goats and kids in 2005. The world production of raw hides and skin was nearly 7 million metric tones, of which production of bovine hides and skins alone accounted for 90 percent in 2004 (Exim bank: 2006: 1)

There is a deep and strong relationship among agriculture, livestock, and meat production and hide and skin trade sectors. Those countries which are primarily agricultural hold huge animal resources are also the major players in the meat and cattle hides and skins trade. Leather industry is dependent on all of these for the supply of raw material. The industry largely located in the third world countries which supply animal hides and skins and processed meat to the developed countries. It is largely due to this reason those countries which have huge livestock are also the big producer and exporter of hides and skins and leather products.

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Table 4.7 World Raw Hides and Skins Production

Category	Raw hides and skins (Metric Tons)		
Year	2002	2003	2004
Total	6,535,454	6,806,099	6,667,937
World	5,895,375	6,147,035	6,018,291
Bovine Hides and Skins			
Developing countries	**3,315,001**	**3,547,112**	**3,460,311**
Developed countries	2,580,374	2,599,923	2,557,980
Sheep and Lambskins			
World	382,459	390,712	384,932
Developing countries	**202,345**	**209,020**	**210,264**
Developed countries	180,114	181,692	174,668
Goat and Kidskins			
World	257,620	268,352	264,714
Developing countries	**243,660**	**254,120**	**250,363**
Developed countries	139,60	142,32	143,51

Source: Exim Bank: 2006: 1

India has been very rich in the natural resources especially in the livestock. It is the largest animal livestock holding country in the world. It holds approximately 19 Percent of the total bovine animals in the world. It accounts for about 58 per cent of the world buffalo population and 14.7 per cent of the cattle population. Besides that there are about 65.07 million sheep, 135.2 million goats and about 10.3 million pigs in the country as per the 19th livestock census in the country. In terms of numbers India has a total of 190.9 million cows and bulls, and an additional 108.7 million water buffaloes together. The number of bovine animals is more than 300 million roughly making 25 percent of India's human population. In other words there is one large cattle on every four person in India. According to Professor Marvin Harris, India's cattle population is more of a liability rather than an asset as they largely remain unused due to the complex value system of the Hindus (Harris, 1992:261). The presence of large livestock does not indicate the quality of the cattle. Most of the cattle in India are weak, underfed and unproductive due to their poor health and care. Most of them are used either for agricultural uses or in dairies for milk after which they are sent to slaughter houses.

Table 4.8 The Animal Livestock In Numbers And Growth In India

Sr. No	Species	Livestock Census 2003 (no. in millions)	Livestock Census 2007 (no. in millions)	Livestock Census 2012 (no. in millions)	Growth Rate (%) 2007-12
1	Buffalo	97.9	105.3	108.7	3.19
2	Sheep	61.5	71.6	65.07	-9.07
3	Goat	124.4	140.5	135.2	-3.82
4	Pigs	13.5	11.1	10.3	-7.54
5	Poultry	489	648.8	729.2	12.39

Source: Annual report 2014-2015, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries)

The presence of large animal livestock makes India, potentially, one of the most important stake holders in the meat production, supplier of raw hides and skin and producer of leather products in the world. India has not been able to manage and utilize its resources in a more efficient and productive ways due to the religious and cultural reasons. This sector has largely remained underdeveloped despite huge potential. Meat is one of the by products of the dairy and animal husbandry industry. The global meat industry alone is worth hundreds of billions US dollars.

ABATTOIRS

Abattoirs are the major part of leather industry because they are the suppliers of hides and skins to the industry. They are listed under "Red" category (amid those industries with highest release of effluent and pollutants in environment) of industries, which are considered heavily polluting and are covered under the central action plan for consent management. According to department of animal husbandry, there were approximately 25,776 unlicensed abattoirs operational in India against 5,521 licensed (Deloitte, 2009: 36). Majority of these unlicensed abattoirs are small, unorganized and low production capacities. The licensed ones are large and huge output per day largely run by organized groups, individuals, companies and firms.

Abattoirs and meat processing are related business therefore they exist side by side. Therefore most of the large and organized abattoirs are also the meat processing plants within itself or separate part of the same firms or company. In a written reply to Lok sabha, minister for health Faggan Singh Kulaste said licenses have been issued to around 1,700 slaughter houses by the country's food regulator FSSAI. He informed the house that Uttar Pradesh has 42 out of the total 76 approved abattoirs-cum meat

processing plants or standalone abattoirs followed by Maharashtra at second with 13 while Punjab and Andhra Pradesh had five approved abattoirs each. "As per the information available in the food licensing and registration have been issued under food safety and standards (FSS) Act, 2006 is 1,707".

The beliefs of killing animals are very strong among Hindus particularly among the caste Hindus in India that it is seen as a sin. The social and cultural beliefs and customs are very rigid, orthodox and conventional. There is a general avoidance and restriction to meat consumption, preference to vegetarian food, restrictions on slaughter of animals, ban on slaughter of cows, taboos regarding eating beef. There is poor infrastructure in colleting hides and skin. "According to CLRI report which was based on 1987 'All India survey of hides and skins' stated that, annually, about 90 Lakhs hides and skins were lost due to no recovery from carcasses in far flung villages" (Matthew, 2012: 78). Besides poor transportation facilities, poor care of animals (most of them starve) and strict regulations regarding running the abattoirs result in loss of animal resources.

Table 4.9 Availability of Hides and Skins in India

Category	Slaughtered (%)	Fallen (%)	Net availability (In million pieces)
Cattle hides	25	50-60	40-50
Buffaloes	21	60-70	30-40
Goat skins	101	90	10
Sheep skins	34	90	10

Source: Report of All India Survey- Ministry of Commerce, GOI, 2007 cited (ibid)

Hides and skin are the byproducts of the meat industry everywhere. But in India it is the byproduct of agricultural, animal husbandry, dairy business. Hides and skins are most of the animals that are non productive are sent for slaughter houses once they exhaust their utility. Most of the animals that come to abattoirs in India are sick, old, weak and starved. The hides in India largely come from 'fallen' animals those animals which die due to starvation, diseases or old age. It is precisely the reason leather industry in India largely gets inferior quality hides for its consumption.

Slaughtering is largely a socially and legally regulated activity in India. It is precisely the reason most of the large and organized abattoirs, or abattoirs cum meat

processing or exclusive meat processing plants are run by non Hindus specially the Muslims. According to the list by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), there are 75 registered Indian abattoirs-cum-meat processing plants/standalone abattoirs in India. 65 are owned by Muslims and 10 by others. There are 34 registered meat processing plants. 31 plants are owned by Muslims and 3 by others. All of these large and organized abattoirs cum meat processing plants are located in the food processing zones and these firms and factories are exporting meat to different countries. There are many and multiple plants of a single firm or company which are running these plants.

Table 4.10 World Meat Market (In Million Ton)

	2006	2007	2008	Change 2008/07
Meat production	**271.5**	**274.7**	**280.9**	**2.3**
Bovine meat	65.7	67.2	68.0	1.1
Poultry meat	85.4	89.5	92.9	3.8
Pig meat	101.7	98.8	100.6	1.8
Ovine meat	13.3	13.7	14	2

Source: UNIDO, 2010: 17

In the world meat market Pig meat holds the superior and dominant presence followed by poultry at second and bovine third place. Bovine are large animals which include cows, buffaloes, bulls, ox etc. the share of Poultry is growing more than any other. Goats, sheeps, fishes are one of the widely consumed meat all over the world. But yaks, camels, deers, kangaroos, snakes, elephants and many similar animals are consumed in different regions and parts largely determined by availability and climatic conditions. India has the largest non meat-eating community in the world. "It is estimated that 31 percent of india's largely hindus population are lacto-vegetarian (consuming milk and honey but no other animal-derived products) while a further 9 percent consume eggs but no meat" (Guleria , Kumari , Khan , Dangi, 2015: 253). It is precisely the reason that meat consumption is still a taboo for a large Hindu population. It is precisely that meat production is also not at very large level compare to other countries where meat is a standard part of their diet. It is one of the reasons for the underutilization of the livestock in India. The meat production has been increasing significantly over the years due to changed government policies and

priorities.

Table 4.11 Major Meat Producing Countries

	Production in 000 tons			Share of world production in percentage in 2004
	1979-1981	1999-1991	2004	
World	136,219	179,648	260,098	
China	14,526	30,644	74,306	28.57
USA	24,325	28,827	38,891	14.95
Brazil	5,224	8,228	19,919	7.66
Germany	6,925	6,987	6,798	2.61
France	5,423	5,767	6,255	2.40
India	**2,620**	**3,881**	**6,032**	**2.32**
Spain	2,601	3,459	5,531	2.13
Mexico	2,535	2,839	5,040	1.94
Russia	-	-	4,981	1.91
Canada	2,514	2,799	4,592	1.77

Source: ibid: 17

China hold only 9 percent of the total bovine animals in the world but its share in the meat production is staggering 28.57 percent holding number one position followed by USA with 14.95 percent at second and Brazil with 7.66 percent at third. These three countries altogether produce more than 50 percent of the global meat. The growth of developed counties in the meat production has largely been slow compare to the developing countries both in terms of volume and growth in the time span of roughly 25 years and in between 1979-1981 to 2004. China has phenomenally progressed and it has surpassed all the countries with a huge gap. Developed countries although have a significant presence in the production of meat but most of this volume is consumed within their respective countries. These countries therefore are dependent on the developing countries for their domestic and industrial requirements.

India's share in the world meat production is mere 2.32 percent despite the fact that it holds 19 percent of the livestock in cattle population in the world. It ranks 6th in meat production in the world. India ranks far below Germany, France and Spain, Mexico which are smaller in size both geographically and human population. Chinese meat sector is more 10 times bigger than India. Since meat is expensive than the vegetables and grains it is also one of the major source of foreign exchange for

developing countries specially china. While India lags behind in meat production compare to other countries but it is one of the largest exporters of meat. Over the year India has progressed meat production. The meat production has registered a healthy growth from 2.3 million tons at the end of Tenth Five Year Plan (2006- 07) to 5.5 million tons at the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2011-12).

Meat production in the beginning of Twelfth Plan (2012-13) was 5.9 million tons which has been further increased to 6.2 million tonnes in 2013-14. It may be seen that export of buffalo meat has increased significantly in the last five years. The export of buffalo meat in 2013-14 was 14,49,758. 64 M.T. India exports both frozen and fresh chilled meat to more than 60 countries of the world. "The major item of export includes deboned and deglanded frozen buffalo meat, which accounts for 97% of the total meat export. Major market for Indian buffalo meat is Malaysia and Egypt and for sheep and goat meat are UAE, Iran and Jordan. India also exports small quantity of processed meat to Thailand, Yemen, and Japan and poultry products to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Qatar" (Guleria , Kumari , Khan , Dangi, 2015: 256). India exported 2.4 million tones of buffalo meat in 2014-15 to 65 countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Saudi Arabia which made up 23.5 percent of the global beef exports according to the centre for monitoring Indian economy. The whole meat exports valued approximately 30,000 crores in India (ibid).

Besides the meat industry there are many other allied industries which are dependent on byproducts of slaughtered animals for raw material like pharmaceuticals, sports, textile and garments, musical instruments, soaps and chemicals, paint brushes and dusters, biscuits, jewellery etc. The blood of animals is used in chemical and pharmaceuticals industry in making syrups. The cow blood is used in hemoglobin and iron tonics, shoes shining products and vaccines for pets. The chemical and soap industry heavily use animal fats to make medicines and soaps, the bones are used to make soap, toothpaste, and bone china products. bone power id used to extra sheen to sugar, glands are used to produce insulin, triptan, heparin and pepsin, the intestines are used in surgical stitches, for binding together sausages, to make badminton and tennis racquets, violin strings and other musical instruments. The bone are crushed and converted into powder ,which is used to whiten the sugar, the horns and hoofs of animals are used in making jewellery, earrings, necklaces, combs, coat

buttons, foam in fire extinguishers[4].

LEATHER PRODUCTION

The hides and skins are converted into leather through tanning processes. Finished leather is the base on which the whole leather industry operates. It is the basic raw material for the manufacturing products. The hide and skins which are procured from slaughtered animals are sent for processing in the tanneries. These hides and skins go through different processes for conversion from hides to leather. India's share in the leather production is 5th in the world as per year 2006 which is far less than the potential and advantage that India has in animal livestock. China's production of leather is approximate four times bigger than India. Some of the countries that have very small livestock population in the world produce huge volumes of leather.

Table 4.12 Major Leather Producing Countries (Million Sq. Ft.)

Country	Year					Rank (2006)
	1997	2000	2001	2003	2006	
Argentina	721	529	561	561	655	7
Brazil	602	726	741	1005	1655	3
China	1969	3002	3312	3546	4000	1
India	**1036**	**1102**	**1106**	**1092**	**1119**	**5**
Italy	2020	1922	1926	1902	2039	2
Republic of Korea	1235	1260	1349	1344	1090	6
Mexico	614	556	509	511	570	8
Pakistan	302	323	336	350	359	12
Russia	660	888	1034	1450	1410	4
Spain	541	529	528	510	430	10
Turkey	572	340	470	470	528	9
USA	560	730	670	558	417	11

Source: UNIDO, 2010: 27

* (bovine, buffalo, sheep and goat leather only)

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[4] http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/beef-ban-and-bloodshed/1/493111.html

India lags behind in production which affects the growth and expansion of this industry. One of the major reasons for the lack of development, inefficiency, under utilization of the resources, low production and exports of leather and meat related produces are more social than economic. India exports nearly 40 percent of the finished leather to china. Italy and Spain are the other key destinations. USA forms 5.4 percent of global imports of finished leather but only 1.9 perent of india's portfolio (Deloitte, 2009: 15). The top 10 players in terms of export are: Tata International Ltd., Florind Shoes Ltd., Punihani International, Farida Shoes Ltd., Mirza Tanners Ltd., T. Abdul Wahid & Company, Hindustan Lever Ltd., Super House Leather Ltd., RSL Industries Ltd.and Presidency Kid Leather Ltd (Indo-Italian Chamber of Commerce (IICC), Indian Leather and Tanning Industry, 2010)

Table 4.13 Share of Leather Raw Material by Type

Animal	Percentage
Bovine	66
Sheep	15
Pig	11
Goat	7
Others	1-2

Source: UNIDO, 2010: 17

Bovine animals are the major source of leather raw material for the industry. The skin of bovine animals is thick and sturdy which makes it durable and strong. The bovine leather is largely used in the footwear industry across the world. It is specially used in the upper of leather shoes. There is a relationship between meat consumption and the type of meat being consumed is also important for tanners. Bovine hides consistently represent about two third of the raw material used by the world leather industry, which makes them by far the most important raw material. Pigskin represents approximately 11 percent (slightly more than 2.5 billion sq. ft/year. But it is the least well documented of the main types of raw material. This unsatisfactory documentation reflects a niche position, difficult technology and the changing balance between the use of pigskin for leather and its consumption as food (UNIDO, 2010: 17). It is the bovine animals which are the major source of raw material for the industry.

Table 4.14 India's Export of Leather and Leather Products: Recent Trends (US $ Million)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Share (%)	CAGR (%)
Footwear (Incl. Components, And Non-Leather	1758.7	2079.1	2066.9	2531.0	2945.2	45.3	13.8
Leather Goods	855.8	1089.7	1180.8	1351.5	1453.3	22.4	14.2
Finished Leather	841.1	1024.7	1093.7	1284.6	1329.1	20.5	12.2
Leather Garments	425.0	572.5	563.5	596.2	604.3	9.3	9.2
Saddler & Harness	87.9	107.5	110.4	145.5	162.7	2.5	16.6
Total	**3968.7**	**4873.5**	**5015.4**	**5908.8**	**6494.4**	**100.0**	**13.1**

Source: (Eximbank, 2015: 37)

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRY WITHIN INDIA

The leather industry in India is geographically well diversified and unevenly concentrated across s different regions, states and cities. There is multi level categorization of the industry according to its location, product portfolio, density and concentration, output and exports. The major Production clusters for leather and leather products in south region are Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana In North, In east largely in the west Bengal and Bihar and in west in Maharashtra. The leather products processing states and cities are known and specialize in different segments of leather work. Tamilnadu is known for finished leather, leather tanning processes and semi-processed hides. Mumbai for leather goods, articles and accessories. Agra and Kanpur are famous for finished leather footwear and shoe uppers, Noida for leather garments, Delhi for leather garments, goods and sports shoes, kolkata for tanning and leather goods and accessories etc.

Table 4.15 Exports of leather and leather products from the five regions in India(Value in million Euros)

	2007-08		2008-09		
	FOB value	% share in total exports	FOB value	% share in total exports	
South	909.72	37.98	984.85	36.84	8.26
North	527.68	22.04	660.68	24.71	25.2
Central	466.88	19.49	465.28	17.41	-0.34
East	357.27	14.91	418.79	15.67	17.22
west	133.76	5.58	143.62	5.38	7.37
Total	2395.31	100	2673.22	100	11.60

Source: ITC (Italian Trade Commission), 2010:10

Figure 4.3: The share of different regions in the total leather exports in 2008-09 (value in million Euros)

	South	North	Central	East	west
Series1	984.85	660.68	465.28	418.79	143.62
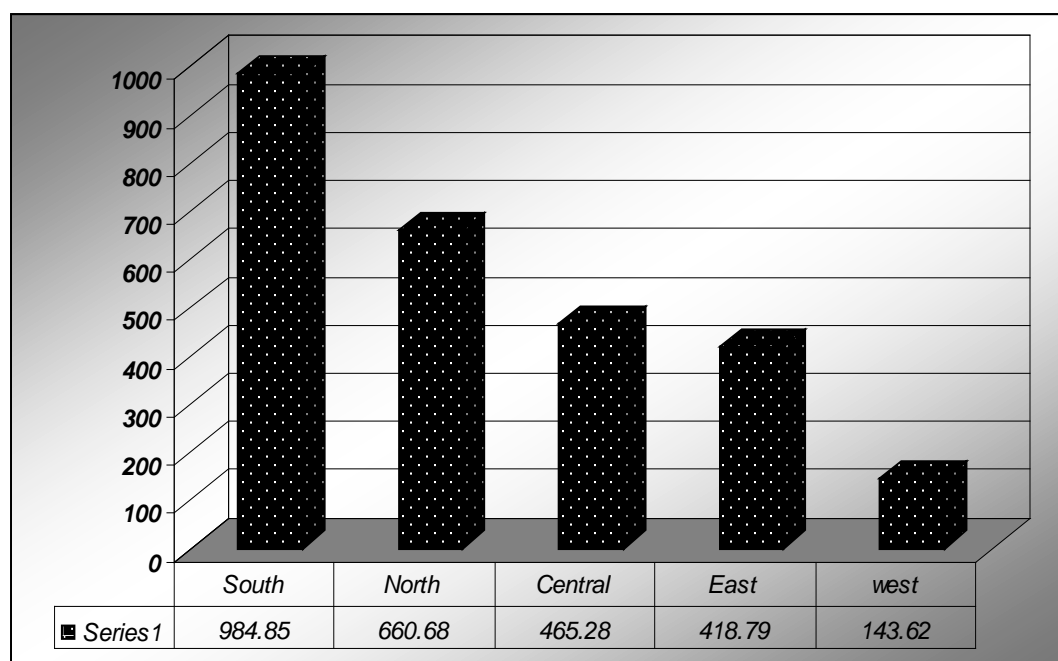
The south region contributes heavily in the exports of leather products from India followed by north and central. All the regions have shown positive growth except the central region which has shown negative growth. The northern region has registered a significant 25 percent growth during this period and its share in the overall exports of leather products have raised to 24.71. The south and northern regions contribute heavily in the production and exports of various kinds of leather

products. These two regions contribute more than 60 percent of the total leather exports. The industry is concentrated in certain specific state within the respective regions in terms of production and exports. Some states have a larger share both in production and and exports. In southern region it is largely located in Tamilnadu, in north in Uttarpradesh, in east west Bengal and in west Maharashtra. These different states have different and disproportionate share in the production and exports.

Table 4.16 State Wise Exports of Leather and & Leather Products (Value in Million Euros)

state	2007-08		2008-09		% variation in FOB value
	FOB value	% share in total exports	FOB value	% share in total exports	
Tamilnadu	**861.65**	**35.97**	**932.40**	**34.88**	**8.21**
Uttar Pradesh	**702.95**	**29.35**	**755.31**	**28.25**	**7.45**
West Bengal	**357.24**	**14.91**	**418.76**	**15.67**	**17.22**
Delhi	**164.56**	**6.87**	**204.17**	**7.64**	**24.07**
Maharastra	**131.05**	**5.47**	**139.37**	**5.21**	**6.35**
Haryana	100.27	4.19	129.84	4.86	29.49
Karnataka	41.59	1.74	43.05	1.61	3.51
Punjab	22.11	0.92	33.32	1.25	50.70
Pondicherry	4.46	0.19	5.67	0.21	27.15
Gujarat	3.52	0.15	5.31	0.20	50.93
Rajasthan	4.232	0.18	2.64	0.10	-37.62
Andhra Pradesh	0.66	0.03	1.6	0.06	141.89
Kerala	0.56	0.02	1.07	0.04	91.17
Madhya Pradesh	0.25	0.01	0.45	0.02	80.25
Uttaranchal	0.22	0.01	0.26	0.01	17.52
Total	**2395.322**	**100**	**2673.22**	**100**	**11.60**

Source: ibid: 11

Top four states contributed 86.44 percentages of the total exports from India in different product category in the 2008-09. Rajasthan is the only state which has shown negative growth and its share has gone down in the exports drastically. Many states which were not known for leather work have shown tremendous growth during this period. Delhi is a major exporter of leather products despite its size. It is approximate half of the size of the whole west Bengal.

Figure 4.4: State Wise Exports of Leather and & Leather Products (Value in million Euros)
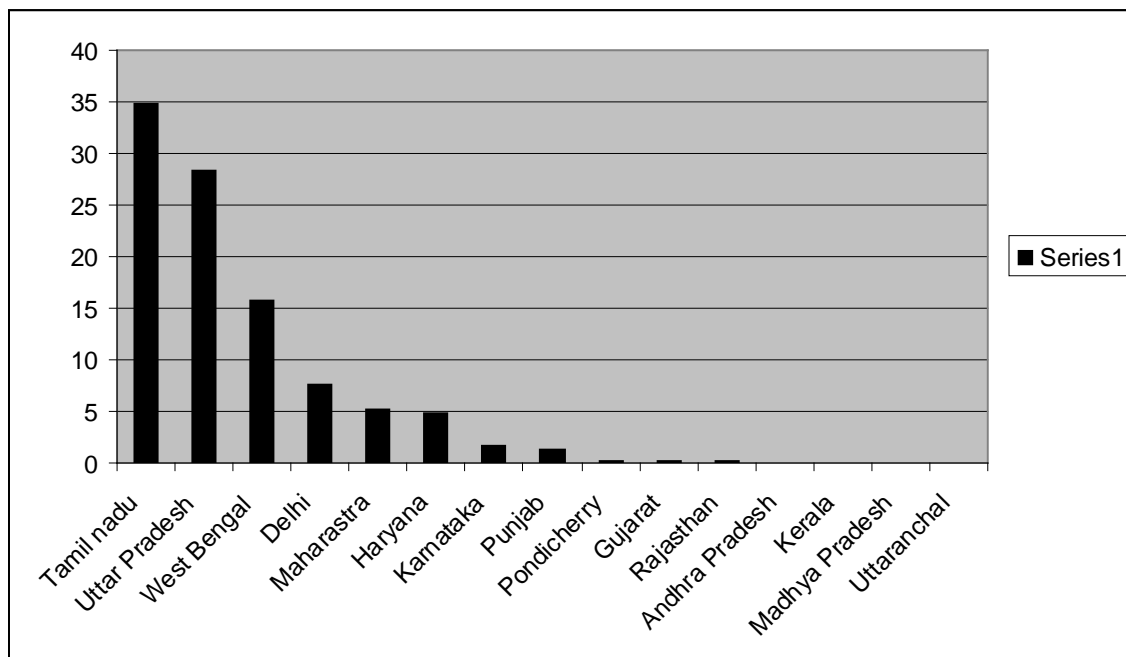
There is a third level categorization in which industrial clusters are identified with the manufacturing cities. Some of the major and significant cities which are dominant contributor to the whole leather trade are Chennai, Ambur, Ranipet, Vaniyambadi, Trichi, Dindigu, Kanpur, Agra, Noida, Jalandhar Bahadurgarh, Ambala, Gurgoan, Karnal And Manesar, Delhi, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Guntoor, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata etc. The leather products processing states and cities are known and specialize in different segments of leather work. Tamilnadu is known for finished leather, leather tanning processes and semi-processed hides. Mumbai for leather goods, articles and accessories. Agra and Kanpur are famous for finished leather footwear and shoe uppers, Noida for leather garments, Delhi for leather garments, goods and sports shoes, kolkata for tanning and leather goods and accessories etc. These cities have significant contribution not only to the leather industry trade but also to the GDP of the country. Besides that these cities are the source of employment and livelihood for hundreds of thousands of workers directly. Altogether these cities give employments to millions directly and indirectly.

There are many economic reasons for this regional difference, variations and concentration of the industry in particular regions, states and cities like availability of livestock and hide collection centers, transportation and logistic support, climatic

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conditions, availability of cheap labour (caste specific), closeness to markets, demography of the population, social and cultural environment and conditions. Historical reasons played an important role in its distribution and concentration. Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi have the historical significance since colonial times. These cities were developed as ports for the export and imports of the goods from India. Therefore traditionally these were commercial centers. Export of semi processed hides was one of the top five goods exported from India since colonial times. Therefore these cities traditionally been a hub of leather related activities.

While these are concrete reasons but there are large social and cultural beliefs which played an important role in its location and functioning. One of the major reasons for the concentration and presence of tanning industry in south is due to diverse eating habits and tolerance towards beef. The taboos towards Beef are not as strong as in north India. It is an acceptable food item in the south India and it is a standard food among some particular communities and groups. Therefore there are no such strong sentiments attached with slaughter of animals including cows. The expansion and growth of some of the segment of the industry in particular regions are result of policy level shifts that started since 1973 to the emergence of new economic policy in the 1990s.

STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

The leather industry is hugely diverse and fragments in terms of its location, concentration and product portfolio. There are huge regional variations in its spread, functioning, and operations. The same variations are also reflected in its structure, operations and functioning. The industry largely located in the unorganized sector with more 80-85 percent of the production units lies in the small (er) sector. The industry is dominated by micro and small units with bigger units accounting for just around 5 per cent of the total manufacturing units (Report 12th five year plan, DIPP, GOI). The percentage of the organized units is just 5 percent but the volume and production output is huge in these units. The number of these units does not reveal the actual position of these manufacturing units in the overall leather trade. There is a hierarchal relationship between these different size enterprises which is not revealed by the numbers. A single large manufacturing firm or factory produces and exports goods worth hundreds of Crores annually. The large and organized sector caters to the

international which is hugely profitable whereas the small sector largely caters to the domestic demand.

Table 4.17 Structure[5] of the Industry in Numbers

	Large Units	Medium Units	Small Units	Micro Units	Merchant Units	Total
Finished Leather	30	49	309	68	151	607
Leather Footwear	38	46	228	49	81	442
Non Leather Footwear	4	2	34	13	17	70
Footwear Components	29	32	182	28	22	293
Leather Goods	14	13	242	259	210	738
Leather Garments	8	8	132	49	72	269
Leather Gloves	4	3	38	36	24	105
Harness and Saddlery	3	9	74	69	26	181
Total	130	136	1239	571	603	2705

Source: 12th plan, Dipp, GOI: 13

Note: Multiple units of single company are counted as one. But if they produce different products, they figure in each of the production categories

The large manufacturing units have a capital investment of above 10 Crores with no above ceiling. Therefore the actual production value in terms of numbers, volume and value is extremely high compare to others. One single large unit with minimum 10 Crores capital investment may be equivalent to 40 small enterprise or

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[5] According to MSME act 2006 an enterprise is classified as:

   a. Micro enterprise, If investment in plant and machinery does not exceed twenty five Lakh rupees

   b. Small enterprise, if investment in plant and machinery is more than twenty five Lakh rupees but does not exceed five Crores

   c. Medium enterprise, if investment in plant and machinery is more than five Crore rupees but does not exceed ten Crore rupees

200 micro enterprises. The output of these enterprises and factories is very high due to the volume and magnitude of their operations. The per person production output from these large units is very high due to the extensive use of machinery and other capital goods. The total sales and exports of these manufacturing units run into thousands of Crores annually. Similarly, the medium enterprises operate with a capital investment between 5 to 10 Crores. Therefore structurally one single medium enterprise is equivalent to 2-20 small enterprises or 20-40 micro enterprises. The small enterprises operate with a capital investment between 25 Lakh to 5 Crores. Hence a single small enterprise is equivalent to 20 micro units. There is a huge structural hierarchy in terms of capital investment in all these enterprises. The production of one lager units is equivalent to the production of 200 micro enterprises. Hence there is huge structural variations in terms of volume, production and value. The larger organized structures have higher profit and margins whereas the lower ones have low profit and margins due to the variations in the magnitude of their operations.

Table 4.18 Major Production Unit Types and Capacities According To Percentage

	Sector/product	Estimated annual production capacity	Household, tiny, and cottage sector	Small scale sector	Medium & large scale sector
1	Tanneries-leather	2.5 billion sq. ft.	10 %	35%	55%
2	Leather footwear	1009 million pairs (includes 100 million pair of shoe uppers	60%	25%	15%
3	Non leather footwear	1056 million pairs	15%	70%	15%
4	Garments and outerwear	20 million	-	95%	05%
5	Leather goods	100 million	10%	85%	05%
6	Saddlery & harness	Value Rs. 2680 million	40%	60%	-

Source: Damadoran & Mansingh, 2008, CEC working paper on leather industry in India

Tanneries are one of the largest and most organized sections of the leather industry. More than 50 percent of the output of tanneries comes from the organized large and medium enterprises followed by small scale and only 10 percent come from the home based sector. Contrastingly leather footwear is largely an unorganized activity. Major production happen within the small, home based cottage sector which

largely cater to the domestic market. Only 15-20 percent of the production happens in the organized factories. The non leather footwear largely a small scale activity with 70 percent production happen in the small sector followed by 15 percent each in the large and home based sector. Leather garments is one of the segment where overwhelmingly 95 percent of the production is in small sector followed by 5 percent in the organized sector. Leather goods have the similar situation like leather garments but more there is slightly more share of household sector. Harness and saddler is largely located within the small and household sector.

SEGMENTS OF INDUSTRY

The leather industry can be divided into six broad segments in India. These are finished leather, leather footwear, leather goods, non leather footwear, leather garments, harness and saddlery (CLE, 2005). These six segments cover most of the leather work in India. Finished leather segment is basically a plain tanned skin of the animals which is the basic material for leather industry. Harness and saddlery is equipment or device made of leather which help control the hourse and animals, non leather footwear covers both sports shoes or shoes which does not require leather, leather goods comprise leather wallets, purses, key chains, belts, seats, leather garments include jackets, coat, overcoat etc.

Table 4.19 India's Exports of Leather and Leather Products for Six Years

(Values in million Euros)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Finished leather	416.78	455.8	477.20	543.00	605.39	505.03
Footwear	575.8	683.08	783.93	927.68	1117.01	1150.24
Leather garments	225.81	247.08	249.98	232.43	259.00	319.61
Leather goods	404.4	439.29	495.13	529.71	600.34	654.98
Saddlery & harness	39.53	46.28	58.14	61.75	79.64	69.11
Total	1662.32	1871.53	2064.38	2294.57	2661.38	2698.97
% growth	18.20	12.58	10.30	11.15	15.99	1.41

Source: CLE (Council of Leather Exports) cited in ITC, 2010

Figure 4.5: Products Wise Contributions in India's Export Basket (2008-09)
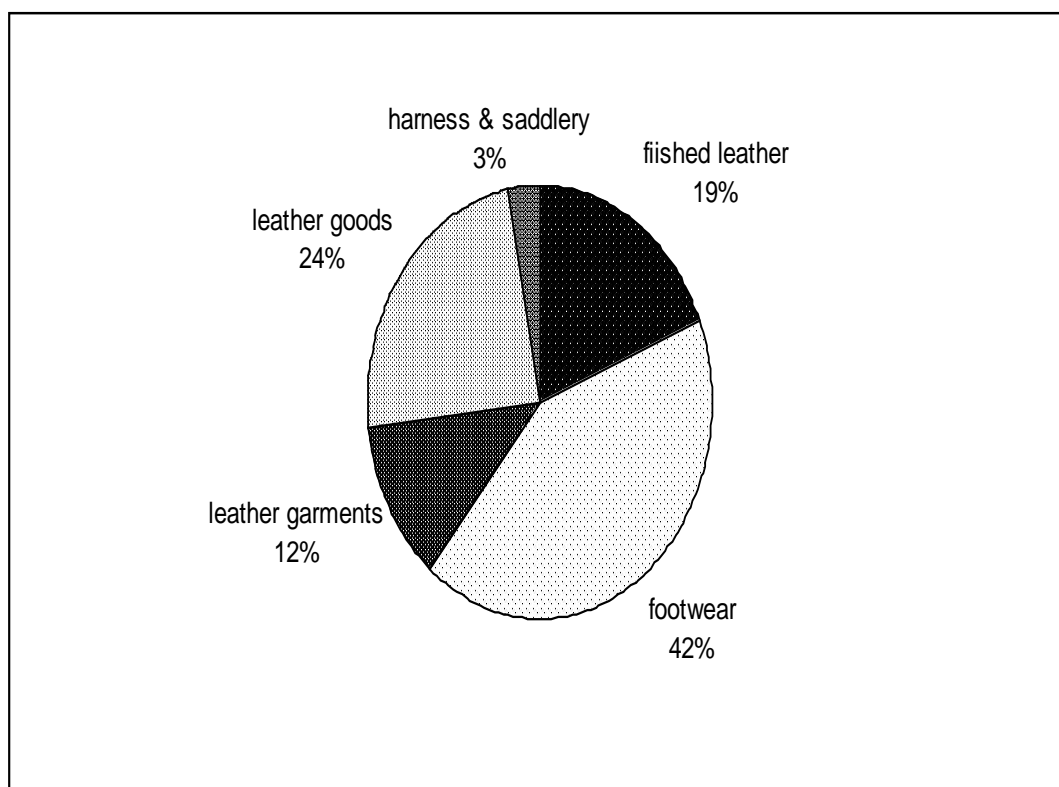
Source: DGCI&S quoted in ITC, 2010

* Footwear includes both finished leather footwear and shoe uppers

LEATHER TANNING

Finished leather is the base of leather industry. It is the most important and elementary sector of the industry. Other sectors are dependent on this segment for raw material. The share of this segment in the overall export in leather trade in 2008-09 was 19 percent. It is the most organized sector in overall leather industry. Leather industry is designated as 'hazardous industry' under the factories act, 1948. This makes it mandatory for units to secure a license before commencing any operations and particularly those relating to processing and finishing (Nihila, 1995:1485). This segment consists; raw hides and skin, leather (wet blue, crust & finished leather). Tamil Nadu is the bulk producer of the finished leather as most of the tanneries are located there. The state alone accounts for 44.6 percent of the total tanneries in india and its share in the exports within this segment is 34.88 percent.

Table 4.20 Distribution of Tanneries among Major States

States	Number Of Tanneries	Share In (%)	Share In Total Exports (%)	Production Places
Tamilnadu	934	44.6	34.88	Chennai, Amber, Ranipet, Vaniyambadi, Trichi, Dindigal
West Bengal	538	25.7	15.76	Kolkata
Uttar Pradesh	378	18.0	28.25	Kanpur, Agra, Noida
Maharashtra	33	1.60	5.21	Mumbai
Karnataka	16	0.80	1.61	Bangalore
Andhra Pradesh	24	1.15	0.06	Hyderabad
Punjab	79	3.8	1.25	Jalandhar
Haryana	18	0.8	4.86	Ambala, Karnal, Gurgoan, Panchkula

Source: (Roy, 2012: 13-4)

Tanning is a water consuming process; approximately around 40 tons of water is required to tan 1 ton of skin. There is huge industrial waste and affluent which is released from tanning the leather skin. Therefore it requires permits and licenses to operate this. As per the estimates of Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), there are 2091 tanneries functioning across India (Matthew, 2012:80). According to central pollution control board (CPCB) the number of tanneries operating in Tamilnadu is 934 accounting about 44.60 percentage of total tanneries operates in the country, in west Bengal 538 tanneries are in operation, accounting 25.70 percentage, in Uttar Pradesh there are 378 tanneries in operation accounting 18 percent (ITC, 2010: 14). Tamilnadu, west Bengal and Uttar Pradesh put together account 88.50 percent of the total tanneries in the country. Tanning is the most organized segment of the leather industry. The bulk of the production happens in the medium and large establishments. The share of household sector was 10 percent, small sector accounting 35 percent and medium and large sector accounting the bulk 55 percent (ibid).

LEATHER GOODS

This segment manufacture diverse varieties of goods like wallets, bags, files, caps, ties, folders, organizers, briefcases, belts, waist and hand pouches, sofa, seat

cover, credit card holder, passport holder, pet accessories, briefcases, luggagewares, covers for camera, cauculator, leather toys, diary covers, gloves and industrial accessories like washer, bushes, bellows, industrial gloves and so on. The main inputs are leather and leather substitutes such as "foam leather" and rexine (Pais, 2006:2). This segment is highly diversified and spread to many part of the country. But it has a prominent presence and concentration in west Bengal especially in Kolkata.

One of the important base for the establishment for this segment in Kolkata is the presence of tanning industry in Kolkata which proves readymade material to this segment. There are approximately 538-600 small tanneries in west Bengal and 20,000 units manufacturing leather products. It employs approximately 2 lakh people. West Bengal produces 8 percent of india's cowhides and 11 percent of its goatskins. Large quantities of skins from Bihar (India's second largest producers of hides) and UP are also tanned here. Bata India Ltd (BIL) has India's largest tannery with annual capacity of 335,000 cow and buffalo hides in a Calcutta suburb. Apart from BIL, leather tannery by 600 small scales, family owned units concentrated in the Tangra (267), Tiljala (223) and Topsia (48) areas. The largest of these is the USD 7 million Taj leather works.

Table 4.21 India's Key Export Market of Leather Goods and Accessories

Country	Value In Us $ (Millions)					Share (%)	
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2009-10	2013-14
World	757.02	855.78	1089.71	1180.82	1351.50	100.0	100.0
USA	137.97	162.9	196.83	225.47	259.91	18.2	19.2
Germany	117.75	135.34	172.24	174.9	215.21	15.6	15.9
UK	123.08	131.74	137.14	154.39	177.12	16.3	13.1
Italy	44.82	46.57	67.02	62.67	90.27	5.9	6.7
France	38.9	48.16	59.09	67.05	78.18	5.1	5.8
Spain	51.47	62.82	79.12	67.98	74.31	6.8	5.5
Netherlands	38.12	40.86	49.39	53.9	62.7	5.0	4.6
UAE	21.63	21.76	35.1	43.05	56.87	2.9	4.2
Australia	26.00	26.27	34.17	36.3	36.72	3.4	2.7
Denmark	16.16	18.91	27.82	33.65	35.11	2.1	2.6

Source: Exim bank, 2015: 41

The export of leather goods during 2008-09 was 99,569,781 pieces worth 462.1824 million Euros. The east region share in the exports during 2008-09 was

53.36 followed by north ad wourth with 18.99 and 18.19 percent respectively. Central and west have a minor share of 5.92 and 3.54 during the same period. West Bengal alone accounts 65 percent of India's leather goods exports in 1999-2000. Its share of total Indian leather and leather goods exports is 15 percent. The European Union and North America are the leading importer of west Bengals leather and leather goods amounting 79 percent and 12 percent respectively. In response of the 1996 supreme court order banning polluting industries in municipal, areas, the government decided to set up a modern, integrated leather completed at a site about 25 km from where most of the tanneries and leather manufacturers are currently located.

LEATHER GARMENTS

India is the 2nd largest exporter of leather garments in the world. The exports of garments commenced in 1984 due to the policy level changes in the 70s and 80s. This segment is not very old but it has acquired an important place in the economy. This segment entered the world market only in the mid eighties with exports of 15 Crores in 1987-88 to 1530 Crores in 1997-98. Leather garments include products like leather jackets, long coats, waist coats, shirts, pant' short, children garments, motorbike jackets, aprons and industrial leather garments. Leather jackets are the major exported item within the garments section. India exported 3,172,363 (49.41%) pieces of gents' jackets worth 171.2427 million Euros in 2008-09. In the same period 2,568,216 (36.91 %) pieces of leather jackets for ladies worth 127.925 million Euros were exported. The leather jackets constitute more than 86 percent of the total leather garments exports from India. Germany is the major importer of leather garments from India followed by Spain and France. India, china and turkey are the major suppliers to leather garments to German market. These countries accounted for about 78 percent of the market share.

The leather garment production capacity in India was estimated to be 16 million pieces annually in 2013-14, of the total global production volume of about 120 million pieces. China's production capacity was about 70 million pieces making it the larger producer of leather garments in the world. India's export of leather garments increased from US $ 425.04 million in 2010-11 to US $ 604.25 million in 2014-15. In 2014-15 India's export of leather garments accounted for 9.3 % in India's total leather exports of US $ 6494.41 million (exim bank, 2015: 42-3).

Table 4.22 India's Key Export Market of Leather Garments

Country	Value In Us $ (Millions)					Share (%)	
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2009-10	2013-14
World	428.62	425.04	572.45	563.54	596.16	100.0	100.0
Germany	109.2	110.7	154.0	130.6	138.5	25.2	23.3
Spain	51.1	46.4	66.3	66.9	72.6	11.9	12.2
France	55.5	60.9	69.4	76.3	68.9	13.0	11.6
Italy	65.0	59.6	71.4	61.9	60.1	15.2	10.1
USA	17.0	22.0	31.9	42.2	56.3	4.0	9.5
UK	25.1	21.8	30.4	34.7	39.8	5.8	6.7
Denmark	19.7	19.1	18.8	19.6	26.8	4.6	4.5
Netherlands	16.9	17.4	23.0	21.4	22.5	3.9	3.8
Canada	8.6	7.0	10.5	13.0	13.1	2.0	2.2
Australia	5.6	4.8	6.6	5.7	5.4	1.3	0.9

Source: Exim bank, 2015: 43

This segment is largely dominated by the small and medium scale industrial units of different size. These units are largely located in the industrial cluster and economic zones of different regions. The manufacturing units are located in the Noida, Delhi, Gaziabad, Manesar, jalandhar in the north, Hyderabad, Bangalore in the south largely. The market share of north in the leather garments exports was 61.04 percent followed by south with 30.08 percent. West region contributed 4.09 while eastern region had a share of 3.25. Central region had a marginal presence in the exports with 1.53 percent share in 2008-09. India exported 9,286,313 pieces of leather garments worth 346.545 million Euro in 2008-09. Major brands like Armani, Zegna, Abercrombie & Fitch, Marco polo, mango, Cole Haan, Andrew marc, and guess source leather garments from india.

HARNESS AND SADDLERY

Harness & Saddlery comprises of a wide range of products running into more than 1,000 different items. In addition to the traditional leather equipment, it also includes metal hardware, nylon & textile items, such as horse rugs, blankets, saddle pads etc and also the riding apparel and the specialised riding boots[6]. Harness & Saddlery is made out of vegetable tanned leather which is fitted on top part of the horse back bone seat. The Saddlery with leather top is more comfortable and long

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[6] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kanpur/Kanpur-Unnao-only-region-to-make-saddlery-harness-goods/articleshow/53991171.cms

lasting. Two types of saddlery are used by the horse riders i.e for general purpose and horse show jumping. The raw material for manufacturing saddlery are indigenously available[7].

Table 4.23 India's Key Export Market of Saddler and Harness

Country	Value In Us $ (Millions)					Share (%)	
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2009-10	2013-14
World	83.39	87.92	107.54	110.41	145.54	100.0	100.0
Germany	18.0	18.5	22.2	22.3	30.3	21.6	20.8
USA	10.1	11.4	13.8	16.6	26.4	12.1	18.1
UK	9.3	8.6	11.2	13.4	16.4	11.2	11.3
France	7.6	6.3	6.2	8.9	13.2	9.1	9.1
Australia	5.4	5.9	9.1	7.7	10.5	6.4	7.2
Netherlands	5.4	5.7	6.5	7.0	9.9	6.5	6.8
Italy	3.6	3.7	4.0	2.9	4.4	4.3	3.0
Canada	2.3	2.6	3.0	3.6	3.4	2.8	2.3
Spain	1.9	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.3	1.9
Denmark	2.5	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.0	1.9

Source: (Eximbank, 2015: 44).

The industry is mostly concentrated at Kanpur, Meerut (UP) and Ambala (Haryana). The horse rider uses two types of saddlery. One is for general purpose and the other is for horse show jumping. The raw material for manufacturing of saddlery is indigenously available at Phillaur, Jalandhar, Bath Kalan, Kaithal, Kolkata, Kanpur, Meerut. There is very good potential for marketing the harness and saddlery both in the Indian as well as International market. The potential centers for marketing of these products are Race Clubs, Defence Departments and Police Deptt., Model Schools, Sport Schools etc. Presently, a number of units are making harness and saddlery at Kanpur, Meerut and Ambala[8]. Kanpur has been a major production center of harness and saddler since colonial times. It continues to hold dominant presence in this segment.

It is the smallest segment of the leather industry in India and India is one of the the largest producer in this segment occupying 3rd rank in exports. This segment is largely concentrated in the small sector which contributes 60 percent of the total

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[7]
http://www.msmedihimachal.nic.in/msme_adm/writereaddata/upload/files/pp/Harness%20and%20Saddlery.pdf
[8] http://www.dcmsme.gov.in/reports/leather/harnessandsaddlery.pdf

production while remaining 40 percent production come from house hold cottage sector. India exported 12,155,002 pieces in 2006-07 worth 424.44 Crores and in 2008-09 it exported 10,813,000 pieces worth 418.03 Crores. Its share in the exports of leather products is declining both in terms of percentage and also in production over the years. The share of Uttar Pradesh was 420.93 Crores in 2006-07 while it was 415.38 Crores in 2007-08 of the harness and saddler product exports from India (Hashim, 2010:45-49). India's export of harness and saddlery products is about US\$ 150 million, making it the third largest exporter in the world, accounting for a share of 11.56% trade in the global saddlery market of US\$ 1,407 million[9].

FOOTWEAR

Global footwear production reached 16 billion pairs in 2007 an increase of over one third since 1995. China holds an imposing position in the footwear trade, it produces 63.7 percent of the total global production in footwear. In 2007, 84 percent of the world's footwear by volume was manufactured in Asia. India ranks 2nd with 12.3 percent in the global footwear production followed by Vietnam with 4.1 percent, Indonesia with 3.5 percent and Thailand with 1.6 percent. The leading footwear manufacturing country outside of Asia is Brazil with an estimated 4.9 percent of the world output. It is estimated that 10 million people are employed in shoe manufacturing worldwide. 2.82 billion Pairs (more than 18 percent of the global output) are classified as sports footwear (UNIDO, 2010: 53).

Table 4.24 Top Ten Footwear Manufacturing Countries In 2007

	Volume	Share of global production
	Million pairs	%
China	10,209	63.5
India	**2000***	**12.5**
Brazil	796	5.0
Indonesia	665	4.1
Vietnam	565	3.5
Thailand	268	1.7
Pakistan	246**	1.5
Italy	242	1.5

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[9] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ka565npur/Kanpur-Unnao-only-region-to4.13.5-make-saddlery-harness-goods/articleshow/53991171.cms2681.73.5

Mexico	170	1.1
turkey	172	1.1

Source: UNIDO, 2010: 59

*includes 1.02 billion pairs of non-leather footwear, and excludes 100 million Paris of shoe uppers

** includes at least 150 million pairs of sandals/thongs

The share of china in the early 1980s was insignificant. It was 16 times smaller than India in terms of its share in global leather trade. The share of India in world leather trade was 8.8 percent in the 1981 while it was 0.41 percent in the case of china. China has emerged as a dominant player during the 80s and 90s. It increased its share from 0.41 percent in 1981 to around 31 percent in 2006 (ITC, 2009: 19). It has registered more than 60 times growth within a span of 25 years. Contradictorily during the same period India lagged behind despite its growth its share has gown down drastically during all these years. Its share in the world leather trade has seen an almost 4 times fall. Today china is the global manufacturing hub for all kinds of products. China exported 68.2 percent as footwear and 2.8 percent as finished leather. It is the largest manufacturer of footwear in the world today surpassing India and other countries with huge margins (Deloitte, 2009: 14).

Table 4.25 Growth of Exports of Major Footwear Exporting Countries (in Million US Dollar)

Country	2002	2006	% Increase	Rank As Per 2006
China	10,680.64	21,014.63	96.75	1
Italy	6,508.56	8,141.77	25.09	2
Hong Kong	5,466.33	5,692.85	4.14	3
Vietnam	1,875.22	3,039.17	62.07	4
Belgium	1,841.77	2,960.28	60.73	5
Germany	1,518.05	2,607.89	71.79	6
Spain	2,023.96	2,147.74	6.12	7
Brazil	1,450.97	1,863.11	28.40	8
Netherlands	742.55	1,577.42	112.43	9
France	931.91	1,535.21	64.74	10
Indonesia	1,115.06	1,514.63	35.83	11
Romania	754.77	1,272.97	68.66	12
India	**625.25**	**1,236.91**	**97.28**	**13**

| Thailand | 736.92 | 918.55 | 24.65 | 14 |

Source: Hashim, 2010: 45

Footwear is the most important segment of the leather industry in India. India is the second largest producer of footwear in the world but it ranks 13th in terms of exports. India produces 2,065 million pairs of different categories of footwear which included leather footwear of 909 million pairs, leather shoe uppers of 100 million pairs, and non leather footwear of 1,056 million pairs. India exports about 115 million pairs. Hence nearly 95 percent of the production goes to meet its own domestic demand (ONCRA, 2014:9). Half of the footwear produced in India are non-leather based. The share of exports is very low compare to production. However despite that, the share of footwear in the leather exports from India is 42 percent. Major markets for India footwear are UK, Germany and Italy. However, one of the largest market markets USA (which accounts for 28.1 percent of global imports of footwear) is not among the top three destination for Indian footwear exports (Opcit: 16). Footwear is the growth engine of leather industry in India. It consistently shown growth both in terms of volume and numbers, it registered 17 percent growth in 2010-11 and 18 percent in 2011-12.

Table 4.26 India's Key Export Markets Of Footwear (Leather, Non-Leather and Leather Shoe Uppers)

Country	Value In Us $ (Million)					Share (%)	
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2009-10	2013-14
World	507.6	1758.7	2079.1	2066.9	2531.0	100.0	100.0
UK	296.5	339.7	360.5	399.5	426.1	19.7	16.8
Germany	224.3	286.7	353.7	275.0	345.0	14.9	13.6
USA	123.6	143.0	183.0	227.6	312.2	8.2	12.3
Italy	210.0	219.7	219.6	163.7	183.7	13.9	7.3
France	144.6	155.0	159.5	156.5	183.1	9.6	7.2
Spain	95.9	112.1	113.9	101.5	116.8	6.4	4.6
UAE	39.5	41.8	62.1	75.5	106.2	2.6	4.2
Netherlands	65.1	6.2	101.7	92.1	98.4	4.3	3.9
Portugal	22.6	25.7	28.8	21.4	28.2	1.5	1.1
Denmark	17.0	16.6	24.3	32.9	24.5	1.1	1.0

Source: Exim bank, 2015: 39

Table 4.27 Exports of Leather and Leather Products from India in 2006-07 and 2007-08

	2006-07				2007-08			
	Quantity	FOB value	Units value in Rs.	% share in Export value	Quantity	FOB value	Units value in Rs	% share in Export value
Leather Footwear (Pairs)	**79,860,832**	**4,620.74**	**579**	**32.22**	**77,617,742**	**643**	**33.48**	**8.07**
Finished Leather (Sq. Ft)	650,741,171	3,476.28	53	24.24	644,107,012	54	23.35	0.17
Leather Goods (Pieces)	105,887,055	2,297.86	217	16.03	91,521,545	258	15.22	-1.22
Leather Garments (Pieces)	8,698,843	1,466.26	1686	10.23	7,180,180	2,127	10.24	4.17
Footwear Components (Pieces)	**40,704,099**	**1,301.75**	**320**	**9.08**	**37,007,211**	**372**	**9.22**	**5.62**
Leather Gloves (Pieces	99,408,814	680.69	68	4.75	107,643,457	71	5.13	12.40
Harness & Saddler (Pieces)	12,155,002	424.44	349	2.96	10,813,000	387	2.80	-1.51
Non-Leather Footwear (Pairs)	**4,949,337**	**71.14**	**144**	**0.50**	**5,659,274**	**145**	**0.55**	**15.56**
Grand Total		14,339.16				14,913.2		100	4.00

Source: ibid: 45

Footwear segment consists of largely three broad products categories. These three products categories are leather footwear, non leather footwear and footwear components. Leather footwear is complete ready to use footwear shoes. It accounted for more 33 percent of the total exports from India occupying 1st place in 2007-08. Footwear components are products like footwear uppers, soles, footwear lasts and other loose parts etc. it accounted for more than 9 percent of total exports occupying 5th place and finally non leather footwear which included rubber, plastic, PVC footwear. It accounted 0.55 percent occupying 9th place in overall exports in 2007-08.

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Table 4.28 Exports of Leather and Non Leather Footwear and Components from India 2007-08

Products	Quantity (in pairs)	FOB value (in Rs. Crores)	% share (Value wise)
Leather Footwear (Children)	6,603,339	339.03	6.78
Leather Footwear (Gents)	**41,040,658**	**2,896.93**	**58.02**
Leather Footwear (Ladies)	**27,396,999**	**1,589.49**	**31.83**
Leather Footwear (Others)	2,576,746	168.02	3.37
Total	**77,617,742**	**49,993.46**	**100.00**
Leather Components (Children)	1,369,719	49.26	3.59
Leather Components (Gents)	**19,584,262**	**813.5**	**59.17**
Leather Components (Ladies)	**8,350,742**	**442.76**	**32.2**
Leather Components (Others)	7,702,488	69.43	5.05
Total	**37,007,211**	**1,374.97**	**100**
Non Leather Footwear (Plastic)	2,198,411	21.51	26.17
Non Leather Footwear (PVC)	789,542	15.42	18.77
Non Leather Footwear (Rubber)	2,284,991	16.45	20.01
Non Leather Footwear (Others)	386,330	28.81	35.05
Total	**5,659,274**	**82.21**	**100**

Source: ibid: 46

India exports more of gent's leather footwear whereas world's major exports are in the ladies footwear. Gents leather footwear accounted more than 58 percent share in the exports in 2007-08 followed by approximate 32 percent in the case of ladies. Together these make 89.85 percent of total footwear exports. The same condition exists in the case of footwear components as shown in the above figure. Non leather footwear is relatively less expensive alternatives to leather footwear. Therefore the value and exports are less compare to others. In the non leather

footwear category, the share of Plastic footwear was 26.17 percent in 2007-08 while it was20.01 percent in the case of rubber footwear. PVC footwear accounts 18.77 percent.

Table 4.29 Export of Leather and Non Leather Footwear and Components by Regions

Products/Region	2006-07			2007-08		
	Quantity (Pairs)	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	Unit Value In Rs.	Quantity (Pairs)	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	Unit Value In Rs
Southern						
Leather Footwear	23,755,626	1,822.96	767	26,796,768	2,053.01	766
Footwear Components	19,934,493	879.00	441	18,760,496	917.61	489
Non Leather Footwear	1,32,6807	9.13	69	782,520	4.20	54
Northern						
Leather Footwear	**24,805,589**	**1524.37**	**615**	**25,914,744**	**1,667.42**	**643**
Footwear Components	**4,77,2084**	**124.15**	**260**	**4,780,033**	**121.02**	**253**
Non Leather Footwear	**1,969,713**	**34.89**	**177**	**2,610,382**	**49.40**	**189**
Central						
Leather Footwear	19,466,022	770.91	396	13,623,375	774.82	569
Footwear Components	13,031,330	253.88	195	12,285,612	302.55	246
Non Leather Footwear	203,042	8.87	437	172,588	6.70	388
Eastern						
Leather Footwear428724	430,663	19.77	459	428,724	22.63	528
Footwear Components	33,7617	10.42	309	486,4449	12.67	260
Non Leather Footwear	48,400	0.47	97	1,026	0.01	97
Western						
Leather Footwear	11,402,932	482.72	423	10,854,132	475.58	438
Footwear Components	2,628,575	34.30	130	694,171	21.12	304
Non Leather Footwear	1,401,375	17.78	127	2,092,758	21.89	105

Source: ibid: 47

Southern region dominates the leather footwear export market both in terms of quantity and value. It holds first position in the leather footwear followed by northern region at second and central region, western and eastern regions third, fourth and fifth position respectively. In the footwear component exports southern region ranks number one, followed by central second, northern at third and fourth and fifth by western and eastern respectively. In the non-leather footwear, northern region hold first position, second by western region, third by central, and fourth and fifth by southern and eastern respectively.

Table 4.30 Exports of leather and Non-leather footwear and components by states

State	2006-07		2007-08		% Variation In FOB Value
	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	% Share In Total Exports	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	% Share In Total Exports	
Tamilnadu	527,7.24	36.80	5,385.30	36.11	2.05
Uttar Pradesh	**410,8.35**	**28.65**	**4,374.33**	**29.33**	**6.47**
West Bengal	2 08,5.60	14.54	2,216.55	14.86	6.28
Delhi	936.81	6.53	1, 005.83	6.74	7.37
Maharashtra	847.26	5.91	819.04	5.49	-3.33
Haryana	630.21	4.40	619.79	4.16	-1.65
Karnataka	199.35	1.39	259.96	1.74	30.40
Punjab	157.91	1.10	138.17	0.93	-12.50
Others	96.43	0.67	94.20	0.63	-2.31
Total	14,339.16	100.00	14,913.17	100.00	4.00

Source: ibid: 48

In state wise exports, Tamilnadu is the most important state in India. It holds a prominent place in the leather industry. It alone contributed 36.11 percent in the total footwear exports from India worth 5385.30 Crores in 2007-08. Uttar Pradesh followed at second with 29.33 percent in exports worth 4374.33 Crores. West Bengal accounted 14.86 percent worth 2216.55 Crores at number third, Delhi at number fourth with 6.74 percent in exports worth 1005.83 Crores. Maharashtra and Haryana followed with fifth and sixth position with 5.49 and 4.16 percent in footwear exports worth 819.04 and 619.79 Crores respectively. The top three states together accounted

for more than 80 percent of the total exports of leather products from India in 2007-08.

Table 4.31 Export of Leather and Leather Products from Uttar Pradesh

	2006-07				2007-08				% Variation In FOB Value
	Quantity	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	Unit Value In Rs.	% Share In Export Value	Quantity	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	Unit Value In Rs.	% Share In Export Value	
Leather Footwear (Pairs)	**38,074,704**	**1,974.34**	**519**	**48.06**	**33,254,616**	**2,105.98**	**633**	**48.14**	**6.67**
Finished Leather (Sq.ft.)	281,817,457	1,181.12	42	28.75	285,089,163	1,284.77	45	29.37	8.78
Harness & Saddler	**12,024,752**	**420.93**	**350**	**10.25**	**10,697,918**	**415.38**	**388**	**9.5**	-1.32
Footwear Components (Pairs)	**14,867,525**	**314.26**	**211**	**7.65**	**13,965,730**	**356.99**	**256**	**8.16**	**13.60**
Leather Goods (Pieces)	15,406,016	143.02	93	3.48	5,942,133	136.43	230	3.12	-4.61
Leather Garments (Pieces)	309 127	54.71	1770	1.33	334,717	57.78	1,726	1.32	5.61
Non-Leather Footwear (Pairs)	**881,908**	**19.38**	**220**	**0.47**	**590,585**	**14.55**	**246**	**0.33**	**-24.92**
Leather Gloves (Pieces)	92 806	0.38	62	0.01	169,646	2.45	144	0.06	322.41
Grand Total		4,108.35		100.00		4,374.33		100.00	

Source: ibid: 49

Uttar Pradesh is the most important state in the northern region in terms of leather industry. In the overall exports of various products, footwear alone accounted for more than 48 percent in 2007-08. It exported footwear worth 2105.98 Crores in the same year registering a growth of 6.67 from previous year. Finished leather is another important product with 29.37 percent in exports. The state exported finished leather worth 1284.77 Crores in 2007-08 followed by harness and saddler with 9.5 worth 415.38 Crores. Footwear components placed fourth with 8.16 percent worth 356.99 Crores. These four products altogether make 95.17 percent of the total exports from Uttarpradesh.

Table 4.32 Exports of Leather and Leather Products from Agra Cluster

	2006-07			2007-08			% Variation In FOB Value
	Quantity	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	% Share In Export Value	Quantity	FOB Value (Rs. Crores)	% Share In Export Value	
Leather Footwear (Pairs)	**1,682,531**	**1,107.66**	**94.94**	**1,836,458**	**1,258.78**	**95.65**	**13.64**
Footwear Components (Pairs)	**1,522,669**	**47.48**	**4.07**	**1,477,631**	**47.01**	**3.57**	**-0.99**
Non-Leather Footwear (Pairs)	**591,666**	**9.17**	**0.79**	**299,997**	**7.69**	**0.58**	**-16.14**
Leather Goods (Pairs)	284,013	1.53	0.13	383,288	1.85	0.14	20.92
Finished Leather (Sq.Ft)	66,333	0.71	0.06	69,996	0.74	0.06	4.23
Harness & Saddler (Pieces)	4,308	0.18	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leather Garments (Pieces)	14	0.00	0.00	60	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leather Gloves (Pairs)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Total		1166.74	100.00		1316.08	100.00	12.80

Source: ibid: 50

Agra is one of the most important cities for leather industry in India. It holds a prominent place in the economy of Uttar Pradesh in terms of the exports of leather products. Leather footwear accounted for more than 95.65 percent of the total exports from Agra in 2007-08 valuing 1258.78 Crores followed by footwear components with 3.57 percent worth 47.01 Crores. These two products accounts for more than 99.22 percent of the total exports of leather products from the city. Agra holds a hegemonic presence in leather footwear and is known world over for its leather footwear production and exports. Uttar Pradesh exported leather products worth 4374.33 Crores in 2007-08. The share of Agra in that export was 1316.08 Crores. Therefore the share of Agra in the leather industry in Uttarpradesh was more than 30 percent.

Table 4.33 Exports of Footwear from Various Clusters in India, 2007-08

Name Of Cluster	Leather Footwear		Non Leather Footwear	
	Quantity (Pairs)	Fob Value (Rs. Crores)	Quantity (Pairs)	Fob Value (Rs. Crores)
Agra	**18,364,585**	**1,258.78**	**299,997**	**7.69**
Chennai	5,206,681	398.56	-	-
Ambur	13,087,436	993.11	19,060	0.38
Ranipet	4,567,996	380.83	-	-
Vaniyabadi	84,339	5.05	-	-
Kanpur	9,712,151	551.97	172,588	6.70
Noida	1,759,702	91.26	118,000	0.16
Gurgoan	3,222,969	160.98	123,208	20.18
Panchkula	312,694	30.36	-	-
Karnal	678,683	40.27	110074	1.83

Source: ibid: 51

Agra is the most important cluster of Leather footwear. The footwear segment of the leather industry heavily concentrated in Agra. It holds number one position in leather footwear in India both in terms of quantity and value. Second position in leather footwear is hold by Ambur in Tamilnadu with 993.11 Crores followed by Kanpur with third with 551.97 Crores and Chennai at fourth with 398.56 Crores. In the non-leather footwear Gurgoan hold number one position with 20.18 Crores in 2007-08 followed by Agra with 7.69 Crores with second and Kanpur at third with 6.70 Crores in the same period. Gurgoan emerged as a major non leather export center due to the shifting of non-leather units from Agra in the 1990s and 2000s due to pollution concerns. Noida, Pachkula are the non traditional centers which are emerging in exports as many MNCs have started production units in these cities.

FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY OF AGRA

Agra is the major producer of leather footwear and footwear components in India. The average per production of leather shoes in Agra is between 2.5 Lakh to 3 lakh per day (Hashim, 2010: 74). According to DIC, Agra, About 65% of total domestic requirement of shoes in India is supplied from Agra. According to CLE (2005) India produced 776 million pairs of leather footwear, 112 million pairs of

leather shoe uppers and 960 million non-leather footwear, the leather footwear has increased considerably and According to CLE (2011-12) estimates, India produced about 2,065 million (206 Crores pairs) of different categories of footwear. It included 909 million pairs of leather footwear, 100 million pairs of leather shoe uppers and 1,056 pairs of non-leather footwear. According to this figure the share of Agra in that leather footwear production at 65 percent will come to about 586 million (58.6 crore pairs). Various types of shoes that are produced and exported from Agra include dress shoes, casuals, moccasins, sports shoes, horrachis, sandals, ballerinas and booties.

There are approximately 33,130 registered and non-registered footwear products units, out of which 70 are large units in which two are golden cards holders and three silver card holders. There are 60 medium, 3000 small and 30,000[10] cottage sector units in Agra according to district industrial center (DIC), Agra. There are a large number of ancillary industries, supporting footwear industries in Agra. (About 20 small scale machinery manufactures and 100 various kinds of footwear component manufacture)[11]. According to SISI, Agra, there are 50 large mechanized units and 200 semi mechanized production units and 5000 small home based cottage sector units functional in Agra. According to Ganguly (2008) there are 60 export factories, 200 large domestic units, 200 smaller domestic units and 4,500 home based units. According to CLE, Agra, there are 5000 footwear producing units of which 60 units are organized firms solely engaged in exports and the rest are targeted to domestic market (Hashim, 2010: 76). The CLE sources are more reliable as they are the monitoring authority in leather trade in India. These manufacturing units are organized and unorganized in nature and vary according to size (physical), products, capital investment, quantity and quality of products, labour composition etc. The organized are running from some particular industrial locations like Nunhai, Sikandra and Achnera which are located on the pheriphery of the main city. The small, tiny and cottage sector units are scattered and run from various Muslim and dalit ghettos.

Footwear industry in Agra is one of the most important economic activities for the livelihood for city people. Agra is the largest footwear manufacturing hub in India with an estimated annual manufacturing value of almost Rs 10,000 Crores. Agra Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Chamber (AFMEC) president Puran Dawar says, "The footwear industry is so labour intensive that for an order of five Lakh

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[10] These are probably the households which are involved in one or other kind of footwear production
[11] http://agra.nic.in/industry.htm

pairs, a labour force of 250-300 is needed[12]. The footwear production in Agra is season driven. There are two major period for production in domestic units, viz, august to October which is supposed to be festival season in India and the other period is from November to April during which most of the marriages take place. In the case of exporting units there are not much of seasonal fluctuations nevertheless exporters basically cater to the requirement of summer shoes. Those producing for the domestic market prepare samples for ensuing seasons during April to June. A relatively bigger unit on an average prepares 400 Pairs of samples and for bigger units this may increase up to 1000 pairs (Hashim, 2010: 78). The output, employment, production are largely determined and affected by the seasonality and climatic conditions.

According to A. Sahasranaman, 25 percent of the total population of Agra is dependent directly or indirectly on the footwear industry, which provides employment to approximately 400,000 people. However, according to the Director of Aadhar, the number of workers working in this sector is far below the reported number. According to him the number may vary between 1-1.5 Lakhs. According to a report by SISI, Agra and MR. sarnam singh , assistant director, leather , SISI, Agra, the total number of workers may be around 200,000. CLE, Agra quotes the total number of workers having employment directly or indirectly in leather industry to be around 3.5-4 Lakhs (Damodaran & mansingh, 2008: 41). A similar report by G.P. Agarwal, Assistant director (L/F) SISI, Nunhai, Agra, the total number of workers who are dependent on footwear industry is about 100,000 Lakhs. The same report also states that 25 percent of the city population earns their livelihood from footwear industry directly or indirectly. If it is true then the actual number may be far more than stated. There is considerable ambiguity in terms of numbers but footwear is an important source of livelihood for city people. According to central footwear training institute (CFTI) Agra, there are 200,000 Lakh workers both in the registered and non registered units. Out of this 75,000 are employed in the registered companies and 1,25,000 are employed in the unregistered units (Bhambhani, 2003:114).

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[12] http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/agra-footwear-industry-for-mega-leather-cluster-111091700064_1.html

STRUCTURE OF FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN AGRA

The footwear industry in Agra can be broadly grouped into two broad categories. The first category includes the large mechanized export factories and the second category consists of medium, small and home based cottage sector that largely caters to the domestic market. The geographical distribution of the units also reflects this dichotomy. Most of the exporting units are located on each side of the Agra-Mathura by pass road while those producing for the domestic market are scattered in different parts of Agra. A large chunk of these are located near in and around hing ki mandi market. The large and medium level establishments are registered with the government labour departments the smaller and cottage establishments are largely unregistered. The footwear from Agra is exported to Germany, Italy, UK, Spain, France, Spain, Netherlands and other European countries. Major International brands like Clarks, salamander, Reebok, Florsheim, Deichmann, Timberland, Tribur, Rover groups and so on. The Major brands which source leather footwear from Agra are Bata, liberty, Sreeleathers, khadims, Tata, Reliance etc (Hashim, 2010: 76). Therefore this industry operates both within the organized and unorganized sector. It is dominated by the small and home based family units. The small scale, cottage sectors account for over 90 percent of the total production (ITC, 2010).

MECHANIZED UNITS

There are 70 large registered factories of leather footwear located at periphery of Agra city. Two are golden card holder three are silver card holder among them. These are highly capital intensive factories where the worth of machines itself may be in several Crores. These factories have imported and very sophisticated machines which are used by trained workers. The goods that they make are sold in European markets. These are primarily export oriented factories with little or no presence in the domestic market. The top largest among them employ more than 800 workers in single factory. These are modern establishments with production arranged on assembly lines. These units are known for making complete shoes and footwear of genuine leather within single establishment. They have their own dedicated department and staff for different work processes. The output of the top 10 exporters is very high per day to the tunes of 100,000 pairs per month. Second level among these export factories consists of factories that work with 400-500 workers with an

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output of 40,000 to 50,000 pairs per month. These are exports factories with similar structure, operations and organization. There are specialized departments with dedicated staff.

These factories have their own parallel supply of raw material and they directly procure raw material directly from Kolkata, Chennai, and Kanpur. According to workers, 80-85 percent of the employees in these factories are temporary and casual workers who work under the contractors on fixed wages. Rest others are salaried employees of the factories who handle different departments and sections. These units are equipped with the modern facilities like proper roads, uninterrupted supply of electricity, provision of water and toilets. Since these are registered factories hence they have to comply with the labour laws, although there are many provisions in labour laws regarding leisure, canteen, safety, entertainment, medical facilities but either these are non functional or being there for symbolism rather than actual use. The products are made according to European standards, designs, size and price. The products are with Euro price tag and the price in the domestic market is in thousand of rupees per pair. Women are also employed in these factories but their place is limited to some smaller processes like cleaning the workplace, packaging the finished goods and other simpler processes. Most of the women who work in these factories are widow, deserted, middle aged or those which are in destitution or those who do not have any support in the families.

SEMI-MECHANIZED UNITS

There about 200 Semi-mechanized organized footwear units. These firms and factories cater to both the international and domestic market. These units have a workforce from 200 to 500 and produce 4,000-30,000 pairs of leather shoes per month. The operations are partly mechanized and manual but there is extensive use of sophisticated machines in the production processes. These units are registered with various government departments. Domestic firms and companies source their footwear from these units. In the domestic market these factories cater to the upper segment of the market in India. These firms and factories make genuine and faux leather products which are sold in the domestic market with range starting above 1000 Rupees. Some of the companies like woodlands, Red Tape, Metro & Metro, Red chief, Woodland and Liberty can be counted in these kinds of establishments. These factories either make complete footwear products or source some parts to the smaller

houses units. 85-90 percent of the employees are temporary and casual workers who work under contractors (thekadars) on piece rate. Only 10-15 percent of the employees work on salary or on the pay roll of the factory. The role of women is limited to certain manual and simpler processes which are non technical. Women are employed in processes like cleaning the workplace, packaging the finished items, doing some smaller works which does not require very hard skills.

SMALL HOUSE HOLD FACTORIES

There are roughly some 500 small establishments and most of them are unregistered and located within the Muslims and dalit residential localities. These production structures run from rented or owned spacious houses or the terrace of the houses which are covered with tin. These are called "factories" in everyday use by the workers. These units are owned by various diverse groups like and Punjabis, Sindhis, Muslims, Jatavs (dalits) and other groups. There is no fixed criterion to define its labour strength but roughly it works with a 10- 50 workers. The production per day from these units is about 1000 to 4000 hand-made pairs per month. The workers are paid wages strictly according to their production output. They are paid according to piece rate and wages are paid twice a week that is on Wednesday and Saturday

Most of the investments in these production units are in specific machines and tools which are used in specific work tasks since the houses largely either owned or rented. The operations in these units are manual in nature to a large extent but some specific machines are used to execute particular processes which cannot be done with hands. Most of these units work with the faux leather, Rexine, Psedo-leather, look alike leather material or waste leather pieces which are purchased from the weekly *Haat* near Bijlighar. The product from these units sells in the markets in the range of 500-800 Rupees per pair. . It is frequent to find many child workers in these factories. The children come with their father, brothers, relatives or known *karigars* to learn the work. It is largely a male dominated area and there is hardly any presence of women in these units.

HOME BASED COTTAGE UNITS

This is the biggest sector of leather footwear industry in Agra in terms of the employment and production. There are approximately 4,250 small scale production units which are run and operated from houses. These workshop units comprise 85

percent of the total manufacturing units in Agra. These units are called *karkhana* by the workers. All these units are exclusively owned, operated by jatavs, hence these are primarily located within the houses of the workers and are heavily concentrated in the dalit basties. Of these 4,250 units, 3000 units are dependent on exclusive family labour and 1,250 units work with the help of 1-2 hired labour as single workers cannot attend to all the operations. The production from these units is about 150 to 1000 pairs of footwear per month. The majority of labour in Agra footwear is engaged in this sector. The overall production it is very high but the output per *karkhana* is low compare to the organized one.

These units do not work round the year in the same way. The bulk of the demand generates during the festivals (August to October) and marriage time (November to April). Therefore these units remain largely non-functional and suspended during this time. The work for these small manufacturing units and workers is available only for 6-7 months in a year. The workers are always in search of work and order during this time. These units largely dependent on order from the hing ki mandi traders for orders. Many artisans randomly manufacture the shoes and sandals and directly sell to the traders on very low margins. These units purchase raw material from the small retailers form the hing ki mandi or nearby shops either on cash or on credit. Raw material largely consists of rexine, foam, pseudo-leather, pasting glue which is called *doodh* locally, cardboards and some metal and non-metal components like buckles, nails etc. which are used in making shoes and chappals. The products of these units sells in the market in the range of 100 to 300 rupees per pair. The margins are very low and highly unpredictable due to the nature of the work.

These small units trade their products at *hing ki mandi* for low margins. Hing ki mandi is the largest wholesale market for footwear in north India. These units are either jointly owned by families or are single hand ownership. Most of the workers in these units are either self employed or work on fixed piece rate wages. There is no differentiation between work place and residential place it is one and same in this sector. One can find tools, raw material, finished/semi-finished goods kept inside the house. This is also the sectors where children help their parents in small processes and handle simple works which does not require much skills. Many of the students come from school and help their parents in the works. Child do not need any special training in this as they grow up most of them becomes quite well versed with using tools, identifying parts by their market names, do the small processes which then expand to

learn some more complex processes and by the time they becomes adult they already become the master.

Women and children are an important source of labour in these units along with adults. Many of these units are involved in making inexpensive shoes, chappals, sports shoes for the lower segment of the market. There is very little investment in the machines as most of the processes are done with the help of tools. There is no wages as it largely involves family labour but piece rate wages are given to hired workers. The small household units outsource some work to these units especially when the work load is more to these units. Besides that the small household units outsource for some specific works like cutting threads, stitching threads though soles, finishing etc. for which 2-5 rupees are paid per pair. It is common to find young unmarried girls and household women to do this work in their houses in basties.

SUPPORTING SECTORS AND INDUSTRIES

Finished leather is the key raw material component for almost 60 percent of the input cost. The kind of material also depends on the product specifications. Most of the firms in Agra source finished leather from four locations in India Chennai (50%), Kanpur (20%), Kolkata (15%), about 10 percent is imported from china, Taiwan and other countries. Bulk of the consumption of Agra consists of goat skin, sheep skins and calf skins and hence is soured from modern tanneries in Tamilnadu, Kanpur is the main source of buffalo leather while Kolkata specializes in cow leather… big tanneries in Kanpur supply raw material to all top export houses in Agra. Supply of accessories (hooks, buckles, eyelets and toppufs) is virtually monopolized by one supplier in Agra (Damodaran & Mansingh, 2008: 46). Besides finished leather, the adhesive that is extensively used in the pasting leather shoes is procured from Kolkata. A while glue called *doodh* is used in pasting parts of shoe uppers, chappals and soles is procured from the nearby manufacturing industries. Most of the domestic units specially the smaller and household are dependent on Rexine and foax leather for making footwear as it is much cheaper compare to the genuine leather. The lower and bottom level manufacturing are excessively dependent on raw material which is imported from China, Taiwan and other countries.

There are many small supporting industries and sectors which are dependent on footwear industry for its demand like rubber components, cloth components, plastic components, metal components, shoe component manufacturing, industries,

tools industry, light machine industry, paper industry, adhesive industry, the last manufacturing, leather board, cartons and other related accessories. According to Ganguly (2008) there are nine mechanized last making units in Agra producing 1,500 lasts per day and 20-30 small units make 1,000 wooden lasts per day[13]. Besides this, there are 200 sole making units producing PU, PVC, and TRP soles and the total capacity of these units would be 4 Lakh pairs per day. About 100 units produce handmade moulds and around 20 would be using CNC machines. Most shoes require insoles and there are 10 modern factories in Agra producing insoles (Hashim, 2010: 76).

 MARKETING

Marketing is an important sector of the industry as it allows smooth functioning of the industry to trade goods. The heart of wholesale market for footwear, accessories, raw material, machines, tools, distributors, retailers, smaller units are located in and around *hing ki mandi* market in Agra. This is the largest wholesale market in the north India and probably in whole of India. It is frequently visited by buyers from outside Agra and nearby state like Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra to make shoe designs, to buy uppers, acquire raw materials and supply of shoe lasts. There are many last factories which make international quality and standards lasts which is the basic requirement for making a shoe. Many of the states where footwear industry exists frequently visit Agra to procure these lasts. Agra is one of the important exporters of shoe uppers to the international and domestic market.

There are many large exporters, wholesalers, distributors, Stockists and retailers in the hing ki mandi. According to Hashim (2016), there are about 600 traders involved in the domestic trade of footwear. The trade use to deal in raw materials and finished products produced in Agra. There are a number of buildings in hing ki mandi housing shops of footwear traders. These distributors and traders are supported by a huge chain of retailers in Agra. They have their own specialization according to products, region, segment, market etc. There are specific dealers who deal in kids shoes and footwear not others. Similarly, there are dealers who deal with ladies footwear not gents and so on. Besides this, there are dealers which have strong

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[13] http://www.ihdindia.org/formal-and-informal-employment/paper-4-a-case-study-of-footwear-industry-in-india.pdf

presence and links in particular regions like east, south etc. many which exclusively deal in gents shoes, other deal in ladies According to Bhambani, there are 5000 shops of footwear in Agra (Bhambani, 2003:111). These large distributors and stockiest have deep links with the international, national and regional markets. They use their links to explore the demand and channelize supply through their networks. The table below broadly explains the segregated cost of leather shoes and the share of different stakeholders.

Table 4.34 Approximate Cost of Shoes and Share of Different Stakeholders

Sources	Indents					
	Material for the Shoes and Cost of Manufacturing (Raw Material and Labour Cost)	Profit to Producer	Railroad Shipping Charges	Profit of Factor	Profit of Retailer	Total
Sharma, 1958: 91	66.67%	3.33%	4.44%	5.55%	20.00%	99.99%
Lynch, 1974: 42	63.5%	5.0%		6.5%	25%	100%
If The Producer Distributes His Own Shoes Source: Ibid	69.21%	6.58%	4.21%	-	20.00%	100%

Ashwini[14]: field respondent	Final price to customer	Final price to retailer	Final product cost and profit to whole seller	*Aratia* (factor)	Final product cost to Manufacturers	(Raw material + labour cost)
Share in Rs.	500	500-380=120	380-250=130	250-200=50	200	140+45= 185
Profit in % per shoe	0	31%	52%	25 %	5-7 %	

Sources: Lynch, 1974: 42, Sharma, 1958: 91 & field notes 2014

Note: The approximate cost based on a shoe with a base price of Rs. 200 at which it is produced in the small karkhana.

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[14] Ashwini has a small karkhana where some 35 workers work on temporary basis. The factory produces 300 Pairs per day in season time

The above estimates clearly show that the profit of the small level karkhana/factory has not changed over the last 60 years although the share and profit of factors, retailers and whole sellers have increased phenomenally during this period. The raw material cost has increased phenomenally but the labour cost has not been raised in that proportion. In the medium and large scale factories the raw material is acquired in bulk and huge volumes so the cost of raw material is low. Moreover per person production is very high due to the use of sophisticated machines therefore the production cost is low and selling price is very high giving huge profits to the manufacturers and firms. Over the years the organized sector has grown and started eating the share of the small level workshops.

Three of the important aspects of marketing in *hing ki mandi* is that the large traders play multiple roles in the market. Firstly, they operate both as wholesalers and also creditors in the market. They purchase goods from the workers and also give credit to the workers on interest. Second aspect is that almost all the transaction in the market is done though credit slips called *purcha/purchi*. The traders give credit slips to the goods suppliers which can be encashed after some time, usually within some months. Thirdly, the traders deduct *Katauti* in the range of 2-8 percent of the total value of goods supplied to them. It is an unjust system with no rational justification. All these systems came into being after the structural changes in the industry after partition. The *purcha/purchi* and *katauti* systems are particularly unjust and exploitative. The workers are trapped into it as they do not have other alternatives. The small manufacturers are forced to encash these credit slips in the markets as they do not have capacity to wait for months. The credit slips are encahsed in the market by cashiers who deduct their commission. The small manufacturers have lower output both in terms of production and value. They have to bear the additional cost of *katauti* which leave them with less money and make them to manufacture low and inferior quality of goods due to shortage of money.

FINANCE AND CREDIT

Finance is an important and necessary component for the functioning of any industry. The industry has expanded over the decades so financial requirements have also expanded in a significant ways. These financial sources are formal and informal, organized and unorganized. There are many sources of finance to the industry like national and private banks, cooperative societies, marketing guilds, money lenders,

the caste associations. These institutions give loans, credit and financial support for establishing factories or providing working capital or to purchase machines. The larger and medium factories are largely dependent on the government banks or MNC capital. They get long term loans with low interest rates and export subsidy from government.

The medium and small are largely dependent on the cooperative societies, marketing guilds and caste based financial institutions for their requirement of capital. The home based cottage sector workers largely depend on money lenders, relatives, family members for short term loan to fulfill their capital requirements. The short range loan has high interest compare to the long range loans. The money is given against the security in the form of mortgaging houses, jewellery, land or something other valuable assets. The workers are charged heavy interests which range from 2 rupees per 100 Rupees to 10 Rupees per 100. The interest rate and amount depends on factors like family background, caste, income sources, urgency, motive, character of the person.

CHAPTER 5

INDUSTRY, LABOUR AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Leather industry in India is highly diverse, heterogeneous and fragmented in its spread, locations, segments and operations. There are significant variations in its structure, organization and operations across different regions, clusters and cities. The leather work in the economy is performed and scattered into the organised and unorganised, formal and informal sector, macro and micro operational structures. There are various segments of the industry which have diverse, disproportionate share, presence in the structural hierarchy of leather work in India. the work is largely located in the unorganised sector with approximately 85 percent of the production comes from the small and household sector except in the case of tanneries where more than 55 percent of production comes from organised large and medium scale production units (Damodaran & Mansingh, 2008:7).

The large industrial cities and towns have major share in production across regions, clusters and zones within the industry. Even in these cities major production is in the unorganised sector where labour laws are not applicable as most of the units are small and household. This work is more visible and relatively more organised in the large cities. The major part of production and significant portion of employment is concentrated in the cities both the formal and informal sector. Majority of the export and organised sector units are located in the large industrial cities and towns. Although these organised manufacturing units employ a significant portion of the worker but this is very small compare to the total workers employed by the industry. The share of exports from these larger units is very high as production processes are mechanised therefore per person production cost is very low but share in the exports is very high.

The heterogeneous nature of the industry also reflects in the diversity of products and its regional distribution. The southern region is specialises in tanning, finished leather and non and leather footwear, the northern regions specialises in leather footwear and leather components and sports goods, the western region specialises in leather accessories while the eastern region is famous for leather goods. There is further categorisation according to cities and their specialisation. Certain cities specialises in certain specific work processes. Agra is famous for leather footwear, shoe uppers while Kanpur is famous for leather Chappals and sandals,

Ludhiana is famous for leather sports goods industry, Chennai is famous for tanning works and leather footwear components, Gurgoan and Noida for sports shoes, Delhi for leather garments, shoes and other products.

The diverse nature of the industry is reflected in the diverse and disproportionate share of employment across different segments. According to Council of leather exports (CLE) "there are 8.00 Lakh workers in the flaying, curing and carcass recovery, followed by 1.25 Lakh in tanning and finishing, 1.75 Lakh in full shoe, 0.75 Lakh in the shoe uppers, 4.50 Lakh in chappals (Indian style open footwear) & sandals and 1.50 Lakh in the leather goods & garments" (Damodaran & Mansingh, 2008 :7). The figure roughly translates into as 45 percent of the workers are in the process of flaying, curing and carcass recovery, followed by 7 percent in the tanning and finishing, 10 percent in the full shoe, 4 percent in shoe uppers, 25 percent in chappals and sandals and 9 percent in leather goods and garments (ONICRA[1], 2014: 3). Besides, these numbers that there is a huge workforce that is involved in leather work as repairers of shoes/chappals/sandals. These workers are the most visible face of leather workers that are visible in almost every nook and corners of all the cities and villages.

The flaying, curing and carcass collection activities is the most elementary and single largest activity put together which accounts 45 percent of employment in the industry. Most of the tanning and finishing processes are concentrated in Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and west Bengal out of which Tamilnadu accounts for a major share. Therefore Tamilnadu accounts for a larger share in employment in this segment. Uttarpradesh holds a major share in the leather footwear and shoe uppers therefore it holds a major share in the employment and within Uttar Pradesh these are Agra and Kanpur. Tamilnadu holds a major share in the non-leather footwear and footwear components. Therefore the employment in this category largely goes to this state. Leather goods segment is largely concentrated in west Bengal and garments segment is largely located in Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Noida therefore these states and cities share larger part of employment in this segments.

The structure of work differs across segments, operations and regions so are the characteristics of workers in the industry. The work is organised in a hierarchal manner in the industry as there is huge variations in the social characteristics of the

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[1] http://www.onicra.com/images/pdf/Publications/Leather-industry-report-Transparent.pdf

workers within the industry. The social characteristics of the workforce differ according to their involvement in this work at different levels. It ranges from an illiterate self employed cobbler at the street corner to a highly paid degree and diploma holder manager in the organised factories. The collectors of hides and skins to highly paid technicians who specialises in particular processes of the work. A cobbler who does repairing and patch work is differentiated with a person who can make many pairs of shoes or part of shoes per day. A salaried class of workers in the organised factories are placed in contradiction to a worker who does piece rate work at different sized production units.

The social composition of the workers also bring in the social characteristics of the workers on the basis of age, gender, physical attributes etc. Women and children are involved in this work at the basic and elementary levels where the work does not require sophisticated skills. The organisation of the work in the industry largely influenced by the ideological, cultural and social customs and regulations. The work in the industry is organised in such a ways that it conforms to the larger social and cultural structures of the society. The larger social and cultural factors largely determine the workforce, composition and social characteristics. The industry is largely dependent on the labour of dalits for its work requirements. Leather work is highly a stigmatic and labour intensive work. It therefore draws labour from certain specific caste groups and communities across different regions, states and cities.

Indian leather industry today is highly specialized, diversified and heterogeneous in its nature and spread. The village level unorganized and fragmented craft evolved to a highly developed industry today. It has gone through various phases in history to acquire its present shape. The historical forces have played major role in its nature and organization. The present leather industry in India carries the baggage of history. This is visible in the form of location and concentration of industry in certain cities which were important trade and export centres during colonial period. The industry draws workers from historically marginalized castes and communities. Major trade partners of Indian leather products are from Europe and specially those countries which once ruled over India or parts of India. Some of the methods and techniques that the British adopted are still widely used in the leather manufacturing production units. The industry still maintains that history and never able to break up with its past completely. This diversity is visible in the organisation, location, function and locations of the industry.

The rule of Muslims and British was the most important period for the development of leather work in India. The Muslims did not have caste nor pollution barriers towards this work. They were traditionally meat eaters and leather has been a significant part of their lifestyle and major part of their military requirements. "During the rule of a specialised occupational category of workers developed called "Qusab" (butcher) whose primary work to slaughter animals for meat" (Sharma, 2003:12). They had love for art work therefore they always cared for the crafts and skills of the workers. These changes increased the demand of leather products during Muslim rule. Muslim rulers provided necessary encouragement and support for this work and workers. The deep impact of Muslims is visible in the form of concentration and location of this industry into those cities especially in the north which were prominent during their rule. Delhi, Kanpur, Agra were some of the largest centres of production, trade and commerce during Muslim rule.

Leather work was one of the industries which got commercialized during this period due to high demand of hides and skins. British moved to manufacture leather products for their military requirements after the Mutiny of 1857. They established first modern factory in Kanpur in 1867. The establishment led to migration from rural areas to cities where tanneries, abattoirs were established and traditional caste and communities benefited from the increased employment. leather The price of leather has been increasing due to the leather being procured for the organized tanneries through agents. Latifi says, in the united province region of Oudh particularly in Kanpur "the prices of hides and skin have risen 125 percent during the last few years" (Latifi, 1911: 102). The commercialization meant significant increase in opportunities both in terms of employment, profits and trade for those workers who were involved at different levels of work. British provided modern technical knowledge, capital, innovations and transportation facilities which led to phenomenal expansion and growth of this work. The leather work went though significant developments during the rule of British which affected the nature, form and organisation of this work.

The British rule particularly transformed this work into a highly valuable trade in India which benefitted the traditional leather workers. The association of British with this so called "dirty" work brought dignity, respect and power to this work. The British brought changes in the traditional leather work which affected the leather workers in the numerous and diverse ways. The leather industry developed so much during the British time that it was the fourth largest export item from India during the

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time when British were about to leave the country. The industry is dependent on caste specific labour. The work in the industry is organised on caste and religion line. The work is organized in such a ways that it maintains structural rigidity which is in compliance with the larger social and cultural structure of the society.

The concentration of industry in major industrial cities, the composition of workers, and improved methods of tanning and designs of leather products owe its origin, growth and development to these two periods in the history. The nature of work was changed due to the impact of muslins and British. Their work got modernized and accepted as an art and craft due to the import role that the muslins and brutish played in this work. The history of modern leather industry in India is not more than 150 years old. The work has seen tremendous changes, transition and transformation in history. These political and socio-economic changes and developments failed to change the cultural values associated with this work. This work still remained to be polluted and degrading for large section of the society. The power of religious beliefs, customs, cultural practices were stronger than the political authorities and economic incentives.

CASTE AND LEATHER WORK

Leather work is one of the occupations where religion, cultural values, custom and identity play a dominant role in determining the availability, accessibility and conditions of the work. This work is one occupation which is considered to be dirty, ritually polluting and degrading for many in the society due to due its association with dealing with dead animals, working on hides and skin and filthy work conditions. Carcass removal was a demeaning occupation but the ideology of caste does not merely demean this work only. It categorises many other occupations and works demeaning and polluted. Bayly observes, "By the logic of so called caste society, those who follow these occupations are inherently 'untouchable', defiling or unclean (ashuddh), even though the tasks they perform are indispensable to the purity conscious 'caste hindus'. India's widely shared reverence for the cow has made leather working a particularly polluting way of life, distilling and fishing have also been widely thought of as defiling" (Bayly, 1999: 192).It is precisely the reason this work is considered to be degrading and impure by Hindus due to the pollution concerns.

The religious values are so strong against this work that it carries stigma with it. Anyone one, who is associated with this work directly or indirectly affected by this stigma. Ramaswami writes, "tanners of Tamilnadu are mostly Muslims. Of the 90 registered tanning units in north Arcot district in 1967. 76 were owned by Muslims. The social prejudice of higher caste hindus against handling of the skins of dead animals was probably responsible for domination of this industry by the Muslims. Chamar the cobbler caste, is considered a low caste in the hindu social order. Most of the tannery workers in the district are of harijan caste, another depressed caste" (Ramaswami, 1984: 62). The stigma is deep and pervasive and is not merely restricted to the execution of the dirty processes nor it is a thing of past. A manager in a shoe factory says, "in India, you are not respected if you are in the leather shoe industry"…because the leather shoe industry, traditionally, is for our lowest caste in India. So that mindset has not changed. You are not respected. I am not respected in this society when I am only a leather shoe maker. If I made garments or exported textiles, I'd be a respected person. Mr. Malhotra names a major Indian company and explains, "They never came to leather because they are a traditional Rajasthan family business house and they do not touch leather. They will never do anything connected to leather; it is religiously not allowed for them to do as family" (Lalgee, 2009: 74).

It is because of this reason that caste Hindu find this work demeaning and lower to their self esteem therefore they have always kept a safe distance both from workers and work. This work therefore relegated dalits who are considered to be impure, polluting and ritually degraded in the caste hierarchy. A report published by government on the leather and leather goods industry observes, "The indigenous techniques included the essential skilled and unskilled operations which are involved in modern advanced tanning, shoe and leather work and the Indian chamars and mochis (italics are original) are well versed in them. There are processes in leather, shoe and leather goods making which people of no other community except the chamars and mochis will agree to perform. Hence this community is the reservon in india from which the supply of labour both skilled and unskilled, for this industry has been drawn" (GOI, 1947: 3).

Working with leather has never been considered to be a dignified craft and science. It is stereotyped as dirty, impure and degrading. It is precisely the reason that this work did not develop during a time when the Hindu kingdoms ruled over the country. Latifi, an Indian civil service officer, says "we find that an industry which

commands the highest knowledge and technical skill in Europe is here the monopoly of the meanest, poorest and most degraded orders of the people. The very touch of the tanner pollutes: his bare presence is an abomination even to a Sudra, a member of the lowest of the four main castes" (Latifi, 1911: 104). The hatred, repulsion and attitude towards this work and workers were so strong that the leather workers always remained undeveloped and marginal throughout history.

There are various kinds of civil, social and economic disabilities associated with the leather workers. They are considered to be so impure that their shadow is also avoided by higher caste Hindu. Mentioning about these various kinds of disabilities and inhuman practices Chandra says, "The leather industry in this country is, as is well known, in the hands of men who hold one of the lowest places in the social and religious scale of the hindus, viz., the chamars and the muchis. Their position is so low that the ordinary barbers and washer men will not shave them or wash their clothes, nor would Brahmins officiate as their priests at their festivals or religious ceremonies. They are held as unclean, and their touch is pollution, and to avoid them their quarters are assigned invariably away on the outskirts of towns and villages. So great is the depth of the degradation of these classes in the eyes of the higher castes, that the term Chamar has passed into one of obloquy. To call a person a chamar, is to call him the meanest of men" (Chandra, 1904:17).

There was so much of stigma associated with leather workers that they were denied basic human services and rights by the society. They are not allowed to access the community resources and opportunities freely. The leather workers have traditionally been poor and were largely dependent on their labour for their survival. They were not allowed to accumulate wealth and resources; they were prohibited by both legal laws in many parts and also by customs everywhere. "The traditional agrarian system in India was mostly governed by the caste system. The means of production, land, was predominantly owned by the upper caste. The physical labour was to be provided by the lower caste. Several artisanal and service castes were to render services towards the physical reproduction of the system. The caste groups were assigned specific duties. Simultaneously their rights over the produce were also clearly laid out. The production relations between the upper caste owners of the means of production and lower caste laborers were institutionalized and known variously across the country. While such relations were known as Jajmani in northern India, it was called Swanthanthiram in many parts of the southern India" (Nihila,

1999: 75). The untouchable workers were bonded by customs and traditions and they were dependent on their masters for basic needs. Bayly says, "Most of these receivers of the big man's largesse were known by the jati title Dubla, and also as Halis, a term implying service and maintenance ties which were perpetuated through the institution of hereditary debt-bondage or Halipratha" (Bayly, 1999: 198).

The predominance of dalits in this work is largely due to the fact that they have been prevented from taking up other occupations and lack of assets for survival. It was the obligatory duty of the untouchable castes to serve the upper castes by customs. This work therefore, has never been a chosen occupation by the dalits rather a forced one. It was perceived to be a degraded occupation meant for certain degraded kinds of people. It was an obligatory duty for the dalits to remove the dead animal as the accepted cultural practice in the society. It was a obligatory duty of those so called 'chandals' or 'pishacha' avarna or 'acchut' or 'untouchable' to remove dead animals from the vincity of upper caste areas. "When a cow died in a central Indian village, the owner tied a rope to it, dragged it as far to the edge of the village as he could, and informed the Mahar. The latter then dragged it out of the village and flayed it he could 'keep the hide free in return for services performed for the village community" (Roy, 1999: 161). Similarly in the south India in the state of Andhra Pradesh, "when among the herds of cow and goat, kept by the Sudra landholder, a head of cattle dies, the madigas are called. They secure the hide, and, in turn, they tan the leather, sew the sandals for the Sudra, make the trappings for his bullocks, and do any other leather-work that is required" (Rauschenbusch-clough, 1899: 40).

The Dalits were coerced to remove the carcass from the vicinity of the upper castes and many a times forcefully. There are instances in history where the dalits were killed and assaulted for refusing to remove the carcass of dead animals. "In 1950 two "untouchables" were murdered for refusing to dispose the carcass of dead animal. A reference is also found in kala bharat, a dalit fortnightly, in its October 1978 issue. The editorial of the said publication mentions that the Savarnas of Allahabad had forced the dalits to remove the carcasses of the dead animals" (Narayan, 2010:113). The upper castes irrespective of their economic position and employment status kept safe distance from this work however remunerative and lucrative it was in terms of employment and earnings. The social codes and barrier were stronger than the economic incentives.

When an animal dies in the city, the carcass is removed by government bodies and municipal workers. It is very difficult to do so in rural areas given the vast area, lack of institutional presence, poor infrastructure and availability of transportation. But in the villages where there is no such provision it is largely collected by the local and specific caste groups across different regions according to their social status in the society. "carcass collection is an activity is strongly linked to traditional caste structures and most of it done by people belong to lower castes in rural areas, as part of caste determined occupational structures in villages…the activities of carcass collection and flaying are still linked to customary obligations and to caste and as a result, those engaged in this activity are part of larger informal workforce that earn very little from the activity" (Damodaran & Mansingh, 2008 :9).

This work therefore was the only occupations which they could do without any barrier. Hence they have been maintaining historical relationship with this work. The work in the industry is organised on caste lines. In the rural economy the role and function of the leather workers is limited and restricted. There are various castes and communities in which are involved in this work at different levels. "The traditional organization of the cottage leather industry was based very largely on the principle of self sufficing village community which underlay the Hindu Jajmani system. Each village had its own workers in leather. These workers flayed the dead animals of their 'Jajmans' (patrons) tanned the hide or skin and made up the leather into shoes, irrigation buckets or drum heads for use by the latter" (Sinha, 1986:1061). The leather workers were bound to the village though customs and it was their obligatory duty to supply leather goods to their masters in exchange of hides and skins of animals. They were permanently tied to the village community and were prevented to change occupations at will. Therefore there were very little scope, alternatives and opportunities for their upliftment and development in the traditional economy.

The leather working castes were dependent on those people who had control over animal livestock. "the skins of the domestic animals are obtained from two sources, namely from the butchers who sell the skins of the animals slaughtered by them and from the villagers whose animals die a natural death, and who allow the chamars to take the skins in return for shoes and articles required in connection with agricultural pursuits. Zamindars and other owners of landed property usually make arrangements of this kind. They grant permission to one or two Muchis (mochis) or chamars to take the skins of dead animals throughout their estates, and in return are

supplied with shoes and other leather articles required by them, free of cost, all the year round. For the purpose of obtaining the skins of dead animals, the chamars and muchies often wander aboiut the country, and sometimes take leases of bheels and river banks, known as shashan mahals or shashan bhumi, where carcases of dead animals are thrown" (Chandra, 1904: 5). It was a customary practice to supply goods to the zamindars or dominant section in exchange for the dead animal.

The carcass collection, flaying and curing are stigmatic and highly filthy work processes. These processes therefore are largely remaining invisible from the public eyes. The availability of hides and skins in India is constrained by a low rate of recovery due to poor infrastructure. Available livestock are scattered and diffused throughout the country and their collection practices vary from region to region. Recovery takes place both from slaughtered and as well as 'fallen' (naturally dead) animals. This activity largely remain absent from the general view of leather industry as this is the most basic, elementary and largely stigmatic work activity which is done in a very secretive manner far away from the main cities in the distant and excluded areas of the country where slaughter houses are located (Lalgee, 2009: 48-52).

The most readily available and more visible icon and symbol of leather workers is visible in the form of cobblers which are found in every nook and corners of India scattered in cities and streets. These cobblers are relatively higher in social status as they do not involve in the more stigmatic work processes like flaying, skinning and carcass recovery. The manufacturers of leather goods are visible in selective cities. The elementary and most stigmatic works like carcass collectors, flayers, skinners are invisible as these works are highly filthy, stigmatic and humiliating therefore carried away from cities. The workers therefore come from the socially marginalised castes and communities. While taking about the tanning industry which is one of the most specialised and filthy process of leather work, Nihila observes "An aspect of the tanning industry that has considerable social and political significance is the caste cum community composition of the industry…the social stigma attached to working with hides and skins has not only inhibited the social upliftment of the caste/community involved in this work, but, worse, despite growing export earnings the workers of this caste/community continue to be marginalized both economically and socially" (Nihila, 1999: 75).

Although flaying, curing and carcass recovery account for a major share in total employment in the leather industry. But this workforce is scattered and

fragmented across different regions, states and cities. The animal livestock in the country is scattered across regions unevenly, secondly, the animals have to be transported to the regions where tanning processes are concentrated, it requires huge network and chain of workers who collect the carcass from different places both rural and urban and transport it to their desired locations largely in the cities where tanning processes are concentrated. Flaying, curing and Carcass collection are the elementary and most stigmatic work processes within the hierarchy of leather work. These are executed either on distance places or places which largely remain invisible from the public. These workers remain absent and invisible when one sees the leather workers in general.

The recovery of hides and skins is a scattered, irregular and informal activity. Rajnikanth and Prasad, observe, "the collection of carcasses and recovery of hides is completely decentralized giving part-time and full time employment to an estimated 5 Lakh persons…It has been estimated that 80 to 90 percent of total raw hides from bovine stock come from naturally dead animals. In the year 1961, nearly 95 percent of the cattle hides and 92 percent of the buffalo hides were from fallen animals. It is only when the animals die a natural death from old age or starvation or disease, that their hides are removed" (Prasad & Rajnikanth, 1991: 92-3)2. The animal population has increased but the slaughter houses have not increased in that proportion. It is therefore not a full time activity but a part time employment for the dalits. "The work of carcass flaying has been assigned by society to chamar and other Jatis like Dhanuks, Kureel, Regar, Madiga, malas and other in different parts of country. They were always considered inferior in relation to caste Hindus...they live in degraded conditions in the village and were treated as lowest of the low" (Sinha, 1986:) Flaying of carcasses is known to be an unclean, polluting and degrading occupation. "The occupation of carcass flaying not only placed the flayers in the lowest strata of the caste hierarchy but also lowest among the scheduled castes in their own caste hierarchy" (Prasad, Rajnikanth, 1991: 93). It is the most elementary, unorganised and filthy work processes. The collection of hides and skins are the elementary process by which the work starts.

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[2] Prasad, R.R. and G. Rajanikanth (1991). D*evelopment of Scheduled Caste Leather Artisans.* New Delhi: Discovery Publishing Houses.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEATHER WORKERS

Religion and cultural values play an instrumental role in the determining the availability, accessibility, composition and social characteristics of workforce within the leather industry. Caste play(ed) an instrumental role at different levels, forms in determining the conditions, composition and workers characteristics in the industry across all regions, states and cities. Leather work has never been a secular occupation historically. The work carried social status with it due to hierarchal division of society. Hence social factors were more important than the economic reasons. The work carries deep stigma therefore certain religious groups kept themselves away from it due to cultural codes and barriers. This work carries low value therefore left for those groups and castes which are considered to be ritually impure, socially inferior and polluted in the society.

The religious values affected the association with this work. Muslims did not have the same orthodox values associated leather work and workers due to the absence of caste. Therefore they did not have much biases and prejudice against handling animal hides and skins. A Report on the tanning industry in Punjab observes, "Owning to prejudice against handling animal products the trade in hides, skins and leather and the financing of the industry are almost exclusively a monopoly of the khojas (Muslims), although some chamars (dalits) are also engaged in this work, most of whom are handicapped for want of capital" (Ramlal, 1939:70). Hence there is a deep material, economic and occupation relationship between Muslims and dalits. Nihila observes, "The analysis of caste cum community composition of the leather industry shows a distinct pattern. Historically the trading aspect of the industry has largely been the preserve of the Muslims while the workers have generally been drawn from the socially depressed Hindu caste" (Nihila, 1999: 75).

The religious values of Muslims gave them an advantage over others in the leather trade. They did not have the competition from other groups therefore they maintained dominant presence in this trade. The slaughter houses and tanneries have traditionally been owned by Muslims. While most of the tanneries have traditionally been owned by Muslims and the workers mostly come from the untouchable castes. A study about the tanneries in the North Arcot district in Tamilnadu revealed that majority of the tanners (owners of tanneries) are Muslims. "They owned 76 tanneries out of 90 registered tanning units in north Arcot district in 1967. The social prejudice

of higher caste hindus against handling of the skins of dead animals was probably responsible for the domination of this industry by Muslims. Chamars, the cobbler caste is considered a low caste in the Hindu social order. Most of the tannery workers in the district are of "Harijan" caste, another depressed caste" (Ramaswami, 1984: 62).

When the demand for leather products increased and large scale manufacturing units came into being during British rule. It was the Muslims and lower castes groups which came to pick up this occupations The British employed Muslims and lower castes in the large factories as they were readily available for this work. "The colonizers recruited Muslims, who did not have the same notions of purity and impurity and as the Hindus, to manage the units and procurement of hides. But leather was handled strictly by certain lower castes…the Muslims then gradually gained a foothold in this sector. Some of them had been trained in management by the Europeans. Others started to create their own units. Along with the development of tanneries, they took over control of the networks within the British Empire. By the mid-nineteenth century, Muslims had the monopoly of both tanning and manufacturing, which then slowly mechanized" (Lalgee, 2009: 37).

Muslims and dalits have traditionally been eating meat. They do not have the same religious taboos either eating meat or handing dead animals. Therefore they have been related to meat and leather work traditionally. "Though Muslims were associated with leather, they were only butchers and not makers of leather articles. Muslim merchant activity spread to leather, which generally considered as socially polluting job by non Muslims" (Nihila, 1999: 80). Atul Chandra Chatterjee, observes in 1908 that "after sugar and cotton, leather is the most important industry in the united province (Oudh). The report noted that there were 341,796 workers both full times and also those involved partially with the work" (Chatterjee, 2013: 98). Almost all these workers came from dalits and Muslims. "The traditional Muslims butchers had a relationship with chamars and acted as middlemen and collected skinned hides from them. With tremendous increase in foreign demand for raw hides and skins, Muslims merchants (leather traders) anmassed much wealth in a short time. The Muslims concentration here as a natural cause and consequence of caste Hindu vegetarianism and abhorrence of cow slaughter" (Nihila, 1999: 80).

The work in the industry is organised strictly on caste lines. There are significant variations in the composition of workers across different regions, states

and cities according to social characteristics of the workforce. These leather working castes and groups are scattered across India and are known by different names in different regions. There have been different castes which have been performing leather work across different regions Roy says, "The rural location of tanning was reinforced by caste. The Chamars of the northern plains from Bengal to Punjab, the Mahars (Dheds) of central India and Gujarat, the Dhors of Bombay Deccan, the Madigas of the Telgu countryside, and the Chakkiliyans of the Tamil country, were castes that performed a variety of services in the village" (Roy, 1994: 464).

Chamars is the single largest category of leather workers and it is the largest caste within the scheduled castes in India in terms of numbers. "census and other figures show that the total population of chamars approached the figure of 11 million in 1916, and that it was the second largest caste category after Brahmins all over India" (Misra, 2011: 318). This caste is diverse and scattered from west to east and from northern part to the central part of India. According to Crooke, "there were 1,156 sub divisions within this caste" (Briggs, 1920: 21). There are hundreds of groups within this caste which have different names in different regions. Lynch says, "As a group, Camars (chamars) are most numerous north India, especially in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Bihar. The census of 1901 showed them to be numerically the largest group of castes in the former north-western provinces and Oudh, while the Brahmans ranked second" (Lynch, 1974: 30). This caste although scattered all over the Oudh but it has some specific concentration in certain districts if UP. "In the sarahanpur district every fifth man is a chamar, while in the meerut division seventeenth percent of the population are chamars. Taking the United Province as a whole, every eighth man is a chamar" (Opcit: 21).

This caste has been doing this work for centuries as per their ascribed occupation in the society. Although leather work has never been their sole source of livelihood but this work was the occupation where they are readily accepted and found. Leather work for this caste is a tradition and custom and they have been involved in this work as part of their culture. When the British opened many tanneries in northern India, the workers in these factories were exclusively drawn from this caste. This caste was exclusively absorbed as workers. Roy says, "Many artisans turned to the city where newly established large tanneries needed labour and could still find only chamars willing to work in tanning process, a situation that has changed very little to the present day" (Roy, : t, : 474-5). Chitra Joshi refers to a labour report

published in 1944 which shows the composition of workers in the modern factories in kanpur. According to report 63 percent of the workers were Chamars, 32 percent Muslims, 0.46 Brahmins and 0.18 kayastha in the leather industry of Kanpur (Joshi, 2003: 204).

In Mysore state (now in karnataka), this work is mostly done by a class of people known as adi-karnataks. In the and other parts of northern India, the work of tanning is under taken by chamars (Sharma, 1946: 163). In Tamilnadu, "The traditional leather workers of Tamilnadu belonged to Chakkiliyar or Arundathiar castes…apart from this main occupation, the chakkiliyar labourers had the right over the meat and skin of the dead carcass of the village. They in turn had to provide leather bags as part of the irrigation equipment, mend it as and when necessary. They also held the customary role of drum beaters of the village and were paid in grains for this" (Nihila, 1999:76). According to census of India reports, for the period of 1901, 1911 and 1921 revealed that, among the tannery workers (excluding manufacturers of boots and shoes), "chakkiliyans and madigas together constituted 97.38 percent of the total workers in 1901, 90.85 percent in 1911 and 83.84 percent in 1921. The share of chakkiliyans was 66.08 percent in 1901 which increased to 70.89 percent in 1921 while the there was a drastic decline of Madigas among the workers. They constituted 31.30 percent of workers in 1901 which got reduced to 12.95 in 1921" (ibid: 78).

These workers mostly involved in the tanneries run my Muslim entrepreneurs. Muslims were largely entrepreneurs but they were also involved as workers in the tanneries. According to Usha, "initially when the product was mainly SFL (semi finished leather), the principle source of labour for this industry was the workers from the traditional leather working scheduled castes of Arunthathiar, chakkiliyan and a group of Adi-Dravidars and Muslims belong to poorer sections. But later with the extension of production to finishing, Muslims workers on a large scale and workers from other castes also entered the labour force of tanneries and finishing plants" (Usha, 1985: 167).

In the United province of Oudh (now Uttar Pradesh), Lynch says "before the growth of shoe industry, the jatavs (chamars) of Agra city were mainly stone cutters, labourers, scavengers and tanner of leather. All of these are occupations which they traditionally performed as part of the village economy. In that economy the "camars" (chamars) form a large part of the landless laboring class and working in leather is only a subsidiary, although hereditarily ascribed occupation. Because of the pollution

barrier, these demeaning occupations were left to the Jatavs" (Lynch, 1974: 34). The leather work is a polluting occupation as a result upper castes kept a distance from it. This work was exclusively in the hands of Jatavs and Muslims in Agra. .A survey of the leather industry in Agra with a sample size of 1,351 workers shows "85.8 percent of the workers were jatavs (chamars) and 14.2 percent were Muslims. (Sisodia, 1960: 19).

In the western part of India there are different castes which do leather work. "In Gujarat, Mochi, Chamar, Dabgars do the leather work at different levels" (Pandya, 1959:78). According to a 'Report on leather industry of the Bombay presidency' (RLIBP)' "In the greater part of the presidency when an animal dies its body becomes the property of certain of the submerged classes, and is by them carried away to some suitable sport and there skinned. In the southern and central divisions, the Mahars usually skin the animal and claim the skin, whilst in the northern the kalpas and chambhars often do this work" (RLIBP: 12). The removal of carcass was their customarily duty according to customs. The duty itself became price of their labour, if they failed to do so they were fined, excommunicated and punished according to accepted practice in the villages.

A report on the leather industry in Punjab covering 104 families across 22 towns and villages across different regions says that, "65 families were "hindus", 36 Muslims and 3 Christians. Among the hindus professional draws men from diverse castes, 47 families consist of chamar (including 6 Sikh chamar (Ad-Dharmi or Ramdasi)) 8 Raigar, 5 khatik, 4 Jatia, 1 Bagri, among the 36 Muslim families, 7 were Jat 7 were khatik, 4 were ranh, 3 chamrang, 2 mochi, 2 shinmar, 2 arain, 2 saqqa, and joiya, kataria, wangar, lakkhan, khokhar, kashimiri, sheikh one each, Among the Christians, 1 family consisted of chamar, 1 jat, and 1 chura respectively" (Ramlal, 2003: 25). The caste is such a strong phenomena that it penetrated into those religions where caste never existed or which opposed caste in their teachings. The workers brought in their caste even when they converted to these religions. These religions also developed the same categorisation and hierarchy as the Hindu caste order.

INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN THE WORKERS

The leather working castes are scattered across India geographically. Their status and experiences in the society are largely similar and unified. These castes are known by different names across different regions and cities. There exist social and

cultural variations between them both occupationally and ritually. The division of labour in the leather industry is highly hierarchal. There exists huge categorization and divisions within this occupation and also among the workers on the basis of their relationship with the leather work. They are divided into hundreds of castes and sub-caste with some castes is found in certain specific regions and cities. These castes are hierarchally arranged in such a manner that they have some predefined roles and functions within the structural hierarchy of work. These roles and functions are in the form of their rights and duties in the social and occupational hierarchy of work.

The leather work is organized in such a way that it conforms to the rigid social and cultural arrangement of the society. The workers are divided and categorised on the basis of work they do, products they make or the services they provide in the hierarchy of work in the industry across different levels. In the occupational hierarchy of work there are various categories of work processes like the tanners, flayers, curers, carcass collectors, shoe makers, repairers etc. these occupational categories differ from each other on the basis of their social and occupational ranking in the society. Roy says, "The separations between tanners and leather workers was decisive whenever the articles involved some sort of skill and /or had an urban clientele. Infact, in the case, subdivision appeared among the leather workers themselves" (Roy, 1999: 161). This social arrangement is visible in the ways the workers relate with the animals, parts and by products of the animals both living and dead. This social hierarchy manifested itself in relation to the animals and them kind of animals they deal with. The more the impure animal more likely it is to be attained by particular sub caste within dalits. The interaction between different groups is governed by their social and occupational status in the society. They maintained patterned and deeply hierarchal relationship with each other. This sub division is universal and largely conforms to the rigid social and cultural hierarchy within different regions.

In the western part of the country Martins observes, "In the Mofussil the carcasses of animals which die are generally the perquisites or haks (privileged right) of the Mahars or other lower village servant. These people are, in some cases, the tanners, and, if so, after unskinning the animals, they themselves, tan the hides' if nor it is sold to the tanners" (Martin, 1903: 3). There is hierarchal value associated with dead body and carcass. The dead body had no use for the cleaner caste while it was a right for leather workers. The carcass is the asset of Mahars traditionally and considered to be their 'right'. The dead body belongs to the Mahars as their right and

it was up to either to unskin and tan it themselves or give it to more degraded caste for tanning. There are significant variations over this right according to geographical locations also. The RLIBP observes, "in the greater part of the presidency when an animal dies its body becomes the property of certain of the submerged classes, and is by them carried away to some suitable sport and there skinned. In the southern and central divisions the Mahars usually skin the animals and claim the skin, whilst in the northern the Kalpas and chambhars often do this" (RLIBP: 2).

The pollution that is caused by doing leather work is hierarchal and graded on the basis of nature of work. The differences also arise between leather workers who provide their labour at different levels within the organisational hierarchy of work. In the province of Bengal, "the chamars handles dead bodies in pursuing his vocation, and in the eyes of a hindu it is the most unclean of all things to touch dead bodies, the muchi is only a manufacturer of leather articles, and has got nothing to do with dead bodies; consequently he is less unclean than his brother the chamar, and holds a higher position than the latter… chamars have many sub-castes , and the names of at least 15 of them have been found, namely, *dhusia, foreya, dohar, dhureya, jeswaria, kanoujia, janakpuria, jaunpuri, kurila, kori, magahia, mahara, ranguja, jatua*, and *lantua*"(Chandra, 1904: 17). This sub-division is significant as the sub-castes have been divided on the basis of their place of origin and also on the basis of their involvement at a particular process of leather work.

Mochi is considered to cleaner than the chamar because it did not work on the dead animals. It merely repairs or makes leather products hence is ritually cleaner than chamars. This is why there is more visibility of mochi than the chamar in the public spaces. It is common to find mochi in every nook and corner of cities and streets while chamars largely remain absent from the general public view as their work is more degrading and filthy. The mochi (ies) themselves are divided into numerous sub-groups and there are linguistic and regional variations. Martin says, "A distinctions must be made between the mochi of Gujarat and those of the southern and central divisions. The former claim and occupy a higher position in the social scale than their fellow craftsmen further south though in both parts they rank below the agricultural and above the degraded classes'…the Gujarat mochies were divided into 13 sub divisions which are involved in various other activities besides repairing work" (Martin, 1903: 26).

The social differentiation between mochi and chamar is not merely occupational it is also about their dietary and eating habits. "In Gujarat, mochi are considered to be of a caste superior to that of the chamars as they do not eat carrion, they are solely engaged in shoe making and chappal making occupations or repairs thereof…the Dabgars belong to the same social strata as the Mochis for, they too have not taken to carrion eating they mainly specialise in kudla or kudlu (leather casks or cruises for oil) made of different sizes. They also prepare leather "pans" for hand scales, which are used particularily in the grain market" (Pandya, 1959: 78). The mochis are superior within the leather workers as they are more sanskritised than chamars. Hence in the social hierarchy the place of mochi is higher than the chamars. The mochi, was also socially better off, as he did not have to touch flesh (Roy, 1994: 466). In west India particularly in the Maharashtra, "the mochi holds a lower position in the social scale, and though he does not touch Khalpas, Dheds, or other depressed classes, his touch is considered a pollution by a high class hindu" (Martin, 1903: 27). The castes are arranged in such a way that the higher caste do not touch mochi due to pollution barriers and consequently the mochi also find the touch of other lower castes polluting therefore there is limited social interactions within these castes.

Many places the local chamars or alike had to give leather products to their patrons in exchange for hides and skins. In northern part of India especially in the Punjab region, this was done by more degraded castes called Chuhra. "the owners of dead cattle do not sell the carcass. These are the right of the village menials of the lowest caste. The skin of the animal goes to the "chuhras"(sweeper) who skins the carcass, the vultures and village dogs eat the flesh, and the bones are taken away by an enterprising outsider, who collects them and sells them to a bone dealer at the nearest railway station" (Ramlal, 1939: 22). The carcass belongs to the Churas who are located at the bottom in the caste hierarchy. It was their customary right to the animal carcass. Their traditional role in the society was to serve and do the menial works. The carcass was given to them free of cost for the services they provide to their patrons whether in the villages or cities.

While most of the untouchables castes were involved with the animals' carcass and hides directly or indirectly. There were sub-divisions among the workers on the basis of the animals they will attain. Most of the lower castes worked on the hides and skins of dead animals particularly the cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, horses, donkeys. the leather workers also death with other animal's skins. Chandra says, "The

skins of tigers and deer are also tanned by the village muchis, where these animals can be had, viz., Orissa, Chota Nagpur, the Darjeeling Terai, the Sundarbans, & c. monkey skins are merely tawed by the use of khari, but as this animal (the Langur, which is to be found almost everywhere) is held sacred and is not killed, the work in this line is nominal" (Chandra, 1904: 14).

There were some city specific castes which worked exclusively on particular animals "The Jatia of Rewari tan mostly camel hides while others caste usually work on cow and buffalo chides and occasionally on the hides of camels, horses and donkeys" (Ramlal, 1939: 25). The variation and status difference was also on the basis whether the animal was naturally dead or slaughtered. There are sub-divisions, fragmentation and geographical association of a single caste on the basis of their involvement in various work processes. "The kuril is chiefly found in Allahabad and Lucknow divisions and is most numerous in Unnao district. He is a leather worker and field labourer. He will not touch dead camels or horses. Contradictorily in some places, notably in Punjab, the jatiya works in horse and camel hides, and refuses to touch the skins of cattle" (Prasasd & Rajnikanth, 1991: 56-7).

There were differences on the nature of hides and its commercial value. Martin observes, "in trade parlance a distinction is made between 'hides' and 'skins', the former word being confined to the pellicles of buffaloes and cows, the latter applying to those of sheep, goats and caves. These are the chief of any commercial importance, though skins of deer, tigers, etc. are dressed in many parts of the presidency, and camel hide is extensively used in Sind" (Martin, 1903:3). While the skins of tiger, deer are more expensive due to its rarity therefore those who do this work are skilled and highly specialised craftsmen than those who deal with hides of readily available animals. There is distinction in the way these hides and skins are procured and skinned which largely affect its value. "The naturally dead animal is carried to the special spot assigned for flaying of the dead animals of the village and the method of handling is very crude, for he often carelessly drags the animal if his companions are not sufficient in number, causing serious damage thereby to the skin" (Tiwari, 1938: 6).

There are differences between the workers on the basis of their faith, regional, linguistic and the product they make for certain groups. According to RLIBP, In the western part of India, "in many places different divisions of the chambhars class will be found dividing the leather work among them, for instance in one city in deccan the

Marathi chambhars make sandals, cheraus, and do any necessary repairing work, whilst the lingayat chambhars confine themselves to making brahmani shoes for which they tan the necessary "red morocco" and do no repairing" (RLIBP: 21). There were Muslim caste which have been involved in the making of leather goods. In Punjab, 'chamrang is the Muslim hide tanner met with mostly in Sialkot and the districts to the north-west of that town…Dabgar is an allied caste, mainly Muslim whose traditional occupation is confined to a peculiar work in raw hides, viz. making of Kupas (oil receptacles) from camel hides (Ramlal. 1939: 20). The camel skin was used for making products which were large in size. The products of this kind of leather was in demand in Arabia where it was used for storing grains, ghee/oil and other similar products.

The use of tanning material and also the ways to extract that material also divide workers into differential social and status groups. The material used in tanning also led to emergence of sub caste within caste. Sharma says, "Traditionally, the tanning of hides for sale outside of the village was undertaken by a sub-caste of chamars known as 'Rangia' literally dyer. The name of the sub caste appears to have been based on the effect of the tanning materials used in the traditional process" (Sharma, 1986: 1062). Rangia is a occupational caste whose primary work was to dye the hides or skin. This was a occupational category which came to be accepted as a separate castes. Briggs says, "there are some groups of chamars that are often spoken of as a sub-castes, which are strictly not such. It is a occupational division of certain sub-castes. As the name suggests, he is a dyer, or tanner, of leather, and, as such is a low type of chamar" (Briggs, 1920:26). Besides this occupational division there are differences existed between the workers on the basis of their technique of extracting raw material from trees. In western india, "The Chambhars who are tanners have the babul bark they use chopped up by their women, in which they differ from the Dhors who break it up with heavy mallets" (RLIBP: 21).

There is strict categorisation within the single sub castes on the basis of occupations and services. The animal skin is flayed to extract hides and skins from them. Flaying is the most elementary, stigmatic and filthy process within the leather work. Those who flay the dead animal are considered to be most impure ritually. It carries huge stigma and humiliations and social ostracism. It is therefore done by set of people (both within group and caste) that do not have much options and alternatives to livelihood. Consequently, "shoemaker Chamars consider themselves

above the chamar flayers…so even among the chamars, there exists stratification "based on occupational role and ritual considerations which places the flayers at the bottom followed by the tanners, shoe makers and agricultural labourers" (Prasad, 1986: 11-12).

The craft and science of leather work and the highly skilled workers never received the respect from the society although the products that they made were immensely useful to the society. "The position of the worker who supplies to the village with its moths (leather bags used in drawing water for irrigation) and pakhals (bags for carrying water, which consist of two hides sewn into the form of a double bag and are slung pannier fashion on bullocks) its shoes and harness, has never been an honoured one, useful and necessary as his labours are. From the days of Manu's code he has been classed with the degraded castes, and though now-a-days the mangs, Mahars, and others maybe hold lower than "the chambhars, the basest of men" (Martin, 1903: 23).

In the united province of Oudh 'The tanner and the shoe maker are to be found in almost every village in the province. The shoe-maker calls himself a mochi and considers himself socially superior to the chamar or tanner. Some musalmans have also taken to the manufacture of leather goods' (Chatterjee, 2013: 98). The entry of Muslims into this work as workers also led to further division among them on the basis of their occupation. Briggs mentions, "The Charkata is a Mohammadan leather worker. The Bihisti, who is sometimes a chamar, also works in leather. The Chik, Chikwa is a Mohammandan who turns out goat and sheep skins…Chamarang, is a tanner who works in ox and buffalo hides only and, who does not work up the leather which he tans. In Punjab there is a mocha, who is, for the most part, a Mussulman chamar" (Briggs, 1920: 28-9).

The same kind of relationship and categorisation were also observed in the Bombay presidency. "In the greater part of the presidency when an animal dies its body becomes the property of certain of the submerged classes, and is by them carried away to some suitable sport and there skinned. In the southern and central divisions the Mahars usually skin the animal and claim the skin, whilst in the northern the kalpas and chambhars often do this work…In several tanneries here both hides and skins are tanned for export, and most of these, although owned by Memon and Borah Mohammedans, are worked by Madrasi foremen. Most of the skilled labour is also performed by madrasis, the coolie portion the work being done by chambhars and

Dhors. In the tanneries working for local requirements Chambhar and Dhor labour is more common" (RLIBP : 12 & 18-9).

In different regions different castes have different share in the animals or product of animals. The hides and skins of "naturally" dead animals fetch lowest value due to the defects and old age. Most of the hides and skin in India came from naturally dead animals due to the absence of slaughterhouses in pre-colonial period. During colonial period, British categorised animals on the basis of their value. In Bombay presidency, "when an animal dies, the local kalpa tanner and two or three Dheds remove the carcass to a convenient spot where they khalpa skins it. The skin belongs to him, but the flesh is shared with the Dheds" (Martin, 1908: 15). The dead animal was a liability for the upper caste Hindus while it was an asset for the lower castes. "The kalpa is assisted by the Dheds in removing the carcass from upper castes areas. Khalpa is placed higher in caste rank therefore it keeps the skin and flesh of dead animal is given to the Dheds who are located at the bottom of caste hierarchy. Latif writes "The khatik, or tanner of goat and sheep skins, is either a hindu or a Mohammadan, and stands everywhere in a class quite apart from the chamar…in Sirsa, the Nankia chamar, who makes shoes, holds his head higher than the ordinary chamars who merely cobbles them; and both in turn must perforce admit the superiority of the Raigar, who only dyes leather" (Latifi, 1911: 104-5).

The size, availability, skin type, texture depends on the products that can be made of such leather. During colonial times there occurred significant changes in the hides and skin trade. There existed three grades of hides and skins during the colonial times. "For many years Indian government purchased large numbers of cattle, kept them where troops were stationed, fed them well for three months, and then slaughtered them to supply beef to the British soldiers. The hides from these animals were known as "commissariats", these were branded with "c" and a number corresponding with month when bought and realised the highest prices. The next grade known as "slaughtered" signified that the hide were from slaughtered animals as distinguished from those which have died a natural death. The third grade was termed as "deads" and still lower are "rejections" these trade terms are still used by the chief hide markets in the central part of India. Similarly goatskins there are in India several varieties. The best are from the province of behar and known as "patnas" they are find in grain, and ideal for the production of glace kid skins…further north in the Punjab the skins are known as "amritsars" they are large, strong and heavy, and

best adapted for upholstery. In the south, Hyderabad and deccani skins are of fair quality, chiefly purchased by the madras tanners, and tanned in southern India" (Legard, 1918:276-7).

The categorisation also exists on the nature of the animals one attends to. "The tanner serves all those having cloven-footed (e.g. cattle, buffaloes and goats). When any of his clients' animals dies, he drags to the tanner's ward. There he skins the carcase and tans the hide, the meat being eaten by his family and others among whom there are reciprocal arrangements for distribution. The skin is acquired free of charge and the shoes which the tanner and his women folk then make from it are sold for cash to the clients" (Mayer, 1966:66). The tanners had a free right to the animals skin in exchange of its removal from the upper caste areas. The tanners do not indiscriminately involve with all the animals. There may be certain animals like dogs, pigs, camels which are not attained by the traditional tanners. There are specific caste and communities which deal with these diverse animals.

The size, breed, quality and health of animals determine its hide and skin value. These factors affect the price one can fetch from the carcass. The sub-divisions of animals also socially important and because it determines which sub-caste will handle it. The categorisation of the carcass on large and small also affect the workers who will be involved in this work at different levels. This categorisation had social and economic consequences for the leather workers. Muslims traditionally been into slaughter business therefore they benefitted from this grading of animals hides. They became prosperous as the hides and skins they supplied had a greater value compare to the "hindu" leather workers who were dependent on the fallen animals which fetch lower value. When the animal is slaughter in abattoirs the hides and skins are safe whereas when the animals are dragged to other places its value is reduced due to mishandling. It is one of the reasons that the traditional caste workers were at disadvantage compare to Muslims.

The goods that have been manufactured out of leather had different use for different sets of people depending on their social and cultural locations within the society. There is gendered and religious categorisation within the kinds of products one could wear or allowed to wear. Konkani "Mahomedan" women wear shoes called *zenani juta'* of red leather with upturned pointed toes and stamped patterns on the inside of the shoe…the memon and other mahomedan women also wear a sort of half shoe with heelless uppers made of sheep skin covered with cheap velvet and worked

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with gilt embroidery and spangles. Hindu, women, it need hardly be said, do not as a rule wear shoes" (Martin. 1908: 19-20).

The products were peculiar to some particular cities. "Many northern towns housed garrisons which needed the leather craftsmen for saddler and harnesses. The cities also used leather jars to carry ghi (ghee) and oil, and to store scents. These bags were, in the 1880s, 'familiar to everyone who has once passed through an Indian bazaar. The cities and mobile populations like the armies or administrators, needed water-carriers, or mashaks, which were made by a small occupational group, the bhistis" (Roy, 1999: 162). "The leather has been used to manufacture varieties of goods, some of them were used to store daily used products it was a flourishing art. Another curious art still survives in Sind in the manufacture of dabas. These leather jars for holding ghee, oil and other liquids were formerly produced on a large scale in Ahmadabad, from whence they were exported to such places as the Persian Gulf. Their manufacture in Gujarat has now almost entirely ceased, their place being taken by vessels of tin" (opcit: 22).

There were some specific cities and clusters which were famous for particular kind of work and skills. Latifi says, "Lalwaan, in Hoshiarpur, is the only place where deer skins are tanned regularly and on a considerable scale. The work is done by 30 to 35 Ramdasia families, who procure skins from the waste country in the neighbour of Ferozpur and Ludhiana, and prepare them, and also the skins of young buffaloes into a soft dark coloured wash leather, locally known as sabar and used for busking, hawking gloves and breeches…the dog skins were widely used in Europe for gloves and pocket books which was widely exported to Europe. 'The difficulty in the way of dressing and tanning dog-skin are great in India, as even the chamar will not touch them, but the industry may commend itself to missions amongst the submerged classes" (Latifi, 1911: 118). There may be more degraded groups and castes below the chamars who will be ready to work with the dog skins. India hardly used the pig skin as the trading aspect of leather industry has been into the hands of Muslims. Muslims have a kind of repulsion to the pigs and it is one of the reasons that pigs skins could not be used in India despite huge potential.

HUMILIATION, DENIAL AND SUPPRESSION

The leather workers have been victim and object of hatred, repulsion and

stigma. This made them vulnerable and virtually powerless as the society kept them away. The condition of the leather workers is pathetic due to the lack of assets, non availability of the work, insecured nature of employment and discrimination which limits their sources of income. It is precisely that most of them were in heavy debt and in the condition of bondage. Lynch observes, "Within the caste system the jatavs (chamars) are untouchables. That is to say, they are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. They are polluting to the upper castes and therefore are the objects of discrimination and because of this low caste rank, they have remained, on the whole, illiterate, poor and virtually powerless" (Lynch, 1974: 23).

They are particularly considered to be fit for manual labour. They were imagined to be people who have less mental abilities and capabilities therefore they were particularly fit for manual and menial works. Gupta says, "The dalit male body was infantilised, tamed and trained for practical use. They were considered as a form of agricultural machinery, valued primarily for their hard work, endurance and productive capability. They were the beasts of burden and workhorses" (Gupta, 2010: 315). There is so much of resistance against dalits if they acquire status and power. The dalits are harassed and exploited though various means and pretexts. There are efforts by the upper castes to sabotage the mobility efforts of dalits by denying them equality in every spheres of life whether cultural or economic.

One of the most classical works on the Chamars is by Briggs. He mentions an incident; "A young chamar left his section of the country and took up service. He became fairly prosperous and felt that he had risen in the world. He concluded to pay a visit to his native village. There he chanced upon his old master, who said, "give that umbrella. You have no use for it. I will give you eleven Annas". So, taking it, the landlord said, "Go to work with the plough tomorrow". The next morning the landlord's servant appeared and forced the chamar to go to work. In the evening the young man received three pice for his day's work. He realized then that he is only a chamar after all. As a class, they are oppressed and they live in continual fear, especially of the zamindars, and far from having the comfortable environment pictured in industrial organization of an Indian province, their lot is a hard one" (Briggs, 1920: 55).

Leather workers were largely dependent on their labour for their survival due to lack of assets. This vulnerability was always exploited by the dominant section of the society. They were not given credits and often forced to work begari (work

without payment). Lucas says, "The tanning industry in the Punjab is followed mostly by the chamars in the villages, who, as a class, stand on next to the lowest rung of the social ladder. They are illiterate, poor and unorganized. Having no land on the security of which to borrow in the open market, they are at the mercy of the khojas (middlemen in the hide and leather trade) who are usually utterly indifferent to the welfare of these cottage tanners. The chamar is more than a leather worker; he is the indispensable agricultural labourer and the village begari (forced labourer) and sometimes a weaver" (Ramlal, 1939:19-20).

The exclusion, exploitation and suppression were universal for the leather working castes. There were markers which showed their social status in the society. These social markers were demeaning, humiliating and exploitative. The leather products were a sign of status and economic affluence for the wealthy and rich people. But the workers were subject of humiliations and repulsion. Roy says, "this ubiquitous article was nowhere a mass consumable or working class attire, but was worn by the relatively wealthy, the city dweller, or that class subject to "the unwritten ordinance' which required the removal of shoes as a courtesy to the superior" (Roy, 1999: 162). The labour of dalits was a touchable commodity and gave status to the wealthy and dominants while the labourers are untouchable and object of repulsion in the society.

The leather workers particularly the chamars were victimised and blamed for the death of cattle. There was witch hunting against chamars for cattle poisoning during colonial times. "The cattle poisoning as a crime made its first major appearance in 1854, when George Cambell claimed to have single handedly unearthed an extensive network of chamar prisoners' who allegedly indulged in the crime for the sake of hides. His campaign quickly turned into a witch hunt against chamars, and led to nearly 700 arrests within a very short time in the district of Azumgarh (Azamgarh) alone" (Misra, 2011:320-21). This crime comes at a time when there was substantial growth for chamars in the hides and skin trade. In the year 1872, caste Hindus on the suspicion of cattle poisoning "raided a Chamar settlement, looted their crops and swung the women up naked from the boughs of trees" (ibid: 323).

The practice of animal branding started during the British times when there was a surge in demand of animal hides for leather industry. The cattle owners started branding the animals so that the value of animal skin is decreased and it becomes

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useless or fetch less value for the chamars. In many a places the upper castes started burying their animals which resulted in loss of animal skins. Baboo, observes in a tribal village In Orissa, the Ghasis a untouchable caste was dependent on animal skin for their survival. "the Ghasias, in general are not getting less animal dead cattle per year…to that extent the income accruing from dead cattle is not substantial. People are not always giving the dead cattle to the ghasia but burying them in their own field, generally the fruit trees" (Baboo, 1985: 191).

The removal of carcass from the village was the duty of the specific untouchable castes. When there was substantial commercialisation of the leather work and the value of hides and skins increased. The upper castes started denying them their traditional right over the dead animals. In many cases they started burying their animals or started demanding money for carcass. "The Chamars were easily outbid by others due to caste, the bonds were not strong enough to withstand these economic forces and even within the Jajmani system, violent disputes broke out over the right to dead cattle. In some cases, jajmans began to dispense with the services of the chamars and to demand payment for the skins of their dead animals" (Sinha, 1986: 1062). This indicates that as long as an animal was a liability the carcass was given free. But when price of hides increased and it acquired value dalits were charged money for the same service. This shows that carcass removal was never a customary right but a forced duty of dalits.

The dominant sections always used their traditional power to extract money from leather working groups on different pretexts. "When the house of a chamar falls down and he wants to rebuild it, he has to pay a fee to the zemindars before he is permitted to do so. The zamindars further prevent the chamars from selling Malba (tannery refuse) which has some manorial value to outside cultivators; nor will the zemindars carry it to their own fields. Fearing that they may be taken to task by the district health staff for accumulating filth, the chamars themselves spread the refuse on the fields of the local landowners without getting anything in return" (Ramlal, 1939: 35). The dalits were exploited by upper caste though different tricks, pretexts and mechanism.

The dalit leather workers are stereotyped as dishonest, shrewd and drunkard by the society. They are considered to be men of lower calibre, intellect and subject of humour for the caste hindus. Gupta says, "The dalits male's intellectual capacities too were referred to as inferior and child like, playing on a mind/body separation. He was

seen as far inferior in intellect, slow in understanding things, and dumb. Work of the brain was therefore denied to them, relegating them to the work of the body" (Gupta, 2010: 316). This stereotyping is universal of castes. But the negative values are particularly associated with the leather working caste groups. "In south the Chakkiliar are perceived to be dirty, untrustworthy and compulsive liars" (Ramaswamy, 1979: 369). Mr. Ramchandra Rau, a Lecturer in economics and commerce, Calcutta university writes about the reasons for the poor conditions of tanners in west Bengal, "So long as there is great external competition with him, so long as no agency exists to teach 'these' chamars the best use of improved tanning materials, so long as these continue to be improvident, drunken and dishonest and so long as the use of foreign tanned leather is on the increase there is no hope of salvation to the village tanners" (Rau, 1925: 10).

The leather workers were dependent on the landlords and their patrons for their livelihood. Therefore, there was a power relationship which defined their status when they interacted with the larger society. This power relationship was visible in the behaviour patterns, gestures and expressions. "In villages around Mudurai, dalits commonly steer clear of the 'oor' (main village) unless summoned to accomplish some task. Social interactions between dalits and caste Hindus emphasize the inferiority of the former. On the approach of a locally dominant caste member, village dalits assume a hunched posture, take their towel off their shoulders and tie it around their waist (tuck it under their arm), lean forward and raise one or both hands in greeting. When conversing with higher castes their hands are held behind their backs or to their sides and their heads remain inclined. In sum, they pay exaggerated forms of respect, which are expressed non-verbally through bodily positioning. They usually stand apart from the higher castes and will not enter their houses but call out to the householder from the backdoor using idioms and dialects that accentuate their social status" (Gorringe and Rafanell, 2007:103).

These gestures and expressions reveal the polluted and low status of the leather workers in relation to the upper castes. There are other spheres where they are made to feel inferior. "For people to sit together on the same charpoy, the status distance separating them should be relatively slight or non existent. Jatavs do not share the charpoy with members of other castes. Another indication of the inferior status of the Jatav may be seen in the fact that people belonging to other castes will not accept fried or boiled food from their hands. When the villager decided to to build

local temple to the god Siva, the jatavs offered to contribute to the construction of fund. They were refused as it was feared that, as contributions to the project, they would want to use the temple and this prospect was unacceptable to other Garvpur hindus. To this day, no Jatav has ever entered the temple" (Lapoint & Lapoint, 1985: 3).

The dalit leather workers have no access to the temples and other sacred places. Therefore they have reinvented their own symbols and icons. Ambedkar had the most profound impact on their lives hence he is accepted as role model. In a village called Abupur in district of Gaziabad the jatavs workship ambedkar is frequently found in their houses in the form of calenders, portraits, statues etc. one informant says, "ambedkar ko humlog apna bhagwan mante hain aur uski puja karte hain, iske always hum koi doosa devi-devta ko nahi maante hain, humn sirf buddh bhagwan ko maante hain" (Kumar, 2002:107). This replacement of symbols also replaces their association and relationship with the traditional gods and caste groups. Ambedkar festivals are seen as an empowerment and assertion which is seen as threat for the caste hindus therefore there is violent reactions to it. Whenever they celebrate and assert their independent will, they were brutalised and resisted violently. On 14th April 1978, on the birth anniversary of Ambedkar, jatavs took out parade to symbolise their assertion in Agra. "When the parade went though upper caste areas like the Pipal Mandi and Rawat Para, it was attacked, bricks and stones were thrown from the roofs of surrounding homes. Despite the presence of policemen who occasionally have their hands full when jatavs try to retaliate" (Lynch, 1981:1952).

The resistance was also met whenever dalits tried to change their demeaning occupations and roles in the traditional economy. They were violently attacked and silenced. The Nara-Maveshi movement (NMM) was started in the mid of 1950s among the chamars of north India. The movement was aimed at ending the caste based occupation of the chamars, where the mean skinned and tanned dead cattle and the women cut newborn umbilical cords, all in return for grain and clothes under the Jajmani relationship. "In the shahabpur village when the chamars refused to do the traditional services they were brutally beaten up by the Thakurs and other lower castes including Muslims. The raised the slogans like "chamar vaddh hoye, chamar vaddh hoye" (kill, slay and massacre the chamars). They hunted out all the chamars and started beating them with spears and sticks. People of all castes joined in the violence. The terrified chamars prayed for the earth to swallow them up. Some people

hid in huge earthen pots to escape from the fury of the mob. Many women and children were injured in the violence" (Narayan, 2010:114).

Whenever dalits tried to pick up any other occupation other than their traditional work they were resisted and discouraged. The caste prejudice is so strong in the minds of people that it often gets reflects in their behaviour. Lynch narrates an incident in Agra about how the dalits are killed for pity issues. "A certain Jatav named karan singh sold snacks in belanganj, Agra. A high caste person bought and ate, unknowingly, friend food from karan singh's hand. In India food cooked by a lower caste person is polluting to an upper caste person; especially is it so when the cook is an untouchable. When the fact of the Sellers's caste became known there was a quarrel, and in the melee karan singh was beaten and died from the blows. The jatavs organized a procession and angrily paraded though belanganj. In an act of defiance they took out a bamboo pipe from the water stand (piao) there. The bamboo pipe was for the use of the scheduled castes only; they were too polluted to receive a drink of water directly from the spigoted brass pot (sakha) meant for the touchable caste "(Lynch, 1974: 82).

Caste based discrimination is very much part of the economic system. There are efforts on part of higher castes to deny equality to the lower castes so that they can maintain their social superiority. Knorringa observes, "There is a caste based chasm between an artisan community that produces a good and a traders' community that sells it. In Agra, footwear workers are predominantly jatavs, a subgroup of the chamars and only those born as chamars can occupy the status of shoe maker without breaking caste rules…the social ostracism of jatavs, which is still widespread severely limits their social and economic options" (Knorringa, 1999: 304)[3]. The dalits do not have control over their labour. Their products are sold by the caste Hindus who try to extract as much as possible from them.

Dalits depend on caste Hindus for their livelihood and remain silent despite their exploitation in various spheres of life. The lower caste labour is devalued and dehumanized and their bargaining power gets reduced which is well utilized by the dominant sections for their own advantage. The caste identity plays a major role in the functioning of the markets. The dominant groups use their traditional power both social and cultural to freeze out the competition of dalits in the market. Lynch says

[3] Knorringa. P. (1999). 'Artisan Labour In The Agra Footwear Industry: Continued Informality And Changing Threats', *Contributions To Indian Sociology*, Nos. 1 & 2, 33:303-328.

"The upper caste Punjabis resist any incursion on their occupational monopoly by the low caste jatavs. Punjabis' greater capital and control of markets 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" (opcit : 39).

The caste manifested in modern factories where the division of labour was more on secular lines. In the modern tanneries where majority of the workers came from the Scheduled castes and Muslims. But there was division within the workforce on the basis of work processes. Usha writes, "There was a division of work among the traditional workers and the Muslims. While the former concentrated in the preliminary process, where strenuous labour and working in pits of lime was called for, the latter engaged themselves in the processes that did not involve wet work, say trimming, packing, grading, weighting, etc. even the traditional workers offered themselves for work only when they could not find alternate agricultural opportunities. The workers in the tanning industry can be grouped into four categories on the basis of their tasks performed by them- hand workers, unskilled workers, machine operators and helpers. While hand workers and helpers came from traditional castes, unskilled workers were mainly Muslims. Machine operators came from diverse castes and religions including Muslim workers and traditional workers" (Usha, 1985: 167). A study on the footwear segment of leather industry in Agra observed, that a lot of intermediate castes have replaced dalits from the different processes of footwear making in large organized factories. Dalits are reduced to lower level of work like cutting, stitching, bottoming, the expansion of industry in various segments has not helped them. The Caste Hindus have entered into non polluting processes like designing, supervision and administration of footwear production process (Kain, 2006). The dalits are found to be employed in the polluting processes at the bottom within the hierarchy of work.

The marginality of leather workers continues in every sphere of social and economic life. This social condition is very reflected in accessing the basic services, commodities and community resources like water, residential spaces etc. Water which is the basic human requirement was not accessible to the dalits workers. The exclusion of dalit is universal and carried out in same ways as in other parts of India. Mayer says, "harijan caste have each their own wells; the weavers, tanners and sweepers draw water at places in or near the wards in which they reside. This separation of the harijan castes is taken for granted in Ramkheri and there have been

no efforts by harijans to change it. A few weavers commented on it to me once, but a higher caste man reminded them that if the "new ways" were adopted, they would have to drink from the same well as the sweeper, and they were not prepared to do this. Yet this separation seems to be mutable from village to village. I was told of places where harijans (atleast weavers and tanners, if not sweepers) drank from the village wells- though the provision was made that should draw water in brass, rather than earthen, pots. In one village, a harijan well had run dry, and the harijans had only been able to get water by asking higher caste women to fill their pitchers from the high caste jars. They were now demanding permission to draw water, too. A Ramkheri man who heard this advised immediate construction of a harijan well, as good as if not better than the common village well. This would silence such demands. And, indeed, the weaver well in ramkheri has been completely rebuild, and work is to start on the sweeper well" (Mayer, 1966: 52-3). The fear of equality and concern to preserve traditional privileges are so strong that people are ready to give relative equality to groups to preserve structural inequality. By denying equality and opportunities they make sure that they retain their traditional power, privileges, rank and order in the society.

The social separation continued and manifested in the residential and geographical as well. The dalits hamlets or clusters were mostly laid outside of the core areas clustered in particular corners of the villages. In Jiapota village in hardwar district of Uttar Pradesh, "as one enters the village through this road from hardwar the dwellings houses of the chamars are first encountered as the chamars are located in the northern part of the village. But when approached from southern side, the settlement of the Muslims is the first to meet with…the entire northern part is inhabited by untouchable castes, e.g. the chamars,, and the balmikis and the whole southern portion is inhabited by all the remaining hindu castes of Jiapota. The main village street thus serves as social boundary to segregate ritually non-compitable castes of the village within untouchable caste" (Das, 2002: 149). Lapoint & Lapoint, while observing the status of untouchable castes in Garvpur village of meerut district, say, "although Jatav families own their houses and house sites, their residences are clustered in one corner of Garvpur. As such, their dwellings are at least particularly segregated from those of other villages…centrally located in the jatavs residential area is the only well from which caste members have historically been allowed to draw water. While many now have access to hand pumps, they still many not use

other village wells" (Lapoint & Lapoint, 1985: 3).

There is resistance as well when they try to shift to core areas in the villages and cities. 'The higher castes in pappanallur village (Kanchipuram district), by and large, refuse to recognise the paraiyars's rejection of the traditional village institutions and the symbolic construction of their identity. In their view, they look at whatever the paraiyars do to assert themselves as a futile exercise and are convinced that it will never be able to remove the stigma attached to them. "The colony people should be colony people and the Ur people should be Ur people and we will never allow them [the paraiyars] to dominate us" say the vanniyars [high caste]" (Arun, 2007: 255). This exclusion is not limited to villages only, it was very much part of the city life as well. "Most of the shoe factory workers in Muzaffarpur are found to be living in a poor locality known as chamartoli…the said locality is also inhabited by members of other low socio-economic class representing different castes, high as well as low in ritual terms. It is called chamartoli because at this place most of the mochies (cobblers) lived earlier" (Thakur, 1992: 18). Dalits are forced to live in separate hamlets which are located on the outskirt of the villages. These localities are always far away from the main villages therefore dalits were also away from the water resources and markets. In cities, they live in those areas which are dirtiest, segregated and polluted.

The dalits and Muslims have been living together due to their similar status and association with certain kind of occupations. There was a clear demarcation on the basis of religion and caste within the villages. "The castes of division 4 (dalits) and the Muslims, live on what was once the edge of the village, though the rise in population has resulted in a varied settlement of caste in division 2 and 3 beyond them. All over, there is certain amount of intermingling, though it is clear which caste provides the nucleus in any ward. But in the harijan wards there is clear separation, both from other castes and between harijan castes themselves. The sweepers are to one side of the village and the tanners to the other. The weavers from a more dispersed pattern, ranging behind the houses of the Rajputs who were, and still to some extent are, their masters" (Mayer, 1966: 56). This social division of colony and hamlet was visible and manifested in many other domains like the location and access of the water resources. Mayer observes, "clothes after child birth are at first washed by the weaver midwife- also in the stream- and after a few days by the women of the house. There is no discernible rule whereby upper castes wash upstream from the

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lower castes; only as usual, the harijans keep separate and wash near their ward, which is also downstream. This is ideally held to be unnecessary, for running water purifies itself" (ibid: 53).

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND WORKERS

The leather work in general is labour intensive and filthy occupation due to the nature of work. There is so much of animal waste generated and it stinks badly. This work particularly is filthier and labour intensive at the elementary levels like flaying, curing and tanning. The work conditions in the tanneries are highly unsatisfactory due to the nature of the work. The work is dirty therefore it is a easy excuse not to provide clean working conditions to the workers. Nihila, observes, "The general conditions in the tanneries were far from satisfactory. The premises surroundings of the units were extremely dirty and insanitary. Though the works in tanneries were hard and unpleasant, it was a delicate work, wherein labourers need to be mentally and physically alert. The process in leather tanning was considered particularly dangerous for workers because of the very nature of the raw material that were handled, which were neither hygienic nor safe" (Nihila, 1999: 92).

Most of the tanneries are located in areas which are away from main settlements. In south India and elsewhere majority of the tanneries are located outside of the cities or in those areas which are already poor, dirty and non liveable. These tanneries work with minimum infrastructure as the work in tanneries is highly labour intensive. "A typical tannery is found in an old building over which neglect in upkeep is writ large. Situated away from the bustle of the tow, by the side of a kacheha road, a tannery is conspicuous from afar by the stray dogs lounging in the vicinity and the kites hovering low in the sky above it. Usually more than one such compound, each on an area of about 3 canals, lie side by side and nearby are the shops of bone and horn dealers and yards for frame drying the green hides. Here and there some creaking ox-carts may be seen bringing dry hides from the chamra mandi or freshly flayed hides from the slaughter house or taking away the tanned goods "(Ramlal. 1939: 66).

The working populations which involve in these works drawn are largely migrant and native workers which are drawn from the villages and slums. Labour Investigative Committee observed regarding the leather industry in 1946, "The large majority of workers in tanneries in Utter Pradesh are drawn from villages. In leather

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goods factories the workers are mostly urban areas and belong to cities of Kanpur, Unnao, Allahabad and Agra. Labour in Madras (now Chennai) is available in plenty and employers do not find it difficult to recruit the workers directly. In Calcutta out of 214 sampled workers 91 percent were found to have migrated from other provinces" (Swarup. 1952:41). The workers are vulnerable and poor therefore they are not able to resist the management to improve the conditions of work. It is the main reason that the working conditions in the leather industry remain largely unsatisfactory and inadequate.

The Royal commission of Labour in India (RCLI), the inquiry commission report revealed the pathetic working conditions in the tanneries. The commission observed "the handling of skins and hides is obnoxious to most castes, the workers in this industry come largely from the depressed classes. We were stuck by the lack of adequate sanitary arrangements, which make the bulk of such places even more offensive than inevitable from the nature of the industry. Adequate drainage was absent and often the whole earth floor space, spread over a wide areas, was littered with heaps of evil-smelling refuse and sodden with pools of filthy water. There was no washing arrangements and in case the majority of cases, no latrine accommodation. In a number of instances the workers had no alternative but to eat the food they had brought with them in the midst of such surroundings. Hours wee long, often 12 and sometimes in excess of 12, and whereas few women were employed, in the Madras presidency children of from 8 to 12 years as well as older boys, were found at work in the vats and elsewhere. Their houses sometimes exceeded those of the adults owing to the necessity of performing certain additional tasks such as water carrying, vat filling, etc., for which they "receive no additional cash wages but merely two dhotis a year. We feel that the statutory protection of the workers in this industry is essential because of the nature of the work and the class of worker employed, which from long social tradition a is peculiarly powerless to help itself…as far as the parents of the child workers typical of these industries are concerned, we realize that we are here dealing with a class wholly illiterate, exceedingly poor and only too often heavily indebted" ((RCLI, 1983: 98-99). The working conditions in the leather industry are highly inadequate to the requirement of the working population.

There is a close relationship between the location of leather products processing units and the settlement patterns of the working population. The workers are drawn from the marginalised castes therefore those who live around leather

processing and manufacturing products are largely from the dalit background. "Historically, the members of this community along with other untouchable caste have been living away and ecologically segregated from rest of the caste Hindu society. The ecological settlements of these people had been at the low-lying areas on the outskirts of the village proper. They lived in filthy conditions (Sharma, 1986: 67). The localities of these workers are derogatorily known by their caste names like Mochibara, Chamarauti, Chamarwada, etc. These settlements are largely far away from the core areas of the cities or villages. These are at times called antevasi in Sanskrit or vesakar in Marathi, are actually descriptive terms meaning people living at the end or outside of the wall of the village" (D'Souza, , 1977: 220). These segregated settlements have poor infrastructure whether it is availability of the water, roads, well built houses, electricity supply, provisions of street lights, open spaces etc.

The leather manufacturing units have been located outside from the main areas of the cities and villages due to stigma. These were mostly located in areas which had substantial leather workers population. According to Sharma "with regard to the living conditions of these people in the past one may say that the polluting aspect of leather tanning, shoe making, always drove the members of this community on the outskirts of the village proper in highly unhygienic conditions of life. But urbanisation and consequent migration of different caste groups seem to have brought about a state of liberal assimilation of different castes…economic inequalities and inability to afford a house within the limited of the town proper have led most of the shoe makers or the cobblers, in general, to live on the outskirts"(Sharma, 1986:75-6). Dharavi had been a major leather tanning center previously, martins says, "the neighbouring village of Dharavi, in the north end of the island, is entirely given to the tanning industry" (Martin, 1903: 2). Dharavi still maintains its old association and exclusive identity with leather work even today. It had been a village earlier but with urbanisation and industrialisation it has become part of urban city but it still retains its social, cultural composition and characteristics, it is mostly inhibited by the poor and socially depressed communities.

The material conditions of leather workers is very poor indeed. The live a hand to mouth life. "Many of them cannot get two full meals a day, and those who do get two full meals for themselves and their families a day consider themselves lucky. They live in dirty, low built thatched huts. Half a dozen people huddle themselves together in a hut already half filled with household articles and hides and implements.

The value of such a hut is not more than Rs. 5. Those that are better off, have two or three huts and the value of these is within Rs. 15. They have no furniture worth the name; but the comparatively well to do among them have one or two khatias (bedsteads) bamboo baskets and boxes, and some brass utensils for cooking and eating their food" (Chandra, 1904:18-9). Chitra Joshi observes that "the leather workers live in utter destitute and poverty. These people also face problems due to lacking basic amenities housing, unhygienic and dirty living conditions and the accommodation problem in some cases due to the large size of families. The death rate in areas inhabited by the labouring populations was higher than in other areas and in times of epidemics these were the areas worst hit the working class localities were crowded areas, with 71 percent of the families living in one room dwellings" (Joshi, 2003).

The condition of the dalits was same across different regions. Rauschenbusch-clough while observing the conditions of the madigas caste writes, "the madigas are miserably poor, each family lives in a hut built of stone laid in mud, and covered with thatch, giving a single room about ten feet square. By way of furniture there are a few cots, made of a frame of wood with twine woven across, and a few low stools. Earthen pots, large and small, used as cooking utensils, a few baskets, a few brass utensils, a stone to pound the rice and a roller to grind the curry powder complete the arrangements of the household…each family has two suits of clothes and a cotton sheet for covering at night. The women have strings of beads and a little cheap jewellery. A family whose possessions are as above specified is considered a thrifty, well-to-do madiga family…but the two thirds of the madiga community have only a portion of the above mentioned possessions. Cattle is lacking, there are no cots, no brass vessels, no red clothes for holiday attire. A few suits of clothes constitute the outfit of the whole family. If any of them need to make themselves presentable, they wear the better part of the wardrobe of the family. Many a day in a year they go hungry, glad if they can get a meal of boiled grain of a kind that is cheaprer evenr than rice, and a little pepper water poured over it to give it a religh" ((Rauschenbusch-clough, 1899: 43).

The living conditions of the workers is highly unsatisfactory and inadequate. There is struggle for the basic minimum facilities in the houses of leather workers. According to Satish Sharma, "one of the most important parts of a household is kitchen. It is not only a facility in the senses of a luxury but as an essential part. There

are only 43.65 percent houses having separate kitchens. Apart from this 56.34 percent of the respondents' food is cooked in their living rooms, outside in the open and in the small courtyard of their respective houses (whenever some place is available) even in those houses where there are separate kitchens, the kitchens are not adequate enough for keeping cooked food and other utensils. Due to this reason, in the case of large numbers, the utensils could be seen lying in the living room itself. Also the water, which is of utmost use for human beings' survival, is not available in the kitchen. According to the indications coming from data there are only 19.84 percent of the respondents who have this facility in their respective houses. Rest of them, constituting 80.15 percent , either fetch water from the municipal tabs or from the wells in their locality or in certain cases from hand pumps installed in other's houses in the neighbourhood…there are only 32.53 percent and 23.80 percent of the workers who have bathroom facility and latrine facility, respectively. Whereas 63.73 percent and 75.84 percent of them respectively go without these facilities" (Sharma, 1986: 80-1).

The leather workers have traditionally been poor and living life in distress. Lucas says "Every family is in debt and in each case it was incurred in a year of scarcity for buying food. among the duties of chamar are to supply "beggar" (forced labour), to repair all leather work, to supply one pair of shoes to the owner at each crop, to supply the ox, goads and thongs when required, and to assist in weeding and reaping. Among his dues are 1/20th of the total crop of grain, and dead animals whose hide and flesh are shared with the Dhanak" (Lucas, 1939:22). The earning of workers are highly unpredictable and insecure due to the insecure nature of work and employment. It is one of the main reasons for the poor economic conditions and heavy debt on their head. "In a respondent group of twenty five men, seventeen of the twenty five were in debt for some amount of money, the average debt being Rs. 928 in 1960s when the study was conducted. The major reason or debt was expenses for food, shelter, work, followed by marriage expenses and sickness" (Lynch, 1974: 51). This figure is particularly significant as the average wages of an unorganised worker was calculated to be 55.64 Rs. in the same period. This would mean that the workers were so heavily indebted that it was almost impossible for them to pay off the debt by regular work unless they sell of their land and other family assets.

A study which was conducted in four states namely, Bihar, west Bengal, Rajasthan and Gujarat covering taking a sample size of 480 leather artisans belonging

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to Scheduled castes. This sample covered the occupational categories like flayers, tanners, footwear makers, tanning and footwear manufacturing, leather goods makers etc. According to the study "72.71 percent of the artisans were landless and only 27.29 artisans' household had some landholding. Of these 27.29 percent artisans, 44.27 percent had less than one bigha of land, 18.32 had and 22.14 percent had landholdings in the range of 1-2 and 3-5 bighas of land. Only 15.27 artisans' possed more than 5 bighas of land. The landlessness was highest among the artisans of Gujarat (93.75 %) followed by Bihar (71.43 %) and Rajasthan (60.89 %). The study found that 40.62 percent of the workers were illiterate, 27.71 percent were literate without any educational standard and 18.96 percent and 11.25 percent had received education up secondary and higher secondary. There were no graduates and post graduates among them and only 1 artisan in Bihar was found to have received technical education…43.75 percent of the artisans were indebted. Out of this 35.71 had taken loan less than Rs. 500 and only 7.14 percent had taken more than Rs. 3000. The indeptedness was found maximum (63.81 %) in Bihar, followed by Rajasthan with (24.29 % and Gujarat with 11.9 percent" (Prasad & Rajanikanth, 1991: 68-79)

The wages in the industry have been poor due to poor employment and Woking condition. It has not improved even after significant improvement in the leather trade over the last few decades. According to a study on Dharavi, one of the most important leather products producing center within Mumbai. The study says "the monthly earnings of hired workers differed by category of the work. The average monthly earnings for all hired workers in the leather accessories industry was Rs. 2127. On an average, piece rated workers had higher monthly earnings then the time rated workers, piece rated workers employed by the month had average monthly earnings of Rs. 2932. The average monthly earnings of monthly salaried workers were Rs. 2022. The monthly contract worker (there was only one workers of this category in the sample) home based piece rated workers had average monthly earnings of Rs. 5000" (Pais, 2006: 700-01). The poor working conditions also bring in the poor wages in the industry workers. The workers are not able to dictate the work conditions as they are largely drawn from the most poor and socially ostracised communities. Indian leather workers are one of the poorest workers in the world. The following table and figures reveal the poor conditions of workers in India.

Table 5.1 Wage Structure of Leather Workers across Selected Countries

country	Wages
	US $/ hour
Japan	21.95
Italy	13.16
USA	12.00
Republic of Korea	6.30
Brazil	2.98
Mexico	2.59
Philippines	1.15
Thailand	0.92
China*	0.70
Indonesia	0.67
Vietnam	0.46
India	**0.43**

Source: UNIDO, 2010: 60

*Wages in china increased by 20 % to 25 % in 2008

Figure 5.1 the wage earnings by workers in different countries
Workers Cost/hour in US Dollar (2008)
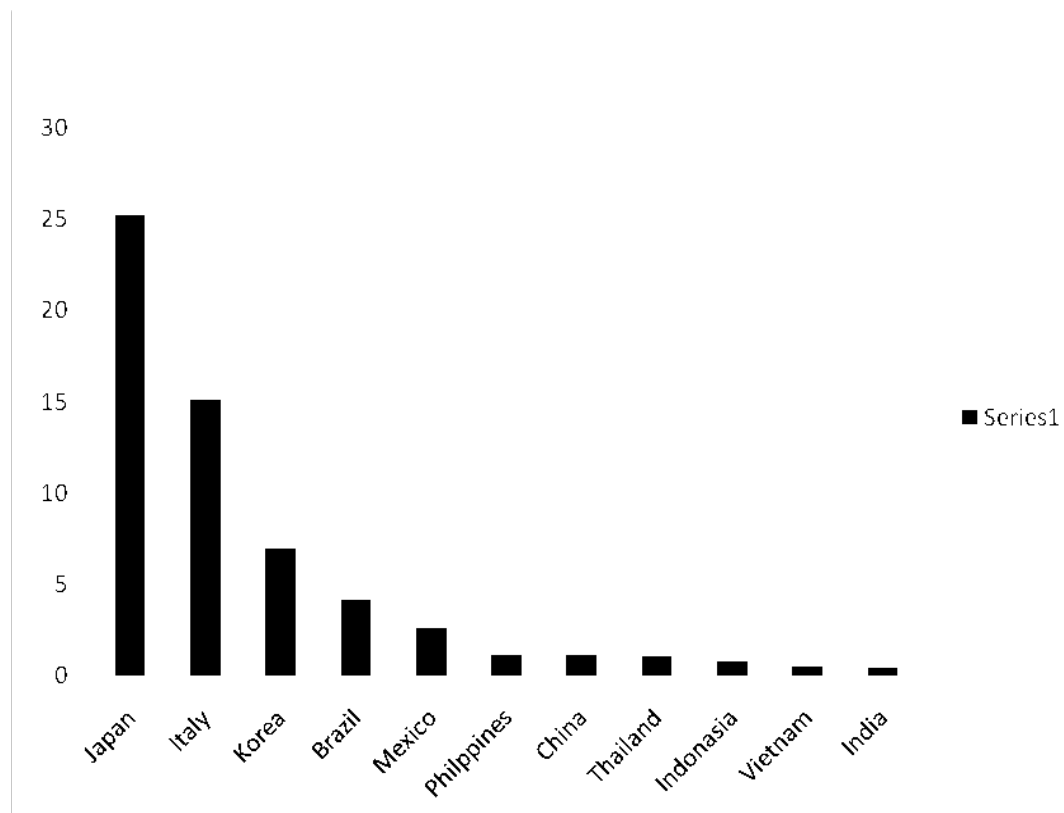
Source: Report on human resources and skill requirement in the leather and leather goods sector Vol. 16, National Skill Development Corporation, Ministry Of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, GOI

The leather workers in India are one of the most poor and economically marginalized communities globally. There are huge wage inequalities and differences between the workers of developed and developing countries. The wages of leather workers in Japan is more than 50 times comparing to India. The industry is more organized in the developed countries therefore the wage structure in India largely indicate the wages in the organized sector. Majority of the leather work and workers in India are working in the small and home based unorganized sector where there is no standard wages or fixed piece rate. The workers are temporary and casual and there are huge fluctuations in the demand of work on the basis of season. This makes them further vulnerable and politically powerless. They have to bear and tolerate the humiliations and stigma beside the economic hardships therefore they are cumulatively more marginalized than any other country.

Leather tanning and leather products making is highly complex, sophisticated and specialised work. It is a labour intensive community oriented work with different work processes and occupational specialisation. One single person cannot execute and specialise in all the work processes. The work is subdivided into different sub-categories with each phase of that category require differential skills according to product manufacturing. Traditionally this work has been a family oriented work which involved family labour. This division of labour required different categories of workers within the family. Women and children have been involved in this work from the very beginning since a very early time. Women and children have been involved in the most elementary processes which were relatively less labour intensive and less technical whether it is within the tanneries or within other products manufacturing.

The work is community oriented work and children learn the skills and trade within the houses. It is a hereditary work and there is hardly any organised or proper training. Most of the children start this work as part of their family culture. They learn the basic art of cutting, flaying and use of animal's products in their lives. Mahatma Gandhi, who was one of the self-proclaimed well wisher of the dalits while writing about the beef eating among leather workers he says, "No harijan worth his salt will kill cattle for food, but, having become untouchable, he has learnt the evil habit of eating carrion. He will not kill a cow but will eat with the greatest relish the flesh of a dead cow. It may be physiologically harmless. But psychologically there is nothing, perhaps, so repulsive as carrion eating. And yet it is a day of rejoicing for the whole

household. Children dance round the carcass, and as the animal is flayed, they take hold of bones or pieces of flesh and throw them at one another. As a tanner, who is living at the harijan ashram, describing the scenes at his own now forsaken home, tells me that whole family is drunk with joy at the sight of the dead animal. I know how hard I have found it working among harijans to wean them from the soul-destroying habit of eating carrion" (Prasad & Rajnikanth, 1991: 54). While the concern of Gandhi was more of ritual pollution which is caused by eating beef and not about the poor living and Woking conditions of the leather workers.

Children are drawn into this work from a very early especially in those families which are involved at the lower level manufacturing in home and small scale units. It is a way of life for the workers. Lynch says, "shoe making in Agra is more than a caste occupation; it is a way of family affair and way of life. Almost every male child grow up knowing at least the essentials of making shoes; it is only the rare educated or rich young man who has not, at one time or another, put his hand to the cobbler's thread and awl. Most children pick up some knowledge of the trade in their own or in their neighbor's home. However, when a boy leaves school in his early teens (the rule rather than the exception) he attaches himself to a man who becomes his Guru, or teacher" (Lynch, 1974: 47).

The industry is largely concentrated in the small and home based sector therefore child labour is most frequent in the industry. Poverty has been a historic fact for the workers and it is also an empirical reality today. It is precisely the reason that family are often compelled to send their children for earning from a very early age. A study on the small scale leather industry in Calcutta found, "in general 52.5 percent were in the age group seven to 10 years and 47.5 percent were in the older group of 11 to 14 years. The maximum number (40%) were nice to 10 years of age'. The working children were usually considered as trainee workers and accordingly their wages were much lower than those of the adult workers. Their usual wages ranged from 5 to 40 Rupees a week and 15 percent of them received no wages at all. The working hours were long and the work start from 9-10 am and continues till 10 pm. During a good business season, work continued even until mid-night. 55 percent of the children worked for 13-14 hours a day and in all 85 percent worked for more than 10 hours a day. A few children (5%) worked on a part time basis. Sunday was the usual holiday and the shops closed for about two weeks during the major Islamic festivals like "ID (Eid)"" (Mitra, 1993: 938-40).

Child labour is frequently used in various industries in India. It is largely due to the huge poverty in India that parents are forced to send their children to work to provide income to the family. 'Child labour is involved in the leather industry in a large scale. Children are employed in the manufacture of shoes, particularly in the Agra. It is estimated that as many as 25,000 children may be involved in shoe making, both for the domestic market and international markets' (Tiwari, 2005: 8). "According to the list of the US department of labour, children in India work in footwear production and in the production of leather goods and accessories. In May 2011, there was a press release about 44 child workers having been freed from leather units in Delhi. The press release did not link the companies running the leather units to production for the international market. The children, most of them approximately 10 years old, were beaten regularly and had to work in a small space in a leather units that had very little ventilation. They worked assembling leather purses and footwear…the India national child labour project (NCLP) says that the most recent observations of child labour in the footwear sector both date from 2008. A raid took place on 5 February 2008 at miracle shoes in vinnamangalam in which a boy and a girl were removed from the workplace. A second raid took place on 22 februrary 2008 at Ambur shoes and five children between 12 and 13 were removed from the workplace" (SOMO, 2012: 41).

Children have been one of the major categories of workers in the industry since very early. The work did not require much literary skills as it was a labour intensive work. the workers acquired skills though families and hereditary knowledge which was transferred from parents to young children. Therefore most of the workers have been illiterate or semi literate. This characteristics are present even today in the industry. Majority of the workers in the leather industry are casual workers who work on contract whether it is in the small units or large factories. In the large factories only a small 10-15 percent of workers are permanent employees. Rest of them work under contractors and middle men. The workers are either illiterate or early drop out of the schools. According to a study on leather industry in Tamilnadu, it was found that Most of them are either early drop out or illiterate as leather. "It was found 4.88 percent of the workers did not have any formal education, 22.76 percent of the workers were educated upto 7th class. 34.96 studied upto 8-9 class, 26.02 were 10th passs, 9.75 were 12th pass, 0.81 was graduate and 4.88 were no response"

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(Damadaran, & mansingh, 2008: 33). This clearly shows that most of the workers come from the poor families who have to discontinue studies due to family problems.

The industry has retained its history, character, composition and nature of the workforce even today despite huge changes over the century. There have been huge structural, technological, socio-political and economic changes in the country. But these changes have failed to transform the internal structure and culture of the society. The caste has not changed in the society so are the relationship of caste and work. Caste is still prominently has its effect on the works patterns, living conditions and attitudes towards work. It is revealed from the recent study that has been conducted by labour bureau under the ministry of labour and employment in 2007-08.

Table 5.2 Percentage Distribution of Workers by Caste Category

Sl. No.	Stratum	No. Of Sample Units	No. Of Workers	Percentage Distribution Of Workers Caste Wise		
				SC	ST	Others
1	Uttarpradesh	54	1570	47.5	0.2	52.3
2	Tamil Nadu	24	791	56.3	0.4	43.3
3	Maharashtra	30	391	51.2	-	48.8
4	Delhi	13	301	34.9	-	65.1
5	Kerala	25	216	12.5	-	87.5
6	Bihar	8	23	65.2	-	34.8
7	Rajasthan	19	478	32.2	3.1	64.7
8	West Bengal	18	337	3.3	-	96.7
9	Haryana	16	712	21.0	6.8	72.2
10	Punjab	16	327	51.4	-	48.6
11	Residual	23	605	26.9	0.5	72.6
Total		246	5751	38.0	1.3	60.7

Source: Report on leather industry including footwear and other art works in India 2007-   08, labour bureau, ministry of labour & employment, GOI (pg. 21)

Majority of the workers in the leather industry are drawn from the dalit castes in different parts of the country. There is disproportionate presence of dalits in the leather work which is excessive of their proportion in the population. While the percentage of dalits in the population is around 16 percent but their presence in the leather work is around 38 percent. This means that the relationship between dalits and leather work has remained intact despite changes in the industry. Some of the largest producers of leather and leather products manufacturing state like Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Maharastra and Bihar have around 50 percent of the workers coming

from traditional leather working castes. The status of dalits in the society has not changed but within the leather industry there has been significant change in the workers' composition. The other castes have displaced dalits from their traditional work which is reflected in the above study. The jobs and employment in the industry specially in the higher end jobs and employment has been overtaken by other castes. Dalits and Muslims have lost significant jobs and employment in the industry.

CHAPTER 6

LIBERALISATION, SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND DALITS

Liberalisation, Philosophy and History

Liberalisation is understood as an economic process often associated and interlinked with markets, private capital and foreign investment etc. If understood philosophically and linguistically, it is a process which signifies flexibility, softening, relaxation, adjustment or loosening of some state or condition. There occur philosophical, political and ideological changes/shifts/repositioning in the priorities of the state. In political term it is understood to be a process in which there are significant ideological shifts in the notion, nature, form, role and function of the state. Liberalisation therefore is a broad multi-dimensional and multi faceted social and political process. It is a broad term with pervasive meanings with wide applicability in different areas.

State adopts flexible, tolerant and liberal approach towards private capital. It reduces its own role in various socio-economic processes and activities. The changes in the nature of the state have huge social and cultural implications to the society. State adopts a flexible and liberal approach towards many social and political issues like commitment to social justice, ensuring just resource distribution, environmental protection, promoting egalitarian ideas and visions, consensus based social development, ensuring freedom, safety and security of the people etc. Economic liberalisation is one aspect of liberalisation process in which the forms, nature and role of state changes significantly in favour of markets and private capital.

The state perpetually and consistently creates conditions in favour of private sector. It ensures though policies that the interests of those people who command greater social and economic powers in the society are safe guarded and promoted. In that way liberalisation is also a multi-layered and multi-dimensional social, cultural and historic process in which those who already hold the privileged position whether in society/country/world are further allowed to remain privileged. The state becomes both a means and tool through which this processes takes place in the society. The governments irrespective of their political or ideological subscriptions facilitate the

interests of private capital and ensure that the private capital flourishes, expands and remain profitable.

Liberalisation is not a singular and one way process. It brings with it various associated processes like privatisation and globalisation. All these processes are interlinked, interdependent and occur simultaneously. These processes operate simultaneously often one leading to other in a systematic manner. The role of markets and capital become important in shaping the policies and priorities in the economy. There is more focus on the economic growth, removal of barriers in trade and promotion to exports and earning of foreign exchange. The process results in structural changes in the economy, weakening of the state, withdrawal of state from welfare and social security, reduction in the public sector employment, changes in labour and factories laws, relaxation in environmental regulations, changes in the policy framework to suit the interests of corporate sector, modification/alteration of the acts and laws which regulate the exploitation of the natural resources, changes in the social security provisions etc.

Soon after independence the country made its own priorities and planning. The five year plans were devised to allocate the resources in the different sectors. "The designer of this plan was professor Mahalanobis, who had adopted the simple two sector model of soviet planning: investment goods and consumption goods. he gave top priority to investment goods, as they were crucial for further economic growth…Heavy industry in the public sector was considered to be the major item once more, as it was the very symbol of economic independence and was thought to be crucial for the maintenance of political independence" (Rothermund, 2003: 130). During the second five year plan (1956-61), the country went for "rapid industralisation" and the focus shifted from small sector to the large and organized sector. In this phase the capital was diverted to the planned industralisation and major hydro-electric power plants were set up and along with that, five steel plants were set up at Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela with the help of Russia, Britain and West Germany. Tata institute of fundamental research and atomic energy commission of India. Coal production was increased and network of railways was built to supply coal to manufacturing factories.

The shifts from small to organized, agriculture to manufacturing was both ideological and political. The rapid industralisation led to change in the structure of the economy drastically. The rapid industralisation led to rapid commercialization,

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commodification and urbanization. It led to increase in the number of urban cities, migrant population, and emergence of Urban and semi urban bodies to manage the city infrastructure, and population. The change started affecting the unorganized, small scale industries and home based units. Leather industry was one of the firsts to be affected by this change. Hides and skin trade has been a major and important traded items since colonial period. A government report published in 1968 mentions, "at present, leather is one of India's leading foreign exchange earners and among the world's leather exporting countries India occupies third position. During 1965-66 the value of the total shipments of tanned hides and skins stood at Rs. 28.22 Crores and that of raw hides and skins at Rs. 9.85 Crores" (Labour Bureau, 1968: 1).

The government emphasis and promotion to the large, organized manufacturing sector and emergence of the cities management bodies started changing and affecting traditional crafts. The collection of the hides and skins and carcass became a valuable public commodity and it acquired commercial value and removal of these from public areas became a wage work. The rise of the organized manufacturing brought simultaneous changes in the collection of hides and skins. Carcass collection has been the traditional right of the Dalit castes all over India though the system of *Jajmani*. Dalits had an exclusive right to the body of the dead animals and it's by products. The growth of urban cities, emergence of Municipal corporations, public hygiene and safety concerns, commercialization and commoditization of the leather also brought changes in the very nature of organization of the work and also the traditional workers. "The Bombay Municipal Corporation act and by laws under required the owners of a dead animals to remove it to a place fixed by the corporation or get it done by an agent of the corporation on payment of Rs. 20. After the dead animal was deposited in the fixed place, it became the property of the corporation. The corporation then contracted out the carcass for utilization. The corporation, thus, had deprived the traditional flayers of their occupation" (Pathak, 1997: 137).

In the rural and semi-rural areas, there were significant changes occurred due to the commercialization of the leather which resulted displacement of the Dalits. Prasad & Rajanikanth observes, "all their traditional rights and privileges in regard to carcass recovery and flaying were taken away in the year 1967, February 24, when the government of Uttar Pradesh, through an official notification, declared that powers and functions relating to the disposal of dead animals and utilization of carcasses have

been transferred to Zilla parishads…by laws were formulated by the Zilla Parishads under section 239 (2) of the Kshetra Samiti and Zilla Parishad act, 1961, which came into effect from January, 1971" (Prasad & Rajanikanth, 1991: 102).

The Zilla Parishads have been empowered to auction the rights to the carcass collection to the highest bidders. "The Zilla Parishads were empowered by the Kshetria Samiti Act to regulate "offensive" trade. This included carcass utilization which meant skinning a dead animal, tanning, extracting bones, horns and fat and processing of these, and disposing the waste. Section 239 of the act empowered the Zilla Parishad to make by laws for promoting or maintaining the health, safety and convenience of the inhabitants. To ensure this, the act empowered the Zilla Parishad to regulate offensive activities through license. Further, section 143 empowers the Zilla Parishad to impose a license fee" (Pathak, 1997: 136). "In Meerut, contracts for the collection and storage of hides and bones have been awarded by the Zilla Parishad throughout each block. A single block contractor paying Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 100,000 Lakh per year-then usually licenses groups of villages to others, retaining a part of the block where he organizes collection and flaying through his own network of godowns" (Sharma, 1986: 1063).

The system is highly exploitative and brought huge monetary, economic and social disaster in the lives of the flayers. Dixit,while writings about the this system in UP writes, "The contractors and cooperatives societies sell these hides at nearby markets, where agents of traders of large markets (Hapur, Chauri Chaura and Kanpur in UP) operate. The raw hides are then transported by road, to godowns of these big markets. The traditional village flayers, though controlling the most vital raw material for the industry, are also the most disadvantaged. The high licensing fee automatically preludes the possibility of the flayers bidding for license. Since the flayers cannot sell hides to anyone but to the contractors of the same block, the price of hides is dictated by contractor. The flayer is thus paid for his labour only and the rental income which is Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 per hide and up to Rs. 250 per skin is shared between the state government (in the form of license free) and contractor. The state government to remove this anomaly, decided to give priority to cooperative societies of these flayers but things have not improved much due to corrupton and muscle power of contractors" (Dixit, 1995: 53).

The commercialization of the leather and growth in trade made the leather work highly lucrative. "There occurred stiff competition between the affluent high

caste Hindu castes like Jats, Rajputs, Thakurs, and Muslims hide merchants in regard to securing contracts from Zilla Parishads. In this competition, the scheduled caste leather artisans do not find even a faintest chance to compete and bag the contract…the high caste Hindu people, who have entered into the hide trade, remain in the picture only with regard to clean and sophisticated aspect of the trade. The work related to removing the dead animals up the flaying, sites, flaying the carcasses, salting the flayed hides, and transporting it to the hide merchants, etc. are left to untouchable flayers' caste. The Muslim contractors also dependent exclusively on the scheduled caste flayers for flaying, salting and curing the raw hides. The Hindu contractors are largely interested in the hides only, the bones and other part of the carcasses are left of the Muslim bone collectors"(Prasad & Rajanikanth, 1991: 105).

The Dalits were displaced from their own traditional occupation and work. They lost their traditional right to carcass and by products of the animals due to both government policies and discriminatory practices by the society. They challenged this in various courts of the country without much success. The first case in the series was Jagat Dhavi vs Zilla Parishad AIR (1975) in Allahabad high court. Another case was state of Maharashtra vs Mumbai Upnagar Gramodyog Sangh (State of Maharashtra vs Mumbai Upnagar Gramdyog Sangh in 1969. The Suraj pal Vs Zila Parishad, Banda (write petition no 1540 of 1974), Jaggu vs Zilla Parishad, Gonda (1981). The matter reached to Supreme Court (Gulshan vs Zila Parishad, Etawa 1981 (Pathak, 1997: 137). The Dalits fought cases without much success or gains. The state policies continued as it is without any significant changes. They suffered huge loss and reduction in employment, opportunities and ownership. This resulted in displacement, unemployment and economic loss to the Dalits as they lost control over their traditional occupations and rights.

Simultaneous to the above developments in the 50s, and 60s, there occurred some other dramatic changes in the economy in the 1960s. The country faced two wars one with the china in 1962 and other with Pakistan in 1965, the disturbances in the west Asia due to Israel and Arab conflict, severe draught in the country in the late 60s which led to introduction of HYV in agriculture. All these developments took a heavy toll over the economy, serious food crisis in the country and huge unemployment. There was pressure for creation of employment, handling the food crisis, earning the foreign exchange to sustain the government expenditure etc. The government took some dramatic steps to improve the health of the economy. It

cautiously and selectively brought policy changes in its economy to earn foreign exchange. The government turned to leather industry which has been one of the most important and consistent sources of foreign exchange for the country.

The exports of hides and skins and leather products were a major source of income and revenues for the state since colonial times. This industry had been reserved for the smalls scale sector since independent as leather work was the source of income and livelihood for the Dalits and Muslims traditionally. Mathew observes, "On the enunciation of the first industrial policy of the government of India, after the independence, it was decided to protect this sector from the invasion of the organized industry, so that the current employment in the industry, consisting of people belong to the vulnerable sections of the society could be protected. This industry thus, came to be reserved for the small scale sector" (Mathew, 2012: 50). This industry was one of the top five industries in India in terms of foreign exchange earnings when the British left India. It retained its position despite setbacks like ban on cow slaughter in different states of the country after independence

The leather industry continued to grow consistently without any larger government intervention. There was steady increase in the exports of leather of all kinds (including hides and skins). "It reached to 70 Crores in 1967-68, which grew further to 83 Crores in 1968-69 and reached to 93 Crores in 1969-70" (EPW, 1970: 1068). India had been a major exporter of semi finished and untreated hides and skins since colonial times and it continued the same status till early 1970s. The share of raw and semi finished leather in the total leather exports from India was 88.93 percent till 1972-73 as the table 6.1 shows.

Table 6.1 Composition of Exports (1960-61 to 1972-73)

Year	1960-61		1964-65		1969-70		1972-73	
Items	Value (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Share (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Value (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Share (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Value (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Share (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Value (Rs. Cr.) (%)	Share (Rs. Cr.) (%)
Raw and Semi-Finished Leather	**33.2**	**87.24**	**34.6**	**84.75**	**86.84**	**88.06**	**151.8**	**88.93**
Finished Leather	1.78	1.69	1.95	4.77	2.25	2.3	6.83	4.00

Leather Manufactures	3.07	8.07	4.27	10.48	8.76	8.95	12.07	7.07
Total	38.07	100	40.85	100	97.85	100	170.7	100

Source: Damodaran, 2003: 120).

The leather industry was reserved for the small sector where most of the exports were in the form of semi-finished hides and skins. It used to export the semi-finished and untreated hides to foreign countries largely the western countries due to the absence of large scale treatment facilities in India. The major markets of the leather industry were the Europe and USSR. "the east European countries-particularly the USSR and Czechoslovakia- which have emerged as prominent markets for Indian leather and leather goods accounting for nearly three-fourth of the total exports, import mainly chrome tanned leather and footwear" (EPW, 1971: 2533). The work was unorganized and scattered in rural area and villages. It was largely into the hands of Dalits and Muslims who used to work on the hides and skins and export it with the help of STC (state trading corporations). The national and international developments and disturbances in the 1960s compelled the state to bring drastic changes in its approach to smaller sector. It was the ideological and political departure and the sign of change in the nature of the state and its priorities. The changes in the late 60s and early 70s marked the beginning of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation of the economy especially in leather industry.

One of the major state interventions and a major development witnessed by the industry came in 1972s. The process was started with the government of India appointing Seetharamaiah committee to make ""comprehensive study" of Indian leather industry and make recommendation on the following. (1) to examine the necessity of reducing the "export of E.I tanned and chrome tanned hides and skin, (2) to suggest measures for speedier switch over of exports from semi processed hides and skin to finished leather and leather manufacturers, (3) to consider the impact of export ceiling on short term and long term foreign exchange earning, (4) to identify the steps to be taken for the mechanization of the leather industry for increasing export production. The committee gave its recommendation on 16 December, 1972" (Rajajee, 1989: 61). The recommendations were far reaching and completely changed the leather picture of India

The committee made 18 recommendations, of which all but one were accepted by the government. With its two primary aims being to increase the export potential of the industry and to make it earn foreign exchange for the country, "it recommended, among other things, a ban on exports of raw hides and skins, quota restrictions on export of semi-finished leather, a simultaneous increase in finished leather production capacity, and incentives for increasing finished leather exports. The quota restrictions on semi-finished leather exports were such that over the next eight to ten years, exports would reduce to 1/4 of the 1971-72 level. In addition to the quota restrictions, semi-finished leather was subject to an export duty of 25%. Soon after, semi-finished leather became a canalized item to be exported through the State Trading Corporation (Exports were decentralized much later in 1988-89). A large number of incentives were given to exports, following the recommendations of the committee. Cash Compensatory Support for Exports was extended to leather exports in 1973, and Duty Drawback was also provided. Generous airfreight subsidies were provided to overcome disadvantages in long-distance transportation. The recommendation that was not accepted by the government, which may be said to have affected the industry profoundly, was one to provide a cash subsidy upto 15% against exports of leather and leather manufactures for the setting up of infrastructure for modernization by producers. This was a production-oriented recommendation that targeted producers and left out pure traders who did not have manufacturing facilities. In its place, the CCS (cash compensatory support) scheme was introduced, which is aimed at encouraging trade, not necessarily by manufacturers" (Damodaran, 2003: 93-4).

The recommendations of Seetharamaiah committee were directed to stop the export of semi-tanned hides and skins and increase value added products in Indian trade portfolio. The main concern was to earn foreign exchanges and creation of employment. The committee recommended many concessions, incentives, subsidies and support for the promotion of the exports of finished leather. It also recommended penalties in the form of export duties to the local traders and manufacturers. "It recommended export duty of 10 percent on EI tanned and chrome tanned hides and skins. It was later enhanced to 20 percent. A quota system was also introduced, whereby exports of semi-finished items were reduced- by 20 percent from their level in 1972-73 in respect of cow hides and buffalo hides, and 10 percent for cow calf, buffalo calf, goat skins and sheep skins" (EPW, 1975: 566). The recommendations

were largely applicable to the trade in raw and semi processed hides and skins. These recommendations had far reaching implications on the whole leather industry as hide and skin are the basic and most elementary material for leather industry. Many other processes are dependent on it like leather manufacturing and finished leather. The recommendations of this committee were first sign of emergence of liberal capitalism in Indian economy and also integration with other economies of the world. In a more particular understanding it was a sign of integration of leather industry with the other economies of the world. It started changing the very nature, composition and characteristics of the industry.

This work has always been associated with the Dalits and Muslims for hundreds of years due to its being ritually impure, filthy and stigmatic. The government policies made the leather trade particularly the export highly lucrative business. To avail the opportunities "Many high caste Hindus like Chattiars and Brahmins entered into this industry" (Lalgee, 2009: 39). Ramaswamy observes "There was no Brahmin tanner 50 years ago. In 1973 there were six Brahmin tanner in Tamilnadu… All of them now make finished leather, and three of them even make leather gloves and garments for export"(Ramaswami, 1984: 62). The upper caste groups never had any direct or indirect association, experience and background in leather work but they had higher social, economic and cultural privileges. They had capital, higher links and network both within government and outside and greater awareness of the changing government policies. These privileges put them in dominant and favorable position compare to Dalits and Muslims. These groups invested in the firms, factories and other related processes of leather work. The entry of upper castes into this work changed the ownership patterns, nature of work, composition of the workers, functioning and operations of the industry.

The government promotion to exports led to the flooding of leather processing factories and large scale manufacturing in different parts of India. It led to establishment of mass scale production and more organized tanning processes in the south and many other part of the country. "A survey of the growth of the Indian leather industry over the past four decades has revealed that, of the 1803 units under SSI sector that were surveyed, only 234 (13%) were set up before 1950; 126(7%) between 1951-60; 325 (18%) between 1961-72; 451 (25%) between 1973-1980 and 667 (37%) between 1981-88. In other words, 62% of the existing units were set up after 1973" (Matthew, 2012: 49). These factories were established in the urban areas.

This is the phase of commoditization of the leather, commercialization and modernization of the leather work.

The structure, operation and functioning of the industry started changing as an outcome of these recommendations and shifts in government policies. It led to structural changes of leather work from rural to urban areas, from self employment to wage work, from home to factories from organic and vegetable to chemical and from segregated Dalits basties to organized factories. The government firm policy was to convert raw hides and skins as well as semi-processed leather into finished leather and leather products to maximize the employment and foreign exchange. After 1973 the share of semi-finished leather gown down in favour of exports of finished leather and leather goods. "The total export earnings from leather and leather goods roses to Rs. 425 Crores in 1979-80 from around 100 Crores in 1973-74" (EPW, 1981: 2022). The exports of semi finished raw hide and skin trade was replaced with finished leather and other diverse products.

The industry continued to grow but the work and operations were still not highly mechanized. There was recession in the industrialized countries leading to slow growth in late 70s. Government appointed Kaul committee (1979) to explore the prospects of removing the bottle necks and obstacles that are faced by the manufacturers and firms. The committee submitted its recommendation to government in 1979. Its Major emphasis was on making available the capital goods needed in the production of leather and leather manufacturers through imports. "Accordingly, the import duty on tanning, finishing, footwear and leather goods machinery was reduced to a uniform rate of 25%. This facilitated the import of machinery by manufacturers" (Damodaran, 2003: 94). Besides that, "cash compensatory support and pre-shipment credit facility was extended to exporters" (Opcit: 2022). This paved way for import of machines, mechanization of the various processes and modernization of the manufacturing facilities. "The Kaul committee measures were introduced at this time to improve the competitiveness of the leather products sector and to enhance its ability to take advantage of the anticipated growth in the international markets in the 1980s" (Sinha & Sinha, 1991: 111). The

In order to earn more foreign exchange, achieve higher growth and boost up the leather exports further government announced liberalisation of industrial licensing policy relating to the manufacture of leather footwear in the 80s. Footwear was emerging one of the major earners of foreign exchange within the leather industry. So

the government started focusing on the footwear. "The footwear segment was reserved for the small scale sector large units are allowed to produce leather footwear provided they agree to a high export obligation" (EPW, 1975: 216-7). Many traditionally rich families and groups further attracted to avail the benefits of the government policies. "Under the new policy, the hitherto reserved areas of footwear manufacture has been thrown open to MRTP and FERA companies provided they set up units in centrally notified backward areas and export 75 percent of their output. However, the export obligations would be imposed on the units only after the third year of commencement of commercial production" (EPW, 1986: 365). These changes further led to spread of the industry across various regions and states. The changes in the MRTP and FERA and support and encouragement from state led to the establishment of mass scale production structures in various parts of the country.

To further boost up the growth and enhance the earning. "Leather exporters and technologists emphasized the need to ban exports of curst leather from India altogether. As this was upgraded by importers in west using modern finishes and chemicals and sold at higher profits. The finishing could be done in India before exporting, to increase the country's export earnings" (EPW, 1985: 217). There was no concrete data on the availability of raw material in India. "CLRI estimated that hardly 15 percent of hides and 50 percent of skins reach tanneries. Evidently a lot more needs to be done to exploit the domestic sources before thinking of going in for imports of raw and finished leather" (ibid: 217). The footwear and footwear components started emerging the growth engines of the industry. The Pandey Committee's (1985) advised at accelerating the pace of change by mobilizing resources and creating facilities for manufacture and export of value added leather products. In the context of recent developments in the leather industry, both at the national and international levels, and recognizing the need to provide impetus to this sector for export promotion and growth. It recommended on evolving measures to augment raw material availability, further the modernization process and promote footwear as the most important item of export. It recognized the lack of a consistent database on availability of raw hides and skin in India and following its recommendations, a study was conducted by the CLRI to make available this database. The study looked at availability of raw hides and skins at the times as well as prospects for later and recommended measures to improve the quality and availability of raw material. It also recommended that imports of finished leather be

permitted to compensate for the shortage of raw material and imports of raw hides and skins, west blue leather and crust leather. In order to promote footwear exports in keeping with world trends, it recommended the production of footwear on large scales as well as the development of man power in footwear engineering, design, pattern making etc. '

Murthy Committee (1992) submitted its report to government, which went into the growth prospects of the Indian leather industry and submitted a number of recommendations "aimed at capturing at least 10 per cent of the global market share by India. Salient recommendations of the committee include measures to encourage greater consumption of non leather material in the domestic market, in order to conserve and divert leather for export production, promotion of strategic alliances with developed and developing countries through joint ventures with the Indian industry for material management, product selling, chemicals, machinery etc." (Mathew, 2012: 46-8). It recommended that "reservation of specific products for production in the small scale sector be abolished, secondly, it recommended that licensing requirements for the industry be dispensed with, that foreign collaborations be clearly quickly and routinely and that Indian firms be permitted to enter into joint ventures in order to gain access to raw material abroad, thirdly, training centers to be set up and developed to train manpower for the industry, fourthly, the main tenets of a technological package to modernize the industry were identified" (Damodaran, 2003: 96-7).

DECLINE OF THE SMALL SECTOR

The changes in the leather industry signified the ideological shift and changing priorities of the state since 1972 in favor of markets. These changes and shifts in the state policies, priorities, and preferences were in direct contradiction and opposition to the old government policy of controlling the monopoly, restricting the role of private sector in the economy. This industry since independent was left for the small entrepreneurs, cottage artisans and workers who were historically marginalized. The leather industry including footwear was reserved for small scale sector in the industrial policy of 1967. It was protected by various acts and laws like FERA and MRTP. The shifts in state attitude and recommendations of these committees had disastrous impact on Dalits and Muslims. The state simply bypassed the social-

economic and political implications of its changed policies on the rural, small scale workers, small level entrepreneurs, self employed artisans and workers in general.

After 1972 home based cottage has been seeing a decline in leather work both in terms of the employment and also in terms of operational units. The Dalits and Muslims suffered badly due to the modernization of the industry. Their share of this sector in the leather industry has declined considerably. According to NSS data collected over the years, 354,230 small units/enterprises have been closed down in the non factory sector in leather industry within just 16 year from 1984-85 to 2000-01. The number of people who got unemployed or lost jobs for the same period was 361,684 in the same sector. Besides the huge loss of employment opportunities the average employment per unit increased from 1.4 to 2.2. This means that the earnings have also gone down drastically in the cottage sector. These trends show that the cottage sector was highly burdened to absorb the additional workers that have been shed off due to the emergence of the organized factories. It shows that the base of cottages sector has been continuously shrinking since 1972 onwards.

Table 6.2 Non Factory Sector Decline in The Leather Industry

Year	No. Of Enterprises	Employment	Average Employment Per Establishment*
1984-85	5,30,179	7,60,784	1.4
1989-90	3,19,408	5,47,840	1.7
1994-95	2,11,313	5,04,574	2.3
2000-01	1,75,949	3,99,100	2.2

Source: Damodaran, 2003: 135)

*This column has been added to show the impact

The government policies led to the emergence of the upper caste in the industry. After 1972 the upper caste emerged as a major and dominant player of the industry that controlled exports and manufacturing. The large and big traders, firms and manufacturers started controlling the leather and took control of leather and leather exports and trade. This led to huge increase in the price of leather and raw material. The large and organized firms and factories cornered best quality leather for exports and the left over leather was left for the domestic consumption and market. Even within the domestic market the large and organized manufacturing firms took

control of the remaining good quality leather for their own needs leaving the inferior and low quality leather for bottom segments and sections of the industry. "The traditional shoe-makers at the next stage of the industry were also adversely affected, on account of their inability now to get the tanned leather of requisite quality from the traditional tanners in adequate quantity and at a proper price. They also became dependent on the new and exploitative trade in leather that was emerging from the decline of traditional flaying and tanning arrangements. In the curious new system the shoe makers have raw material problems while tanners have a marketing problem, both at the same time" (Bhagat, 1986: 1552). There has been phenomenal rise of the upper caste in the leather work since 1972 which is shown in the table below.

Table 6.3 Factory Sector Growth in the Leather Industry[1]

Year	No. Of Factories	No. Of Workers	Average Employment Per Establishment
1979-80	862	48,720	56.6
1984-85	929	58,760	63.2
1989-90	746	40,646	54.4
1994-95	1,884	1,09,926	58.3
1999-2000	2,205	1,21,848	55.2

Source: Damodaran, 2003: 135)

The upper caste driven and dominated factory sector was at the cost of Dalit driven and dominated small sector. In the organizational hierarchy of work the manufacturing and exports is the most lucrative segment of the work. After 1972 the most lucrative business of the leather export came into the upper caste hand. Their share and influence in the leather trade grew phenomenally. After 1972 the organized and top most factory sector has been seeing a phenomenal growth. There has been a 255 percent rise in the number of factories from the period 1979-80 to 1999-2000. In the same period the number of workers rose 250 percent. The emergence of the factory sector was at the cost of small, home based cottage sector. When the work in the factories increased it simultaneously decreased in Dalits Basties, their houses and their residential clusters. There are many other processes and segments of work which

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[1] Relevant and Significant columns have been produced from the actual table and last column has been additionally included to show the impact of change

are highly decentralized in nature like Carcass collection, supply of hides and skins, the stockiest, contractors, dealers of hides and skins etc. Majority of the workers in the leather industry are involved in these processes. The emergence of organized sector or manufacturing affected all these processes.

The liberalisation and modernization that started since 1972 onwards proved to be disastrous for small home based cottage sector. The cumulative effects of various committees and government policies brought huge economic, financial and loss in employment opportunities for the small sector. They got displaced and marginalized in their own work. The smaller and home based unorganized small artisans and workers suffered badly. They faced stiff competition from the large factories. The cost of leather increased significantly which made the leather inaccessible for the lower and bottom level workers. They shifted towards to the cheap and third graded leather which had a low value in the market therefore low returns and margins. Eventually after the 1980s they shifted to cheap variants of leather like Rexine, foam, foux leather in the market. The number, volume, and quality of the products of the small sector declined since 1972s onwards.

The establishment of the factory sector in the leather industry started a chain reaction and huge changes in the organization, composition and characteristics of the leather workers. The rise of organized sector and entry of the upper castes in the industry also changed the dynamics of the work. The exports factories required steady supply of leather for their needs. They encroached into the suppliers of hides, skins and manufactured leather. The small merchants, stockiest, whole sale dealers in hides and skins were eliminated gradually. "They gradually expanded and controlled all the processes and sub processes of leather procurement. Soon they replaced Dalits as contractors and suppliers of leather and raw material" (Bhagat, 1986:152). The leather industry has grown but it did not bring Dalits any new opportunities rather whatsoever opportunities they had also lost gradually. Modernization of industry thus proved to be a huge social, economic and monetary loss for them.

The small entrepreneurs, cottage sectors workers were already struggling hard to maintain themselves in the industry a major blow came in the form of disintegration of USSR and collapse of east European block. USSR and east European countries have been the traditional market for leather industry especially for Agra footwear industry. According to one estimate the share of USSR in import of leather goods from Agra alone was 13 percent in the 1960s which should have increased

significantly until the USSR got disintegrated. This development resulted in decline in the exports and closure of many small factories and karkhana. The base of cottage sector further shrinked and thousands of self-employed workers and artisans lost their livelihood. It created huge economic burden on the small karkhanas, small factories, self employed artisans in cottage sector and wage workers.

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY AND CHANGES

The unorganized home based cottage sector was already witnessing decline and shrinking its operations and activities due to various developments that took place in the early 70s and 80s. The process was further intensified and accelerated with the introduction of new economic policy of 1991. This change was more radical compare to the previous ones as far as leather industry is concerned. India opened its economy for foreign and private investment after the acute financial crisis known as 'balance of payment' crisis in the early 1990s. The state was forced to reform and restructure its economy. It officially opened its market and allowed large private and foreign capital investment in various spheres of economic domain like agriculture, manufacturing and service sector. It marked fundamental shift from the previous regimes. This step was both ideologically and politically significant as it marked the departure of Nehruvian and Gandhian model of development which emphasis strong public sectors and protection of the small industries and workers rights.

The neo-liberal reforms changed the whole structure of the Indian economy. The role of capital private capital increased in all areas. State allowed foreign capital in various areas which led to increased competition and intensification of the production processes. The role and interference of international bodies increased in the economy and gradually it became difficult to take an independent decision in the foreign policy matters. It virtually became dependent on foreign capital, international bodies, large MNCs and big economies for its growth. According to Chandrasekhar and Jayati ghosh, "neo-liberal reforms redefined the role of state, introduced structural adjustment and liberalisation at the sectoral level, changes in industrial policy, trade liberalisation, reforms in agriculture, financial liberalisation and changes in the exchange rate policy" (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2000:).

The Indian state took some major policy decisions. It officially allowed foreign capital in the Indian economy. To make the foreign investment safe, viable and profitable the state withdrew the conditions, protections and controls that it provided to insulate its economy and working populations. State has brought significant flexibility and changes in the acts and laws like, IRDA, FERA, MRTP etc. These acts were made to control the foreign capital, corporate houses and prevent monopoly in the Indian economy. These acts, laws and regulations were hindrances in the growth, expansion and smooth functioning of the private capital. The adopted a policy of minimum intervention in the activities of markets and private sector.

The changes were also brought in factory acts, social security acts, environment acts and regulations, labour laws etc. These modifications, alterations in acts and laws redefined the definition, scope, activities, applicability and compensation. These acts made the hiring, recruitments, layoff process easy, discouraged union activities and reduced the liability of the management towards the workers. The role, duties, and control of the state officials were restricted in factory matters. The processes of acquiring licensing, registrations, permits were simplified. Many of the core areas which were reserved for the government sector were opened for private sector. In the manufacturing many of the goods which were reserved for the small scale industries were de-reserved and de-licensed.

Besides changing various laws the state started withdraw and deregulated many areas of the economy. It opened many sectors of the economy to create a market for foreign investors and large corporate houses in the economy. It pulled back from central planning and structural process of these sectors and expanded the role of private sector in these areas. it has opened many sector of the economy like agriculture, food processing, education, banking, agro-business, civil aviation, leather industry, animal husbandry, plantations, mining, petroleum and natural gas, construction, wholesale trading, electronics, defense manufacturing etc. There are many sectors like insurance, retail, railways, public banking, Health institution where there consideration to allow the private capital or increase the private and foreign participation.

These sectors were so far were covered and regulated by various government acts. There was strict government control over the activities in these areas even though many of them were in private sector already. Central and state governments have been giving huge concessions, benefits and advantages to these big investors in

the form of tax exemptions, reduction in taxes and duties, tax holidays, building infrastructure, setting up SEZs and SPZs and industrial parks to smoothen their functions. Government has been acquiring land often forcefully from the farmers in the name of national development on standard market rate which is actually lower than the actual price of land. This land is handed over to the private and foreign investors.

In the pre-reform period most of the spending on public goods came from state. The international bodies like WTO, World Bank, IMF and later on ADB pressurized India to control the budget deficit and reduced and control its spending. To address that State took many measures one of them was to gradually reduce and downsize its own employment. As a result the public employment reduced sharply and its percentage in overall economy gone down drastically. According to Director General of Employment and Training (DGE&T), Under Ministry of Labour & Employment (MLE), there has been a loss of 19.18 Lakhs formal jobs between the years 1995 to 2011 in the public sector alone as per the information received by March 31, 2011. Additionally it virtually put a curb on the creation of fresh new jobs under various ministries and public undertakings. There has been a trend/shift to recruit workers temporarily on contact basis or outsource the processes to cut the cost in public sector. The pension has been eliminated for those people who were recruited after 2003 so that it can escape the liabilities.

To give a private sector major role in the markets and to reduce the government financial and economic liabilities the government has disinvested or sold many of its business and assets. It did this so in phase wise manners. The government auctioned minor share in 47 companies in 1991-92. It sold shares in 35 companies in 1992-93. In 1994-95, Sale through auction method, in which NRIs and other persons legally permitted to buy, hold or sell equity, allowed to participate in 13 companies (Krishna Chaitanya V, 2004)2. "It has completely sold some of the government companies to private sector like BALCO" (Sinha, 2004: 128). The state has reduced or reducing its share in various public sectors undertaking like ONGC, IOC,IBP, OIL, MMTC, GAIL, VSNL, Coal India, Maruti, IPCL, HTL, HCL etc. There are many other companies like HMT and other which are in the list of being shut down or selling off to private sector. It has privatized many of the operations or has adopted

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[2] http://www.indianmba.com/Faculty_Column/FC57/fc57.html

the public-private partnership (PPP) model. It is still an ongoing process in which many of the state companies like AIR INDIA, Indian railways, shipping, airports etc are to be privatized in a phase wise manners.

Going ahead further state has been making huge budgetary cuts and reduction in public spending on major areas like healthcare, food, education, infrastructure development, social security and basic needs like water, housing. Simultaneously it has been reducing or ended subsidies on many items like petrol, diesel, LPG, kerosene, food, education, health care accessories, seeds, and fertilizers. The public spending on these areas have gone down drastically over the two decades. The agenda of state is to withdraw itself from all the key areas and make the economy completely driven by the private capital with minimum interference of the state. The state has been making consistent and significant reduction in its spending on various facilities and public goods over the years. Going on that agenda, there have been some major reductions in budgets recently. Various government schemes under different ministries and departments have seen budgetary cut in the general budget or further roll back of the actual proposed (Duggal, 2009: 14-17). Going by the recent current scenario, the budget for social pensions was revised from Rs 10,500 Crores to Rs 7,187 Crores. Following the cut, the Ministry of Rural Development failed to allocate money for pensions in time to states, creating a deficit of more than Rs 2,000 Crores at the state level. Consequently, several elderly beneficiaries of the scheme did not receive their pensions for several months.

In child education and health, The Union Budget for 2015-16 cut the net spending on child education, development, health and protection from about Rs 81,075 Crores in 2014-15 to Rs 57,919 Crores in 2015-16. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS): Declined from Rs 18,000 Crores to Rs 8,000 Crores. Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS): Increased by Rs 2.23 Crores. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Declined from Rs 28,000 Crores to Rs 22,000 Crores. Mid-day meal scheme: Declined from Rs 13,000 Crores to Rs. 9,000 Crores. "In school and higher education, the allocation for the education sector was slashed significantly by nearly 17% as compared to the Budget Estimates of 2014-15. Department of School Education: Declined from Rs 55,000 Crores to 42,210 Crores. Department of Higher Education: Declined by 800 Crores. In agriculture and rural development, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana: Declined from Rs 9,864 Crores to Rs. 4,500 Crores. National

Rural Drinking Water Program: Declined from Rs 11,000 Crores to Rs 3,600 Crores" (The Logical Indian, 2015)3.

The government has ordered a cut of nearly 20 percent in its 2014/15 healthcare budget due to fiscal strains, putting at risk key disease control initiatives in a country whose public spending on health is already among the lowest in the world. More than 60 billion rupees, or $948 million, has been slashed from their budget allocation of around $5 billion for the financial year ending on March 31. "Despite rapid economic growth over the past two decades, successive governments have kept a tight rein on healthcare expenditure. India spends about 1 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on public health, compared to 3 percent in China and 8.3 percent in the United States" (Kalra, 2014).4

"The government has reduced funds for higher education to the tune of Rs 3,900 Crores in its revised budget estimates for the financial year 2014-15. The government has revised the figure to Rs 13,000 Crores, as against Rs 16,900 Crores for the plan allocation" (Kumar, 2015).5 The budget for the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change for the fiscal year beginning April 1 has been reduced by 25 percent, from 22.6 billion Indian rupees ($360 million) to 16.8 billion rupees ($268 million). "In his budget speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced an increase in the target for renewable energy generating capacity, to 175,000 megawatts by 2022. But the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy will see it's funding for the coming year reduced by more than two-thirds, to 3 billion rupees" (Chakraborty, 2015) 6.

In order to accelerate the capital flow smooth between borders and across countries and encourage exports and imports. Taxes on investments were reduced or exempted for certain time period, freight and custom duties were brought down, tariffs and charges were lowered, double taxation regimes were done away, technology import and transfer made smooth and fast, subsidies on various items were gradually done away. The barriers which were obstacles in the smooth trade were

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[3] https://thelogicalindian.com/news/modi-government-cuts-budget-of-crucial-sectors-social-pensions-education-health-and-more/

[4] http://in.reuters.com/article/india-health-budget-idINKBN0K10Y020141223

[5] http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/govt-cuts-funds-for-higher-education-iits-worst-hit/story-uC5r3Rm8E8EVaCYpTydYKO.html

[6] http://in.reuters.com/article/india-budget-energy-idINKBN0M812D20150312

done away. Countries were asked to give most favored nation so that inter-regional trade could be promoted. To promote and encourage greater flow of capital and trade within and between countries, regions and zones various treaties and agreements came into effect. UN bodies, committees and agreements like UN, World Bank, IMF, ADB, GATT, WTO, ICJ played an instrumental role in the facilitation, mediation and enforcement of liberalisation processes.

After the introduction of new economic policy leather industry has seen fundamental changes in its operations. The changes in the factory laws, labour laws, relaxation in the import of goods and technology, concessions like reduced duties, tariffs and tax exemptions, changes in the licensing and registration processes, removal of the conditions and restrictions made it a very attractive and lucrative destination for foreign capital and large corporate houses. "Around 58 countries have introduced changes in their investment regimes annually during the period of 1991-2000. In 2000 alone, 69 countries made a total of 150 regulatory changes, of which 147 (98%) were more favorable to foreign investors. As a result, global FDI inflow increased to USD 1271 billion in 2000 from USD 209 billion in 1990" (Gautam, & Singh, 2012:114). These changes created new market and favorable conditions for the MNCs and new opportunities for large and organized domestic corporate houses.

These developments suddenly changed the economic environment of the country. There was sudden inflow of foreign and private capital in the Indian economy. The economy got integrated with the other economies and the signs and symptoms of globalisation started visible in the public domain. Foreign capital started making its presence felt in the Indian market. There was rise of public-private partnerships, joint ventures, foreign funding and collaboration, flooding of foreign goods, setting of SEZs, SPZs and industrial parks, flooding of MNCs in different sectors, establishment of bigger manufacturing units and hubs, exotic branding and aggressive marketing of products, boost in consumption, the opening of food chains like McDonald, KFCs, Subway, emergence of huge malls and grand multiplexes, high rise buildings with exotic designs, discount culture and shopping carnivals etc. These changes have significant social and economic implications for the society in India.

Leather industry particularly the organized manufacturing sector saw a phenomenal boom in output since 1990s. The deregulation of the economy and removal of the restrictions and conditions on various leather goods led to establishment and mushrooming of huge factories and supporting industries in various

part of the country. Industrial zones came up in various parts of cities and states where these factories were set up. There was a huge rise in the production capabilities, capacities and expansion of the operations of the factories. "There were 746 factories in the year 1989-90 in different regions of the country which increased to 2205 till 1999-2000" (Damodaran, 2003: 135). This means within a period of 10 years there was more than threefold increase in the number of factories. This growth particularly was starker during 1990 to 1995. "The leather export from the country increased to 2,550 Crores in 1991" (Nihila, 1993: 2220). The growth rate during the 1990-91 to 1994-95 was 24.04 (ibid: 136).

To facilitate the corporate and foreign investors' government has been spending huge money for the development of integrated leather parks and setting of leather specific SEZs so as to lower the production cost and make the industry competitive. It has been pushing for upgradation and mechanization of various associated processes. Leather fairs, seminars, conferences are being organized to make the manufacturer aware of the international developments in the industry. To meet the international standards and quality there is great emphasis on the upgrading and mechanization of the various processes, bring uniformity in the quality, design, techniques of leather goods making processes.

The opening of the economy for the foreign capital led to the emergence of MNCs in the leather industry. These large brands and companies invested heavily in the plants, machines, tools, technique and raw material. They are known to employ hundreds and at times thousands of employees under single manufacturing unit. The production processes are highly mechanized and they use the most sophisticated machines. They make the complete products under single roof and the production happens on assembly lines. A single plant is worth hundreds of millions of rupees. The turnover of some of these brands runs in thousands of Crores yearly. Most of these big firms and manufacturing units largely cater to the international and domestic markets and their manufactured products are very expensive and beyond the reach of common people. These brands spent huge amount on advertisements, marketing and use various famous personalities from different areas. The entry of these brands captured the domestic market across all categories in different products.

These brands captured the local leather market and today they have a dominant presence in the market and their name has become synonymous with quality due to aggressive marketing. They have captured the high and middle segment of the

domestic leather market. They use exotic designs, patterns, and material to attract the customers. These MNCs and large corporate houses like Reebok, Nike, Puma, Bata, Lee cooper, Gucci, Monte Carlo, Khadims, Sreeleather, Redtape, Redchief, Liberty, Metro, gradually expanded their operations diversified their products. They sell variety of products like belts, purses, bags, shoes/sandals, wallets, leather garments, gloves, mobile covers, and many other products. They gradually entered in the retail business as well and opened their own brand specific retail chains in major cities eliminating the middle men and small traders. Besides entering in the retail business they have also entered into the online shopping and they are selling their products from various online portals and through their own exclusive online sites.

The international trade cannot grow if there are blockages or obstacles in the movement of capital, technology and human resources. It was necessary to remove the trade barriers between countries to promote trade. The removal of barriers both tariff and non tariff between the countries led to the entry of diverse products in different countries. This was particularly beneficial to those countries which had better infrastructure, low labour cost, favorable policies for manufacturing and substantial capital to invest in the production processes. China emerged as one of the important source for the import of raw material and also the exporter of finished products in the Indian market. It is not only the complete, finished and manufactured products that are being imported from china. China is major source of raw materials for many of the products which are manufactured here in India. It has emerged as one of the destination for supporting and auxiliary materials like chemicals, machines, tools which are used for manufacturing products here. This brought huge competition and pressure in the leather markets. The industry which was already competitive after the entry of MNCs the competition has further increased after the imports from china. The local factories ranging from top to small levels are upgrading and mechanizing many processes to remain competitive. They have become highly dependent on Chinese markets for supplies of all kinds of goods whether it is readymade, semi-finished or raw material or capital goods.

GLOBALISATION AND GROWING INEQUALITIES

The process of liberalisation brought drastic decline in the public sector employment. "The rate of growth of employment in the organized sector dropped

from more than 1.7 percent per annum in the late 1980s to 1.2 percent in the 1991-92 and to 0.6 percent in 1992-93. Creation of jobs in the public sector fell from 11 million in the preceding four years to the 6.2 million in the succeeding four years of the reforms" (Teltumbde, 2000: 103). "The share of public sector in total GDP (1989-90) was 30 percent and the share of public sector in total investment hovers around 45 percent…in 1991, 18.97 million were employed in public sector while only 7.85 million were in private sector. Thus, the share of public sector in employment was 70.7 percent while that of private sector was 29.3 percent" (Jogdand, 2000: 3). There has been a consistent decline of the share of organized sector particularly the public sector. This decline means that the people have been pushed in the unorganized and unregulated sector of the economy.

According to ministry of labour and employment, in between 1995 to 2011 there has been a loss of 19 Lakh 18 thousand jobs in the public sector which included both the central, state, quasi-government and local bodies. The industrial break up reveals that the maximum jobs have been lost in the manufacturing, it has gone down from 17.56 to 10.56. In transport, storage & communication sector from 31.06 to 23.84, in community, social & personal services from 95.04 to 90.95, in construction from 11.64 to 8.47. In electricity, gas and water it has gone down from 9.35 to 8.31, in agriculture from 5.39 to 4.77 (DGET, GOI)7. The jobs that have been lost in some of the industries and sectors were some of the critical areas like water supply, education, health, banking, agriculture, electricity, manufacturing and transport.

After the liberalisation processes started there has been a significant rise in the unorganized and informal sector both in terms of number and percentage. "The percentage of people in the organized sector has reduced from 8.8 percent to 7.6 percent in the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05" (NCEUS, 2007: 4). There has been a significant increase in the number of people in the unorganized and informal sector. According to same report the number of informal/unorganized workers have increased from 361.7 million to 422.6 millions in the same period. The public sector employment has significantly gone down over the years which led to significant increase in informal and temporary jobs. The changes in labour acts, factory laws, social security laws and policies of the government led to changed conditions of

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[7] https://data.gov.in/catalog/employment-organised-sectors-public-and-private

employment which led to casualisation of workforce both within the formal sector as well as in informal sector of public and private sector.

The organized sector jobs have declined drastically both in terms of percentage and numbers whereas unorganized sector jobs have increased in terms of percentage and numbers. "According to National Sample Survey conducted in 2004-05, about 7.62% of the total work force was formal in nature, while remaining 92.38% or about 422.61 million workers were informally employed" (Indrajit Bairagya, 2010). Majority of the people were already living without any protection as government laws and protections are not applicable to unorganized sector workers. They were already under the insecure work conditions and after liberalisation significant numbers of workers have been pushed into the insecure and vulnerable conditions.

Besides the growing Informalisation and Casualisation of the workforce there has been a significant decline in employment over the years. According to NCEUS report "the rate of growth of employment during the decade of 1993-94 and 2004-05 declined significantly to 1.85 percent from the previous ten year to 2.03 for 1983 to 1993-94" (NCEUS, 2009: iii). In the same period the number of unemployed rose from 18.08 million to 28.74 millions in the same period. "According to eddy (2005) India's labour force is growing at a rate of 2.5 % annually, but employment is growing at only 2.3 % thus the country is faced with the challenge of not only absorbing new entrants to the job market (estimated at seven million people every year) but also clearing the backlog" (Shastri, Tripathi, Singh, 2010: 34). Significantly higher proportions of people are either living with no jobs or are in jobs which are marginal in nature. Job today is now a scarce resource and there is stiff competition in society to secure it. Those jobs which are available are informal in nature and contract based. They do not guarantee secured future as these are largely temporary, casual and contract based.

There has been uneven growth of different sectors post reform period. Agriculture has been the backbone of the Indian economy for a long time. It has been one of the major sources of employments traditionally. It has drastically gone down within the last two decades. According to government sources, the percentage of people dependent on agriculture is 53.2 while its share in GDP has reduced to mere 12.35 percent. Contrarily the percentage of people dependent on service sector is 25.3 whereas its share in the GDP is 57.09. The percentage of people dependent on

manufacturing sector 11.0 where its share in GDP is 16.17 for the period 2009-10 at 2004-05 base prices (GOI)8. Agriculture is the worst affected sector after liberalisation. While the agriculture accounts only 12.35 to the GDP, the people who are dependent on it are more than four times.

The share, percentage and quantum of agriculture have declined in the economy. This was caused due to the government shift to promote value added products and services. Agriculture has become one of the most unproductive and loss making work. The reduction in government subsidies, inflation, lack of funds for infrastructure and irrigation, the rising cost of fertilizers, seeds, pesticides etc. have raised the cost of agriculture. Farmers are highly in distress and in vulnerable position. The condition of sub-marginal and marginal farmers is even worse. There is growing indebtedness in agriculture due to sharp increase in the production cost. In all categories of agriculture farmers there is a 25,895 Rs. Debt per household (NCEUS, 2007: 277).

The share of agriculture in the economy has declined considerably. There has been growing landlessness among the masses. Land has been one of the most important and significant assets for people. There were huge and stark inequalities in land ownership already in rural India between different groups. Using the data from 48th and 59th round of NSSO, Rawal finds, "10.04 percent of the households in rural areas do not own any land whatsoever and those household that do not own any land other than homestead is approximately about 41.63. Inequalities in land ownership have worsened between the liberalisation period from 1992 and 2003-04" (Rawal, 2008: 43-47). The competition has intensified and increased for the small, lower level farmers, peasants and workers.

This clearly indicates the contemporary scenario of agriculture. The decline in agriculture led to the decline in the earnings of the farmers and peasants. It has deteriorated to such an extent that there is has been sharp rise to suicides of farmers in different part of the country. The decline in agriculture and small scale activities have resulted in decrease in the self-employment after the new liberal reforms were introduced. According to Visaria, "The number of self employed has decreased significantly from 1972-3 to 1993-94 after the liberalisation processes started. It has decreased from 61.4 to 54.8 percent, in same period the regular wage workers have

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declined from 15.4 percent to 13.2 percent and casual workers have increased from 23.2 to 32 percent" (Visaria, 1996: 737-8). There has been a growing trend towards wage work both in the organized manufacturing and the service sector. This is largely due to the shrinking of the public sector manufacturing, decline in farming and loss of opportunities at the small level activities.

The service sector and the organized manufacturing have grown disproportionally after the liberalisation. The GVA (gross value added) in the service sector is higher than any other sector. The service sector largely deals with the value added products and is concentrated in the urban areas. It covers various activities like consultancy, telecom sector, information technology, e-commerce, high end real estate market, automobiles, organized retail marketing chains, shopping malls, entertainments etc. This means that urban areas are the clear beneficiary of the liberalisation due to the expansion of the service sector. The rural and urban gap has widened up post reform period. This clearly shows that inequalities in the rural areas have increased where majority of the population reside and situation has worsened over a period of time. There has been an increase in the disparities and there is rise in the poverty. This uneven and unequal growth will also mean that different segments of the populations have been unevenly touched by the growth story of Indian economy.

Post liberalisation there has been the emergence of organized private sector across different industries and sectors. The liberalisation has brought and strengthens the manufacturing especially in the higher end in different sectors. The organized manufacturing has been instigated by the MNCs and the corporate sector in different domain of the economy. In leather industry, Post 1991 many big multinational companies like Reebok, Adidas, Nike, Lee Cooper, Lotto, Puma, entered in Indian market through the new emerging segment called non leather footwear or sports shoes. This segment captured a substantial part of the domestic footwear market. Beside this the above MNCs and Many others like Gucci, Monte Carlo, Diesel, Clarks, Salamander, Florsheim, Deichmann, Timberland, Tribur, Rover etc expanded their operations and entered in different product segments. These companies make diverse products for Indian and oversee markets in different categories and classes.

Beside these big MNCs many local and large corporate houses like Tata, Corona, Liberty, Khadim, Relaxo, Shree leathers, Woodlands, Action, Paragon, Metro, Red tape, Red Chief, Mochi entered into different segments of industry in

different categories and expanded their operations. Many of these local brands had been exporters of finished leather to international markets for a long time before 1972. After 1991 with the deregulation of the Indian economy, they expanded their activities and gradually diversified their products. After 1991 they started their own brand and started catering to the domestic market. "The Bata alone sold over 590 Lakh pairs in the middle and upper middle classes especially in the urban areas" (EPW, 2001: 2724). The international MNCs and large corporate houses spoiled the fortunes of the small entrepreneurs, self employed artisans and local workers.

Liberalisation has widened the inequalities between countries. "According to a report by the Washington based Institute Of Policy Studies (IPS), the combined sales of the world's top 200 MNCs are now greater than the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of all the world's nine largest national economies. Yet, the total direct employment generated by these multinationals is a mere 18.8 millions –one hundredth of one percent of the global workforce" (Shastri, Tripathi, Singh, 2010: 34). The gross trade has been rising in different trade zones, regions, countries but there is differential, inequal and huge export-import gap between different countries. It has also strained and started trade wars among countries. The growing trade imbalance between china and India has increased enmity and bitterness between these two neighbors.

There has not been any increase in the employment after the economy has been opened for private capital rather due to competition there has been significant reduction in jobs. "the 'jobless growth' experienced in the period from 1991 to 2000 is explained by the fact that industry has shown dramatic improvements in the quantity and quality of its production outputs while there has been virtually no job creation. This is the result of imports of labour-saving technologies and of the fact that there are fewer new jobs created than thee rare jobs lost. These changes also mean that the skills possessed by the majority of the workers are becoming obsolete, which affects their future employability" (Sinha, 2004: 131).

Trade Liberalisation has not only resulted in decrease in employment opportunities rather it has killed and reduced employment opportunities due to excessive mechanization and destroying of the small level activities. There have been some micro studies on the impact of liberalisation in developing countries. Due to liberalisation, inequality and poverty among the self-employed increased in Mexico; as the economy established inequality started to go down, but poverty kept increasing.

"The study by (Obokoh, 2008) shows that most Nigerian SMEs still find it difficult to compete and merely struggle to survive the liberalized economic environment in Nigeria in spite of the policies to assist the development of manufacturing small and medium sized enterprises. In the less developed countries small and medium companies has been affected and facing new challenges" (Singh, 2012:114).

Multinational corporations have been using the cheap labour in developing countries for their growth while transferring the profit to the developed countries. After trade liberalisation exports-imports have become easy across countries. A study on the impact of trade liberalisation on leather industry in Ethiopia reveals "the Chinese imports have flooded the domestic markets and the worst sufferers are the small and medium level enterprises. The local firms have seen downsizing, bankruptcy, loss of assets and property, to downgrading activities and informalising operations" (Egziabher, 2007: 647). It is the small level traders, self employed workers, small level manufacturers, artisans, working class, marginal farmers who have been badly hurt by the excessive competition that has been brought by the globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation put together.

Trade liberalisation led dilution of the trade barriers both tariff and non tariff between and across countries. This led to dumping of cheap goods from different countries making creating stiff competition for the local industries. The local unorganized industry has suffered badly and they find it difficult to sustain their operations. A study was conducted in Punjab selecting SSI units like textiles, bicycle and bicycle parts, leather and leather products and food products and beverages in the. The sample comprising 173 units includes 43 textiles units, 46 bicycle and bicycle parts units and 41 leather and leather products units. Industry wise analysis revealed "after liberalisation resulted in more competition in textile, it led to dumping of cheaper goods by other countries, and it led to reduction in profit margin. The units relating to leather and leather products have strongly felt that "liberalisation resulted in more competition; it resulted in more quality consciousness and maintenance. It led to dumping of cheaper goods by other countries and the reduction in profits" (Gautam & Singh, 2012: 114).

The loss in the employment and work has created and increased poverty among different section of the population. There have been efforts by the government to reduce subsidies and focus its program to the targeted population. The PDS system has suffered hugely by government shifts in priorities. The PDS already were not

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getting sufficient grains to be distributed among the vulnerable and poor sections. Post reform period has seen a significant reduction in the supply. "people below the poverty line (at the 1991 level) require 46.5 million tons of food grains as against the actual distribution of only 16.6 million tones, a mere 36 percent of the requirements" (Teltumbde, 2000: 99). The coverage has been shrunken and the quality has deteriorated over a period of time.

After NEP the food consumption patterns have seen significant changes. Food consumption have been badly affected. There has been sharp decline in per capital food grain consumption. "It has declined from 476 grams per day in 1990 to only 418 grams per day in 2001. The NSS data also suggest that even aggregate calorific consumption per capital declined from just over 2200 calorie per day in 1987-88 to around 2150 in 1999-2000" (Ghosh, 2013: 13). Similarly, water is one of the areas which have been badly affected by liberalisation. The water has become commodity and it has become a scarce resource. There have been significant changes in the regularity, quantity, quality, and reduction in timing of water supply. Water riots becoming frequent in the urban areas and many areas the water level has gown down.

There are huge health inequalities in the world both in terms of spending and health outcomes. There are huge variations and geographical distribution of financial resources. "there is 20/90 syndrome in which 30 member countries of the organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD) make up less than 20% of the world's population but spend 90% of the world's resources on health" (WHO, 2007: 19). Health is one of the core areas which have witnessed a decline in public expenditure. India is amongst those countries in the world that have huge disease burden and yet one of the lowest spending on health. "India is ranked low in terms of overall health status compared to other countries. India's health and primary education system was ranked 101th out of 131 countries and economies by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2007 and 2008. On the Human Development Index (HDI), India finds itself at 128th place of 177 countries. This low ranking in HDI is largely due to India's low ranking in life expectancy at birth, which is 63.7 years. Data from the United Nations places India at 148th out of 194 on the number of tuberculosis cases per 100,000 persons, 48th out of 89 on infant mortality rate, and 62nd out of 108 on percentage of undernourished people" (Subramanian, Ackerson, Subramanyam, & Sivaramakrishnan, 2008: 127-8). "There were 0.60 physician, 0.80

nurses, 0.47 midwives, 0.06 dentists, 0.56 pharmacists, 0.05 community health workers, 1.03 other health workers per 1000 population in 2004" (WHO, 2007: 60-1).

India lags behind even some developing countries in terms of human development. "India is among the poor performers despite high economic growth rates in recent times. Compared to countries that enjoy sustained high growth like China, Japan, Malaysia, and Korea, India is extremely backward in terms of health outcomes. In fact, India's health outcomes are comparable to those of countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan that have poor economic growth and health outcomes" (Baru & Bisht, 2010: 1-2)9. The health expenditure shows, India spent 5.0 percent of its GDP in health out of which mere 17.3 were spent by government and 82.7 was spent by people. A whopping 93.8 percent is out of pocket expenditure on health in India. the per capital total expenditure on health on average is 31 US dollar out of which government share is mere 5 Dollars (WHO, 2007: 66-7). Most of the spending on health comes from people's pocket rather than the state "Nearly 72 per cent of Total Health Expenditure (THE) is borne out-of-pocket (OOP) by the households. OOP health care costs led to impoverishment of about 32.5 million people in 1999-2000 amounting to 3.2 per cent increase in overall poverty head-count"(Prinja, Kanavos & kumar, 2012: 422). The rollback of state from public spending and reduction in health budget over the years has created severe crisis in the health. Education is one of the sectors which have seen a steady decline in public funding. It has badly suffered after liberalisation.

The isolation and insulation of the economy has been broken down due to the collapse of the trade barriers. Indian market is now well integrated with the international market after liberalisation. It is no more isolated and insulated of the international developments. Any change in other part of the world has its implications here. A survey was conducted by Labour Bureau of Ministry of Labour And Employment as part of a study on the effect of economic slowdown on employment covering 2581 units covering 20 centers across 11 states covering textile and garment, metals and metal products, information technology and business process outsourcing, automobiles, gems and jewellery, transportations, construction and mining. According to the study, "five Lakh people were rendered jobless between Octobers to December 2008 due to recession. Total employment in all these industries had come down from

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[9] http://www.indiagovernance.gov.in/files/health_inequity.pdf

16.2 million to 15.7 million by December 2008. Major affected industries were gems and jewellery, metals and textiles" (Shastri, Tripathi, Singh, 2010: 35).

In this new global world those countries which are powerful have their terms enforced through various international bodies, conventions, regulations and treaties due to their superior position. The weaker countries have to submit to the dictates. The Indian economy has become integrated with the world economy. Its reliance and dependence on the FDI and private capital has increased over the few decades. This dependence is well exploited by the developed countries and MNCs to arm twist India. They manipulate and force their terms on the developing countries through different pretexts or masks. Leather industry became a readymade victim of all these. Many of the developed counties banned the products from developing countries. "In 1989-90 Germany banned the import of leather items, containing more than five mg/kg of pentachlorophenol (PCP); followed by another ban on import of leather (and textile) treated with AZO dyes (benzidine) in 1994" (Chakraborty & Chakroborty, 2007: 1669). The exports suffered badly and Indian leather industry witnessed a decline after 1990s. It's share in the total leather exports declined significantly due to these bans and also due to successive campaign by PETA and child labour activists. Leather industry in India was one of the hardest hit by these.

The growth in the trade and manufacturing increased phenomenally post liberalisation process so was the pollution. After the 1991 there has been phenomenal growth in the organized manufacturing sector due to the emergence of MNCs and corporate sector. The increased output also created huge negative impact on environment. There has been phenomenal rise in the pollution levels across India and industrial towns. The quality of the air and water degraded and noise and light pollution increased. A study by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) on the automobile industry in Delhi reveals sharp rise in the pollution levels due to phenomenal increase in the number of automobiles. "The quality of air has degraded and it is below the accepted levels. Besides air, the noise and light pollution are also emerging in cities" (UNEP, 1999).

After 1990s there has been phenomenal rise in the leather product output due to mechanization and modernization. This higher output also resulted in huge pollution of rivers, ground water and air. Leather industry particularly the tanning industry became the victim of it. Tanneries are water-intensive industry requiring enormous quantities of fresh water. Every 100 Kilograms of skin tanned use 3,200

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litres of fresh water (Baskar, 1992: 127). Tanneries therefore are classified under the category "red-most polluting industries". "In 1995, adjudicating on complaints brought by farmers on ground water pollution by tannery affluents, the supreme court ordered closure of the tanneries in Tamilnadu that were not treating their affluents in accordance with pollution control regulations" (Chakraborty & Chakroborty, 2007: 1669). In 2002, CPCB asked the state board to shut down 150 chrome tanning units in Jajmau (Bhambhani, 2003: 34). Hundreds of the small tanneries have been closed down which resulted in loss of thousands of jobs.

The removal of physical, economic and trade barriers between countries led to greater mobility of the people and goods from one country to the other. Post reforms period, tourism has emerged as one of the most important industries. The governments have been promoting tourism as it brings foreign exchange in the country. To earn foreign exchange from tourism there has been push for marketing the natural heritage and preservation of the ancient monuments. Tajmahal is one of the major symbol and identity of India abroad. Many of the industries in Agra have been closed down due to concerns of pollution to Tajmahal. The union ministry of forests and environment has also restricted industrial activities in the urban residential areas, in accordance with the Air and Water Pollution Act of 1974. Iron foundries and glass manufacturing units in Agra were shut down or forced to shift outside the eco-sensitive Taj Trapezium Zone in 1996 by the Supreme Court following a petition filed by M.C. Mehta on the harmful effects of pollution on the famed Taj Mahal (times of India, 2014)[10]. The tourism and beautification drives are changing the very composition of the cities. The Jhuggies and the small industries are forcefully removed from big cities. These are pushing the small, poor migrant population from the cities. Big cities are becoming ghettos for the service sector and service class people.

Industrial workers have emerged as the worst affected section post reforms. After the changes in the factory and labour laws the work and working conditions in the factories have become dangerous as state has pulled back from various decisions making processes of the factories. There is degradation of the working environment both in terms of quality and quantity as competition in the economy has intensified. There is more push for greater production and growth to remain at competitive edge.

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[10] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/pollution/Agras-leather-shoe-units-told-to-check-pollution/articleshow/30742121.cms

There has been phenomenal shift towards mechanization and automation processes in the economy in various sectors. To extract more and more profits there is greater use of the highly complex machines and technology, raw material, chemicals. This is leading to greater number of industrial and factory accidents, burn, disability, illness and death of the workers (CEC, 2002: 33).

The workers are recruited casually and temporarily on a contract basis. Therefore there is hardly any proper training to use these complex machines and understand the safety provisions. The changes in the factory laws and labour laws and government withdraw in factory matters have transformed the wages, conditions of employments and work, recruitment processes as internal matters of the managements. The basic minimum provisions like canteen, crèche, entertainment, leisure which were already poorly implemented now have become more of an option due to relaxations in inspections and non intervention of the state in the production processes. The managements are defying all the basic safety and security provisions to increase productivity. Their life has become more insecure and vulnerable due to changes that have come as an outcome of liberalisation processes. The work conditions have changed and there has been a gradual decline in the employment in various sectors. The life has become difficult due to changes in the industrial laws and state withdrawal from welfare. They have become vulnerable and marginalized and there has been a gradual degradation in the living condition due to increased cost of living.

Land has become one of the scarce resources as its availability has decreased. The land particularly in the mineral rich tribal areas of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, west-Bengal is one of the most lucrative business for government, MNCs and corporate sector. To meet the greater demand for energy there is higher push for the extraction of coal for thermal energy, construction of dams and setting up factories and other projects. There are efforts to acquire more and more land for these ventures forcefully. The Jharkhand particularly has India's 40 percent of mineral wealth and natural reserves and paradoxically is habituated by some of the most poor, destitute and marginalized groups. The successive governments irrespective of their political affiliations under the control of large corporate interests have been forcefully displacing the local tribal population and getting their lands for various projects. "In September 2005 a MoU has been signed between state government and CESC (Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd.) a subsidiary of RPG to commence a

multi-prolonged energy project in Kathikund region of the Dumka district. This project is likely to displace some 30,000 villagers and 54 villages decimated" (Becker, 2009: 73-5). The Dumka district has the distinction of having 70 percent of the population living in poverty (roughly 2055 the national rate), 87 percent without access to electricity, 60 percent without access to roads and the second highest illiteracy rate in the country. This is resisted by the population but the government going ahead with its plans.

One of the most disastrous impacts of liberalisation and privatisation is on the environment and ecology. Huge numbers of coal mines have been auctioned and large corporate houses are allowed to extract mineral and gas. Besides that, there is every increasing demand for cement, marble and stones for real estate. To meet the ever increasing demand there is blind extraction of the minerals across different parts of India. The forest covers are depleting and natural resources like the sand, rivers, land are exploited mindlessly. The rain deficit, non-recharge of rain water due to concretization, excessive extractions of water for commercial use etc. resulted in water crisis. The ground water has gone down beyond recovery in some parts due to blind use. The water, air, land and light pollution is on the rise. In some parts of the country like there have been water riots. It is becoming a day to day life affair especially in the dry areas and urban cities where water has to be purchased for drinking. Besides that, there has been degradation in the quality of water in many parts which is showing huge effects on the health of people.

The human population has been badly affected due to disturbance in the environment and ecology. After the green revolution there has been phenomenal increase in the use of pesticides, rodenticides, fertilizers and other chemicals in the green revolution affected regions. The use of DDT increased phenomenally in the agriculture to kill the insects. "The use of DDT also increased phenomenally due to the national malaria eradication programme to control the malaria epidemic. It accounted 30 percent of the total health budget in the second five year plan" (Amrith, 2007: 117). The blind and irrational use of DDT, fertilizers, pesticides on crops led to the entry of these chemicals in the food and human body. It brought significant changes on the biology and shifts in the disease patterns in the human population. After green revolution Punjab became one of the largest producer of good grains and also the worst affected region of cancer and other diseases.

The cancer cases in Punjab are much higher than the national average. "There are at least 90 cancer patients for every 100,000 population in Punjab. Cancer incidence in the state is higher than the national average of 80 per 100,000 population, reveals a survey by the Punjab government…The study underscores that the Malwa region, already infamed as the cancer belt, has the highest number of cancer patients—107 in 100,000 population. Four districts that topped the cancer incidence list are from this region. Muktsar district fares the worst with 136 cancer cases per 100,000 populations. It is closely followed by Mansa with 134.8, Bathinda with 125.8 and Ferozpur with 113.9 cases" (Singh, 2013)[11]. The rise in breast cancer cases is one of the most emerging patterns among the women in India. The treatment cost of cancer is very high and health is becoming a commodity due to state withdrawal. It is causing huge economic and social distress on these affected groups and population.

The changes in the economy over the last four decades and particularly after the new liberalisation have been disastrous for the large section of the society. After liberalisation process started the inequalities between and within different countries, societies, sections have grown, increased and sharpened. The working populations world over has seen gradual degradations of the working and living conditions due to privatisation of the essential needs. The globalisation and privatisation has increased the insecurity and created vulnerable conditions for a large section of the population. The worst affected sections are the industrial workers and other working segments like self employed agriculture farmers and small unorganized sector workers. These groups have seen a gradual decline of opportunities which has manifested in the huge increase in the suicides. "Vidarbha saw 1,065 suicides in 2006, Chhattisgarh saw 1,483 the same year. According to NCRB, the suicide rate among Chhattisgarh's farmers in 2006 was 6.49 per one Lakh farmers, followed by Maharashtra with 4.28, Kerala with 3.37, Andhra Pradesh with 3.24 and Karnataka with 2.57" (Choudhary, 2009, 83).

Liberalisation induced various processes touched the lives of every person in one way or the other directly or indirectly. The upper and upper middle segments of the population are the beneficiary of the liberalisation. The globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation fulfilled the aspiration and ambitions. It has brought them growth, alternatives, choices, options in life. The privileged sections of the society have

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[11] http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/punjab-cancer-capital-of-india-40255

become more privileged as they are able to meet and live their international standards, consumptions, dreams, ambitions and aspirations etc. It has a disastrous effect on the lower middle and lower segments of the population. It has exposed and pushed a large section of the population to insecurity, vulnerability, and marginality. Liberalisation has made their live difficult as the cost of living has gone up and the working conditions have changed and insecurity has increased.

The social and cultural effects of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation have diverse, vast, and multi-dimensional and politically significant. It has disastrous effects on the socially marginalized communities and groups like the Dalits, Muslims, farmers, Adivasis and women. They were already suffering from various socio-cultural and economic deprivations and liberalisation has increased their vulnerabilities. The farmers have suffered badly due to declining of this sector leaving the agricultural communities at the margins. Today the corporate sector and foreign investor are looking to forcibly grab the agriculture land to establish industries and set up SEZ and SPZ. The huge real estate sharks are grabbing the government land and forcing the small farmers to sell their land so that they can build amusements parks, create entertainment facilities, and build high rise buildings, multiplexes and residential societies.

The land of Adivasis is being forcefully snatched from them to do the mineral extractions and starting various projects in their areas. The women who have been dependent on the small level works and self employed activities have largely lost their work due to decrease in self employment and loss of opportunities. The unemployment is increasing, besides that there is greater Informalisation and Casualisation of the work force. The poverty is increasing, consumption levels are going down and nutrition intake and hunger have become a mass problem. The worst victims of these changes are the people who are located at the bottom of both social and economic hierarchy. They were already living a marginal life due to various social and cultural reasons there life has become more competitive, insecure and marginal due to changes in the global events.

LIBERALISATION, DALITS AND MARGINALISATION

Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation have adversely affected every segments of the population but it has particularly been disastrous for Dalits. Dalits

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have already been living a marginal life due to the prejudices and violence created by caste. They are socially and culturally perceived to be impure and low. Therefore they are also located at the bottom in all the economic activities in different sectors. The share of Dalits in the resources was already below the national average. They lag behind other communities in terms of the ownership of assets and secured employments. Liberalisation has added to their vulnerability. After Liberalisation, Globalisation and privatisation the gap is further increased, widen and sharpened.

Agriculture is one of the worst affected sectors after reforms. The small and marginal farmers are the badly affected segments in agriculture. Majority of the Dalits come into the sub-marginal farmer's category. It is one of the major sources of livelihood for them. Dalits constitute a large number of workers/farmers/peasants and laborers in the agriculture at the bottom level. According to NCEUS reports (2007, 2009) out of the total population of Dalits, 59.61 percent are involved in agriculture sector as workers. Out of 59.61 percent who are dependent agriculture 56.4 percent are sub-marginal farmers owning less than 0.4 hectare of land and 29.1 percent of them do not possess any land and work as landless laborers. So 85.5 percent of the Dalits in agriculture are either landless or marginal farmers.

According to NSS 59th round data (2003) 45.8 percent of sub marginal and marginal farmers were in high indebtedness. Given the fact majority of the Dalits are in the sub-marginal farmer category and sub marginal farmers have an outstanding loan of 14,866 Rupees. "This debt is highest in Kerala with 43,228, followed by Himachal Pradesh with 25,925, in Haryana it is 24,264, in Punjab it is 21,090, in Tamilnadu it is 20,596" (NCEUS, 2007: 277). This means majority of the Dalits in agriculture sector are in high debt and the situation is grave in some of the states where they are significant percentage of the population. This is only the condition of those who own land. The condition of the landless workers is even worse given the fact they do not have any assets and largely dependent on their labour.

There were already huge disparities in terms of land distribution both agriculture and homestead. Dalits are located at the bottom in terms of their share in the ownership of the land. The landlessness among Dalits has increased since mid 70s. According to Rural Labour Enquiry Report conducted by National Labour Bureau, Shimla, from the period 1974-75 to 1999-2000 the percent of Dalits without land has increased from 55.6 to 65.51 percent. The decline of agriculture has resulted the shrinking of the employment opportunities for small and marginal farmers,

cultivators and agricultural laborers. "As per the NSS 50th and 55th round calculations, the share of Dalit households engaged in the agriculture has declined from 69.4 to 67.8 from the period 1993-94 to 1999-2000" (Thorat, 2009: 47).

According to census reports, the proportion of Dalits cultivators in rural main workers has declined from 31.94 to 26.78 from 1981 to 2001. The decline is very sharp and significant in some states where the proportion, quantum and percentage of the Dalits in various agricultural categories very high. In Himachal Pradesh it has gone down from 74.86 to 63.26, in Jammu and Kashmir from 68.40 to 52.80, in Rajasthan from 60.38 to 54.47, in Uttar Pradesh from 51.92 to 44.75, in Manipur from 77.48 to 48.07, in Sikkim from 64.77 to 45.34, in Dadra and Nagar Haveli from 32.455 to 7.92 and in Pondicherry from 5.34 to 1.86 (Ibid: 245). The Given the quantum of the Dalit population engaged in agriculture, this change means very high number of Dalits lost self employment opportunities in the agriculture sector. The decline in agriculture has affected huge section of the Dalits directly and has resulted in decline of income. Dalits are therefore a major group which has been directly affected negatively due to decline in agriculture. "The average daily earnings of Dalit men, women and children in rural labour households in agricultural occupations in 1999-2000 were 41.89 Rs for men and 29.60 for women" (NCEUS, 2007: 275).

The structural changes in the economy led to the structural shifts in work, working conditions and employment patterns. Public sector employment had a major share in the organized sector jobs. After liberalisation the public sector has shrunken drastically. The decline and shrinking of the public sector has resulted decline of their share and representation in the public sector which was already low compare to others. After the July 1991 the new measures have led to decline in employment of the SCs in government services and jobs. "The absolute number of SC employees has gone down from 6.28 Lakh in 1991 to 6.04 Lakh in 1992…further the absolute number of SC employees in public sector undertakings has declined from 4.32 Lakh in 1990 to 3.69 Lakh in 1992. Their percentage share has also declined from 19.54 to 17.74 in 1990" (Jogdand, 2000: 5).

Dalits are under-represented in the public sector in proportion to their population in various categories despite the reservation. In more than five decades they have not been able to fulfill their quota in proportion to their categories. This only reveals that either there is discrimination or they are still lagging behind other communities and groups. The percentage of Dalits in the total population is

approximately 16.48 as per 1991 census. "In the central government services in A they are only 10.21 percent, in group B they are 12.38 percent, group C with 16.08 and in Group D (excluding sweepers) it is 21.54, they are 39.42 percent in the sweeper category" (Louis, 2003: 2476). Their representation is graded and hierarchal which manifests and reinforces the same Varna hierarchy in modern and secular spaces. According to central government employees survey, railways has a major share in the central government jobs and a very high proportion of jobs are in the class III and class IV.

These jobs are one of the important symbols of their public representation and visibility. After mid 90s Post reform period there has been significant reduction of jobs in public sector. "According to the economic survey 2003-04, 13.64 Lakh public sector jobs have been abolished during the period 1995-2002" (Mandal, 2014:7). According to Ministry of Labour, the total number of jobs reduced from 1995 to 2011 is 19.18 Lakh. According To DGE&T, as per the Census of the Central Government Employees (2011)12 class III and IV employees constitute about 68.92 and 15.23 percent of the total central government employees. The combined percentage reaches to 84.15 percent of the total employees in central government jobs. Dalits are disproportionately represented at the class III and class IV. Most of the jobs that have been lost and affected badly due to liberalisation were into these two categories. After liberalisation the share of Dalits in the public employment has gone down even before reaching to it's just and proportionate representation in various categories.

The representation of Dalits in the state government is even is even more painful and worse. They are under-represented across various categories in the state government jobs. The Dalits have severe under-representation in the states where they are significant proportion to the total population. The table below shows, the prescribed reservation for Dalits in many states is much lower to their actual proportion in the population. This is more striking in Bengal which has been dominated by left politics for a very long time. In all the states the representation of Dalits in the Group A jobs is pathetically lower and it is worst in some states where they make up a substantial proportion in the population.

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12 http://dget.nic.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/publication/CENSUS_REPORT_2011_.pdf

Table 6.4 State Wise Reservation and Representation of SC In State Jobs

States/UT	Proportion of SC in total population (Percentage)	Prescribed Reservation (Percentage)	Actual Representation			
			Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Punjab	26.87	25	9.23	12.39	9.56	14.38
Himachal Pradesh	24.62	22	5.40	7.80	12.00	20.50
West Bengal	21.99	15	4.63	6.01	9.50	16.21
Uttar Pradesh	21.16	21	7.40	7.11	13.66	17.58
Haryana	19.07	20	5.60	4.70	8.0	26.20
Tamilnadu	18.35	18	7.00	14.30	13.70	16.60
Delhi	18.03	15	7.3	9.2	10.63	31.3
Rajasthan	17.04	16	7.90	9.80	9.02	22.65

Source: Louis, P. (2003). Scheduled castes and tribes: the reservation debate, *Economic and political weekly*, vol. 38, no. 25 (June 21-27), pp. 2475-2478
Note: The table has been compiled from the above source for SC

There is graded representation of Dalits in the central and state jobs. There number, percentage and share increases as one moves from Group A to Group D. Their share, number and percentage decreases as one moves from Group D to Group A. The Group A and B are highly lucrative, better salaries, better work conditions and other benefits. Dalits are denied these by not having their just proportion in these jobs. Over the last Two-Three decades there has been a change in this due to liberalisation. According to DGET13, Ministry of Labour and Employment, the total number of jobs in the state government have declined from 73.55 Lakh to 72.18 Lakh in between 1995 to 2011. This means Dalits which were already underrepresented has also gone down further. Public sector employment although small in numbers was one of the most important sources of secured employment for Dalits. Dalits have lost more opportunities than other groups due to shrinking of the public employments. A

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[13] https://data.gov.in/catalog/employment-organised-sectors-public-and-private

significantly higher proportion of the Dalits and Adivasis than others have been pushed into the unorganized and informal sector of the economy where conditions are already harsh and there is no protection. This change signifies that more and more Dalits have been forced to become casual, marginal and informal workers.

Dalits as a category is not evenly distributed across different regions, states and zones. There are regional, cultural and demographic variations in their work patterns and settlements. They are not evenly distributed and represented across all the works, occupations and segments due to social and cultural taboos, regulations and discrimination. Their percentage in the total population is 16.2 according to 2001 census but they are 22.9 percent in the casual work in non-agriculture sector. In rural areas they are they are 27.7 as casual workers (NCEUS, 2007: 252-3). They are the largest group which is disproportionally represented in the unskilled and lowly paid work at the lower level processes in all the economic activities whether it is agriculture, mineral extraction, factory labour, self employed category or service sector. The sources of their earning and income are limited, temporary, insecure and fluctuating. It is one of one of the reasons that they have a larger proportion and share among the people below poverty line.

Dalits have a higher and disproportionate presence among the economically distressed groups. As a category they are not evenly distributed across different regions, states and zones. There are regional, cultural and demographic variations in their work patterns and settlements. They are not evenly distributed and represented across all the works, occupations and segments due to social and cultural taboos, regulations and discrimination. Therefore they have a heavy presence in the labour intensive, unskilled, and temporary works across various sectors, industries, segments and services. The incidence and ratio of poverty among them are higher due to their work patterns. "According to NCEUS reports, 26.2 percent of the Hindu SCs were poor in rural India where they were around 38.9 percent in the urban areas in the unorganized sector"(NCEUS, 2007: 25).

In the unorganized non agriculture and non factory sector, leather work has been one of the most important sources of employment and livelihood for Dalits for centuries. This work has been a community oriented economic activity where work was executed in the homes with the help of the family labour. After 1972 the nature of the work changed and the work shifted to the factories. The home based work got transformed into wage work. The large factories took over the work and Lakhs of

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small enterprises owned by Dalits have been closed due to stiff competition by the factory sector. According to annual survey of industries data collected over the years, 354,230 home based small units/enterprises have been closed down in the non factory sector in leather industry within just 16 year from 1984-85 to 2000-01. "The number of people who got unemployed or lost jobs for the same period was 361,684 in the same sector" (Damodaran, 2003: 135).

After 1991 the MNCs and the corporate sector further pushed Dalits to the bottom. These large MNCs and upper caste driven corporate sector captured the domestic leather market pushing Dalits to marginality further. The growth of the organized sector brought huge loss of employment and work for the Dalits. The growth and expansion of the industry benefitted the upper castes and MNCs. The Upper caste grew and expanded in all areas like manufacturing, wholesale, retail, raw material supply (both leather and parts), transportation, machines and tool manufacturing, supporting industries, credit distributors etc. the upper caste Hindus established their own brands, marketing channels and retail chains. They not only took control over the factories but they also replaced Dalits from the other activities like the suppliers of leather, stockiest, dealers, wholesalers and retail etc.

After 1990s there has been a general deterioration of the environment and there are growing concerns for pollutions in the wake of global warming debates. Dalits by default are involved in the most polluted occupations and works. They have a heavy presence in the polluted industries or pollution creating industries. Some of the industries which have become easy targets of the urban welfare societies, supreme courts, and civil society groups are bangles, glass, tanning, plastic, brick kilns. "In 1990s supreme court has been involved in large scale environment related measures several times. In April 1995, the apex court of country has ordered rehabilitation of 538 tanneries located in 3 clusters in Calcutta, which used to generate 30 MLD (milliliters per day) effluent" (Roy, 2012: 12). In Kanpur and Agra After mid 90s large numbers of tanneries have been closed down due to Supreme Court orders. The closure of the tanneries and other manufacturing units resulted in reduction in exports and employment. "India's share in the world market for leather has gone down in recent years and stands at a meager 1.69 percent from the 4.5 percent estimated by the international trade centre, Geneva for 1998. And earlier in 1995-96 india was the fourth largest exporter of this category" (EPW, 2001: 2724).

The Dalits were further affected in a large way when the leather industry saw another major development in 2001. The government de-reserved and de-licensed several leather goods from the small scale sector in 2001; it allowed 100 percent FDI in leather and footwear sector since 2002. The competition in the industry further intensified and increased. This paved way for the dumping of foreign goods especially Chinese goods in the Indian markets. This developed made the industry more competitive and there was pressure to upgrade and mechanize more and more so as to remain competitive. Cheap Chinese goods affected every segment of the industry.

Table 6.5 Share of Imports from China in Total Imports to India (Leather Industry)

NIC 5 Digit Code	Item Group	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
19201	Footwear (Except Leather)	76.39	85.74	89.28	84.47	76.88	82.23
19201	Leather Shoes	57.18	55.10	54.84	55.24	59.60	74.48
19122	Leather Bags, Wallets, Purses	38.11	34.66	33.27	29.15	53.63	53.85
18104	Leather Garments	18.66	28.43	23.40	26.36	62.77	43.17
19129	Leather Gloves	7.98	29.12	34.64	23.50	13.97	15.70
24297	Leather Finishing Chemicals & Auxiliaries	0.00	0.00	8.55	19.17	0.01	7.47
19119	Tanned Or Chrome Skins And Leathers	2.73	2.83	2.31	1.50	1.50	2.36
19201	**Shoe Uppers (Leather)**	**6.05**	**41.24**	**30.27**	**61.27**	**0.00**	**0.81**

Source: Singh, J. (2012). Impact of the surge in Chinese import on Indian manufacturing sector. DIPP, GOI. Pp. 30-35
Note: the table has been compiled for leather industry from the above source

Trade liberalisation has resulted into increasing imports from foreign countries in India. China has emerged as one of the major destination of imports over the years. Leather industry has been worst hit by the cheap imports from the china. There has been a significant rise in imports of different products from china every since FDI was allowed in 2001. There has been significant rise in imports from china in between 2005-06 to 2010-11. The import of non leather footwear increased from 76.39 percent to 82.23 percent, in leather shoes from 57.18 to 74.48, in leather bags, wallets and purses from 38.11 to 53.85, in leather garments from 18.66 to 43.17, in leather gloves from 7.98 to 15.70, in leather finishing chemicals & auxiliaries from 0.00 to 7.47. The import has slight decrease in import in tanned or chrome skins and leather from 2.73 to 2.36, and drastic decrease in shoe uppers from 6.05 to 0.81. The imports from china

have disastrous impact on the small industries. Many of the industries are not able to sustain the dumping of cheap Chinese products. It has further affected Dalit badly as Chinese products specially the manufactured goods have destroyed the cottage and small sector of the leather industry. "According to 51st, 56th and 62nd round of NSSO surveys, the unorganized manufacturing enterprises in the leather has reduced from 1.7 in 1994-95 to 0.8 in 2005-06" (NCEUS, 2009: 276).

A government report on the status of the leather industry noted 'The overall employment in the leather sector seems to have declined in the last five years. The NSSO 61st and 66th rounds indicate that the overall employment in manufacturing and leather sector (covering both the organized and unorganized sector) has declined not only in absolute terms but also relative to total employment…the employment in organized leather sector, however witnessed an increase. But the organized sector employed only about 20 percent of the persons engaged in the entire sector' (DIPP, GOI). Most of the employments that have been lost at the bottom level particularly the cottage sector owned by Dalits.

Table 6.6 Employment in Manufacturing and Leather Sector (Persons in Millions)

Employment	Leather	Total manufacturing	Total employment	Share of leather sector
2004-05	1.4	53.6	457.9	2.6
2009-10	1.1	50.5	459.0	2.2

Source: Report of Working Group on Leather & Leather Products, 12th Five Year Plan Period (2012-17), Department Of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry Of Commerce & Industry, GOI.

The above table clearly reveals the alarming situation of the economy. Only 11 Lakh jobs have been created during five years that too in the service sector. The manufacturing has suffered badly due to emergence of organized sector and trade liberalisation. There has been stark decline in the employment in the manufacturing sector from 2004-05 to 2009-10. The sector has lost 31 Lakh jobs in between 2004-05 to 2009-10. Leather industry has been badly affected in the manufacturing sector. The share of leather sector has declined from 2.6 percent to 2.2 percent during these years. The employment in the leather industry has gone down from 1.4 million to 1.1 million signifying a loss of approximate 3 Lakh jobs. This loss is one-tenth of the total

number of jobs lost in the manufacturing sector. Most of the jobs and opportunities that have been lost in the leather industry are from the home based cottage sector and the small karkhanas.

There has been huge mass scale displacement of Dalits due to emergence of organized factory sector and trade liberalisation in leather industry. It led to mass scale unemployment and Lakhs of workers lost their jobs. The employment and opportunities at the lower end have decreased. Besides loss of employment thousands of skilled leather artisans became part time casual and informal workers. They have been transformed into the wage workers largely surviving on labour. A small number of employment opportunities that emerged in the factory sector were also casual and temporary as the workers work under the contractor and wages were paid according to piece rate rather than salary. Besides the loss of employment, casualisation and Informalisation of the workforce, the industry also witnessed sharp decline in the wages due to excessive completion in the market. "The wage rate in Indian leather industry was 0.56 US $ per hour as per Yojana, March 2000" (Bhambhani, 2003: 26). "According to UNIDO the wage rate in Indian leather industry stood at 0.43 US $ in 2006" (UNIDO, 2010: 60). This clearly indicates that the wage rates in Indian leather industry have seen a sharp decline within less than a decade. This has brought badly affected the workers. The Chinese leather industry contrarily has seen double fold rise in wages it has increased from 0.36 US $ to 0.70 US $ during the same period.

The withdrawal of state from public funding has resulted in reduction in social spending in general. Many of the public goods like water, transport and electricity have been privatized and there is a huge reduction in subsidies on fuel, gas, stationary, food, fuel etc. which raised the cost of living for huge mass of people. Health and education are one of the critical areas which have suffered badly after the NEP. Over the years there has been substantial cutting in health budget in the central government. The states have also followed the same patters in health over the years. There has been huge reduction in the spending in by the state governments. According to RBI statistics, "the share of state health spending in GSDP (percentage) has gown down from 0.84 to 0.69 during 2000-01 to 2004-05. Similarly, share of state health spending in total state spending (in percentage) has gown down from 5.07 to 4.08 during the same period" (Berman & Ahuja, 2008: 211). This has disastrous in a country which has 21 percent of the world disease burden and there are huge disparities in terms of health outcome between different groups, sections, and segments of the population.

The health requirements of Dalits are more than others due to their living and working conditions. They have a heavy presence into physical, manual, and dangerous occupations and works. They have high rate of accidents, mortality and morbidity due to their occupational patterns. The sources of their income are limited, temporary, seasonal and fluctuating. They live in the most dirty, crowded and unhygienic surroundings which are highly dangerous for health of the workers and family. According to NFHS- 2, "the infant mortality rate (IMR) of SC was 83 compare to 68 in the case of non SC/ST, the gap is 15. The child mortality rate (CMR) of SC is 40 where it was 25 in the case of non SC/ST, the gap is 15. Similarly under-five mortality rate (U-5MR) of SC was 119 compare to 92 among the non SC/ST, the gap is 27" (Thorat, 2009: 111). The percentage of institutional deliveries is 26.8 whereas it is 33.6 for others, similarly 56.0 SC women were anemic, percentage of children undernourished (weight to age) was 53.5 while for others it is 47.0 (SCSP, Planning commission, 2006).

The age at death is one of the important indicator of the social, economic and health status of groups in the society. According to NSS 60th round data, "Average age at death by gender and social groups (mean years) shows huge gap and disparities. The average age at death for SC men is 43.3 while it is 39.5 for SC women (non pregnancy). Contrastingly, the average age at death of Hindu (higher caste) for men is 55 years and for women it 54.1. This clearly reveals the multiple and cumulative difference and disparities between these two contrasting groups. The difference between upper caste women and the SC women is 14.6 years" (Borooah, Sabharwal, & Thorat, 2012: 7). Caste clearly has a direct relationship with the health outcomes. It is a major determinant of the health care accessibility and utilization. The chances and probabilities of survival and death depend on the location of group in the social hierarchy. As one moves up the death rate decreases and as one goes down it increases. This pattern is not restricted to above mentioned categories. It is reproduced in other categories like nutritional intake of women, children, child immunization, maternal health care etc.

Education is one of the key areas which have been badly affected by the state withdrawal from education. The state has substantially reduced its spending on education particularly in the higher education sector. The public sector is seeing a gradual decline both in terms of funds and enrollment. This is particularly disastrous for those groups which had no right to education in history. It is largely the state

education system which has been one of the major support system for Dalits. The education has been poor among the SCs due to historical reasons. It has improved over the few decades but still there is vast gap between them and other groups. The gross enrollment ratio for 2003-04 from class I-VIII shows huge gap between SC and general. It was 84.8 for general while for SC it was 69.63. Similarly, there are huge differences in literacy rate among SC and general groups. In 2001 it was 64.80 among general while among SC it was only 54.70. The dropout rate for SC from class I-X was 73.13 while for general it was only 62.69 (SCSP, Planning Commission, 2006).

The higher education has been one of the most lucrative businesses today due to commercialization. Post reform period saw a phenomenal mushrooming of the private engineering colleges, hotel management institutions, MBA institutes, medical colleges, professional courses, technical education, and consultancies in different areas. These private and MNCs have increased the cost of education. There has been a huge hike in the fee structure, books, stationary, uniform etc. over the years. The commercialization has badly affected the quality of education and it has increased gap between the groups further. According to NSSO sources, "only 3.8 percent of SC had a graduate degree in Agriculture in urban areas in proportion to their population where it was 62.1 for Hindu upper castes (excluding OBC), in engineering they were 2.2 percent where upper castes it was 66.8, in medicine they were 1.8 whereas upper caste were 65.3 and in other subjects SC were 3.6 percent and for upper castes it was 65.9 percent" (Despande, 2006: 2439).

This clearly reveals the grim picture of the status of different groups in education. The differences are huge and gross and it clearly reveals that the upper castes hugely privileged to other groups. Education has been privatized and commercialized and it led to increase of cost of education in different fields. The liberalisation has made education specially the higher education expensive and unaffordable due to its commercialization. It has become a professional and commercial venture. It is particularly disastrous for the Dalits and Adivasis as historically they were at the receiving end. The commercialization and commoditization of education brings huge monetary and economic strain to them.

There have been significant changes in the working conditions over a period of time. The changes have been brought due to changes in the factory and labour laws, changes/modification/alteration in the definitions, scope and applicability, recruitment and lay off policies, liability of the state and managements, social security

and compensation provisions, the role of government of government, the mechanization of the production processes etc which affected the working conditions to a great degree. The production sites and processes have largely been privatized with minimum intervention of government. The work has become dangerous, hazardous and insecure and the work conditions have deteriorated due to lack of uniformity and standardization of the working environment.

The structure of the working class in India is such that Dalits and Adivasis are located at the bottom in the production processes. Most of the highly polluted, dangerous, hazardous and labour intensive processes are executed by Dalits and Adivasis. They have a heavy concentration and disproportionate presence in labour intensive occupations and works like paddy cultivation, wheat harvesting and cutting, construction, leather tanning, brick kilns, coal digging, mineral extractions, stone quarries, stone crushing, marble extractions, tea plantations, beedi work, glass and bangle making, underground mining work, firecrackers and matchbox manufacturing, cashew processing etc. Dalits and Adivasis have a very high and disproportionate presence in different processes and hierarchies of work. Dalits particularly across different regions are universally located at the bottom of all the industrial, hazardous and labour intensive works in India.

Many of the above mentioned industries and sectors use bonded labourers or debt workers as labourers. "on the initiative of supreme court, a study in 1995 found about a million bonded labourers in Tamilnadu alone…a high proportion of bonded labourers were from the scheduled castes (61.5 percent) and the Scheduled tribe (25.1 percent)" (NCEUS, 2007: 105). The working and living conditions on these sites and industries are known to be harsh and the chances to promotion are almost nil and the workers are hired for time bound contracts. These occupations and work are largely unskilled in nature therefore the earnings and limited, fluctuating and temporary and there are huge wages differentials between different sets of workers. Dalits have a heavy presence at the most lower level processes which are highly accident prone and life threatening and health wise dangerous.

Over the years there has been significant changes in these sites, occupations and work due changes in demand, trade liberalisation, changes in the labour laws and withdrawal of state from regulating the work conditions. The tea plantation is one of highly labour intensive works. The working conditions are simply inhuman and workers are forcefully kept in bondage. Over the years the demand for tea has

decreased due changes in demand and emergence of other alternatives. "Many of the tea estates have been abandoned by their owners due to shrinking in profits" (Madhukalya, 2015)14 Hundreds of hunger deaths have been reported from tea gardens of Assam and Darjeeling due to starvations (Bhabani, 2014)15. The workers have seen a virtual shutdown of factories, estates, home based self employment activities and huge reduction in employment due to emergence of organized sector across many sectors and industries.

The competition in the industry has increased and intensified leading to greater emphasis on production and minimization of the wages. There is more emphasis on the production and output to achieve growth. The state has minimized its intervention in the affairs of the functioning of the factories. "On 26 October 1998, an order was issued from chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh with the instruction that factory inspectors should seek prior permission of the district magistrate for inspection of the factories" (CEC, 2002: 25). This order reduced the role of government officials in the functioning of the factories and simultaneously empowered the factory owners to manipulate, decide and work conditions. This resulted in the deteriorating of the work conditions, safety and security. On 24 may 2002 major fire broke out in Sree Jee footwear factory in Agra. "The number of workers who were burnt to death was 42 according to official figure. But the actual figure was 100 according to some sources. Beside deaths, 13 persons were injured badly and admitted to hospital. A fact finding team under the banner National Campaign On Labour Rights reported that more than 90 percent of the workers were Dalits" (CEC, 2002: 34).

The fire cracker industry at Sivakasi is one of the most accident prone industries. This industry is notorious for frequent fires, accidents especially during the

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[14] http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-65-die-of-starvation-future-bleak-for-lakhs-of-north-bengal-tea-workers-2152766

[15] http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/starvation-kills-100-tea-garden-workers-in-bengal/1/374869.html

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http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/two-tea-garden-workers-die-due-to-starvation-panel-finds-malnutrition/
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/Hunger-deaths-stalk-Bengal-tea-country/articleshow/39194027.cms

major festivals particularly around Diwali when the demand for fire crackers is very high. This industry is dangerous and hazardous and is exclusively depend on the labour of Dalits. Those who died or become victim of the accidents and injuries exclusively come from Dalit castes. A major industrial accident happened at Sivakasi on 5th September 2012 in which 38 workers were burned to death and more than 70 seriously injured. The work has become dangerous after the emergence of the large scale production structures post 1990s. The competition in the economy has intensified which is leading to mechanization of the production processes and use of highly toxic, inflammable and dangerous chemicals and adhesives. The working conditions are becoming dangerous leading to fatal accidents, burns, disability, death of the workers.

Mining and mineral extraction is one of the most important industries in India. it is one of the most labour intensive works. The work is not only manual and labour intensive but also executed in the uneven physical terrain therefore the probabilities of injuries, accidents and deaths are very high due to physical location. Dalits and Adivasis are involved at the bottom level processes which are highly dangerous, hazardous and labour intensive. Rajasthan is one of the states where large number of stone quarries and mines exist. Simenon observes, "Most of these persons (workers) have no official existence, since it suits the power structure to avoid regulating the extraction process. A vast amount of revenue is thus denied the state due to its own studied negligence. Over 95 percent of the two thousand- odd units function in a primitive way without modern safety methods. Between January and June of 1994, 130 workers died in accidents, and 175 suffered injuries. None of them compensated by the employers or the state, and only ten cases were registered by the police" (Simeon, 2005: 115).

The large number of mortality and morbidity is reported from the sewage workers who are engaged in cleaning the urban drainage systems. These deaths reported almost on daily basis from different cities, areas and states. There is no attempt to collect the systematic data on this. Many of the deaths are not reported or come to the limelight. The Safai Kamgar Vikas Sangh which represents the sanitation workers extracted data through RTI on the death among the manholes cleaners in BMC controlled areas. The body found that 288 workers had died in 2004-05, 316 in 2003-04, and 320 in 2002-03 in just 14 of the 24 wards of the BMC. This means 25 deaths in every month in just 14 wards out of 24 wards in BMC controlled areas.

These figures do not include civic hospital workers, gutter cleaners or sanitation workers on contract16. "In an article published in Tehelka on 8th December 2007 under the tile 'life in a black hole' According to S. Anand there were 22,237 deaths of Dalits annually while doing sanitation work" (George, 2009).

One study by CEC on the sanitation workers in Delhi found that majority of the workers are contract workers i.e. Beldar who do not have permanent jobs in the DJB (Delhi Jal Board). Over the years new recruitments have not happened and there is a growing trend to hire workers on contract or casually. "Sewage contains numerous toxic substances that can pose risks to the worker's health. The working conditions maximize the exposure of the *Beldars* to harmful ingredients, thereby increasing the mortality and morbidity rates of the workers at the workplace. Thirty-three worker have died in last two years owing in 2003-2005 to accidents that took place while they worked on blocked sewer lines… the workers are suffering from numerous health diseases due their exposure to poisonous gases, toxic compounds, metals, dangerous substances, unsafe working conditions. 80 percent of the workers die before retirement and there were 300 deaths in last 2-3 years according to Mr. Hargyan Singh, president all India Safai Mazdoor Congress, Delhi Pradesh Shakha Sewer-Nala" (CEC, 2005).

Post reform period, state has specially targeted the Dalits and Adivasis funds. Dalits and Adivasis have become the worst victim of state's discriminatory attitude. The special component plan (SCP) that has been devised since 1979 for the development, welfare and empowerment of the Dalits. The main objectives of this plan is to reduce poverty, creation of assets for growth, human resource development, giving physical and financial security, and providing basic minimum services like primary education, health, drinking water, nutrition, rural housing, rural electrification and rural link roads for SC hamlets etc. "The central government alone has denied approximately 53,403.36 Crores of rupees meant to be spent on the welfare of Dalits between the period 2005-06 to 2008-09. In the 2009-10 budget 23,287 Crores is denied to the SCP. Total amount denied from 2005-06 to 2009-10 is approximate 76,690 Crores" (Diwakar & Kumar, 2009: 48-58). The government misused the SCSP funds for many other purposes rather than welfare of the Dalits. During the common wealth euphoria an amount of 678 Crores was diverted from SCSP to common wealth

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16 http://assam.assamnet.narkive.com/wn9fVQst/from-tehelka-life-inside-a-black-hole

games projects. "The Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) filed RTI to seek the information about the fund that was directed from SCSP in between 2006 to 2010. The government gave detailed information and accepted that 7.44 billion or 744 Crore Rupees were diverted from SCSP plan to CWG projects" (Ramachandran & Goel, 2011)[17].

The government has been making huge cuts in the allocation to SCSP funds. In 2014-15, the SC's Sub-Plan budget was around Rs 43,204 Crores. This has been reduced to Rs 30,000 Crores for the next financial year. Similarly in 2014-15, the Tribal Sub-Plan was to the tune of Rs 26,714 Crores which has been now cut down to Rs 19,000 Crores (Outlook, 2015)[18]. These are all central government figures and this excludes the amount denied by the respective state governments since the plan was devised over a period of time. In the last two years, there has been phenomenal rise in the unspent amount by the present BJP government. In 2013-14 Rupees 9,398.35 Crores remained unspent which was 72 percent increase from the previous year. In 2014-15 the unspent amount increased to whooping 32,979.21 Crores that is 251 percent increase within one year since new government took charge (Babu, 2016)[19].

Table 6.7 Flow of Funds for Central Ministries (Tribal & Scheduled Caste Sub Plan)

Year	Allocation (Rs Crore)	Expenditure (Rs Crore)	Amount Unspent (Rs Crore)	Increase In Allocation* (%)	Increase In Unspent* (%)
2012-13	58,823.14	53,345.04	5,478.1	--	--
2013-14	66,159.52	56,761.17	9,398.35	12	72
2014-15	82,935	49,955.79	32,979.21	25	251

Source: Babu, N.M. (2016, Sept. 16). Hindustan times

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[17]http://www.internationalbudget.org/publications/tracking-funds-for-indias-most-deprived-the-story-of-the-national-campaign-for-Dalits-human-rights-campaign-789/

[18] http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/modi-budget-slashed-sc-tribal-farmers-funds-centre-for-dalit-rights/883722

[19] http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/under-modi-record-rise-in-unspent-funds-for-Dalits-and-tribals/story-PjrIc3zZxEYBXRsUwaTdpI.html

The national coalition for SCSP-TSP legislation, an umbrella organization of Dalit and Adivasis groups tabulated though government documents and RTI the allocation patterns of government funds. It revealed huge and gross denial and neglect of Dalit and Adivasis funds by successive central government from the seventh to twelfth five year plans. Over a period of thirty years (from seventh to twelfth five years plans), "the successive central governments have denied 5,27,723.72 Crore Rupees to the SCSP-TSP. The government should have allocated 8,75,380.36 Crores but it actually allocated only 3,47,656.64 Crores. In other words, 60 percent of the funds were never allocated to the Dalits and Adivasis ever since the plan was devised" (Villatt, 2014)[20]. This is huge, gross and criminal denial and neglect given the quantum, volume and degree of poverty among the historically marginalized and suppressed groups.

The denial and neglect is not only manifested in the allocation but also found in its utilization patterns. The government has no clear records how the money that has been allocated SCSP and TSP has been utilized. Series of RTIs filled by Indiaspend a monitoring agency which track the government spending on various heads reported that "2.8 Lakh Crores have not been spent at all over the last 35 years" (Babu, 2016)[21]. The fund is lying unutilized as it is non-lapsable. No one has the idea where these funds have gone. An RTI response has revealed that the NITI Aayog does have information how the allocated 3.1 Lakh Crores have been spent by the state governments as states do not report their expenditure to the center. "The report by the scheduled caste commission after auditing the 26 state's budget in 2012-13 found that only a fraction of the total amount allocated to the SCSP across India is spent on the SC specific schemes" (Bhardwaj, 2016)[22]. The commission found, Of the Rs 80,310 Crores the 26 states allotted to SCSP schemes in 2012-13, when the UPA government was in power at the Centre, Rs 61,480 Crores was spent. However, of this amount only Rs 9,920 Crore, or just 12 per cent of the total allocation, was spent on SC-

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[20] http://www.tehelka.com/2014/12/denial-and-diversion-of-plan-fund-the-great-adivasi-dalit-rip-off/#.Wd-CFDXhXs0
http://www.ncdhr.org.in/Dalitsinnews/denial-and-diversion-of-plan-fund-the-great-adivasi-dalit-rip-off

[21] http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/unspent-money-for-Dalitstribals-42-6-billion-8-times-agri-budget-90181
[22] http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/scheduled-caste-funds-b-r-ambedkar-scheduled-caste-commission-2764608/

specific schemes and the rest was diverted to other schemes, the commission found (ibid).

According to NCDHR a substantial proportion and amount of the SCSP and TSP funds have been diverted to those schemes and events that have nothing to do with the welfare of the Dalits and Adivasis. "In Jharkhand TSP funds were diverted to purchase "two aeroplanes—VIP version, one trainer aircraft and one motor glider, making of helipads, construction of the houses and bungalow of judges, police officers, MLAs and ministers quarters, and bungalows etc. in Madhya Pradesh, the SCSP and TSP funds were diverted for beatification of lakes and ponds, animal injections, building synthetic hockey turfs, raising state industrial protection forces and very significantly, the *Sinhastha Mela*, also known as Ujjain Kumbh Mela. Funds have also been diverted to pay allowances to *Gau Sevaks* etc. Similar patterns have been observed across numerous states. The situation is alarming and pathetic in some of the states that have substantial Dalit and tribal population like the Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, west Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka etc" (Villatt, 2014)[23]. This becomes significant in wake of the high number of Dalits living below poverty line. The funds could have been better utilized for their upliftment and empowerment. The governments over the years keep increasing the budget of the sub plans but desist from spending it. "The government gets away with allocating funds to pacify the people but not actually spending it. This is at the cost of extremely poor people who direly need these funds," said Paul Divakar, convener of the National Coalition for SCSP-TSP Legislation, an umbrella organization that monitors the special plans. The proportion of Dalits living below poverty line is higher in some states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam. The state government have either not spent the money or have no information and record how the money has been spent.

This reduction in allocation and rise in unspent amount is disastrous and criminal given the vulnerability, magnitude and volume of the poors and poverty among the Dalits. There is huge gap between the Dalits and the non Dalits in terms of economic assets and resources. Dalits have a higher and disproportionate share among the poor's in the country compare to other dominant groups. The poverty and economic distress among the Dalits is very high and it is alarming in some states. As

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[23] http://www.tehelka.com/2014/12/denial-and-diversion-of-plan-fund-the-great-adivasi-dalit-rip-off/#.Wd-YqbXhXs1

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per the NSS 55th round calculations the rural poverty for the Dalits is 36.25 and in urban areas it was 38.47. In some state the situations is even worse both in rural and urban. Percentage of rural poverty In Bihar is 59.8, in Orissa 51.8, in Assam 44.0, In Madhya Pradesh 41.3, in Uttar Pradesh 43.7, in west Bengal 35.1, in Maharashtra it is 33.27 (Planning commission, 2006). NCEUS has identified Dalits and Adivasis as the most vulnerable section of the society. According to its report, out of the total population of SC/ST 10.9 SC/ST are extremely poor, 21.5 percent are poor, 22.4 percent are marginally poor, 33 percent are vulnerable. Altogether 87.8 percent of the SC/ST are poor and vulnerable group. This means 87.8 percent of the SC/ST is surviving with an income less than 2 dollars per day (NCEUS, 2007: 6-7).

The Dalits are facing multiple difficulties not only due to state's neglect and biased attitude but also due to the Untouchability and Discrimination practiced by the society and exclusion and denial of job opportunity by the private and organized sector. Service sector has been one of the areas which have been growing disproportionally after liberalisation period. It has created substantial job opportunities in different sectors and industries. A study by Thorat & Attewell (2005-06) found that even if the qualifications of the applicants were equal or similar but their very name and family background have a substantial impact on the hiring processes. "Dalit or Muslim name were on average significantly less likely to have a positive application outcome than equivalently qualified persons with an HC (high caste) Hindu name…on average, college-educated lower- caste and Muslim job applicants fare less well than equivalent qualified applicants from the higher castes names, when applying by mail for employment in the modern private enterprise sector…caste and religion proved influential in determining ones job changes" (Thorat & Attenwell, 2012: 46-7). The discrimination against Dalits is structural and pervasive in all spheres and areas. There is resistance against them attaining mobility and efforts are there to contain and sabotage their mobility attempts so as to keep them under bondage and subjugation. The ideology produces itself into structure and the structure largely functions in such a ways so as to maintain the structural order by absorbing and allocating roles, duties and privileges according to their place in the social hierarchy.

The competition in the economy has increased, widen and intensified after the opening of the economy. There emerged huge employment crisis in the economy after globalisation and liberalisation. Employment has become one of the scarce resources

and stable jobs one of the assets. Private sector is growing while the public sector is shrinking year by year. Private sector is assumed to be unbiased, efficient and free from biases and prejudices when it comes to employment and recruitment. It allegedly recruits people on the basis of caliber, talent and productivity and these opportunities are open for all the people without any favors and discrimination. A study was carried out by Jodhka & Newman on the private sector which covered large and diverse corporate firms covering various sectors and industries with substantial number of workers. The interviews with the heads of human resources and managers revealed serious problems with the recruitment processes. It was found that "there is severe stereotype of people on the basis of religion, family background, caste and region. There is a systematic pattern in which the job opportunities are denied to the people on the basis of their physical/personal attributes, caste, religion and regions due to the biases of the HR managers and recruitment heads" (Jodhka & Newman, 2012: 52-87).

Caste played an important role in the labour market in determining the access to resources, occupations, opportunities and employment. A survey was carried out in 664 households in three villages in the three different states namely Orissa, Gujarat and Maharashtra on the functioning of the labour market. There were hue disparities and disproportionate representation of Dalits and the non Dalits in various spheres of economic activities. Inter-caste differences are fairly clear in access to employment. At an aggregate level, average employment was about 108 days in an agriculture year. Casual labour from the HC (higher castes) got employment for 154 days, while SC wage labourers were employed for only 100 days. The difference in employment rate between low caste untouchable and HC casual farm labourers suggests the discriminatory working of labour markets in favours of HC farm wage labour. Similarly in the wage rate, the HC received 34 Rs per day while SC received 30. In the non-farm wages the SC received 58 Rs. while HC received Rs 77 per day. There is discrimination against SCs in land ownership. A whopping 55.88 percent reported that SCs are generally denied land that is surrounded by land of HCs in majority of the cases. When the higher castes sell their agriculture land they give preference to their own caste people over others. "Majority of the higher castes 63.64 percent reported to have preference to sell land to their own caste people. Similarly patterns were observed in the case of land-rental market, sale and purchase of farm and non-farm goods, milk, vegetables etc" (Thorat, Mahamallik & Sadana, 2012: 148-178).

Elementary and secondary education is the base which plays an important role in determining the future of the children. The quality, access, affordability, skills, responsibilities, experiences and exposure at this level affects the outcomes, careers planning, career choices of children. A study jointly sponsored by IIDS and UNICEF conducted in the urban and semi urban areas in Rajasthan found cases of untouchability, exclusion and discrimination against Dalit children in the schools. The caste manifests at different sites and spheres in various forms and levels. There is fear, silence, hesitation among the Dalit children compared to others. They lag behind others in the school events, functions and activities due to their background. They face every day humiliations and resistance by their peers who call them by their caste names. "In the rural areas most of the important responsibilities and tasks in the school are executed by the upper caste students. The Dalit children largely not encouraged in tasks like serving water, tea, mid-day meals, and important functions like farewell parties, independence functions or worships in the school premises" (Nambissan, 2012: 253-286).

Higher education is an important vehicle to attain mobility, opportunities, growth and fulfill one's aspirations in the society. It is one of the major determinants of the earnings of the people. The higher qualifications also bring diverse, higher and well paid jobs and works. It is one of the means by which people overcome the inequality imposed by the society. A study was carried out in three higher national education institutions namely University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia to study to see the job expectations, job search methods, actual placements, and the differential role that social networks (family and friends) play in determining their options in the world of work. Deshpande and Newman found, "graduating reservation students had significantly lower occupational expectations than their non-reservation counterparts. The average expected monthly salary for reservation students was Rs. 19,510, while non-reservation students expected to earn about Rs. 24,470. The median salary for the non-reservation students was Rs. 22,500 and that for the reserved category students was Rs. 15,000. There were similar and stark differences in terms of family backgrounds of the respondents. The family background, parental education and networks play an important role in access to employments. The Dalits students lacked in most of these areas. This had consequences on their aspirations, job search methods, time and duration to find job

etc. Reservation played an important role in their life journey. It is due to this they have been able to come to higher education" (Despande & Newman, 2012: 88-122).

There has emerged a severe employment crisis among the Dalits due to various factor some are purely economic and others are political. Dalits have also suffered badly due The PETA campaign, environmentalists, judicial activism, urban welfare societies, civil societies groups and politics surrounding ban on cow slaughter, beef consumption, vegetarianism, the emergence of Gau Raksha groups, and growing radicalization of the political atmosphere in the country. These have been targeting the leather industry repeatedly. "The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGBRA) have identified the polluting tanneries and asked them to shut down. Some 98 tanneries out of 700 have already been closed down by the administration in the Kanpur" (Jainani, 2015)[24].

The crackdown on the tanneries by the NGT, CPCB, SPCB, GAP has resulted huge loss of opportunities to the Muslims as they were primarily the merchants and traders. The closure of factories and trade activities have resulted huge job loss to the Dalits as they were largely the workers. Sen Reports, "of the 300 Godowns that used to exist (in Kanpur), only about a hundred remain; other have converted into garment shops. Even for these 100 warehouses, work is down to about 35 percent of what it used to be and they now hire only two or three workers each" (Sen, 2016)[25]. The Jajmau is an industrial suburb of Kanpur and has one of the biggest leather tanneries. Some 150 tanneries have been closed down in the last five years out of 400. Most of the tanneries that have been closed are the smaller one as these units could not install IETP and CETP due high cost. Some ten thousand people mostly labourers have lost their jobs in Jajmau.

Dharavi has been one of the most important leather and goods manufacturing center in Mumbai. It is a slum and an urban industrial cluster largely inhabited by the Muslims and Dalits. Leather work was one of the most important industries there. It has been hardly hit by the increasing competition, influx of cheap Chinese products, rising raw material cost, and labour shortage in recent years. "Sales are falling, output has decreased and the margins are growing thinner year by year. Some of the

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[24] http://www.financialexpress.com/article/markets/commodities/kanpur-leather-industry-in-danger-as-ngt-cracks-whip-on-pollution/39891/

[25] https://thewire.in/25567/the-unmaking-of-kanpurs-leather-industry/

businessmen have seen a 10 fold decrease in their sales" (Kalra, 2014)26. These units are not able to sustain themselves and due to stiff competition. They are likely to close down within few years due to non-profitability.

The Kolhapuri chappal has been known in India for delicate embroidery on leather chappals even the stitching and embellishments were always in leather. The leather is cured and tanned using only natural ingredients, without any chemicals, these are completely handmade. This industry has been hit hard due to the disruption of the supply of raw material. This was caused by the ban on slaughter of cow in Maharashtra in 2014. This was followed by ban on its consumption in Maharashtra. "The reduction in supply of raw material raised price of from 70-80 Rs. square foot to 250 to 300 Rs. Square foot. The lowest grade chappal which used to sell at Rs. 150 has reached to Rs. 330" (Dubey, 2016)27.

Many tanneries have either closed down or shifted to rural or other small towns. Those which have been shut down were the smaller ones. The bigger one escaped by putting up water treatment plants in their premises. Besides tanneries there is also growing pressure on the shoe manufacturing units to close down their operations in the residential areas. Besides tanneries there is a growing pressure on the footwear manufacturing firms due to pollution concerns, beautification drives and tourism promotions. Many of the sports shoes factories from Agra have shifted to Noida, Gaziabad, Uttrakhand and Delhi due to pollution concerns of Tajmahal. In a writ petition filed in 2003 by Mithilesh Jain, the Allahabad High Court directed the authorities to take action against the shoe-making units in the residential areas. Notices have been issues to footwear factories. Thousands of workers have lost their employments in Agra alone and those who lost their employment are largely the Dalits as they are labour intensive industries. In the footwear industry of Agra some 2

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[26] http://blogs.reuters.com/india/2014/04/01/dharavis-once-booming-leather-industry-losing-its-edge/

[27] https://thewire.in/29149/how-the-beef-ban-is-causing-the-decline-of-the-famous-kolhapuri-chappal/

For more information see the following links
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolhapur/Fading-footprint-of-Kolhapuri-chappals/articleshow/50791236.cms
http://www.thehindu.com/society/the-last-original-kolhapuris/article19231770.ece

Lakh workers are involved in the small and medium factories and karkhanas. There is pressure on these small units to close down and shift somewhere.

There is a growing polarization, radicalization and the emergence of cow protection groups in different parts of the country. This has particularly became more visible in the ever since the BJP government took over at the center and the other prominent states[28]. There have been numerous incidents in which people were killed in suspicion of consuming or possessing the alleged cow meat. This is has affected the leather workers as well as they are the one who are involved in the transportation, flaying and skinning processes. The infamous Una incident is an example for this. "Seven of the Dalit workers were mercilessly beaten up with rods and it was video graphed to show a lesson to others" (The Hindu, 2016)[29]. These kinds of incidents have been reported from different parts of the country. The forced closure of the Slaughter houses, the growing influence of the Gau Rakshak Groups, beef ban, the ban on the sale of cattle etc. have caused huge problems for the leather workers. It is leading to the disruption of the chain to acquire the raw material and its showing its impact on the growth of the leather industry. The leather industry of Agra has suffered badly due to these developments (Ramachadran, 2017)[30].

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[28] http://www.rediff.com/business/report/why-the-rs-20000-Crore-up-leather-industry-is-on-tenterhooks/20170322.htm

[29] http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Protests-continue-in-Gujarat-over-thrashing-of-Dalits-near-Una/article14501552.ece
For more information visit the following links
http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/ahmedabad-to-una-the-great-gujarat-dalit-march-for-freedom-begins-friday/story-3SiKoDZVGGiFuQKOxCUzqL.html
http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/gujarat-7-of-dalit-family-beaten-up-for-skinning-dead-cow-2910054/
https://thewire.in/54094/dalit-agitation-gujarat-una/

[30] http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/opposition-mps-concerned-about-decline-in-leather-production-owing-to-closure-of-slaughterhouses/story-tsBAj63y5TIBwLElXnLxTL.html

CHAPTER 7

ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT, FIELD ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES

ECONOMIC AND MATERIAL STATUS

The leather workers have been one of the most economically marginalised and exploited castes in India. It is very well reflected by their landholding patterns. Out of the sample of 40 only 3 reported to have agricultural land that too located outside Agra. Some of the agriculture land that some workers owned previously had been sold off due to various reasons like marriage, paying off debt, health treatment or establishing small karkhana. The workers to a large extent inherit their traditional shoe making skill from their parents instead of land. Labour is their major source of income and livelihood. One successful entrepreneur who is also a worker received the land from his wife's inheritance. The landlessness is a wide spread phenomenon among the workers. Poverty has been a historic fact and it continues to be so even today both in terms of volume and degree.

The ownership of the houses is one of the important parameters of their economic status. Majority of the respondents reported to be living in their ancestral houses. Only few reported to be living in rented accommodations. It is common among the workers to have 3-5 children in a single family. Many of these families share the same premises. Hence there are problems in the demarcations of the family assets and ownership titles. Almost every family has one or other kinds of disputes over the ancestral property which is also a reason for disputes and conflicts within the families. It is one of the reasons that they are not able to take loans from banks or benefit from many of the government schemes as they lack proper documents. There are many in the basti who are in dire need of the government support but not able to utilise due to tough procedures and proper papers. Many are still without ration/PDS cards, bank accounts etc.

The ownership of household assets is an important indicator to evaluate their economic position. There exist is huge range of disparities and inequalities within the families and community. Some houses in the basties do not even have basic requirements like cooking gas, bed, water storage facilities, separate kitchen, running water etc. They merely have some boxes, beddings, limited kitchen utensils, and fan

etc. however on the other hand one can find houses with sofa, bed, TV (with cable), audio system, fridge, motor cycle, cooler etc. explorations further revealed that many of these things have been received in dowry in the present or previous generations. There are very few countable houses in the basties who actually own four wheelers, AC, washing machine etc. These households either belongs to those people who either have established business, own small karkhana, or have government jobs (Field Observation and interviews, 2014)

Work is one of the main components which determine the income, economic security, and quality of life. The native workers of Agra reported to have footwear and footwear related work as their primary source of income. However the interviews with the entrepreneurs revealed many workers in their karkhana or small factories come from agricultural background. They come from nearby towns or village during non-agricultural season. Over the years the collapse of the small home based manufacturing units have led to their dependence on rent. Many of the workers in the dalit basties reported to have rented out their karkhana to tenants. It is specially observed in the case of *Panchkuyein* which is located beside the main road and nearby police lane and magistrate office.

The leather work is highly volatile in nature as the demand depends on fashion, orders, and price moreover the per capital consumption of the shoes in India is very low compare to the rich nations. The bulk of the demand for shoes and other accessories generates during the festival and marriage season. Hence the shoe works largely a temporary, fluctuating and seasonal in nature. It is one of the main reasons that the shoe making does not guarantee round the year employment to the workers. It is only the large organised factories which run round the year as they get sufficient order from the western countries. The small factories, karkhanas and household units largely cater to the civilian and domestic demand. Hence there are very limited opportunities for their employment. In annexture C page number 571, a home based worker in panchkuyein, is seen working with limited orders.

The workers in the small factories, karkhanas and household units live at two extremes; either there is so much of work that they are unable to handle or there is none. They have to sit idle for a large part of the year. The sample covered the large factories workers and the small factories, karkhanas and household units' shows that none of the workers had any permanent affiliation with any one establishment. The workers in the factories and the order suppliers keep changing hence it is highly

unpredictable. Even within a season workers end up working in numerous places. Almost all the workers in the factories and household units reported to have to have worked or taken order from multiple establishments and factories. A worker roughly recalled to have worked approximately 25-30 places before opening a small karkhana in his house. The same karkhana has been closed due to the entry of Chinese shoes and slippers (Interview, 14/12/2014, Panchkuyein).

The work opportunities are limited and there is stiff and cut Thorat competition to get work. There are not standard wages or regulatory mechanism to determine the wages in the industry. The wages, salary of the workers, rate of the goods, conditions of manufacturing, orders and supply are determined by the demand and supply in the industry. There is huge fluctuations in the wages, salaries, orders and it keeps changing according to season, demand and fashion even within season time. The workers are always on their toes and pressure to earn their livelihood and many end up working for low wages due to their vulnerabilities. There has not been any increase in the piece rate, wages as the manufacturers, merchants and entrepreneurs negotiate very hard with the workers. Many of the workers in the household unit's workers reported to have closed down their karkhana as there was not sufficient income from this work. They have converted their karkhanas into room and rented out to tenants (Interview, 15/11/2014, Sundarpara)

The workers are highly in a vulnerable condition due to the uncertainties in their live. The discussion with workers revealed that most of them had some kind of debt on their head whether small or large (Group Discussion, 10/01/2015, Nai ki Mandi). Many of them revealed to have sold jewellery or other goods in past to pay off debt. The problem is so acute that it is a stigma to reveal their debt condition. The debt is also perceptional in the senses the small borrowing on a daily basis like 100/500 or 1000 is not considered to be debt rather called *Udhari*. The bigger amount like 5000 or so is considered to be serious and are perceived as *Karja*. Credit is an accepted practice in the industry and the transactions between the goods sellers and buyers take place through credit slips called *purcha/purchi*.

However the actual workers in the karkhana or factory are paid in cash that too, twice a week. It clearly shows the poor situation for the workers. They do not have buffer and enough saving even to sustain even for a week. Any single day disruption in the work brings huge hardship in their life. It is so common to lend and borrow money among the workers in basti for health treatment, paying education fees,

visiting places, having small functions or taking credit to pay off the debt again. The lending and borrow is a normal and accepted practice in the dalit basti. It is also a common among the workers to have their own chit fund kind of arrangement which the call *lottery* to sustain themselves. They contribute small amount per week or month for a certain fixed duration. This amount is given to a person whose name chit is selected randomly by lottery system.

WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Leather work is highly labour intensive and manual in nature. The workers leant this work through apprenticeship in the household or small karkhanas. It therefore does not require degrees or diploma. It is because of this reasons that most of the workers in the factories, karkhanas or household units have poor education. Only 2 respondents in the sample of 40 reported to have reached to the level of master's degree. Both of these left their masters degree after 1st year due to financial problems in the family and pressure to earn. All the respondents except these two were either illiterate or early drop out. One can find young children as young as 8-10 years old coming to the small karkhana, doing small work processes in the houses or working at the shops. The girls in the community have better chances of attaining education as it is the boys who are expected to do the shoe making work and take up family responsibilities. Another reason is that, when the girl is educated, the parents are in a better position to negotiate with the prospective match with regard to dowry (Interview & Observation, 18/02/2015, Panchkuyein).

Illiteracy is still a wide spread phenomenon among the middle aged persons. However the educational status has improved considerably in the current generation. Many of the families are giving education to their children facing huge hardships. Illiteracy is still a problem as one can find considerable number of children in the basties who are not enrolled in the schools or enrolled but not going to the schools. Over the years expenses on the education has increased considerably due to commercialisation of the education. One worker revealed to have sold some agricultural land to pay for the college fees of his eldest son and two school going children. Many workers are not aware of the government schemes and facilities offered by the government for the poor due to lack of education and awareness. One can still find many people in the basties who do not have bank accounts, ration/PDS cards, insurance schemes run by the governments. While many are not aware of many

schemes but still there are people who do not get it easily as the procedures are tough and government staff does not treat them well.

The segregation and ghettoisation is quite visible in the city. There are different groups and communities who live together but there are some natural or artificial markers which separate these groups and communities from each other. There are names of clusters on the basis of the caste which lives there. One can easily find in common discussion to references like *kumhar para, darzi para, saini para, kasai para, bhangi para, valmiki basti, jatav basti, gheira basti* etc. it is quite possible that there may be many other people from different caste live there but they are identified with identity of one particular group. *Malinbasti* is the term which is used for the leather dalit clusters even in government records these clusters are designated by this term. There are some other terms used to denote these by suffixes like *Nagla*, *Tila*, *Pura* and *para*. In annexture C, page number 574, a municipal contract workers is shown cleaning the Sundarpara, a jatav dominated low lying basti with bare hand.

These terms are specially used to denote to those areas which are located away or outside from the main residential cluster. The leather workers basties can be quite easily identified with the facilities and physical outlook. The term *Mohalla* is generally used for a Muslim cluster while the term *colony* is generally used for those areas which are clean, planned, and have better facilities. Sundarapara is inhibited by jatavs, beside this lies a small cluster of a tribe called *Gheira* which buys rejected shoes from the large factories and repair them and sells it in market. The jatavs consider them below to their social ranking. There is hardly any interaction between them and jatavs. One woman from Jatavs contested in an local election and when she went there to ask for their vote. The *Gheira*'s condition to support to her was that she drinks water from their house (Interview, 10/12/2014, Sundarpara).

A survey of the field areas revealed that there is some kind of disadvantages attached to these clusters. These areas are located on an uneven surface and terrain, have drain passing beside or though them, lies close or beside railways tracks or have located below normal surface. This is also revealed by the workers living in those areas. The field areas like *panchkuyein* is located behind a Muslim graveyard, *sundarpara* is located at least two floor below normal surface road and in opposite of it passes a railways line. It is jokingly called *gaddha*. Another areas called *nala kaji para* is located at least three floor below normal surface and is located beside railway line. It is divided by a big drain which divides the Muslim and Jatav clusters. The

residents call it *nara kaji para* instead of *nala kaji para* to avoid stigma. Ratanpura is also located beside a drain and has huge uneven surface. Half of the basti is located above and half below normal surface. Similarly, the *nai ki mandi* also has geographical uneven surface. The same is the situation of *ratanpura* and *meera hussseni* areas (Field Observation, 2014).

The living conditions are highly inadequate and unsatisfactory. The houses in the dalit clusters are small, lack sunlight/natural light and congested. The houses are *pucca* and electrified. However there huge variations within the basties about the consumption of electricity and age of the houses depending on their economic status. There are good numbers of houses which are aging however there are houses which have been constructed recently or renovated. The houses are so well tightly aligned to each other that it is so difficult to get fresh air and sunlight. It is specially applies to those basties and houses which are located deep within the residential. Those houses which are located outside are little more privileged to get sunlight and fresh air. The workers reported to use bulb or tube light even during the day time. The workers traditionally have large families which were largely due to their occupational requirements. It is rare to find a nuclear family in basties and many generations share the same household. The chances of horizontal expansion of the houses are none due to congestion. Hence the houses are kept rising vertically. Whenever there is marriage in the house the one room is built over the terrace or some compartment are created within the existing rooms (Observation & Discussion, 2014).

The family size is big as it leather work has been a group oriented work. The houses do not have sufficient space to accommodate the large families. There is no clear demarcation between the hall, kitchen and living rooms. In majority of the case a part of the common areas or balcony is designated as kitchen. Majority of the houses are provided with water connection but still there are many who are dependent on public hand pumps or shared sources. The tap connections in most of the cases are outside of the houses as there is not sufficient space within the premises. Over the years there has been reduction in the quantity, regularity and quality of the drinking water. Many who are relatively well off purchase the drinking water from the market.

Open defection is still a wide spread phenomenon due to the location of these basties. Many of the dalit basties are located below the normal surface therefore the drainage system cannot be provided by default. There are still a large number of people in the basties who use the nearby railway line for relieving as there is no space

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inside the houses for making toilets. Many of the families that have constructed toilets in their houses have their waste discharged in the drains. The cost of digging a septic cost is huge moreover the houses are not big enough to have septic tanks. The drains stinks as it carries human waste and chocked quite frequently as the waste leather products are also infused into these drains. It is the municipal workers who clean these drains with their hands as the suction machines cannot go inside the basties due to lack of space. The water quality, qnantity and regulalrity are issues in dalit basties. Annextures C, page number 573 captures the quality of water received in dalit basties.

LOCATION, IDENTITY AND POLITICS

The probabilities of accidents are huge due to the uneven geographical terrain of these low lying areas. During rains these sloppy surface becomes slippery resulting in injuries. The water is accumulated in these low lying areas which virtually cut off these areas from the rest. The passing of rails frequently creates vibrations which result in cracks and weakening of the houses. There is constant fear of the collapse of the old houses. It is especially specific to those basties which are located nearby railways tracks. The same railways tracks are used for relieving. Many people in the sundarpara para informed how many people in the past died untimely when they went for relieving themselves in the morning as they could not see the speeding train due to fog. Similarly, *Nala kaji Para* which is also a low lying basti and located besides the railway tract faced the same problems. Many children in the past fell or drowned in the drain which passes though Nala Kaji Para.

The poor living conditions and uneven surface in the basties affect every one living there. However it becomes more acute and gruesome to some specific set of people like aged people, disabled, diseased, young children and women. The mobility of the disabled is doubly restricted due to the areas in which they live. The aged are not able to move freely as going up and down create additional burden to their bodies. There have been cases when the children fell from the sloppy surface and broke their teeth, bones or suffered injuries. The structural location and uneven makes it difficult to reach these places conveniently. The people living there do not easy access to markets and they have to cover distance to buy everyday utilities like groceries, vegetables and other requirements. Even the rickshaw pullers do not like to visit these places readily unless paid little more due to uneven terrain as it requires extra physical

strength to reach these places (Field Experience, 2014-15). If some are ready they drop to a nearby convenient place.

There is a particular penchant for non vegetarian food among the workers. Goat Meat has been an essential part of their dietary practices historically. It is therefore a symbol of history, identity and assertion. Special and important guests are treated with various kinds of meat like fish, mutton and chicken. Sunday is a special day when meat is cooked in every family which can afford it. An entrepreneur revealed that he has not eaten any vegetable for years. It is a rule and a custom in his house to cook meat twice a day. Over the years there has been significant reduction of meat consumption due to the rising cost. Many of the workers have resorted to other sources of protein like fish, chicken etc which are relatively less expensive than mutton. Many have left it altogether or started eating other kinds of meat.

There were mixed views about the religion. Many hesitated to call themselves Hindus while many had a clear prefer to call themselves as Buddhist. A significant of section of workers claimed to be atheist and they do not worship. However there is presence of Hindu gods, idol along with Ambedkar and Buddha statues in the houses but the gods and goddesses do not have that ritual and spiritual value in their life. There are less temples and more Ambedkar statues and parks in and around leather workers clusters. The Ambedkar parks serves the practical value to them as social functions are organised in these parks as there is no other open space available to them.

There is an overwhelming support for the philosophy of Ambedkar and BSP. Mayawati is a respected figure and a role model among them. They are particularly influenced by her ability to make administration, bureaucracy and police more public friendly. The workers have an opinion that the crime rate goes down and law and order improves in her rule. Moreover small person gather courage to go to the police station as it generates enough confidence among them. Ambedkar birth 14th April is celebrated with much enthusiasm and energy followed by the *Buddha purnima* and *ravidas jayanti* etc. Every year a dalit basti is selected and projected as "Bhim Nagri" on the birth day of Ambedkar. Annexture C, page numbers 575 to 577 captures the Bhim Nagari celebration, their history and symbolic assertion.

This celebration helps attract administration attention to those areas. The administration is forced to focus on these areas and clean the roads and drains otherwise these areas remain neglected due to administration's callous attitude. The

celebration on the one hand provides them a platform to articulate their views, assert their political beliefs and on the other hand bring more amenities and attention of the administration. The BSP also shows its presence in these celebrations though various means. Whenever BSP forms the government in the state, these left out areas start getting administrations effective attention and the quality of life improves significantly. During BSP rule last time many of the roads were constructed and special drives were organised to clean these basties. Along with these, special days were designated to file police complaints in case, people were abused on case line. Overall the administration becomes more sensitive and accountable in her rule as it came out very clearly from workers narratives.

CASE STUDIES

Vikrant

Vikrant is a 39 year age young gentleman running his shoe designing work in his rented shop at *nai ki mandi*. He is medium built, 5 feet 4 inches tall, fair complexion and weight around 67 kilogram. He is very conscious of his identity and is a staunch supporter of BSP. He does not like to be called a hindu and has a deep faith in the Buddha and the philosophy of Ambedkar. Most of the people in the basti and at his work place are firm supporter of the politics of Mayawati. This is visible in the from of symbols, icons, statues of Ambedkar and Buddha in and around their basti and at their work place.

He is had done his graduation from Agra university though correspondence. He enrolled for post graduation but left mid way due to financial problems and family responsibilities. He is married and his wife is a home maker, he has two daughters and both are going to private school. He is the second youngest among four of his siblings. His eldest brother is school dropout and unemployed. He makes his living by doing some random works here and there. Two of his sisters are post graduate and been married off long back. His mother is a home maker and He lost is father some years back due to fever. He is the only earning member in his family currently.

He is Jatav by caste and leather work has been their traditional caste and family occupation. Vikrant's grandfather was a rich person and was a known leather entrepreneur in Agra. He was a very mobile person who used to make big trips to different parts of Indian related to work. Vikrant's father joined for B.Tech in Gwalior for his engineering. But he faced discrimination by fellow students who used to tease his father on caste line which led to frequent conflicts with his colleagues. One day in the rage he hit someone and left the institution leaving his studies midway. Afterwards he had been repairing machines and tools randomly. The sources of earnings were limited and the family was dependent on rent which they received from their ancestral property. .

Vikrant had to start earning at a very young age due to financial problems in the family. He was forced by circumstances to enter this work so that he can provide a helping hand to his family. He somehow completed his Graduation through correspondence from Agra University. He applied for some government jobs after his graduation but failed to secure any. He did his shoe designing diploma in 2001 from CFTI, Agra. He is a shoe designer by specialization and profession which is highly technical skill and greatly valued in this occupation. He has worked at many large export factories in different part of India. He is well exposed to the dynamics of leather work.

He lives in basti called Ratanpura which is located in between jeevni mandi and vijay nagar colony. The vijay nagar is an upper caste dominated colony with doctors, entrepreneurs, professional and government officials living in that area. Jeevni mandi is a commercial area with factories and market. The outer part of the basti is inhibited by the jatavs and as one goes inside there are other castes groups and religious communities living together but there is demarcation and separation. On the end lies jamadar/mehtar basti where one can see many pigs roam around.

Ratan pura is a known leather footwear production cluster with small and house based karkhana located within the basti. There are many small karkhana running from houses and shops which deal with raw material and some small workshop of shoe last where workers manually repair old lasts. Many families are

dependent on the work which is subcontracted to them by the small karkhana and factories on piece rate. The basti has uneven surface there is a big drain nearby. The basti is very densely populated and most of the people here are workers. The houses in the basti are small, congested and lack proper ventilation. There is no proper street lights in the basti it is very dark during nights. People use their own bulbs to lighten the streets.

The lanes are although made of concrete bur broken due to digging and repairing work here and there. Most of the water connections are located outside of the houses. Toilet facility is not absent in many houses but many families do not have enough space for toilets and they have to go outside for relieving. It is one of the reasons of conflict as there have been conflict with the Vijay nagar colony residents over this issue in the past. Geographically the surface is highly uneven, somewhere it is too high and some where it is too low. Vikrant house is located at higher altitude from the normal surface of the basti. He does not therefore have to face the water logging problems which is particularly pathetic during the rainy season when the water is accumulated and it become difficult to pass through.

The house where Vikrant lives, is an ancestral property. He was adopted by his aunt and he inherited the house which he has constructed with his own saving. He lives on the first floor with his mother and family and the ground floor is rented out to tenants. Most of the items in the house are received in the dowry gifts like the double bed, fridge, cooler, sofa etc. The life of Vikrant has not been smooth. He has faced a lot of problems and hardships to come to this stage. There were many problems in the family due to the lack of economic resources and income. He is quite open to share these family details without much hesitation. He is one of the major influence and role models in his basti for his sincerity, dedication and hard work.

He started his life journey as a child worker in technical terms but it is often a culture within the community. As the child reaches the age of 8-10 years, he starts going to different karkahana and small factories with his elders or known person to learn the basic of leather work. "*maine bachpan se hi kamama shuru kar diya tha, kyuki ghar mein koi sadhan to the nahi, majboori mein kuch to karna tha apna aur apni family ka peth bharne ke liye*" (I started earning from a very early age as there were not resources in the family, I have to do something to earn so that I could provide income to myself and family). He says " *maine footpath pe thadi laga ke jute beche hai alag alag sehar mein, yahan se jute le jata tha aur footpath pe bechta tha, kaise bhi karke apna kharcha nikal leta tha*" (I used to scatter shoes on footpath in different cities, I used to carry shoes from here and used to sell on footpath, somehow I used to manage my expenses).

He is only 39 years old, but he says that he has been earning for the last 25 years. Leather work has been his caste and family occupation. He did not find much difficult in this work as it is something which is readily available for anyone who is living in a basti. There are many children in the basti which are working as child workers in the small factories and karkhana. He himself has been assisted by children of different age groups who were sent by their families to learn the basics of shoe designining in his shop. He says " *garibi bahut kuch kara deti hai, jin logon ke pass khane kamane ko kuch nahi hai unhe majboori mein baccho ki padai likhai churani padti hai aur phir woh is line mein majdoor ban ke reh jate hain, aur phir hamari caste mein to garibi hamein virasat/parampara mein milti hai, ma-baap ke karje ko bacche chukayenge, yeh eik cycle hai, sirf chehre badalte rehte hain, par log rahi rehte hain*" (poverty forces people do many things (against wishes), those families who do not have income sources are forced to discontinue their children studies mid-

way and they become labourers once they enter into this, and then we get poverty as our heritage/culture, the debt of parents are paid off by their children, this is a cycle, only faces change but people (group) remains same).

He has a rich experiences of working in some of the largely export oriented factories in different parts of the country. Just after his shoe designing he joined a factory at Sikandara. There he worked as a temporary employees like majority of other workers. He says in most of the large factories 80-85 percent of the workers are temporary workers. They work under contractors and they will be there as long as contractors want them. Only 15-20 percent of the workers are salaried employees of the factories. The workforce keeps changing in the factories both due to changes in the demand of work and also to prevent unionism and labour laws. He worked in the factory as designer for a salary which did not suit either his qualifications or his requirements. But given the family circumstances he joined it and worked for many years before settling down to do his own work. He worked for many years at many places before opening his own shoe designing work against the advice of his elders who opposed his decision as he was earning well in large factories. He says, "*mein jahan bhi gaya hue maine eik cheez observe ki, hamari caste ke logon ko hamesha neeche rakha jata hai, unko badne nahi diya jata, koi ekka dukka mil jayenge par jaidatar majdoor mein hamare lore hi rehte hain*" (wherever I have gone I found one thing, our caste people are kept below always, they are not allowed to move up, there may be one or two exceptions but majority of the workers are our caste people).

There are no rules and scope for promotions in the large factories, he says "*jo jis line mein, jis level pe join karta hai woh wahi kaam karta rehta hai, promotion ki koi gunjaiyish nahi hai is kaam mein, jaise jo cutter/fitter/designing ke kaam pe rakha jata hai woh wahi kaam karta rahega hamesha, agar mein designer hue to designing hi karunga, management mein jaane ki ka koi option nahi hai, upar badne ke chances bahut kum hote hain, agar koi salary yeh piece rate badane ki baat karein to use naukti se nikal dete hain*" (whoever joins at whatever work and level, they have to do this work forever, there is no changes for promotion in this work, like those who join as cutter/fitter/designer always remain so forever, if I am a designer I have to do designing work, there are no changes that I can be promoted to management, there are very few chances for promotion and upgradation, if someone talks about raising the salary or piece rate, they are fired).

He is humble, polite and practical but is very critical whenever he is talking about caste. According to him, my grand father was a very rich person. He tried to purchase a plot in the vijay nagar colony, but these colony people did not allow him. He finally settled purchasing so many properties within the basti. He says "*caste ki wajah se humko bahut nuksan uthana padta hai, yeh kabhi khatam hue hi nahi thi, hamare saath bhedbhav hamare kaam ki wajah se tha, par aj to yeh kaam bhi hamare haath se chala gaya hai, is kaam mein hum log khatam ho gaye hain aur dusre badh rahe hain, phir bhi na to un logon ki caste badli aur na hi unke saath bhedbhav hota hai hamari tarah*"(we have to suffer in many ways due to caste, it was never dead, we are discriminated due to our work, but today this work has also gone out of our hand, we have been ruined in this work while others are progressing, it did not change their caste nor do they face the same discrimination like we do). He says "*caste ne is country ka jitna nuksan kiya hai utna kisi ne nahi kiya, is ki wajah se hum logon ko dub ke rehna padta hai, meri to samaj mein nahi aata ki akhir unmein aur hum mein farak kya hai, kyun hamare samaj ko itni grahna ki dristi se dekhte hain, khane-peene mein, milne-julne mein doori bana ke rakhte hain*" (no other factor has destroyed this country than caste, we have to live in subjugation due to it, I do not understand what

is the difference between them and us, why they hate our caste so much, they maintain distance whether it is eating or inter-mingling).

He says, "*maine CFTI se footwear desining mein diploma kiya hai, us waqt course fee 10,000 Rupees. thi, mere pass who bhi nahi the, maine chaar installment mein di, who bhi yahan wahan se jugad kar ke, aj wahan basic se basic cource bhi 50,000 se kum mein nahi hota, wahan ki fees itni bada ki hai ki hamare log to jaidatar pauch hi nahi paate, hamara to quota bhi nahi bhar paata, aur jo pauch jaate hai kaise bhi karke phir wahan casteism chalta hai, hamare ladko ko peeche rakha jata hai jaanbooj ke, ki top kar gaye to unhe aachi job mil jayegi factories mein, foreign mein posting bhi mil sakti hai, wahan pe theory padane wale saare log upper castes ke hai aur unke helpter saare hamari caste ke, ab yeh discrimination nahi to kya hai, jo log sadiyon se juta banate aaa rahe hain aj wahi helper hai aur jin logon ne juta kabhi banaya nahi hai who aj iske master hai*"(I have done a footwear designing course from CFTI, that time the fee was 10,000 rupees, I did not have even that, I payed in four instalments by managing from here and there, today there is hardly any course which can be done below 50,000 rupees, the fees has been increased so much that our people are not able to reach there, even our quota is filled, whoever reach there by some efforts, there have to face castism, our children are kept behind consciously, that if they top they will get good jobs in factories and may get foreign posting as well, those who teach theory are from upper castes and their helpers are from our caste, if it is not discrimination what it is, those who have been making shoes for centuries are their helpers and those who never made shoes are masters (teachers).

He says, "*yeh log hum logon ko aage nahi badne dete, hamesha kisi na kisi tarah hamrti kaat mein lage rehte hain, agar caste maloom hone ke baad hamein koi job pe rakh bhi leta hai factory mein to hum un se barabari se bat nahi kar sakte, bare tarike se baat karni padti hai chahe galti uski kyun na ho, hamesha eik pressure mehsoon hota hai caste ka*" (these people cannot tolerate our progress, they always try to stop us though different tricks and pretexts, if somebody employ us knowing our caste, we cannot talk to them in equal terms, we have to be very careful while talking even if the person is at fault, there is always a pressure of caste). He gives the example, "*aap kahan kahin bhi jao basti mahollo mein aapko eik cheez common milegi, wahan aspatal ho yeh na ho, school ho yeh na ho, par apko daru ki dukan jarur milegi, aur un daru ke dukano ke thekadar yeh log nahi hai dusri jaat ke hai, sarkar ne daru ki dukanein har gali mahollo mein khol di hai, par shiksha aur health ke liye koi suvidha nahi hai, yeh log chahte hi nahi ki hum tarikki karein, sham ko jab eik karigar ghar wapas aata hai to haath mein daru ki eik bottle hoti hai, jo paisa shiksha aur swathya mein lagna chahiye woh daru mein udh jata hai, jo chala rahe hain woh badh rahe hai aur jo pee rahe hain woh barbad ho rahe hain, ab yeh discrimination nahi hai to kya hai, aap bari bari colony mein koi daru ki dukan nahi dekhote*" (you will find one thing common whererever you go in the dalit clusters/settlements, there is one shop of liquor, instead of hospitals and schools, and these shops are run by other caste people, the government has oped these liquor shops in every nook and corners, but there is facilities/provisions for health and education, these people do not want us to progress, when a worker return in evening, he has one bottle of liquor in his hand, the money which should have been spent on health and education is wasted on liquor, those who are running these are prospering and those who are drinking are pauperising, now, it is not discrimination what it is , you will not find these shops running from colonies).

He is a staunch supporter of BSP, he is very active in his basti to promote the ideas and ideals of Buddha, ambedkar and kanshiram. His critical experiences, discrimination and exposure in different part of the country convinced him that he cannot have a dignified life within Hinduism. He has persuaded his family members not to practice Hinduism. He has replaced all the gods and goddesses in his house with the Buddha and ambedkar. He takes his wife, mother and children to various public festivals on various occasions. He is also playing an active part in the community functions. He has become very active in the social and religious gatherings and now frequently participates in the rallies, functions and social events.

Pintu

Pintu as is known in his family, is a 40 years old person working in his house based small karkhana. He is dark complexion, above average built would have been tall had he not been affected by polio at a very young age. He is handicapped with one leg and moves with the help of his hands. He lives on the first floor of his house and his movement is restricted to only that floor except in the case when he has work he goes to the top floor to his karkhana. Earlier the karkhana was located at the ground floor but due to lack of work it has been closed down. He has his own small workshop on the top floor where he cuts the leather pieces for the chappals.

He is unmarried and lives with his father and elder brother along with his 3 nephews and bhabi. He has 5 sisters all have been married off long back. His mother died some years back due to some ailment. 2 of his nephew are studying and one is not going to school and helping his father on the shop. His father was a shoe designer by profession but now has been retired from this work. His father was one of the first persons in basti and nearby areas who got a shoe designing diploma from CFTI when the institute was established in Agra in the early 60s. He got a placement in madras but was not allowed by his grandfather due to family responsibility as he was the one of the eldest in the family. Pintu's elder brother is an illiterate and never went to school but he got some relaxation due to his physical problem and he went to government school. He finished his studies successfully and became graduate an achievement in the basti. After his graduation he tried his luck in UPSC, PSC, SSC, enrolled in employment exchange for a government job in handicap quota but failed to get job despite required qualifications.

Pintu although restricted to his house but he is well aware of the dynamics of the industry as his father is an established person in the basti. His father has good links and network in the market and work with a Punjabi. He is involved in giving credits to the workers on interest. He has a "big man" reputation in the basti and is rich compare to the basti standards. Initially his father had a karkhana in the house which was working well for a considerable long time. There was a time when there used to be 10-15 karigar working in the karkhana making gents chappals and ladies sandals. Now all has been lost as due to changes in the market, establishment of large factories and entry of chinese cheap goods, all these worked to their disadvantage and decreased the demand of their products.

The house where pintu lives is an ancestral property purchased by his grandfather long back. The property has been divided across different generations making it denser, smaller and congested. There have time to time constructions on the basis of requirements. Those who live inside are more crowded, these houses neither have sunlight nor any air and one can feel the smell of leather and chemicals within the compounds. One single room is shared by many generations together. Pintu house is more spacious and there are 3 rooms on the first floor with a big veranda in front of these rooms. The house used to be crowded when mother and unmarried sisters were there in the house. But now it has become less as sisters have been married off. There is no separate kitchen and the food is cooked in the balcony of the house. The toilet is located at the top floor of the house. The source of drinking water is municipal supply and a motor is used for this purpose. There is a room on the ground floor which used to be their karkahan previously but nowadays it remains closed as there is shortage of work.

The house is located in panchkuyein a Jatav cluster and behind the house lies a Muslim graveyard. There was no specific separation between this Jatav basti and

Muslim graveyard previously. He says, "*jab hum chote the, to hamein bhuton (ghosts) ka daar lagta tha, kabristan bagal mein tha, hum apni chaat se din mein janaze dekhte the, aur raat mein daar lagta tha, ki kahin koi bhoot na aa jaye*" (when we were young, we were scared of ghosts, the graveyard was adjacent to our house, we used to see the funeral procession in day light from the top of our house, and we were scared at nights, that ghosts may come). he says, "aadmi se bara bhoot koi nahi hai, mare aadmi se zinda aadmi jaida khatarnak hota hai, mara hua aadki kisi ka nuksan nahi karta, lekin zinda aadki aadmi apne karibi ko bhi nahi chorta" "There is no bigger bhoot than the living man, they are more dangerous than the dead body, the dead body cannot harm anyone but the living human beings harm others". This graveyard has been used for relieving by many in the basti previously. But now the boundary line has been drawn separating these two areas due to encroachment fear by Muslims. After the boundary many of the families were forced to make toilets in their houses. Even though toilets have been constructed but there is no septic tank in most of the houses and the waste goes though the drains.

Pintu is a cutter by profession and specialisation with this work but he has been doing many other works like pasting, moulding whenever there was need. He says he earns 8-12 rupees per pair that varies according to the size, design, workload and season. He claims that he can earn upto 500-1000 per day if there is sufficient work. But most of the time he has to sit idle as he gets works in bits and pieces. There no surety of income but he is not dependent on his family despite his physical condition. He earns enough to sustain his own expenses and live a life according to his wishes. He wanted to have a government job but when he could not secure a job so finally he came into his traditional caste and family occupation. He says, "*is kaam ko log bura mante hai par hum nahi, hamara ghar is se chalta hai, hamare liye to rozi-roti ka sadhan hai*"(people consider this work dirty but we do not feel so, it is a source of income for us, it is livelihood for us). He has a very loud voice and can be heard easily from the other houses. Due to his physical condition his voice is the only way he can easily communicate, moreover he has to give directions and instructions to the workers. so he is accustomed to using his voice at a very high pitch. He says there is no certainty in this work, you can rise and fall suddenly due to the nature of the work. You have to go according to the nerve of the market. The fashion, techniques, design and demand change so fast in this industry that if you are not updated you will fall behind from others.

he says, "*hamari line mein competition bahut hai, pehle bhi tha, par ab jaida badh gaya hai, khaskar jab se bari bari factory aayi hai, chinese maal market mein aaya hai, logon ke karobar chaupt ho gaye hain, karigar log bekar ho gaye hain, dar dar ki thokar kha rahe hain kaam ke chakkar mein*" (there is so much of competition in our work, it was before also, but now it has increased ever since these big factories have come up and chinese products have entered into the market, artisans have become idle/jobless, people are struggling very hard for employment). He has so much of anger for his caste people, as they do not have unity among themselves. "*yahan koi kisi ko badte nahi dekh sakta, agar koi eik badh raha hai to dusra uski tang kheechne main lag jata hai*" (nobody can tolerate to see other progress, if one person progresses other will pull him down).

He accepts there is huge competition in this work and there are very few people who are successful in his caste. "*Bekari aur berozgari itni badh gayi hai ki log eik dusre ko bardast nahi kar sakte, kabhi who time tha jab logon mein mel-jol tha, eik dusre ke sukh dukh mein eik saath khade rehte the, aj to eik hi family ke logon mein bol chal tak band hai*" (idleness and unemployment has increased to much that

people find it difficult to see each other, there was a time when there was sharing, caring and harmony, today different members of the same family do not even talk to each other). He says, "*hamari samaj mein aj bhi log shiksha ka mahatv nahi samaj paye hain, abhi bhi mahnat majdoori kar ke jinda hai, na khane ke liye hai na pehan ne ke liye*" (our people (caste) have not understood the importance of education, they still survive on physical labour, neither they have money for eating or clothing).

At times, he regret for taking birth in a caste which has no respect in the society. Everyone treats them badly and see them with suspicion and repulsion. "*hamari halat hamari caste ki wajah se hai , agar humne bhi kisi aur samaj mein janam liya hota to shayad sthiti kuch aur hoti, hum bhi baith ke khate, samaj mein izzat hoti*" (our condition is due to our caste, if we had taken birth in other caste things would have been different, we could also sit and enjoy, there would be respect in the society). he says, people see them with hatred, their behaviour and attitude change when they come to know about their caste. It is because of this reason; he did not have many friends from other castes. He had a restricted movement therefore he has passed most of this time within the basti where he lives.

Pintu has much of pain, regrets and grievances and aggression which is reflected in the way he talks, the tone of his voice (which is very loud), pitch of the voice and the words he selects to express his anger as if he wants everyone to hear that in and around his basti. He says "*jatavon ki kahani to khatam ho chuki hai, barbad ho gaye hain, ab inke pass koi kaam dhanda nahi bacha, ab yeh log sirf majdoor ban ke reh gaye hain, uske liye bhi sangharsh karna pad raha hai, aur yeh sab inke karmon se*" (there is end of the story for the jatavs, they have been ruined, they do not have any concrete work left to do, they have become mere labourers, for that also they are struggling hard, all that is due to their own actions). He says "*in logon ke pichde rehne ka karan in logon ke karam hai, saara paisa khane peene mein uda dete hain aur phir karja mangte firte hai yahan wahan*" (they are to be blamed for their backwardness, they spend all money in eating and drinking and then they lookout for credit here and there). He adds, " *aj garib aur garib ho raha hai aur amir aur amir ho raha hai, amir aur garib ke khai patne ke bajaye aur badh rahi hai*" (today poor is becoming poorer and the rich is becoming richer, the gap and difference is increasing rather than bridging up).

On being asked about the discrimination and exploitation of the leather workers in the markets, he opens up the complex interaction between the artisan and the merchants. "*Market mein saare ke saare vyapari log yeh dusri jaat ke hain, in logon ka pura kabza hai market pe, yeh log (caste hindu) garib karigaron aur majdoor logon ko khun chuste hain market mein, chote kaam dhando walon ka paisa rok ke rakhte hain,, upar se gali galoch daath aur fatkar alag se sehni padti hai*"(all the merchants in the market belong to other castes, they have a absolute monopoly in the market, these people suck the blood of these poor workers/artisans in the market, they withhold the money of these small artisans and workers and above that, these people have to bear abuses, insults, and humiliation). "*Hamare babuji to market mein baithte hain to mere liye to kaam ghar pe hi aa jata hai aur ghar se hi chala jata hai, mujhe to jaida dikkat nahi hoti, par dusre log jo khud maal banate hai aur khud hi bechte hain unlogon ka to market mein soshan hota hai*" (my father sit in the market so I get my work delivered at home and it is transported from home to market, I do not feel much problem but others are exploited in the market).

There was a time when every household in the basti was involved in the leather work. This basti was one of the major leather products clusters in Agra. Nowadays it has been ruined as most of the work has shifted from jatav houses to the large factories.

The unemployment has increased and workers have become useless. "*Pehle logon pe kaam dhande the to log kaam mein busy rehte the, aj kaam khatam ho gaya hai to log ghar mein baith kar apna time kaat rahe hain, bahut logon ne apne karkhane kiraye pe chada diye hain*" (earlier people had work and employment, they were busy in their work, today there is no work many have given their karkhana on rent to tenants). The workers have ruined and finding it difficult to sustain themselves. Nowadays many of the youngsters are involved in quick money technique. They are involved in gambling, liquor, satta, dalali and many other activities which were not seen previously in the basti.

Although they have been BSP supporters traditionally but they have their own grievances. After the party came into power there were many changes in the basties, the roads were built up, the water regularity improved, the electivity problem regularised (although it was privatised in her rule) but on the work front nothing concrete happened. Although mayawati opened a special market for the small artisans and home based workers but it has been made useless by the rich and big people in the heeng ki mandi. They purchased all the shops in the market by using small artisans as face and let it closed. Things remained as it is and nothing concrete happened.

"*kul mila kar jamini haqikat wahi ki wahi rahi, hum jaise the waise hi reh gaye, bahut log aaye bahut logon ne bahut kuch waide kiye par na to jati badly aur na hi hamari kismet, balki cheezen pehle se aur bhi kharab ho gayi hai*"(the situation remained unchanged in totality, it remained as it is as it was before, many people came, many made promises but neither caste changed nor our destiny, now things have deteriorated further). According to him people use them for their own use. Whenever there are elections, many of the politicians distribute free liquor in the basti for votes or whenever there are rallies people are given money to participate in those rallies. None of their expectations were fulfilled and there is so much of pessimism and passivity both from the government and society for their neglect and sufferings.

Rajesh

Rajesh is 44 year old man, he is around 5 feet 4 inches tall, fair complexion, average body built up and running his own small karkhana in his house. he calls himself hindu but does not worship like others. He says, he is the follower of babasaheb and he is our god. He and his wife are illiterate and never went to school. He has been married off when he was in his in 20s. He has five members in this family including himself. There are three children, out of which the eldest son, is doing graduation in Mathura, the daughter is studying class 12th and the youngest son is studying in class 9th. The house where they live can be called puccka but it is broken at many places and has not been properly constructed.

He lives in sundarpara, a low lying area which is hugely dense. Most of the people in the basti are one way or the other related to leather work. there are many small karkhana running in the basti within the houses. Most of the houses are two storied but many houses more than that either to get some rented income or to accommodate their families. There is hardly any space in between the houses, they are tightly aligned with each other. There is only one chowk around 150 sq. feet which is used for small functions. The houses cannot be expanded horizontally due to space problems therefore they are vertically as the numbers of family member are increasing. It is a usual practice, once a family member is married off, it is allocated a room at the top of the house which keeps multiplying over a period of time. There are many houses which are not able to do so due to their economic problems are single storied. There are many houses in the basti which have an area of 15-20 sq. feet, but to accommodate the families rooms have been built over it. The conditions of these houses are really pathetic as there is no sunlight, cross ventilation or space for movement. The condition of people in these houses and basti become extremely difficult during the summers, rainy season, power cuts.

The house where Rajesh lives is a family property received in heritage. Therefore the house is old and has old design and construction. It is a single story house which is located on the right side of the narrow lane. The house lies on the slope and on the higher end is main road and the lower end is street. There are frequent accidents on these slopes especially during the rainy season when it becomes slippery. The house has two rooms; the bigger room which is also their drawing cum workshop is located at the front of the house. The tools, stitching machine, raw material are lying there. The bed room is little inside of this room and many of assets and belonging are kept there. There is no specific kitchen and it is an areas which lies between his karkhana and the bed room. The toilet is located on the outer part of the house but within the confines of the plot. The walls of the house are dirty and the plaster is coming ip at different places. The floor is cemented with numerous cracks here and there due the vibrations and ripples of rail which passed just opposite his house. The water connection is located outside of the house. The house is not properly ventilated and has very restricted access of sunlight. The bulbs are used even during the day time due to lack of natural light. It was not remembered when it was last whitewashed. The fans and the bulbs are used when it is necessary otherwise the karkhana gate is opened to access the fresh air. There are no specific assets in the house; there is one gas connection, one fan, some folding beds, one black and white TV with cable connection and kitchen utensils etc. Many of the things are shared within the families within community as the need arises.

He is a fitter by specialisation which requires him to stitch different pieces of different part of the shoe upper with the help of stitching machine. He gets this work

from the small factories and he charges around 8-12 per pair which is not fixed and depends on many factors. His wife is a full time homemaker and assists his husband in his karkhana in doing small processes like separating and arranging the pieces and at times putting adhesive or some other smaller works. He makes shoes and chappals as per the the demand and orders, but normally he makes 3-4 pairs of shoes if there is some order with the help of his family. He says, he can make 8-10 pairs by hiring 1-2 karigars if work is there. The leather shoe which he makes is sold at the cost of around 300 to 400 rupees to the merchants. This includes the cost of his labour and also the raw materials. The merchants or retailers sell the same to the customers around 700-800 hundred or whatever rate suit to them. The children often help their parents in the work when there is load of the work. The youngest one specially does many of the works. This room (karkhana) is also used for studying by kids when there is no work. at the karkhana.

While telling about the history of the family, he says, "*hamare pitaji ka kabhi chota mota karkhana tha, kaam bahut jaida bara to nahi tha, woh bhi hamari tarah mehnat majdoori karke apni roti-rozi kamate the*" (my father used to have a small karkhana, the work was not huge, he too, used to work and earn his livelihood like me). His father used to own some agricultural land and business. After the death of his father the family business and property was divided into numerous parts. He sold his share of the property some time back to finance the education of his children. The eldest son is located in Mathura and thinking of doing some coaching for UPSC and UPPCS after graduation. "*ab hamari zindagi jaise bhi nikalni thi nikal gayi, kum se kum in bachho ko to shiksha milni chahiye, taki apne pairon pe khade ho sakein, hamari tarah thokar na khayein jagah jagah*" (now our life has been passed whatever way it had to be passed, at least these children should get education so that they can stand on their feet, they should not suffer like we did in our life).

Responding to question about, how he entered in this work he says, "*yeh hamara pustani kam hai, hamar dada, pardada sabhi yehi kaam karte aa rahe hain, humne ghar mein isi kaam ko hote dekha hai hamesha, phir hum be karna shuru kar diya, pehle kaam seekha ghar mein aas parosh mein phir dheere dheere humne bhi karna shuru kar diya*" (this is our hereditary work, our forefather all have been doing this, we have always seen this work in our houses, then we also started it, first, we learnt this in our house and neighbour, then we started doing this (independently). He says, once you start doing this work there is hardly any time for studies. It is the reason that he could not get any education, but he is giving education to his children. He has hopes from his children that they may become successful after getting education. "*kum se kum hamari tarah angutha chap to nahi rahenge, hum apna kaam kar rahe hain, baki bhagwan ki maji hai*" (they will not be like us anguthachap (illiterate), we are doing our work (by giving education), rest depends on god).

According he does not have any "aib" (bad habits) as he does not drink or smoke nor use any substances like ganja, paan, tobacco, kheni, gutka for which most of the workers are quite addicted. "*bastiyon mein mahool bahut kharab hai, log tarah tarah ke nache karte hain, unse yeh adat unke baccho ko lag jati hai, ghar ghar mein yehi problems hai, choti choti umar ke baccho ne duniya bhar ke saare shauq paal rakhe hain*" (the condition in the basties is really bad, people use many kinds of toxicants, then the children pick these habits, in every house you can find same problems, ,the younger children have all the bad habits). It is common in the basti and his caste fellows to have these habits and it can be seen many women and children are habitual to these. He does not allow his children inter-mingle with other basti children.

About the condition of his caste and fellow workers, He says, "*Hamare samaj mein logon ki halat bahut kharab hai, 10 mein se 1-2 hi aise honge jinki zindagi thik se chal rahi hai, baki log to apni zindagi dhekal rahe hai, koi patthar tod raha hai, koi rickshaw kheech raha hai, kisi ka ghar girvi rakha pada hai, koi karje mein duba pada hai, koi bimar se pareshan hai, kul mila ke bhagwan ke bharose zindagi chal rahi hai*" (the condition of people in our caste is very bad, there may be only 1-2 out of 10 who are living life, other are simply dragging their life, someone is breaking stones, someone is pulling rickshaw, someone has his house mortagaged, someone is having huge debt, someone is suffering from illness, in totality, there is no hope and support (except god)). "*Humne bahut pareshani dekhi hai apni life mein, kabhi life mein itni problem thi ki daal roti bhi bari muskil se chal rahi thi, baccho ki fees yahan wahan se le dekar kiya karte the, bahut baar to chatni roti se guzara kiya, eik baar to apne chote ladke ki padai tak churani padi, kyuki paisa nahi tha fee ke liye*" (we have faced a lot of hardships in our life, there were times were barely managing with daal-roti, used to borrow money for children school fees from here and there, many a times managed with chatni-roti, once I have to dis-continue my youngest son's studies mid-say because I did not have money). Things have not changed much it has rather deteriorated over a period of time "*kyuki kaam dhande to khatam ho gaye hain logon ke*" (because the works of people have been ruined).

He says, he started doing this work at the age of 13 in his house. It has been already been 31 years since he started earning. In that long durations he has worked numerous places which he does not remember. "*apni zindagi mein kitni jagah kaam kiya hai woh pata nahi hai, par maine sindhi, Punjabi, Brahman, bania, Musamlan sab logon ki factory mein kaam kiya hai* (I do not remember how many places I have worked, but I have worked, but I have worked in the factories of sindhi, Punjabi, Brahman, bania, musalman). On being asked, if he noticed any specific difference among these people, he says," musalman log jaida chua-chat nahi karte, un logon ko saath mein khane peene mein parehej nahi hoti, baki log thori bahut doori bana ke rakhte hain, khaane peene mein milne julne mein" (Muslims do not discriminate much, they do not have much problems in eating together, rest of the others maintain distance in eating and intermingling).

How his caste and work identity affect them in the society. he says, "*Bhedbhav ab bhi hota hai samaj mein, aaj bhi hum khul kar nahi bata sakete ki hum joote ka kaam karte hai, hamare kaam ki samaj mein koi izzat nahi hai, log abhi bhi is kaam ko grahna ki nazar se dekhte hain, abhi bhi log bhedbhav karte hain, khane peene mein, uthne baithne mein, school mein baccho ko bhi batane mein sankosh hota hai ki unke ghar joote ka kaam hota hai, bhut baar to hum bhi jhoot bol dete hain agar koi puch baithta hai kaam ke baare mein, bol dete hain ki chota mota business hai*" (there is discrimination even now, even today we cannot tell it openly that we do shoe work, our work is not respected in the society, people still see this work with hatred, still people discriminate in eating and inter-mingling, children too hesitate to tell that there is shoe work in their house, many a times we also lie if somebody asks somewhere about the work, we say we have a small business).

On being asked how people come to know about their identity he says, "*Agar samne wale ko yeh pata chal jaye ki aap joote ka kaam karte ho to apki caste aur apki hasiyat ka andaza lag jata hai phir usi hisab se baat karta hai*" (if the other person comes to know about your work, they take a clue of your caste and your position (economic and social) and then they behave according to that). The identity of the person is nor merely known by their work but also the residences which are caste specific. Many a times people will rather use the word collectorate rather than

sundarpara when they normally give reference to their residential area. It is largely to hide their caste identity, nowadays ever since a shani temple has been constructed it has become easier for them to give reference. Most of the time Rajesh is confined to his basti or if go to other places it is only in the matters of work or something else. He does not have many friends although there are many known people in other castes, "*ab ghar ki halat aisi hai ki kisi ko bulaye to kaise, na baithne ki jagah hai na bithane ki, is liye hum jaida kisi se meljol nahi rakhte, apne kaam se kaam rakhte hai*" (how to invite people given the condition of our house, there is no place either for sitting, this is why we do not have much inter-mingling with others, we are restricted/confined to our work only).

About the specific problems he faces in leather work, He says, "*hamare samaj ke pass paisa nahi hai lagan ke liye, jaidatar log garib aur badhall hai, lekin eik baar hum kaise bhi jod tod karke paisa laga bhi de apne kaam mein, to us se jaida kuch hone wala nahi hai, Hamari sabse bari kamjori hai jiski wajah se hum maat kha jate hai woh hai ki hum apne maal ko khud nahi bechte, hamein in logon pe nirbhar rehna padta hai, jiska ka ki yeh log khub faida uthate hain, jab tak hum in logon pe ashrit rahenge yeh log hamein panapne nahi denge, yeh log hamara khoon chuste rahenge*" (our caste does not have money to invest in this work, maximum are poor and in pathetic situation, but if we invest in our work by managing resources some how, it is not going to solve any problem, our biggest problem because of that we cannot develop is that we do not sell our products ourselves, we have to depend on these people, they take maximum advantage of our weakness, as long as we are dependent on them, they will not allow us to flourish'developed, they keep sucking our blood). He says, competition has increased so much in this work that the rates are going down. No one is ready to show their goods to others because of fear that it may be copied. "*Hum logon ke haath se yeh kaam chala gaya hai, hum log majdoor ban ke reh gaye hain, samaj lo 100 mein se 90 percent kaam dusro ke pass hai aur hum logon ke pass 10 percent bhi nahi hai, aur jabse china aaya hai market mein tab se to halat aur bhi kharab ho gayi hai*"(this work has gone out of our hand, we have become only labourers, out of the 100 (percent) 90 percent of the work is with the other castes, we do not eve have 10 percent, even since these Chinese products have come into the market, our condition has deteriorated).

On being asked what are the changes that he has noticed in the leather work over the years. He says, "*hamari sabse bari pareshani yeh hai ki hamein kaam barabar nahi milta, saal mein sirf 4-6 mahine hi rehta hai yeh kaam, pehle kaam bahut tha, saal mein 6 mahine rehta tha, sirf barsat ke season mein hi band rehta tha, baki time mil jata tha thora kum kabhi jaida, aj to 4 mahine bhi nahi chalta, woh bhi kum ho raha hai, jab se bari bari factories lag gayi hai, china ka maal market mein aaya hai, chote logon ki to durgati ho gayi hai*" (our biggest problem is that we do not get employment round the year, it is available only for 4-6 months, there was work in plenty in past, it was available for 6 months earlier, it used to be stopped during the rainy season, rest of the time it was available sometimes less something more, today it is not even available for 4 months, that too is also going down ever since these big factories have been established and Chinese goods have come into market, the condition of smaller people has become pathetic). When enquired about how he passes his time when there is no work. he says, "*jab karkhana nahi chalta to idhar udhar kaam ki talash karte hain, kabhi kabhi apne ristedaron ke ghar thora time kaat aate hain, nahi to yahan wahan guppen marte rehte hain*" (when karkhana is not running then we are in search of work, at times we go to our relatives places to pass the time or otherwise simply pass time in talking here and there).

During the field work he has been making sample and a replica of woodland kind of leather shoes which is to be shown to a kashimiri merchant. He has hopes that if the product is accepted he may get some orders. He has purchased the raw material from the weekly HAAT whether waste leather pieces are sold at a rate of 80-90 rupees kilo. The rate varies on the basis of size, type, weight and thickness. These waste leather pieces come from Chennai and Kanpur in bulk. Almost all the sellers in the market are jatavs by caste but the actual dealers and wholesalers who bring these from far away locations belong to Muslims or other castes. he is find it difficult to get the desired leather work his sample pieces. But he is hopeful that if he gets a bigger order from this merchants, he may be able to expand his work.

Shanta

Shanta is a 58 years old widow living in sundarpara near collectrate. She is fair complexion, around 5 feet 5 inches tall, more than average built up and physically very strong. She does not look 58 due to her height and personality. Many in the basti often say that she has the looks and personality of "Punjabi" and "sindhi" and she does not look like a Jatav. The features, personality and outlook are also reflected in her children. They too have acquired the physical attributes of her mother and father. She is a mother of five children and all the children are well educated reaching up to the post graduation level. She is literate and can well read and write without any problem. She is a god fearing lady and has deep faith in gods, she is a hindu by faith according to her.

She dropped out of school at a very early age and married off very early when she was still in her teen years. There was big age difference between her and her husband. Her husband was a businessmen but suffered huge setback and losses throughout his life. Therefore economic condition has never been stable and it also suffered ups and downs. Her husband died some 10 years back since then she is the only one who has been running her family. The house they live is an ancestral property and is big, open and huge compare to basti standard. The house is located in a basti called sundarpara which is a low lying area and is at least two floors below the normal surface road. People often call his "ghadda" due to its location.

This basti where she lives, is located near collectrate; on the right end it is there is police training ground, and on the left nai ki mandi chauraha. Just opposite to this basti lies a big drain and railway line which is often used by people for relieving. The drain passes though behind the basti and it is also natural demarcation point between different caste and groups. There is one Ambedkar part which is located at one end of the basti which his used for social and religious functions. It is caste specific settlement and all the people in this basti are jatav. It is highly dense and populated area and like other jatav basti, and has the same social characteristics like small houses, congested and narrow streets, lanes, by lanes, lack of proper electricity connections, lack of open space, street lights, absence of toilets and sanitation etc.

The living conditions in the basti are highly unsatisfactorily as it is a low lying area therefore sewage lines cannot be laid. It is a poor area therefore people do not have either money to built septic tank nor space within their houses for additional toilets. There are many houses which have toilets without septic tanks. During the non rainy season all the waste and dirty water comes to this basti. This water is mixed with the water pipes and the colour of water changes to green and it smells so badly. It is specially a problem during the rainy season when bulk of the the water is accumulated and it becomes difficult to pass though. It creates huge foul smell as the human excreta which flow though the drains come up with the accumulated water. It spoils the houses which are even below within the basti. Most of the water connection in the basti are outside the houses. There are very few houses which have a proper separate kitchen with running water.

While it is true of the area densely populated by jatavs, but below further to jatav settlement lies many houses of ghihara community. This community has living condition even more pathetic as it is further below the jatav settlement. This community purchase the old, outdated, faulty and defected shoe and chappals from the large factories and do some elementary repairing and sell it in the market. Although both jatav and ghihara community are involved in the leather work only but there is no interactions between them. The ghihara community is considered below

than the jatavs hence there is no intermixing between them. They both live separate and there are clear social and geographical demarcations between them.

This family was one of the richest and reputed in the basti in the past. It owned numerous properties within this basti. Shanta's father-in-law whom she refers as "babuji" was a big entrepreneur and had a great reputation, links and networks in and around Agra. He was a "chaudhury" who was also very influential and active in community. She says, "*pehle hamare samaj ki auratein peti-cot mein hi aata pisane chali jati thi, log unhe gandi nigah se dekhte the, babuji ne yeh sab band karwa diya, uhone yeh kaam aadmiyon ko karne ko kaya, agar koi nahi manta tha to uspe jurmana laga dete the*" (our caste women used to go in peticot to market to get the wheat floured, people used to see them with bad eyes (lust), babuji stopped this, he ascribed this work to men, those who did not listen were fined). He was a leather merchant and an owned factory therefore was widely respected. There was so much of work that time that large numbers of workers were employed in factories. Workers used to work day and night when there was excessive work. She says, when she was married she has seen a time when from morning to evening the kitchen used to run without breaks. There were "khansama" making food for the workers and family members. She says, I have seen a time when district magistrate used to come and take his opinions in matters related to community. As long as he was alive things were very good. Once he died, there emerged conflicts, tensions and fight both within the family and the community.

The children were not educated and they could not handle the business. After his death the family property was divided and the factory collapsed. "*mehnat se kamaya hua paise ka hisab rehta hai, woh tikta hai aur virasat mein mila hua paisa pankh laga ke ud jata hai, pata nahi chalta, aur paisa jab aata hai to akela nahi aata, iske saath bahut saare aib bhi aate hain*" (there is accounting of the hard earned money, it stays and the money received in heritage goes away, and moreover when money comes it does not come alone, it brings bad habits as well). She further adds, "*is caste mein paisa tik nahi paata, eik generation upar jati hai to dusri neeche aati hai, le de ke sab barabar ho jata hai*" (the money is not retained in this caste, if one generation goes up, the next generation comes down, altogether the conditions remain same). "*Hamare ghar mein bhi koi sambhal nahi paya paise ko, koshish to ki lekin koi safal nahi hua, dheere dheere property bikti chali gayi, logon ne kabza kar liya aur hum logon ki halat kharab hoti chali gayi*" (nobody could handle the business, they tried but was not successful, slowly and gradually property has been sold off, and many people forcefully took control over it and our condition started deteriorating gradually).

Their family business was ruined long back and the family came into very severe distress. It was very difficult to sustain as their was no source of income. She raised her children with a lot of hardships fighting against all the odds. "*maine kaise taise kar ke apne baccho ko pala hai mein hi janti hue, ghar mein koi support na ho, aadmi kamane wala na ho, upar se samaj mein auraton ji jo sthiti hai woh sab jante hai, maine apne baccho ki padai likhai rukne nahi di, bahut baar logon se yahan wahan se karja le kar ke school ki fees di, kitna kast jhela hai mein hi janti hue, bahar se to log itna bara ghar dekhte hai, unhe to chakachaundh nazar aati hai par haquikat andar se kuch aur hoti hai*" (how I have brought up my children only I know, when there is no support in the family, husband is unemployed, above that, the condition of women is known in this society, I did not let interrupt my children's education, many a times, I took loans from here and there to pay the fees, how much I

have suffered only I know, people see from outside our big house, they see only glittering, but reality is something else within).

She says, "agar buzurgon ka diya hua ghar nahi hota to shayad hamari halat aur bhi kharab hoti" (had the forefather did not give us this house, out condition would have been reallty bad). The rent has been her source of income throughout which she received from a Punjabi tenant who has been running a military shoe factory on the ground floor. He too at times threatens to leave the premises when asked to raise the rent which has not been done for a long time. If this rent was not there, I would have taken a drastic step in my life. Today, the family is relatively stable as her three daughters have been married off in good families. But she has a lot of concern for the youngest one who is also a post graduate from Agra University. It is such a difficult thing to get the suitable match as many of the proposals that come either do not have the desired qualifications or family background and those who have, expect huge dowry.

On being asked whether she has faced any kind of discrimination or bad behaviour from anybody. she says "*gaon dehaton mein to aaj bhi hota hai, logon ko pani tak nahi bharne dete kuon se, dara dhamka ke rakhte hai neechi jaat ko, roz akhbaron mein koi na koi news padne ko mil jati hai, par sharon mein agar paisa hai to kisi ko tumhari caste se matlab nahi hai, aur nahi hai to kahin bhi izzat nahi milti*" (it happens in the villages, people are not allowed to fetch water from the wells, they are suppressed, numerous news are published in newspapers every day, but in cities, if you have money, no one bothers about your caste, if you do not have, you do not get respect anywhere). She mentions an incident. Her husband was active in the congress party in Agra, which is reflected in the picture she had in her house with her husband standing with Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. She was asked to contest for the post of mayor as they were looking for a low caste women face. She was hesitant but later on gave in due to the pressure of husband and community people. When she went for a campaign in the ghiyara basti, the condition of support from the community was that she has to drink water from their hand, which she could not deny due to obvious reasons.

When asked if she can identify areas according to communities. she says "*hamare logon ki bastiyan alag se pechan mein aa jati hai, jo gandi, maili, kuchali jahgah ho yeh jahan kahin bhi kachre ka dher laga ho samaj lo ki yahan jatav rehte hain, upper caste log saaf suthari colony mein rehte hain, jaise khandari, professor colony, dayalbagh, sanjay palace, sikahndara*" (our people basties can be easily identified, those places which are dirty, bad or have huge garbage dump, these are inhibited by jatavs, upper caste people live in clean and good places like khandari, professors colony, dayalbagh, sanjay palace, sikandara). The areas are clearly defined, marked and segregated according to caste. There is a common tendency among the sundarpara people to refer to collectorate as a reference point whenever they are talking about their areas. It is to clearly hide their locations which also reveal their caste.

The conditions of housing in the basti are highly pathetic and unbearable. "Logon ko khuli dhoop, hawa, pani bhi nahi mil pata hai, hamare ghar se aur andar chale jao to pata chalega log kitni muskil se zindagi je rahe hai, eik eik ghar mein log bhed-bakriyon ki tarah thuse pade hai upar se bijli aur chali jaye to poore narak ke darshan ho jate hai" (people are not even getting sunlight, air and water, if you go deep inside from our house, then you will understand how difficult life people are living , people are stuff like goats and sheep in each house and above that if there is no electricity life becomes hell). Giving reference to a house next opposite to her, she

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says, "*is ghar mein kum se kum 20-25 log rehte hain, aur kamre hai 6 woh 3 bhaiyon ke hisse mein hai, yahan 5 ladkiyan hai bhay layak, koi shaadi ke liye haan nahi karta, bahut saare ghar dekh ke laut jate hain aur bahut saare basti ki halat dekhkar*" (this house has 20-25 residents, there are only 6 rooms that too are shared by 3 brothers, there are 5 girls of marriageable age, but no agrees to marriage, some say no seeing the condition of the house and some say no seeing the condition of the basti). She herself has a marriageable daughter and her house is big compare to others but many of the people do not agree seeing the location of basti. The location of the any settlement affects the interaction patterns of the people. It gives people identity and also affects their identity.

The house in which shanta lives is more than 70-80 years old. It is very old and has exhausted its age. It was a karkhana earlier which has been used for housing decades back. It has become weak both due to its age and also due to the trains which passes beside the basti. It creates so much of vibrations and ripples that every now and then there develop cracks in the walls and roof. Every year she has to spend some money on the plaster and repairing. There is always fear that it may collapse if there is earthquake or so sometimes. In the rains they have to keep buckets and utensils at different places as it leaks badly, if there are heavy rains it really become difficult to handle that situation, the situation become humiliating if any guest is also present at that time. This is the reason whenever there are any marriage proposals for the daughter, the meeting is fixed at a different places rather than his house. There has been a toilet in the house but there is no septic tank. Therefore the waste ran though the drains in front of her house. Just 3-4 years back they made some modification in the house so that they could it was presentable before the marriage of one of her daughters. The western and Indian toilet has been recently constructed in the house due to her knee joint problem for which she is not taking any treatment. A large number of the houses are without toilet as there is no space within the houses, those which have toilets do not have septic tank. Many in the basties still use railway line for relieving specially in the morning hours.

Most of the people here are poor workers except few houses. "*roz kama ke late tab jakar unke ghar ka chulha jalta hai, agar eik ein ki bhi naga ho jaye, to katna muskil ho jata hai, ab to sthiti aur bhi kharab ho gayi hai, mehngai kum hone ka naam nahi le rahi, am jaruat ki cheezein itni mehngi ho gayi hai ki log bari muskil se nasib ho rahi hai, bahut se log to chatni-roti se guzara kar ke pet paal rahe hain*" (they work everyday only then there is cooking, if they do not get work for one day, it becomes difficult to sustain, now things have deteriorated, inflation is not coming down, daily use things have become expensive, people are somehow managing, many people are surviving by eating only chatni-roti). She gives the example of a widow whose husband died long back and son expired due to some accidents. She is living in a house where she has not paid rent for years. There is no one look after her although she gets some widow pension but that is not enough.

"*kaam dhande logon ke rahe nahi, rozi-roti ke lalle pade hue the, upar se bijli aur pani ki kimat aur badh gayi hai, ab to log bijli jalane se bhi katrate hain, pehle logon ke gharon ke bahar rosin rehti thi, aj dekho koi bhi bulb jalane ko tayar nahi hai, puri basti raat mein andhere mein padi rehti hai*" (there are no work and employment left, they were already struggling for food above that the electricity and water cost have also increased, earlier there was light in front of every house, nowadays people do not use electric bulbs in front of their houses, the whole basti remains in dark during night). Nowadays ever since the electricity supply has been privatised, those who do not fill their bills their connections are cut off. "*pehle tab bhi*

peene ka pani mil jata tha, aaj woh bhi nahi mil raha, pehle hi bastiyon mein pani kum aata tha, ab municipal supply ka pani itna ganda aata hai ki peene layak hi nahi rehta, bahut log to bahar se peene ka pani mangwate hain,, aur jiski itni gunjayish nahi hai woh abhi bhi wahi pani pe raha hai filter kar ke" (earlier the drinking water was available, nowadays it has also become scarce, there was already discriminatory supply of water in our basties, today, the quality of water is so dirty such that it is not drinkable, many people get water from the market, and many other who cannot afford are drinking the same water after filtering).

On being asked how it has affected the relations within the community, she says, "*pehle jab pani bina motor ke aata tha, to kisi ko bhi rok tok nahi thi, aj pani khichne ke liye motor lagi hai, bijli ka bil dena padta hai, eik do baar ki baat to thik hai, par roz kaun, kab tak dega aise, is liye hum bhi mana kar dete hain ab halaki aacha to nahi lagta, par hamari bhi majboori hai, hamein bhi bijli ka bill dena padta hai*"(earlier the water used to come without motor pumps, we did not stop anybody, but today we have to run the motor to get water, we have to pay the electricity bill, for once or twrice, it is ok if but who will and how long one can do this, at times we have to say no although we do not feel good, but w are also helpless). Many in the basti think that we are arrogant and proud as we have big house. but people do not understand our own problems. It is one of the reasons she maintains very low profile in the basti and has restricted inter-mingling.

She says, "*bastiyon mein rehne ke bahut nuksan hai, bazaar bahut door hai, rosmarra ki jarurat ki cheezon ke liye door jana padta hai, upar se sabzi bhaji nahi milti, thele wale aate bhi hai to pehle colony mein chakkar lagate hain phir hamari bastiyon mein aate hain bacha kuchi sabzi lekar*" (there are many disadvantages associated living in basties, the markets are away, we have to go far away to purchase everyday utility things, moreover vegetables are not available, cart-puller (rehdi wale) first sell good vegetables in the colonies and then they come to our bastt with leftover). There is no one in the house who can buy these things from the market and she her does not go to market both due to her cultural practices and health issues. She is dependent on her daughters who are living within the city but a little away from the basti. Whenever they are coming to visit her which is generally on every Monday as they regularily come to offer their worship in a shiv temple which is located opposite the basti, they will bring some vegetable and other things to her house. There are many other disadvantages. Even the rickshaw puller are not ready to come to this area as it is highly uneven. They charge extra if you have to bring them here.

 Another interesting thing she tell is that, "*jaidatar log subah matket nahi jaate kyuki subah subah bhav (rate) jaida hota hai, jaise jaise sham hoti jati hai, rate neeche aata jaita hai, bahut se parivar to sham ka intezaar karte hai sabzi ke liye, karigar log sham ko ghar aate hain jo to bacha kucha milta hai usi se apna kaam chala lete hain*" (maximum people do not go to vegetable market as the rate is very high, the rate gradually come down with the passage of the day, many a families wait for the evening/dark to buy vegetables, when the workers come from their work, they bring whatever is available/leftover). As the sun sets and darkness increased the number of people who are drunken increases. One can find many drunken people or drinking in the sheds or some places in and around basti.

Pavan

Pavan is 39 year old person running a small karkhana from his basti called kalianpuri, panchkuyein. He is fair by complexion and thin by body. He looks much younger of his age due to his body and physical structure. His body and physique do not correspondent to his age. He is approximately 5 feet 4inches by height and carries a weight of 55. The cheek bones are clearly visible on his face and he hardly carries enough mass and fat in his body from outside he looks weak and exhausted. Pavan is Jatav by caste and leather work has been his ancestral caste and family occupations for centuries. The basti where he lives has a very popular and strong support for BSP. He considers himself as Hindu but does not worship Hindu gods and goddesses have a deep faith in the philosophy of Ambedkar.

He has been married some 15 years back and he is the father of 5 children at the age of 39. His wife is a home maker and largely confines herself in the designated room. He is the eldest of his five siblings and his mother is an illiterate and father was a drop out of school. Like his father Pavan also dropped out of his school at a very early age due to financial and family responsibilities. His parents used to run a small workshop from their single room accommodation which was used both for working and living. Hence there was no difference and demarcation in their living and working areas. His parents used to work day and night during the season time and often involve their children when there was more pressure of work. Gradually all of them were absorbed in this work and eventually lost interest in studies. It is one of the reasons that none of pavan's siblings were not able to complete their schooling. All of them dropped out of school as there was no environment for studies in the house.

He lives in a single room which is shared with his five children. The room was constructed before his marriage was planned. Other brothers also have their own respective rooms and all of them live in their single room accommodation with their children. He is having double bed, television, motorcycle, 1 almirah, fan, cooler, cooking gas, some boxes, a fridge and some kitchen items. Most of these were received in dowry gifts. His mother runs a small grocery shop from his house at the ground floor. Being the eldest in his siblings he started assisting his parents in the works since he was very young. He learnt basics of this work in his house and started going to different places as helper to the karigars. He was able to contribute to the income of the family very early and developed his specialization as a fitter which involves stitching different pieces of shoe uppers by machine.

He says he has worked more than 20-25 places in the factories of Punjabis, Sindhis, Muslims, Brahmins, bania before opening his own karkhana 4 years back after pooling money from his brothers and relatives. The karkhana which he owns today has been a house previously which has been mortgaged by someone in the basti. He was unable to pay off the debt, so the house finally came in the possession of pawan's family. Pawan brother in law (jija) gives credit to the people on interest. He is helped by pawan and his brothers in this work. This association has worked well for them and brought substantial gains which are reflected in their sudden rise in and around which is also the reason for jealously among others in the basti. The karkhana is a two storied building and ground floor is stuffed with raw material whereas the first floor is a hall in which different workers sit in different corners according to the processes of the work.

The karkhana is located in the Jatav basti which is predominantly a Jatav cluster. This basti was earlier known to be a large manufacturing hub of leather shoes and sandals. There was leather work in almost every household where men, women

and children used to work together. The situation has changed now as the work has shifted from Jatav homes to large factories. There are very few karknana left in the basti, those which are working are also small and they are also facing a lot of problems. Many of the workers have closed down their karkhana as there is no work available for them. "*ab gharon mein kaam khatam ho gaya hai, Bastiyan khali ho gai hai, ab jaidatar log bahar kaam pe jate hain aur dihari pe kaam karte hain*" (now the work in the houses have finished, basties have become vacant, nowadays, people go outside for work and get wages). The independent small entrepreneurs have become wage workers who go to other's factories and karkhana for work. Many of the workers have rented out their karkhana to tenants otherwise it will be difficult to run the families.

There is a huge range in terms of the workers age. There is one 65 year man who is a specialist in the bottoming process and many adults who have their own specialization like cutter, fitter, finisher etc. Younger children are often brought by respective karigars as helpers at times as apprentices to teach them the basic if leather work. Pavan has been running this karkhana with the help of 5 hired workers along with the help of his brothers hence the workers strength of this karkhana is around 10-12 workers. The karkhana was started with the collective efforts of the family members. He along with his brothers invested some seven Lakhs altogether to start this workshop. The raw material which is procured for making shoes is purchased from HAAT. These are waste pieces of leather which is sold by kilograms in the haat. The cost of leather has increased so much that it is very difficult for the small karkhanedar to afford this and more over desired leather is not easily available in the market. The price of the shoe is determined by the quality of leather used. The small karkhanedar either work with the waste leather or use faux leather to make leather shoes in the leather industry of Agra. Only those working units which make expensive and quality shoes use genuine leather.

He says, children are heavily used in most of the small and household units. the poverty is very high in his caste which forces children to leave their studies and join as workers. He himself started his career as a child worker. His father was a heavy drinker and he used to drink and work. There were frequent quarrels and conflicts both within the family and within the basti for pity issues. Quarrel and conflict has been part and parcel of their every life experiences when they were growing up. Since the work is done in the houses and the elders use many of the substances like pan, gutka, liquor, bhag, supari etc. the children pick these and start using these very early in life. He says "maine *bhi shauk shauk mein yeh sab shuru kiya tha, par kab yeh adat ban gayi pata hi nahi chala*" (I also started taking these as curiosity, but when these become my habits I did not realize). The conditions in the family and basti are such that people were often involved in eating pan, supari, gutka, tobacco, smoking, gambling, betting and drinking. The younger kids often pick these habits at a very early age as they see it repeatedly and often in their surroundings. Many of his younger siblings started eating gutka, gambling and drinking very early.

On being asked the changes that he has observed in the industry. He says he has worked at different places from a small karkhana to a large export oriented factories. One thing that he noticed that "*hamare haat (caste) se yeh kaam chala gaya hai ab hum log sirf majdoor bane ke reh gaye hain. Hamara kaam Punjabi, sindhi, Brahman, baniya logon ke haath mein aa gaya hai. Hum un logon pe ashrit hai, Hum logon ke karkhana yeh to band ho rahe hain yeh phir band hone ki kagar pe hai, jabki dusre logon ke karkhane khul rahe hain, in logon ne pure market pe kabza kar liya hai aur hum peeche chale gaye hain apne hi kaam mein*" (this work has gone out of

our hand, now we have reduced as majdoor, our work has been over taken by Punjabis, sindhis, Brahman, baniya, now we are dependent on them, our karkhana have either been closed down or on the verse of being closure, whereas others are opening their karkhana, they have controlled the whole market and we have lagged behind in our own work).

He says there is hardly any worker who is not indebted in this work. "*is line mein koi bhi aisa nahi milega jiske sur pe karja na ho, log karje le le kar zindagi jee rahe hain kyuki kaam to khatam ho gaya hai gharon mein, log apni property bech bech ke yahan wajan ja rahe hain*" (you will not find anyone in this line who does not have credit on his head, people are living on credit because work has been spoiled/ruined in homes, people are moving out here and there selling their property). He has seen many of the families in his own basti migrated to other places selling their family property. The karkhana which he owns now has been a house previously which was sold out of distress by the family. "*Karigaron pe kaam nahi hai, log berozgaar ho gaye hain, bahuton ko to roti bhi nahi mil pa rahi hai, bahut se to chatni roti se guzara kar ke jaise taise apna pet bhar rahe hain*" (the workers do not have job, they have become unemployed, many are not able to get even roti (bread), many are surviving on chatni-roti, somehow managing themselves).

While telling the inside stories of the workers houses, points out to one aged person. He says, that (baba) is 65 year old, has three daughters to be married. "*Inki umar mein log kaam se retire ho jate hain aur yeh yahan kaam pe aate hain, bahut baar kaam rehta hai bahut baar nahi, pichle 15 dino mein 300 rupaya ka kaam hua hai inka, is paise se to yeh khana bhi dhang se nahi kha payenge ladkiyon ki shaadi ke liye yeh to inhe ghar girvi rakhna parenga yeh bechna parega, yahan aise bahut saare log mil jayenge jo is tarah ki zindagi jee rahe hain*" (at his age people are retired and he comes here for work, many a times there is work and many a times there is not, in the last 15 days he has earned only 300 Rupees, with this amount he cannot even eat food, and for daughters marriage either he has to mortagage his house or sell it off).

On being asked about the discrimination and exploitation, pavan says, "*maine bahut logon ke yahan kaam seekha bhi hai aur kara bhi hai, maine eik cheez mehsoos ki ki hamare logon ke saath yeh log durvyabhar karte hain, hamesha doori bana ke rakhte hain, muslim ki factory mein bhedbhav thora kum hota hai unke saath khana peena ho jata hai par dusri jaat ke log saath khane mein katrate hain*" (I have learnt and worked at many places, I have observed one thing that our people are not treated nicely, they maintain some distance from us, there is less discrimination in muslim's factory, we can share food with them, but other people hesitate to east with us). But when it comes to work and wages they also behave in the same ways like many others. He says. The upper caste people try to exploit us in different pretexts. They try to find hundreds of faults in our products; they withhold the payment for a long time and at times reject our goods. They often negotiate very hard with us and do not increase the value of goods even when the rate of raw material and labour cost is increasing so much. We do not have many options at last we have to agree to their defined rates which reduces our margins.

He points out to a shoe which is manufactured in his karkhana. He says the total cost of this shoe is 350 Rupees including labour charges and profit in my karkhana. The same shoe will be sold to the customers for around 800-850. "*Hamein to kuch nahi mila is mein par beech wale vyapariyon ko eik Jodi mein 500 rupaya mil gaya baithe bithai, mehnat hum karte hain, labour hum lagate hai, pareshaniyan hum uthate hai aur phir bhi hamein kuch nahi milta, sari ki sari malai hing ke mandi wale*

vyapari kha jate hain" (we did not get much in this, but the middlemen earn 500 rupeees per pair without doing anything, we do the hard work, we put in labour, we face the problems, then also we do not get anything, most of the cream is eaten by the hing ki mandi merchants).

"*Is kaam mein labour ki to durgati hai, na to dhang se kaam milta hai aur na paisa, upar se log neechi nigah se aur dekhte hai*" (the conditions are pathetic for the workers in this work, neither they get employment nor money and moreover people see the workers with inferiority). on being asked about the occupational hazards associated with this work on the body he says "*choti moti chootein to lagti rehti hai kaam mein aaye din, par is kaam mein garden, reed ki hatti, kamar, ghutne reh jata hain kyuki lambe time tak eik hi position mein kaam karna padta hai, aakho pe joor padta hai aur haatho pe bhi, upar se khane peene ko jaida kuch hai nahi ki bharpai ho jaye*" (small injuires are common every now and then, but neck, backbone, waist, and knees suffer badly because workers have to sit in one position for a long time, it creates so much of strain in the eyes and on the hands, more over there is not much for eating that one can compensate for these).

He says, earlier the work was easy and simple nowadays it has become dangerous. "*pehle kaam mein itna khatra nahi tha, na to aise chemicals the aur na hi aisi machines, aj dekho aisi machine aa gayi hai ki kaam fatafat kar deti hai, par labour ke liye to khatra hai, kabhi haath aa jata hai machines mein, short circuit ho jata hai, kabhi kabhi to compressor fat jate hain, chemicals ko bahut sambhal ke use karna padta hai, agar thori laparwahi ki to aag lagne ka khatra rehta hai, labour ki jaan ko to hamesha khata rehta hai, pehle kaam jaida bhi tha, aur asan bhi tha, jaidatar kaam haath se hota tha, ab to kaam karne ke tarike badal gaye hain, karigaron ke liye to yeh khatarnak hi hai*" (there were no such dangers previously, neither there were such chemicals now were such machines, today, you see, there are machines that can do work quickly, but it is dangerous for workers, sometimes hand stuck in machines, at times short circuit, sometimes compressors burst, we have to use chemical with precautions, if there is any laxity or carelessness, there are chances of fire, there is always danger to the workers, earlier the work was more and also simple, maximum work used to be done with hands, nowadays the technique and ways of work have changed, it is a dangerous work atleast for the workers).

While pawan is more honest in revealing the dangerous working conditions that prevail in the leather industry of Agra. His own karkhana is also not an exception to this. He is having one compressor at his workshop, one machine for grinding, and some stitching machines. The workers work with no or minimum safety provisions. There are loose electricity connections here and there and the working primises is full of wastes and tools are lying here and there. The conditions are dangerous not doubt but it is a universal practice in the whole industry in Agra whether big or small. "he says, " *ab kaam mein khatra to hai, par agar hum kya karein, agar hum in cheezon pe kharch karein to joote ki kimat badh jayegi, hamein pehle hi kuch nahi milta is mein, upar se agar hum yahan paisa aur laga de to hamara maal kharidne wala koi nahi hoga, hum apni taraf se puri koshish karte hain ki durghatna na ho, par kabhi kabhi na chahte hue bhi ho jati hai, agar hamein hamara sahi rate mile to in cheezon pe bhi kharcha kiya ja sakta hai, akhir hamari rozi-roti karigaron pe tikhi hui hai*" (there are dangers in the work, but what we can do, if we spend on these things, the cost of shoe will rise, we already do not get anything, if we spend on this then nobody will purchase our goods, we try our best from our side that no unwanted incidents happen, but sometimes it happens despite our wish, if we get our proper rate, then money can be spent on this, after all our own livelihood depends on the labour of workers).

Kamlesh

Kamlesh is 50 years old lady living in kanyanpuri, panchkuyein. She is around 5 feet 4 inches tall, fair, thin, average body built up and is jovial natured lady. She never went to school and had been married off very early when she was in her teens. She has 5 grown up children and 5 school going age grand children, altogether they are 13 members in the family including the daughter in laws and her husband. The eldest son is 12th fail, second eldest daughter is married off long back, the other 2 sons also dropped at early. Two of her daughters managed to finish their graduation through correspondence. The eldest son is working as home guard on contract, the second son is working in an export factory, the third is unmarried and helps his parents in the managing the family and house. The youngest daughter is unmarried and has done a tailoring course, she teaches stitching to young girls and manage her own expenses.

The house where the family lives is an ancestral property roughly around 50 years old. There is one colour television with cable, 2 motor cycle, cooking gas, fans, bed, some boxes, almirah, kitchen utensils in her home. Almost all of these have been received in the dowry of her sons. There is no water storage facilities in the house, when the water comes it has to be stored in the buckets and utensils. The source of drinking water is municipal water taps located inside the house. There is separate bathroom and one toilet inside the house but it is without septic tank and the waste runs though the drain in front of their house. The married sons have their own separate family and live in their own single rooms. The food is cooked separately one by one in the same kitchen. This often leads to conflicts and tension within the family over sharing the time and resources.

The family has one room which is shared by majority of the family members, including sons, daughters, grand children etc. It is hugely crowded when all the family members gather to watch the daily soaps on television. It is also used for multiple purposes at times the same room is used for dong work, studying, entertainment, bedroom etc. all the assets and footwear making tools are kept in this room. This room at time is also used for the storing the raw material as well. This family did not own any agricultural land and the only source of income has been the leather work. They used to make leather chappals/footwear in their karkhana when it was running. The karkhana has been closed down some years back as most o the work has been shifted to larger factories. The entry of Chinese footwear spoiled their work and made them unemployed. The karkhana has been closed down and there is no manufacturing of footwear. At times her youngest son gets some cardboard cutting work randomly once or twice in a fortnight.

house is very crowded due to the presence of many generations in a small house. There is hardly any space for privacy or rest. The members are able to get some privacy and rest only when someone falls sick otherwise it is difficult. Kamesh does not get rest in the house. Earlier it was due to the work pressures and now she has to look after so many grand children herself. According to her husband she is a very brave lady. When she was still unmarried and a young girl herself she single handledly saved a girl from being raped. When she was working in the agricultural field a dominant caste thakur tried to drag a young girl into the field with the intension of raping her. She took her tool and dare the thakur to touch her. Although after the incident she was appreciated by many but the family had to bear the social boycott by dominant caste thakurs. In a more recent incident there was a fire in the gas cylinder in her house. No man had the courage to touch the cylinder but she dragged the

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burning cylinder out of her house and threw it on the road. She is a strong and courageous lady both mentally and psychologically.

She considers the previous time better than the present time as she was stronger in the past both psychologically and economically. Kamlesh recalls " *pehle har gali ke ghar mein joote/chappal ka kaam hota tha, koi bhi ghar aisa nahi tha jo jahan yeh kaam na hota ho, ab sara ka saara kam bari bari factories mein chala gaya hai, hamara kaam dusri jaat ke pass chala gaya hai, ab basti mein sab karkhane band ho gaye hain, 1-2 hi honge jo hain, who bhi bari muskil se chal rahe hain*" (there used to be shoe/chappal work in every house in the basti earlier, there was hardly any house where this work was not done,. Now all the work has gone to large factories, our work has been overtaken by other castes, all the workshops have closed down in the basti, there is hardly 1-2 workshop left these are also running with a lot of difficulty). When enquired how it has impacted the women she says, "*pehle jab ghar mein kaam tha, to aadmi-aurat sab milke karte the, ab factory mein chala gaya hai to auratein to ja nahi sakti, jaidatar bacche aur aadmi log hi factory mein kaam karte hain, pehle do paise ki amdani ho jati thi, ab woh bhi khatamk ho gayi hai, ab to baccho ka mooh takna padta hai*" (when the work was there in the home, men and women used to do it together, eversince it has gone to the factories, now women cannot go there, maximum children and men go to factories for work, we used to earn some money earlier, now it has also gone, now we have to look at the children for the money).

She says, "*pehle kaam tha to do paise ki amdani ho jati thi, ab woh bhi khatam ho gayi hai, pehle apne hisab se kharcha kar lete the, ab to kiraye ki bharose rehte hain, jo aaata hai woh khane peene mein nikal jata hai, bachta kuch bhi nahi*" (when there was work earlier, we had some income, now that has also ruined, earlier we could spend the money according to our wishes, now we are totally dependent on the rent, whatever rent comes is spent on the food commodities there is hardly any savings). Kamlesh is a very hardworking lady and she hardly gets rest in the house. There is hardly any space for rest in the house as it is over crowded moreover she has to attain the grand children herself. This makes her drained out which is reflected in her body as well but still she has no complaints from life. "*pehle season pe kaam karte the, aur jab season khatam ho jata tha to karoli mata ke darshan ke liye chale jate the yeh ristedaron mein ghum aate the, ab toi woh bhi khatam ho jaya hai, kahin bhi jaane ke liye paisa chahiye, ghar se bahar niklo to 50 rupaya tut jata hai kiraya bhade mein, ab to ristedaron se bhi shaadi byah pe hi milna hota hai, ab kahin aana jaana kum ho gaya hai, jaidatar ghar pe hi rehte hain*" (we used to work in the season and in the off season we used to visit karoli (goddess) or visited relatives, now that has also stopped, it requires money to go anywhere, if you go outside of house 50 rupees spent in rent and fare, now we meet relatives in the marriages or functions only, the meeting have minimised, nowadays we largely stay in the houses only). The economic loss has brought its own social and cultural changes in the community. The frequency and inter-family meeting have decreased quite considerably due to economic distress.

Her husband was a very dedicated and clean craftsman known in the basti for the perfection of his work. Nowadays he largely remains in the house watching television or sitting around with the other people in the basti. Many a time's people pass comment on him for sitting in the house idle eating the rent which is humiliating for them. for eating the rent taunt on them for being in the house and oing nothing. It is a very humiliating *experience* especially for the men. Their movement has been restricted large to the homes or within the basti their social standing in the society has

also been affected badly. The environment in the family and the house has changed. "*pehle hamari sthiti thik thi, kaam karte the to do paise haath mein rehte the, ab kamai se sadhan khatam ho gaye hain, paise ki tangi rehti hai, kuch kharidne se pehle 10 baar sochna padta hai, kul mila ke janimans ki halat kharab hue hai, ab puri tarah ladko ke bharose hai*"(we were better before, we had money in hand as we worked, now all the sources of earning has been ruined, there is so much of crunch of money in the family, we have to think 10 times before we buy something, the condition of women is deteriorated in totality, now they are at the mercy of sons).

"*Pehle jab kaam tha tab aadki-auratein janimansh lottery/committee (chit fund) daal leti thi paise bacha ke mahine ke mahine, jiski jaida kamai hoti thi woh hafte hi hisab se daal deta tha, jab khulti thi to woh paisa kaam dhande yeh ghar mein laga leti thi, ab kaam khatam ho gaya hai to amdani bhi khatam ho gayi hai, ab to lottery bharne ki to bahut door ki baat hai, ab to khane ke bhi lalle pade hue*" (we used to deposit money in the community chit fund by saving every month, those who had better income deposited weekly, the money used to be invested in the house or the work, now work has finished so income has also dried up, it is so difficult to get money for eating, depositing money in the child fund is a far off reality).

"*Mehngai itni badh gayi hai, rozana ki jarurat ki cheezen bhi nahi rahi hai, sabun-soda, chai, cheeni, kapda-latta, sab ke daam badh gaye hain, bahut muskil ses guzara ho raha hai, aj doodh 40 rupaya kilo mil raha hai, jiske pass saadhan hai woh to le leta hai, jiske paas nahi hai woh mooh takta reh jata hai, hamare ghar mein doodh sirf chai ke liye aata hai, baccho ko kahan se pilaye*" (inflation has increased so much that it is difficult to get daily utility things, we are surviving with great difficulty, today the price of milk is 40 rupees per litre, those who have resources they are getting and those who do not have simply watch the faces (helplessness), we get milk only for making tea, where to get it to give it to children). On being asked how it has affected the food patterns in the family she says "*pehle mutton (goat meat) 100-150 mein aa jata tha, hafte mein eik baar to ban hi jata tha, aj meat kahin bhi 300-400 rupaya se kum nahi bik raha, ab to sirf tabhi banta hai jab koi mehman yeh ristedar aa jate hain ghar mein, woh bhi jaidatar un ke liye hi banta hai, bahut se logon ne to khana chor diya hai basti mein, yeh phir bade ka khane lage hain*" (earlier meat was selling for 100-150 per kilogram, we used to make meat once in a week, today nowhere meat is selling below 300-400 rupees per kilo gram, nowadays we cook only when some special relatives come, that too is kept for them only, many a people in the basti have stopped eating it or have shifted to (bigger) (beef/buffalo) meat).

The inflation has increased that it has become really difficult to manage such a large family. This inflation is also reflected in the family and in the basti. Many of the young children in the basties do not go to schools at all. "*Hamare khud ke baccho mein se koi bhi padh likh nahi paaya, aur inmein se (grand children) koi bhi bacccha school nahi ja raha hai, padai likhai mein paise lagta hai, school ki fees ke liye paise chahiye, kapda latta, copy kitab ke liye alag se paise lagte hain*" (our own children could not get education, none of these (grandchildren) is going to school, it requires money to get education, additionally uniform, stationary education require money). On being asked what is the future of these children she says, yeh log bhi hamari tarah mehnat majdooori karrenge, chot mota kaam dhanda kar ke apna pet palenge" (these will also do manual and hard work like us, they will survive by doing by opening some small work).

Chan Singh

Chan Singh is a 56 years old man, he is around 6 feet tall, wheatish colour, average body built up. He lives in basti called kalyanpuri, panchkuyein which is located on the road between panchkuyein chauraha aur police line and on the back side of this basti is Muslim graveyard. The houses in this basti are small, congested and there are very narrow lane and by lanes. The outlook of this basti clearly reveals the identity of the people who live here. Like any other jatav basti this is also densely populated. On the opposite of this basti lies a government inter-college which has been separated by a road and concrete wall. There is a small temple beside the road which is seldom used by anyone. There is one small Ambedkar park which is used for social functions, it is the only place where basti people organise their marriage and social events. This park was made on government land which was acquired after a fierce struggle and protest with the district administration.

He was married some 39 years back at the age of around 17 years. The age of marriage has increased ever since as there are many people in their 20s and 30s who are unmarried in the basti either due to lack of money or unemployment. There are eight family members in chan singh's family. He has his wife, three sons, two grand children and a daughter in law who live with him. The eldest of all children is a daughter which is adopted one within the family. The daughter is post-graduate and has been married off long back. Out of three sons, the eldest son finished his graduation from Raja baldev singh college, Agra University. He is married with a primary teacher and having one daughter and one son. The grand son has some physical defect, he is not having two of his ears which is a great concern in the family. The second son has finished his 10th class and did a course from CFTI, after much hardship he he got a job on a recommendation but left midway due to a conflict with his co-workers. He is idle nowadays and looking for opportunity. The youngest one is a school dropout as he did not find much interest in studies. He is desperate and trying hard to get some foreign links so that he can go there and earn something.

The family lives on the first floor of the building and the ground floor has been given on rent. The house is puccka and is 50 years old. There is no separate kitchen and the food is cooked in the balcony which is covered with tin sheet. The source of drinking water is municipal supply although the water is yellowish in colour they are drinking it by filtering. They do not have a tank to store water hence whenever water comes it has to be stored in buckets and other utensils. The house where the family lives is having two rooms. One room is given to the eldest married son while the other room is shared by rest of the family. The house becomes really crowded when the family is joined by their daughter and grand children. The house has one second hand fridge, motorcycle, cooking gas, fan, one double bed, one almirah, some boxes in the main room, second room which is occupied by his married son has only one single bed. Most of these items have been either purchased second hand or have been received in dowry. There are very few things which have been purchased by their own income.

Chan singh's father was a skilled and shoe designer by profession who worked with the British in leather work. His father had a good reputation in and around the basti for being a successful karigar cum entrepreneur. The association with British brought them good fortune, contacts and mobility. This is the reason his father used to visit distant places like madras, calcutta during colonial times in search of raw material, orders and supplies. Chan singh's father used to supply leather shoes to the well known brand named baluja shoes, a Punjabi controlled merchandise located in

karol bagh in Delhi. Although work was enough and sufficient but it suffered time to time fluctuations in the market and demand. These setbacks and shocks were although part of the trade but many a times these were severe. He had to discontinue his studies in midway due to financial problems. He is class four drop out of a government school. He says besides financial problems there was no environment for studies in the house.

His father used to own some agricultural land previously but it had been sold off in the 70s to pay off the debt. Therefore he never acquired land as part of heritage. The only thing that has been transferred from his father was the house in which he lives and the traditional leather skills. He says, he started working at the age of 12 years which means he has been working for the last 44 years. He used to own a karkhana in his house but this karkhana has been closed down due to non profitability over the years. The karkhana room has been rented out to one tenant for which he receives rent. This rent is the sole source of income for him. he says, "*ghar ka saara kharcha isi se chalta hai kyuki kaam dhande to khatam ho gaye hain*" (it is our sole source of income as work has been ruined completely). He is still not retired and is trying his hand as commission agent in real estate for the last few years. But he has not been successful so far in getting some income from his new work.

He is a cutter by specialisation but says he can do all the work processes related to chappal making. The karkhana has been close down as the demand of leather shoes and chappals have declined due to changes in the leather work over the years due to competition from large factories and the Chinese products. He says, "*hamare pitaji ne hamein kum se kum yeh ghar de diya, kaam sikha diya, aj sthiti itni badtar ho gayi hai ki hum to aane wali peedi ko yeh bhi nahi de payenge*" (our father have give us this house and leather skill, but things have deteriorated so badly that we will not be able to give even this to our next generation). He was known in the basti for his short temper during his youth days. He could never tolerate any insult from anybody whoever he was and was always ready to fight if someone misbehaved with him. He still carries the same reputation but has mellowed down due to this age and body now. But he still talks tough and straight. Many in the basti still remember his past history and still afraid of this temper. This trait has been acquired by his sons as well.

This family has seen both the best time during his father period that time they used to own many of the things that time like horse, gramophone, motorcycle (bullet) and many of the things which are considered to be luxury now. All these are part of their glorious past, the family has seen a gradual decline across two generations, and it is going through bad time now. All sons are unemployed and somehow managing with their daily expenses. He says that he never wanted to teach leather work to his sons as he never wanted them to face the same conditions which he suffered in this work. Therefore none of his sons actually know this art. The second youngest acquired diploma from CFTI in shoe designing but he is also without any job so far. During field work, one of this eldest graduate sons got selected as "*majdoor*" for a contract of three months in Agra university.

When there was karkhana running in his house he had a fixed work schedule nowadays there is none. He used to be assisted by his wife and they both worked together when there karkhana was running. Now there is no work schedule they simply pass their time in chatting here and there. The transition has happed in a phased manner, his father used to deal in genuine leather shoes but he made chappals. With the gradual increase in the genuine leather price he shifted to cheap variants like Rexine, Foam or third grade leather chappals. the transition happened from shoes to

chappal, from genuine leather to faux leather. He is a specialised cutter and was known in basti for having minimum wastage. Since he is a cutter he can work both in the shoe making and chappal work. the skill is uniform in both products and only design, size varies. The reason or shifting from shoes to chappal was the due to the lack of money. He says, "*jute ke kaam mein paisa lagta hai, machine, auzon ke liye paisa chahiye, labour jaida lagta hai, is liye maine chappal ka kaam shuru kiya, is mein paisa kum lagta hai aur ghar pe hi kaam ho jata hai*" (shoe work require money, machines, tools require investment, more workers are involved, that is why I started my chappal work, it require relatively less money and it can be done within house).

He says, "*yeh kaam saal mein sirf 4-6 mahine hi rehta hai, aur rehta hai tab hai jab season hota hai, ab to kaam bahut kum ho gaya hai jab se bari bari factories aayi hai, hamara jatav bhai barbad ho gaya hai, karigar majdoor ban gaye hain, koi rickshaw chala raha hai, koi rehdi chala laga raha hai*" (this work is available only for 4-6 months, it is available only during season's time (marriage and festivals period), the work has decreased ever since these large factories have come up, our jatav people have been ruined, skilled artisans have become wage labourers, someone is pulling rickshaw, some pulling cart). The fluctuations in this work forced him to see other avenues of employment when there is no work in his karkhana. He says, "*maine apni zindagi mein kum se kum 25 jagah kaam kiya hai dusron ki factory mein, is dhande mein kaam ki koi gurantee nahi hai, kab tej ho jaye kum manda pad jaye koi nahi keh sakta*" (I have worked at at least 25 places in my life in other factories, there is no surety of work in this industry, when it rises and when it falls no one can say with certainty).

The work is highly uncertain due to changes in the season, demand, products etc. They were accustomed to those fluctuations but the main reason for their decline are the local merchants on whom they are dependent for the marketing of their products. "*in vyopari logon ne hamein khatam kar diya, upar se jab se market mein chinese maal aane laga hai tab se to halat aur bhi kharab ho gayi hai, logon ke kaam dhande chaupat ho gaye hain, logon ke ghar bik gaye bahoton ke to girvi rakhe pade hai basti mein*" (these merchants have finished finished us, moreover ever since these Chinese products have come into the markets, all the work and workers have been ruined, people have sold off their houses and many are mortagaged to money lenders). He blames Atal bihari bajpaye led BJP government for ruining their work. The BJP government opened leather industry for foreign investment in 2002 when it was in power and it has benefitted upper caste and ruined their work. The upper caste still selling products on their shops but our karkhana have been closed down. "*hum log sadap pe aa gaye aur yeh log kothi pe kothi banaye ja rahe hain, sarkar bhi inhi logon ke saath hai, uski policy garibi khatam karna nahi hai, balki yeh to garibon ko khatam kar rahi hai*" (we have been ruined and they are making luxurious houses after other, the government is also with them, its policy is not to eradicate poverty but to eliminate the poors). The gains of upper castes is at the cost of these low caste leather workers.

He says, the wholesaler, retailers, distributors, financers, purchi cashier, money lenders in the hing ki mandi (wholesale market) belong to upper castes and Muslims. They all try to extract as much as possible from the small karkhanedars. "*in logon ka kabza hai poore market pe, hamare jatav bhai to hai hi nahi market mein, aur jo ekka-dukka hai bhi woh itne kamjoor hai ki unki chalti nahi hai*" (these people have complete monopoly in the market, our jatav people are not there, those 1-2 who are there are so weak that they cannot do anything). He says, if our people go to the market to sell their goods, the purchaser will always try to use tricks not to meet us

directly. They will make us wait, If they meet they will find hundreds of faults in our products and then deduct their katauti and give us credit slip for 3 months. "*maal ke pauchne se pehle hi hamara rate tod dete hain, uske baad 50 kami nikalte hain phir usmein 1-2 rupaya per piece kum kar dete hain, phir apni katauti kat te hain, aur purchi pakda dete hain jo 3 mahine mein cash hogi, hum logon ki itni gunjaiyish hi nahi hoti ki hum 3 mahine wait karein, hamaein woh cash karani padti hai aur phir cash karne wala apna commission alag se kaat leta hai, le dekar hamare pass kuch nahi bachta, jitna hum log neeche gir rahe hain, yeh log badh rahe hain*" (they break the price of the product before reaching in the market, after find 50 faults, then reduce 1-2 rupee per pair, then they deduct their katauti, and hand over us the purchi (credit slip), which can be cashed in three months, we do not have that capacity to wait for 3 month, so we have to cash that, then the cashier deduct his own commission, we are left with nothing, the move we are declining the more they are rising).

He had fight over these issues many a times in the market. but these people do not mend their ways, " *katauti ko to yeh log apna janamsiddh adhikar mante hain, akhir hum kis baat ki katauti de, jab humne maal banaya to tere ko paise dene hai us maal ke, phir yeh katauti kahan se aati hai, yeh kuch nahi hum garibon ka khoon chusne ke tarike hai, meri kitni baar ladai ho chuki in logon se, par yeh log sudharete hain, agar kisi ko katauti na to maal wapas kar deta hai, aur kisi dusre ko bechne jao to use pehle hi phone kar ke bata dete hain, hum logon ko barbad karne mein is katauti aur purchi system bahut haad tak zimmedar hai*" (they consider katauti as their birth right, why should I pay katauti, when I made products you have to pay the cost of the products, where does this katauti comes from, this is nothing but ways to suck our blood, I have had fight over this issue many a times in past, but they do not mend their ways, if we do not pay katauti then they reject our products, if we try to sell to other person, they inform him by phone, if we have been ruined in this work, it is largely because of this katauti aur purchi system). "*Pehle katauti 2-3 percent hoti thi, aj to log 5 percent tak wasulne lage hai*" (earlier it was 2-3 percent nowadays they charge upto 5 percent).

"*Caste ki wajah se hamein dub ke rehna padta hai, na kuch bol sakte na kuch kar sakte hain, yeh to chupchap sheh* (tolerate) *lo, yeh apne kaam dhande band karwa lo, hamare pass koi option nahi hai, agar market mein hum thora kadak ke bole ki hamein nagad paisa chahiye, kaana pusi shuru ho jati hai, jo aaj mil raha hai woh kal nahi milega*" (we have to be subjugated due to our caste, neither we can say anything nor could we do anything, either we have to tolerate this or we get (ready for) our work spoiled, we do not have options, if we say loudly that we want cash in the market, there starts whispering, whatever we are getting now, will not be same tomorrow). He said, he tried to organise his caste fellows in the past. There was a consensus that the merchants should come to their place if they have to purchase the goods. The workers would not budge down on the piece rate but it never happened. Many of our own people were bought by these people and our initiative fell flat.

"*maine agra se bahar bhi jaane ki koshish bhi ki shayad wayan aacha rate mil jaye, delhi bhi gaya maal lekar par hua kuch nahi balki mera paisa aur fas gaya, 1 lakh ka mall supply kiya tha maine delhi mein aur wahan se payment mila 500-1000 rupaya mein, who bhi ji hazuri karne ke baad, itna paisa to aane jaane mein, khane peene mein lag jata tha, kul mila ke hum logon ko koi badne nahi deta, hum log haath ke karigar hai, aur log nahi chahte ki hum aage bade, hamare log isi wajah se peeche hai, mahnat puri karte hai par unki mehnat ka paisa nahi milta*" (I tried to move out of agra in the hope that I may get a better deal, I went to Delhi but nothing happened, my money also stuck, I supplied goods worth 1 Lakh rupees in Delhi and they paid in

500-100 (instalments) that too after buttressing them, this much of money is spent in travelling and eating, in totality nobody tolerate our growth, we are hand artists, and people do not want that we progress, our people lag behind because of this, we do our hardwork, but we do not get the value of our hard work,

There is so much of pessimism, hopelessness and grievances. He says "*humne to apni zindagi jaise katni thi waise kaat li, par mujhe chinta apne baccho ki hai, pata nahi inka kya hoga*" (our life has been spent whatever way it was destined, but I am more worried about my children, I do not know what will happen to them). He is hopeful that his youngest son gets some opportunity to work abroad and he is trying his links, he is hopeful once he gets some opportunity their good days may come back. He asked me if I have some contact anywhere which may help him get visa. He says "*baccho ko padaya likhaya par kuch badla nahi, aj to padhe likhe bhi berozgaar ghum rahe hain*" (I taught my children but nothing changed, today even the educated are roaming around without jobs).

Dinesh

Dinesh is 25 years old married person around 5 feet 6 inches tall, wheatish complexion, average body built up, thin by physique. He is Jatav by caste and an atheist by belief and prefers to call himself as a follower of Ambedkar and does not worship or go to the temples. He is frank, friendly bold and open by nature which is reflected in the ease he responds to the queries. He is illiterate and has 6 members in his family including himself. His wife is illiterate and has three children all of them are going to school. He lives in an area called nagla of tapra. Tapra is a main settlement and nagla is an offshoot or hamlets little away from the main village/settlement. It is largely inhabited by his own caste people and other alike castes.

He originally from bhamni village, tehsil baadi, dholpur, Rajasthan. He migrated to the city some 15 years back with his family. The immediate reason for migration was the fight with the upper caste groups in the village. The context of the fight was food, the upper caste people forced them to sit and eat food separately which was resisted by his caste fellows. It turned out to be a big fight and after that the family finally decided to move to the city. He says, "*gaon mein bahut chua-chat hoti hai, hum logon ko daba ke rakhte hain, is liye hum ne gaon chor diya*" (there is so much of untouchability/discrimination in the village, they suppress us, this is the reason he (along family) left the village). He visits his village occasionally only during some functions and marriages. He says, "*gaon mein hamari koi izzat nahi hai, abhi bhi hum log dusre logon ke saath nahi baith sakte*" (there is no respect for us in the village, even now we cannot sit with them).

He works on a shop cum workshop of of last making which is located in a densely populated area called meera hussani chaurah. It is a jatav-muslim area which lies close to the main heeng ki mandi market and nai ki mandi chauraha. He is a last (pharma) maker by specialisation and makes hand made wooden last sample which are to be produced at mass level in the large factories. Last making is the most elementary and initial process of shoe making. The size, design and shape of any shoe depend on the last. It is a highly labour intensive work which requires him to cut the wooden log stroke by stroke until it gets a shape of a shoe. He does the elementary work which is further passed to the other karigars who refine it further and finally to the master karigar who does the minute work and gives it a proper shape by grinding it further until it gets the desired shape, design and size.

Last making is a highly specialised, sophisticated and labour intensive work and there are very few people who can be called master in this work. He gives the example of an old man of around more than 65 years of age. "*Yeh baba ko yeh kaam karte puri zindagi nikla gayi phir bhi yeh kaam seekh nahi paye hain, is kaam mein bahut barik nazar chahiye hoti hai, eik galat chot padi ki saara pharma kharab ho gaya*" (this baba (old man) has passed his whole life in this work but still he has not been able to learn it, it requires very minute and sharp skill, one wrong stroke can spoil the last). He is a full time karigar and work according to the time rather than piece. "*Jab kaam jaida hota hai to time se hisab se paise milte hain, aur jab kum hota hai to piece ke hisab se*" (when there is abundance of work, we are paid according to time and when it is less we get paid according to piece). He comes to the shop around 10 am when the workshop opens and works till 10 pm when the workshop is closed. So normally he works for 12 hours a day and there are no holidays during the season time.

He is not a salaried employee of the workshop which is owned by his own caste person. He explains, "*Yahan mahinedari (salary) se kaam nahi milta, koi kisi se bandha hua nahi hai, jab tak kaam hai tab tak yahan hai, jab kaam kum ho jata hai to kahin aur dhundte hain*" (here we do not get work on salary, no one is attached with anyone, as long work there is work here we are here, when work decreases then we search work somewhere else). "*kaam ke hisab se paisa milta hai, jisne jitna kar liya uski utni hi kamai hoti hai, jaidatar logon ko piece ke hisab se kaam milta hai*" (the earning depends on the amount of work one has done, whatever you have done will be paid accordingly, majority of the people are paid according to piece rate). He is available from morning to evening and if there is no work in the workshop he has the option of going back home or do something else. But generally people do not go home even if there is no work. They keep searching or busy in chit chat which often related or about the work.

He does not own any agricultural land and largely depend on his labour for his livelihood. He lives in a 50 sq. yd house which has one room and little covered area with some open space. The family does not have many assets in the house. It has some beddings, charpai, fan, cooler, cooking gas, bicycle and kitchen utensils. Unlike many of the other workers, dinesh's father had some agricultural land previously where they cultivated mangoes and other crops. They mortgaged this land to a Punjabi money lender in exchange for some money. The money was required for the medical expenses and treatment of his family members. The money lender played tricks and snatched their land from by fabricating with the records. He fabricated the papers and gave them 2 Lakh rupees while the value of the land was 10 lakh. This was a huge loss to them and the family came under severe crisis. He recalls the time when there was nothing to eat in the house. They would go to mandi and collect the thrown away/waste/leftover vegetable and use it for cooking meals in the house. After some time the family migrated to Agra and dinesh started to learn the shoe work at the age of 10 years. Initially he started with putting *doodh* (adhesive) on the shoe uppers and was paid 5 rupees a week. Gradually he expanded in other processes and became a Pharma (last) maker.

He has seen the worst phases in life when there was no food to eat after they lost their agricultural land. He has great respect for this work, he says, "*agar yeh kaam nahi hota to aaj hum bhuke maar rahe hote*" (if this work was not there we would be dying of hunger). He considers his life is stabilised to a large extent although there are problems here and there but now things are ok for him. His life experiences have made him bitter and straight forward. He is an atheist and does not believe in god at all. "*pehle hum devi-devta ko bahut mante the, par jab se hamari jamin gayi tab se maan-na band kar diya, jab paisa hota hai to devi devta aa jate hain, garibi hoti hai to kahan chale jate hain, agar bhagwan bigri cheez ko banata to hum mante, par aaj hum jo kuch bhi hai jaise bhi hai apni mehnat ki wajah se hai, yeh sab humne apne aap kiya hai*" (earlier we used to believe in the gods and goddesses, ever since we lost our agricultural land we have lost faith in it, when there is money the gods come, when there is poverty where these disappear?, if the god helped us over the problems then we could have believed it, but whoever and whatever we are today, it is due to our hard work, whatever we have (earned) it is all due to our efforts).

On being enquired how the world perceive this work. "*Duniya chamre ke kaam se gharna karti hai par hum is kaam ko ganda nahi mante, hamare liye to yeh rozi-roti ka sadhan hai, is se hamara parivar chalta hai, do paise aate hain, agar yeh kaam nahi hota to hum bhuke marr rahe hote, hum to chamre ko pujte hain, chamda*

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hamare devi devta hai, auzar hamare liye bhagwan hai, hum log to roz subah apne auzaron ki hi pooja karte hain" (the world sees this work with hatred, but we do not consider this as dirty, it is a source of livelihood for us, our family is dependent on this work, we earn money from this, if this work was not there we would be dying of hunger, we worship leather, leather is god/goddess for us, our tools are our gods, every morning we worship our tools). This is visible in the ways, when the workshop is opened in the morning the first thing the karigars do is to worship their tools instead of working the gods. He says, "*duniya is kaam ko neechi nigah se dekhi hai, par jab hamare paas koi sahara nahi tha, tab isi kaam ne hamein bachaya, isi se shuruyat hue hamari, isi se hamare din palte hain, abhi thori tarikki ki hai, aage bacche padh likh gaye to aura aage jayenge nahi to isi kaam mein aage badange*" (when there was no support and hope, this work saved us, we started with this work and our days have changed because of it, we have progressed and if the children got education we will further go up otherwise they will also be absorbed in this work).

Dinesh considers this work is an art, "*hum log eik lakdi ke tukde ko jute mein badal dete hain, yeh hamari kala hai, hum to apne aap ko labour nahi mante, hum log karigar hai, kalakar bhi keh sakte hain*" (we transform a log of wood into a shoe, this is our skill, we do not consider ourselves as labour, we are craftmen, you can also call us artist). The workers find labour a humiliating term and feel bad and often resist it. They do not consider themselves as unskilled worker rather prefers to call themselves as Mistri or karigar which is more a dignified term. The term reveals of their skilled work and does not reduce them as unskilled worker. On being asked about the earnings in this work, He says "*sab kaam ke nirbhar kata hai, kaam chalta rahe to mahine mein 5-6 hazar mil jate hain, kabhi kabhi kaam jaida hota hai to 500 rupaya tak kama lete hai season pe, aur kabhi kuch bhi nahi milta, hamare kaam ki sabse bari kharabi yeh hai ki saal bhar nahi rehta, tukdo mein milta hai, agar yeh pura mile to hamein kisi ki ji huzuri na karni pade, har kisi se bana ke rakhni padti hai pata nahi kab kaun kaam de de*" (all depends on work, sometimes we get work in bulk and something there is nothing, the biggest problem with this work is that it is not available round the year, we get it in bits and pieces, if we got this sufficient work then we don't need to be bonded/sefl servient to others, here we have to maintain our (good) relations with everyone as we don't know who will give us work).

Despite the irregularity of this work he does not think it a bad work. He says, "*kaam to yeh badia hai par hamari samasya yeh hai ki hamein yeh kaam sirf 4-5 mahine hi milta hai, jo kamai honi hoti hai woh season ke time hi hoti hai, jo season pe kama liya us kamai se ghar ka kharcha chalta hai yeh phir jab jarurat hoti hai to yahan wahan se karja le lete hain, agar hamara kaam bandh jaye to hamein karje na lene pade*" (this work is good but our biggest problems is that we get this work only for 4-5 months a year, whatever we (could) earn in this work is during season's time, whatever money is earned during season time is spent in rest of the year, otherwise whenever there is need we take credit from here and there, if we get regular work we will not be dependent on credit). "*Karja bhi asani se nahi milta, jo deta hai woh khub bhaz wasulta hai, koi 2 rupaya deta hai to koi 4, jaida jarurat ho to 8 rupaya pe bhi log karja le lete hain, jiski jaisi jarurat hoti hai usi hisab se byaz deta hai*" (it is also not easy to get the credit, those who give extract huge interest, some pay 2 rupees per 100, some give 4 rupees per 100, if there is urgent need people give upto 8 rupees per 100 a month, whatever is one's requirements they pay interest accordingly). He says, it is a normal thing in this work. There is hardly any worker who does not have any credit on his head. Life is very unpredictable and harsh; there is no surety of work and

livelihood. Any unexpected and undesirable event can push them backward and it takes months to recover the shock.

The work has reduced nowadays due to changes in the demand and emergence of large last making factories. The smaller last workshops have been closed down. He says "*pehle isi dukan pe kum se kum 15 log kaam karte the, aaj sirf 4 bache hai, bagal wale karkhane mein 30 log the, ab sirf 2 log bache hai, kaam bahut kum hua hai, jab se plastic, PVC ke pharme chalne lage hain, tab se lakdi ke pharmo ki demand lagbhag khatam ho gayi hai, ab ladki ke pharme sirf sample ke liye bante hain, phir inki copy hoti hai bari bari factoriyon mein*" (earlier this workshop used to employ 15 workers now only 4 have left, the neighbouring workshop had 30 workers now it has only 2, the work has reduced ever since plastic and PVC last have come to the market, the demand for wood last have almost finished, nowadays the wooden last are used only for sample, and these are copied in large factories). Hundreds of last makers have been displaced and lost their work over the years. Things are deteriorating further as the living cost of going up and the employment is decreasing. He knows many people of his specialisation who lost their employment and they are involved in construction work.

Last making is highly a labour intensive work; it requires a lot of dedication and patience. On being asked if he has faced any occupation related injuries he says, "*lakdi kat-te time bahut sambhal ke katna padta hai, kabhi kabhi tukde aakh pe lag jate hain, ungli haat katne ka daar laga rehta hai*" (we have to be careful while cutting the wooden log, at times the wood pieces hit the eyes, there is always a fear of cutting hand and fingers). He is habitual of taking kheni and gutka regularily and says, one cannot do this work without using these. "*yeh khate hi dimag shant ho jata hai, phir hum apne kaam mein magan ho jate hain, bhuk pyas nahi lagti aur na hi dimag idhar udhar jata hai*" (the mind attain peace, and then we are lost in our work, we do not feel hunger and thrist, the mind becomes stable). It is common among the workers to eat gutka and kheni very frequently after a gap of few hours. It is such a widespread and common phenomena that not only the workers but women and children too are dependent on these in basties. Many in the basties use a tobacco mixed toothpowder which is frequently used by women, children and workers alike. There is a strong urge to use it and many of them end up doing it 10-15 times a day.

When enquired about how he came to know about his caste, he says, " *yeh sab apne aap hi pata chal jata hai, jab mein 8 saal ka tha to mandir gaya, pujari ne chusne nahi diya, mein ghar wapas aa gaya, hamari family kuch nahi kar saki, tab se mujhe pata chala ki hum neechi biradari ke hain, us din ke baad se maine mandiron mein jaana chor diya, barabari mein baithna chor diya, mandali khatam ho gayi aur phir humne gaon hi chor diya, aj bhi hamein mandiron mein chusne nahi dete gaon mein, hamare log bahar baithte hain*" (this comes automatically on its own, when I was 8 years old I went to temple, but priest did not allow me inside, I came back and we could not do anything, from the I realised that we are from lower caste, from that time I stopped going to temple, sitting with them, my fried circle lost and then we finally left the village, even today we are not allowed inside the temples in village, our people sit outside). Dinesh says, "*chua-chat jaat paat abhi bhi hai, abhi bhi log hamare saath khane khane se katraate hain…eik baar hamare gaon se eik tauji aaye agra kisi kaam se, kisi se jaan pehchan nahi thi to hamare ghar ruke, humne khana ki pucha to bole ki apna khana saath laaye hain, agle din poora din bhuke baithe rahe par unhone hamare ghar pe khana nahi khaya*" (there is still untouchability, discrimination exist, people still hesitate/avoid eating with us…once a village person (tauji) came to Agra for some work, he did not know anybody here so he stayed at our

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house, we asked for food he said he brought his food from home, the next whole day he remained hungry but he did not eat food at our house). He says, the jatavs are not given plot in dhanoli village and you will not find any Jatav living in *chauwwan ke nagla*, these people do not like to live with our caste people.

Dinesh has a particular disliking for government offices specially police. According to him, these people do not treat them nicely. They always try to extract money from the poor people. "*Sarkari daftar mein jao to koi sunwai nahi hoti, balki pareshani aur hoti hai, wahan jiska juta jitna bhari hota hai uski chalti hai, woh log sirf paise ki bhasa samajte hain, agar na do to yeh babu log sur pe chad baithte hain, yeh log sirf paise walaon ki sunte hain, aur phir sabke paise mein joor nahi hota, jaan pehchaan, jati biradari se bhi farak padta hai, agar unhe babuji yeh thakur sahib bol de to khush ho jate hain, aur agar barabari pe baat karo to baithne tak nahi dete, khade hokar hi apni baat kehni hoti hai*" (if you go to government offices they do not listen to you rather create troubles, those who have power are treated nicely, they understand the language of money, if you do not pay them they become harsh, they only listen to powerful people and then everyone's money does not have the same power, caste and links matter a lot, if you call them "*babuji*" or "*thankur sahib*" they feel good and if you talk to them in equal footing they do not even allow you to sit, you have to talk to them standing).

When enquired is there any death or anybody suffering from health related issues in his family, he says, "*hamari family ke aadhe log to khatam ho gaye, kuch log bina ilaj ke maar gaye aur kuch ka accident ho gaya, sirf hamari hi family bachi hai hamare khandan mein*" (half of my family members are dead already, half of them died due non availability of treatment and half of them dead due to accidents, it is my only my family which is left). Dinesh is illiterate although but he has strong political opinions and beliefs. He is a staunch supporter of BSP. he says " *bhale hi mayawati ke raaj mein hamari sthiti mein bahut jaida farak nahi pada, par BSP ke power mein aane se hamara hausla badta hai, hum logon ki sarkari daftaron mein sunwai hone lagti hai, logon mein daar rehta hai, koi bhi khule aam hamein chamar nahi keh sakta*" (even though there has not been much change in our condition in the rule of mayawati, but we get confidence when BSP gets into power, our voice are heard in the government offices, people are afraid, nobody can call us chamar openly).

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 *nola 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 perception 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

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 fm1night 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 *sulabhsauchalaya* 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 works 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 seek 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 hog a 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 hie (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 !win 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 bham ke liye kuch to kama 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 nzuskil 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 me in".* (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 me/mat 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 bhama 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 layu, kitab mangle 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 vegetable) 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 zindgiji (live) nahi rahe balki dhekal (drag) rahi hain, khana hai to kha lijia aur agar nahi hai to subah se sham tak baithe hain, kaam mil gaya to theek hai nahi to aise hi bait he 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 otherwjse, 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 kama 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 kheeclzi 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 chafe 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 /win"*.(If it happens then it happens, Nothing unusual about it, we go to governmenthospitals 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 hwnse. 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 wah 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 moming 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).

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 6thh 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.

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 frequent 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 b·rother 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 nalzi laga"(l* 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 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 *"hamein 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 win, in 4 mahine mein jitna kama liya kama liya, uske baad bekar ho jate /win, kabhi kabhi apne aap se nafrat hoti hai ki humne galat samaj me in 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 /win 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 kQ/je ke salzare ji rahe hain, hum karja fete win, use chukate win, phir off season pe kQija fete hain., phir use season pe chukate /win yeh sab chakkar fag a rehta hai* ". (We people are surviving on credits, we take credit, pay it, then again take it in offseason/ 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 tife. 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 a is a din aaya to hum chineyenge, maarenge, marenge, lutenge, chori karenge, dakati dalenge, salta 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 problematic future ahead but he is unable to do anything.

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. *"Parphir bhi humein paper work kama 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 hai,, phir hum bhi wzke 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 wzhe 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 me in kyun reh raha hai, tune kyun yahan kothi kyun 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.

CHAPTER 8

WORKERS AND WELLBEING

POVERTY AND ECONOMIC MARGINALITY

Poverty is one of the most import causes that affect the quality of life and level of living. Poor economic status creates vicious cycle of deprivations and marginalization. It affects one's ability to live a satisfying, meaningful and productive life. The poor economic status reflects in the other areas of the life. It leads to poor consumption, lack of education, poor quality of living, inadequate housing facilities, lower levels of nutritional intake, poor health outcome and lower level of living conditions. It kills the hope and aspirations of people and makes the life vulnerable, violent and unsatisfactory. The lack of income makes people compromise on their basic requirements. It leads to suppression of human hopes, capabilities and potential. Poor economic conditions not only affect the material and economic well being it also affect one's social standing in the society. It affects the standard of life and quality of living directly. Besides affecting the quality of living it also affects psychologically and brings humiliations, indignity and vulnerability in the lives of people.

There is a clear link between caste, rank and poverty. Economic and socio-cultural resources are inversely related with one social position in the caste ladder. The deprivations and privileges are unevenly distributed. The more one goes up in the caste ladder the lower the deprivations and poverty. The more one goes down higher the deprivations and poverty. In other words, there are more economic opportunities and privileges at the top therefore less sufferings. The lower social status and position brings lower opportunities and high risks and insecurity. The higher economic status brings higher social status, higher security and low risks. The inequal distribution of wealth and resources like land, trade, occupations and education is the function of caste. Some groups were historically denied and prevented from owning resources. The higher proportion of landlessness, illiteracy, poor living and poverty among some groups is the manifestation of their historical marginality.

The perceptions of people about themselves are the larger reflection of their status in the society. When certain characteristics, attributes are reproduced repeatedly and largely shared among people it often takes the form of undeniable social reality.

These dominant social facts are manifested in the notions and perceptions of the people.

Hamare samaj ke pass na to paisa hai, na jamin jaidad aur na hi badi badi pustani sampati, jahan bhi milenge garib hi milenge, jaidatar log badhali ki halat mein hi zindagi je rahe hain, kisi ke pass koi thos kaam dhande nahi hai, aur na hi amdani ke sadhan, log mehnat majdoori ka kaam kar ke apne ghar chala rahe hai, baith ke khane wale bahut hi kum hai (Pappu, 2014, sundarpara, Agra).

(Our caste does not have money, land or big ancestral property, they are poor wherever you go, maximum are living life in utter destitude, no one has any concrete work and occupation nor source of income, majority of workers are dependent on labour work to run their families, there very few who are living without any problem)

The poverty among the leather workers is a historical fact. The quantum, volume and magnitude of poverty are very high due to historical marginalisaiton of their caste. They have remained poor and marginalised thorught out history for a very long time as a group. This prolonged deprivation of economic resources and marginalization is reflected in poor and marginal economic base of this group. The weak and marginal resource base of the community is the visible effect of caste. Caste always existed for them and it is reflected in the higher poverty burden among them as a group. Historical marginality continues to define their experiences as a group even in the present. They still carry the baggage and burden of their past.

The material poverty of this group is reflected in the poor ownership of means of production, assets base in their houses. Majority of the workers are without any agricultural land. They are largely dependent on their labour for livelihood. Large numbers of families are living in small or single room accommodation. The poverty is reflected in their poor asset base in their families. In the name of assets many families have mere some boxes, daily use utensils, kitchen items, kerosene stoves, some bedding with fan and bulbs in their houses. Many of the families had fan, bulbs/tubelights, cooking gas, almirah, box, double bed, television, cycle/motor bike, radio, cooler etc. but most of these things were received in dowry/gift in marriages or purchased second hand. There are very few things that have been purchased with their own income.

The division of family property over generations, competition, loss of economic opportunities has further intensified and increased poverty. The limited assets have further been divided into many generations leading to very low assets per household. The competition in the familes and community has intensified due to shrinking of earning sources.

Hamare baap dadaon ki sthiti hum se bahut aachi thi, un logon ke pass kaam dhande the, hamari sthiti to aur bhi kharab ho gayi hai, kaam dhande chapat ho gaye hain, jin logon ke pass paisa tha kaam dhande aache the, aj woh log bhi sadak pe aa gaye hain, kul mila ke jaisi sthiti hamare purkhon ki thi hamari us se bhi buri ho gayi hai (Gora, 2014, panchkuyean, Agra).

(Our forefather had a better condition than us. they had work and livelihood, our condition has deteriorated now, we have lost work and our livlihood, many of those who earlier had money and good work have also come down, our condition has become pathetic compare to our forefather)

The condition has deteriorated further due to loss of economic opportunities arising due to closure and shifting of many factories from Agra. The unemployment has increased leading to shrinking of income sources of the workers. The inequalities have intensified, widen and increased further. The disparities have increased both within the community, across different families and between generations. There has been a qualitative change in their lives over the last 2-3 decdes. There has been inter-generational downward mobility for many families. Some of the families which had good economic conditions in their previous generations have seen a gradual down fall. Their forefathers had better position compare to them. The forefather did not have the same competition that they have now.

The poverty has increased both in terms of quantity and also in terms of quality. This increased poverty is reflected in their lifestyle which indicates the qualityof life they live. Many of them are finding very hard to meet the basic requirement of life like the food and clothing. One workers says,

Hum log na accha kha pate hai na aacha pehan pate hai, rozmarra ki jarurat ki cheezen bhi bari muskil se nasib hoti hain, bahut baar koi cheez pasand aati hai par arthik sthiti ke wajah se use nahi kharid pate, maan maar ke reh jate hai, apni icchaon ko daba lete hai, choti choti cheezon ke liye bhi bahut bar paise nahi hote, agar koi hari bimari lag jaye to musibaton ka pahar sa toot padta hai, dava-daru ke liye bhi paise jutana muskil ho jata hai (Bhurelal, 2014, Nala kaji Para, agra)

(Neither we are able to eat good food nor we are able to wear good cloths, it is very difficult to manage daily utilities, many a times we like something but due to poor economic conditions we are unable to purchase it, we suppress our wishes and control our desires, we do not have money even for small small things many a times, if we get sick it becomes a collapse of sky for us, it becomes difficult to manage even for medicines and treatment)

They have to compromise on the basic necessities of life. This is very much reflected in their every day life experiences. It is common for workers to eat with chatni roti once or twice in a week or once in a day either due to shortage of money or to save money. Many of them simply use the same torn off cloths for years or choose

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to ignore or underplay the necessity. It is common to share same cloths by many people in the family. A single pair of shirt and pants can be used by many in the families. Many do not shy away from borrowing cloths or sharing goods within the community. This poverty is very much the symbol of dalit clusters. One can easily find the half naked people sitting or chatting around their houses or street corners. It is so normalized and standardized that it has become a cultural marker of basties and become a symbol to identity.

The poverty has forced them to live with diverse and multiple deprivations. They share the same pain and sufferings as a group. It is not only the income poverty that people are suffering from. There are large numbe of families that are living with multiple deprivations. These shared suffering are manifested in their articulation when they define themselves.

"hamare log to jahan bhi milenge dube kuchle laachar hi milenge, kisi ke pass rehne ko ghar nahi hai, koi karje mein duba hai to kisi ka ghar girvi rakha pada hai, koi ilaj ke liye taras raha hai, jaidatar log tanghali mein zindgari guzar rahe hain, bahut se parivar aise hai bastiyon mein jinke pass roti khane ke liye bhi paise nahi hai, bari muskil se jee rahe hain, logon ko do waqt ki roti bhi chan se naseeb nahi hoti, us ke liye bhi sangharsh karna padta hai, bahut log to roz kama ke late hai tab jakar unke ghar ka chulha jalta hai, agar kaam na mile to chatni roti kha ke guzara karte hain, "(Rajkapoor, 2014, Nai ki Mandi, Agra).

(Our people are crushed, suppressed and helpless wherever you go, some do not have house, some are under debt, some have their houses mortagaged, some do not have money for treatment, maximum people are living in distress, there are many families in the basties (locality) that do not have any money to eat food, they are living with a lot of hardships, it is so difficult to manage two times means, people have to struggle for that also, many people have to work daily only then they are able to manage food, if people do not find work they have to manage with chatni-roti)

The workers are living in extreme and vulnerable conditions. They are living with multiple and diverse deprivations. Many of them do not have their own houses they are living on rent. The house hold items or houses are mortagaged to money lenders. Many families have huge debt on their head. There is no money to spend on the treatment despite the fact that many are suffering from illness. Large numbers of families are living in utter destitution and distress due to lack of money. It is a struggle to manage two times meals a day. A large number of them live a hand to mouth existence due to lack of steady income and material resources. The level of helplessness can be imagined from the fact that the workers in the Agra leather industry are paid wages twice a week. They do not have capacity to sustain beyond 1 or 2 days without money. Any minor disruption can result in severe episodes or

phases of hunger and suffering to them. If there is no work or any disturbance it can lead to severe crunch of money which has severe implications to them and their family members. The conditions of those families are beyond imaginable where there are no earning membersor aged and widows. There is so much of helplessess and hopelessness in their lives.

Most of the times it is the absolute hunger that becomes area of concern for them. They are hardly bothered about the nutritional value of the foods that they consume. Their decision for the consumption of the food is determined by the cost of the food rather than its nutritional value. Sometimes it is also difficult to get the sufficient food and many will go hungry when there is no income in the family. It is quite evident from the fact that many of the workers easily reveal the phases and episodes of hugner in their lives. This reveals that this is largely a fact which is produced at a mass level. They do not feel hesitant or shy to tell about difficult phases of their lives.

The conditions were already very harsh and tough for the workers. The inflation has increased their pain. The cost of living has gone up sharply as the costs of essential commodies have increased singnificantly. The prices of the essential goods have increased so fast which has not matched with their income sources resulting more destitution. The cost of essential goods has gone up due reduction in the subsidies in the cooking gas, stationary, on education, fuel, medicines and health etc.

mehngai itni badh gayi hai ki doodh dahi to door ki baat hai, do waqt ki roti bhi badi muskil se mil pa rahi hai, baccho ko bhar pet khana bhi nahi mil pata hai, Pehle kum se kum dal roti to mil jati thi, ab to uske liye bhi sochna padta hai, eik time ka mil jaye to dusre time ki chinta dimag mein rehti hai, uspe bhi agar ghar mein koi saga-sambandhi aa jaye to pareshani aur bad jati hai, samjho musibat si aa jati hai yahan wahan se paisa udhar lena padta hai (kamlesh, 2014, Panchkyein, Agra)

(the inflation has increased so much that Milk and curd are beyond reach, it is difficult to manage two times meals, the kids do not get even enough food, earlier we could manage two times food, now we have to think about that also, if we managed to get one time food we have to think about the next meal, if some guest comes ot our house it becomes such a big problem, we have to take money from here and there).

The inflation has affected the most poor and bottom level workers who were already living a marginal and dis satisfied life. The cost of LPG, education, fuel, food items, health care has drastically gone up over the last few years. The competition for resources has increased not only within the community but also in families. It has affected different members of the family in different ways. The worst affected are the

children, aged, diseased and women in the families. The essential needs are curtailed and family members are not able to get their just share in the family resources. They are getting neither sufficient food nor the adequate health care. Many of the families are not taking any treatment of the illness. They somehow manage with the homeopathetic medicines as it is cheaper for them. It has added more vulnerability to their lives. They are not able to meet basic requirement of their lives. The price of milk has gone so high that it has become non-reachable. They buy milk only for the tea requirements that too if necessary and children are the worst affected as they are introduced hard food at a very early age.

WORK AND INSECURITY

Leather work has always been associated with certain negative value. In the occupational hierarchy of work it is perceived to be very low. People make certain distance from those people who are engaged with this work. It is not considered to be a dignified occupation for many in the society. It is due to this reason those who are leather workers are often victim of negative perceptions. It is a common and shared belief in the society that this work is dirty and unhygienic. Many of the workers although do not agree with this perception.

"Hamare kaam ke bare mein logon ki rai aachi nahi hai, unko lagta hai yeh ki yeh kaam ganda hai, log hamein aur hamare kaam ko neechi nigah se dekhte hai, log thori doori bana ke rakhte hai, milne julne mein khane peene mein, Bahut baar logon ko batane mein thori hichak hoti hai ki hum joote ka kaam karte hai, agar kisi ko pata chal jaye to woh samaj jata hai ki hum kaun jaat se hai," (Neeraj, Agra, Panchkyyien, 2014)

(People do not have very good opinion about our work, people think that this work is dirty, people perceive us and our work with disrespect, they avoid us and maintain distance, they do not intermingle or eat and drink with us…many a times we feel afraid/reluctant to tell that we do shoe work, if they come to know about it then they easily identify our caste)

The stigma attached with leather affects the self esteem of the workers. They feel devalued and inferior due to their association with this work. The stigma makes them conscious of their lower social position in the society. Many do not like to have any relationship with them and avoid them as much as possible. The workers are defensive and appologistic when they interact with the outside world. They always carry this psychological burden in their mind. It affects their standing in the society, their self confidence when they interact with the outside world. Many do not like to have matrimonial alliances with the leather workers. They try to avoid it as much as

possible and it is last option for many. It is largely due to the insecurities associated with the work but also due to poor standing of leather workers in the society.

The power associated with the work defines the amount of respect and prestige that one is likely to get from people. All works do not carry the same social prestige and respect. The social and cultural belief system affects the value, availability and access of work in the society. Certain works are stereotyped and devalued as non work or unskilled work like the household women work. The social perceptions affect the economic value of any work. This work is not accorded the status of craft, science and sophisticated art. Therefore it is not considered to be technical in nature. The devaluation of this work also leads to devaluation of the labour. One workers says,

Hamare kaam ki koi value nahi hai, log is kaam ko kaam ki tarah nahi dekhte, unke hisab se, jiske pass khane kamane ka koi aur zaria yeh sadhan nahi hai woh hi is kaam ko karta hai, is kaam ko log eik majboori samajte hai, unhe lagta hai ki yeh to garib-majboor logon ka kaam hai, is liye hum logon se aacha vyahar nahi rakhte aur na hi hamein samman dete hain (Bharat, 2014, Nai ki Mandi, Agra).

(there is no value of our work, People do not perceive this as work, according to them, those who do not have any other source of livelihood only they do this work, they believe we do this work due to our helplessness, they think that it is the work of poor and labourers, that is why they do not behave nicely with us. the is is the reason many of them keep distance from us nor they give us respect).

It is a highly technical skill but it is not acquired though formal education. It is therefore not given the same status like other professions like engineers, doctors, scientists etc. When there is no free movement of labour it leads to inefficietny and stagnation. When alternative avenues of mobility are not available it leads to freezing of labour and decreading its value. Dalits workers are trappned in that cycle they are not allowed to move freely which led to devaluation of their labour and its economic value. It is not a literary work but a practical based work which is learnt though practice and observations in houses and factories. It is largely considered to be an unskilled work therefore the wages are also very low compare to other professions. If a doctor charges 200 rupees as consultancy fees from a patient by just spending around 5-10 minutes, it will take atleast 10-12 hours of physical hard work by workers to earn the same amount. The low and poor wages is the biggest source of their poverty.

Secured work is one of the important antidotes of poverty. A secured, regular, meaningful, safe and economically rewarding work guranttess income security and bring stability and security and freedom in the life of people. Insecured, irregular,

hazardous work conditions, economically underpaid work brings instability and insecurity to the people. The regularity and quality of work detemined the economic status and also affect the level of living one is able to achieve. Work is a major factor which affects the material and social well being. The quality of work determines one quality of living and determines the consumption and affordability of the goods in life.

This work is season, temporary and fluctuating in nature. It does not guranttees a stable and secured income for the workers. This work is highly unpredictable not available throughout year which makes life highly uncertain and and unstable. The demand for this work generates in particular period of year. It is available only during the season time which is largely occurring during the marriage and festival time. A worker puts in,

Hamari garibi ka sabse bara karan hai ki hamein kaam barabar nahi milta, Joote ka kaam saal bhar nahi chalta, yeh sirf season (festival/marriage) ke time uthta hai, saal mein sirf 4-6 mahine hi kaam rehta hai, baki time hum khali baithe rehte hai, idhar udhar bhatkate rehte hai kaam ki talash mein, jitna bhi kama liya season mein usi se baki time katna padta hai, jab se chinese maal market mein aya tab se to aur bhi kaam ho gaya hai kaam milna (Rajesh, 2014, Sundarpara, Agra,).

(The biggest reason for our poverty is that we do not get regular employment. The shoe making work is not available throughout year, it is available during the season (festivals/marriage) time, we get work only for 4-6 months in a year, rest of the time we sit idle, we are in constant search of work here and there, whatever we earn during the season time we manage with that in rest of the year, ever since this Chinese goods have come to the market our work has reduced).

The leather work is available only for 4-6 months a year. This means the workers remain unemployed for roughly 6-8 months in a year. This high and huge unemployment is biggest reason for their poverty. This largely limits their income, earnings keep them in poverty trap. They largely remain without any source of earning for a very long time in a year. Whatever they earn during the season time is spent in the off season. Therefore they are unable to save any money. They live with misery and extremely vulnerable conditions during the slack season. The off-season is a forceful idleness that they live with. They want to work but it is not available therefore this time largely remain an unproductive period of their life. Life is so uncertain and insecure and highly unpredictable. Any small undesirable eventuality creates a huge additional burden to them.

Whatever employment they get is also temporary and irregular. Workers never get employment in any one particular site even during season time. No factory or

karkhana gives them any secured employment even during season time. There is constant search and struggle for securing work opportunities. The story is same for majority of the workers whether they are working in large/medium/small factory or karkhana. Every year there will be new workers in the factories and karkhanas. It is evident from the fact that most of the workers that were interviewed never had any permanent association with any karkhana or factory. Some of the middle aged workers have worked more than 20-25 places in their life.

Besides being temporary this work is also highly fluctuating in nature. This work is largely dependent on the demand and orders. If there is demand there is work if there is no demand there is no work. The demand keeps chaning or affected due to delays in orders, scarcity in raw material, transportation, disruptions etc. therefore the work also keep changing. The workers get it in bits and pieces at different locations and sites.

Jo bhi kaam milta hai woh futkar mein milta hai, lag ke nahi milta, Log hamesha kaam ki talah mein rehte hain, karkhano/factory ke chakkar lagate rehte hai, eik dusre se malum karte rehte hain agar kahin kaam mil jaye, kae baar jugad baith jati hai bahut baar khali haath aana padta hai (Pintu, 2015, Panchkuyein, Agra)

(Whatever work we get, we get it in bits and pieces, there is no regularity, peole are always in seach of work, we keep searching work in karkhana, many a times we get it many a times we have to return bare handed).

This work is available in bits and pieces in single and multiple locations. Every year the work starts from august-september to februrary-march. But it does not mean that all the workers get work. Many of them remained unemployed even during season time. The work is limited and there are more people who are looking for it. There is severe and cut Thorat competition to get the jobs and work. The workers are always in search of work. Life is so uncertain that many karigars work multiple places in a single season time. The situation is so tight that many change many places within a single week for fortnight. This makes their life insecure and vulnerable and they always feel over burden to fulfill the basic requirement of family.

Leather work although is highly technical in nature but it is largely a manual and labour intensive work. Manual work by default is considered to be unskilled work therefore lower wages are the norm. The wages in the industry are very low whether it is highly skilled workers or an unskilled. The work is limited and poverty is very high among the workers. There is excessive competition to secure work. Many who

are unemployed or in desperations are ready to work for lower wages. Besides this the income is further reduced due the exploitation by the thekadars and factory owners.

Is kaam mein kamai kum hai aur mehnat jaida hai, us par bhi majdoori puri nahi milti, karkhanedar/thekadar/vyapari kabhi bhi pura paisa nahi dete, paisa rok ke rakhte hai taki hum hamesha un se bandhe rahe, phir choti choti cheezon pe paisa kaat lete hain, bahut baar to baat gali galoch, ladai jhagde tak pauch jati hai (Bengali, agra, 2014)

(There is too much of hard work and low income in this work, moreover we do not get the full payment, the sweathop owners/contractors withhold our wages so that we remain bonded to them, many a times it become so ugly and it ends in quarrels and conflicts).

The workers are highly exploited by the thekadars/karkhanedars/wholesellers. They use the vulnerbailty of the workers for their own benefits. They exploit the workers through various means like delaying the wages/payments, nonpayment, cutting the wages on account of absence/late, faults in works or reducing the wage/piece rate as per their convenience etc. They are the work providers therefore they exert pover over the workers though these means. The workers are always made to feel lower and inferior through these means. They are uable to resist it as confronting means there will not be work for them in future. The workers are exploited both socially and economically. They are also made to do many other works for which they are not paid economically.

The fluctuations in the work availability and excessive competition create extreme work schedules and conditions for the workers. They are overburdened and under tremendous pressure to earn as much as possible during the season time. One workers says

Season time mein hum log gadhe ki tarah kaam karte hai, din-raat eik kar dete hain, na khane ka hosh rehta hai na sone ki fursat, puri puri raat kaam karna padta hai, phir subah jaidl se shuru ho jate hain, season ke time mein kabhi 200 ka, kabhi 300 kabhi 500 tak ka kaam ho jata hai agar kaam barabar aur bharpur ho to, agar nahi hia to khali baithe rehte hai, yahan wahan haat paer marte hain kaam ki talash mein (Ravinder, 2015, Mantola, Agra).

(We work like donkey in the season time, our day-night become one, neither we have time to eat now we have time to sleep, we have to work whole night and then we get up early and start, in season time we can earn 200, at times 300 or upto 500 if we get regular and sufficient work, if there is no work we have to sit idle, explore here and there for work)

In season time when there is more pressure of work parents and family members do not hesitate to involve their kids in the work. Every one becomes an asset in the house who contributes in some ways. This routine is maintained during season time and many workers work for 15-20 hours a day provide they get the work. This takes a

heavy toll on their health as they underplay and overlook the health and body requirements. The main priority is to earn as much as possible so that they can save as much as possible for off season.

The nature of the work has changed in the last 20-25 years. The bulk of the work has shifted from homes to the large factories. The large factories have emerged and they have displaced the small level workers and artisans. These large factories have substantially reduced the work and market of small and home based entrepreneurs. It has resulted in more unemployment and loss of economic opportunites leading to increase in the poverty among the workers.

"*Pehle gharon mein kaam hota tha, har ghar, gali, basti mein karkhane the, ab bastiyon mein kaam to khatam ho gaye hai, saara kaam bari bari factories mein chala gaya hai, karigar log majdoor ban ke reh gaye hai jo dusre ke factory/karkhano mein jate hai*" (Raj kumar, 2014, panchkyien, Agra).

(Earlier the work used to be done in houses, there used to be sweatshop in every house, lane, locality, now the work in the localities have been ruined, the work has shifted in the large factories, the *karigar* (workers/artisans/craftmen) have become *majdoor* (laborer) and they go to work in other's factory/karkhana…we get work in other's factories/karkhana but we have to be subjucated and tolerate their scoldings and bad behavior, we are helpless so we have to tolerate all that).

The work was already seasonal, scarce and limited in terms of availability and accessibility. It has become further insecure and scarce due emergence of large and organized factories, Dalits workers specially the home based artisans, small factories are the one that have been badly affected. The large factories have displaced and overtaken their work. The volume of the work has reduced as the large factoies and eaten up the share and market of the small level factories and karkhanas. These have caused large scale displacement of the workers, increase unemployment and pushing the poverty level up further.

Mechanisation has created more vulnerability. The work has become faster, easier and simple due to the use of machines. The volume and quantum of the work has decreased due to automation amd increased use of machines. This has resulted in shrinking and reduction in the availability of work. While observing the changes that have taken place in the industry in the last 30-40 years. Madanlal a 70 years old gentleman says,

"*Kaam karne ke taur tarike badal gaye hai, pehle jaidatar kaam haath se hota tha, sole bhi chamre ke bane hote the, plastic, pvc ke sole to ab chalne lage hain, pehle eik juta tayar hone mein kae din lag jate the, aj koi bhi juta kuch ghanton mein taray ho jata hai, pehle se kaam pe bahut farak pada hai, ab kaam kum ho gaya hai aur kamai bhi* (Madanlal, 2014, Panchkuyein Agra).

(maximum work earlier used to be done with hands, the shoe's sole was also made of leather, it is only now that pvc soles are used, it takes many days to make a final shoe, there were also not many facilities, today any kind of shoe can be prepared within few hours

There has been a huge expansion and mechanisation of the industry in the last 2-3 decades. The numbers of working days have reduced due to mechanisation. Most of the manual works and processes like cutting, stitching, sole making, insole cutting, and last making have become mechanized with specialized factories. Today only a master sample is made from hand rest of the work is done on machines. Huge displacement has taken place and unemployment has increased leading to increased competiton.

The mechanisation has led to reduction of work both due to closure of factories and karkhans and also due to shrinking of the direct employment days. It has increased casuality among the workers as skilled karigar have beome deskilled workers. They have been forced to become daily wage workers from self employed workers. Mechanisation has created huge displacement of workers both economically and also occupationally. It has created more unemployment among the workers. The work has reduced so are the incomes of people. A workers says,

Ab hamari jarurat khatam ho gayi hai is kaam mein, hamari puch hamare hunar ki wajah se thi, aj aisi aisi machine aa gayi hai market mein jo kaam to fatafat kar deti hai, bari bari machine ne hamein bekar kar diya hai, pehle is kaam ki barikeyein sirf hamein pata thi, chamre ki katai se lekar banai tak, aj yeh saara kaam machine se ho jata hai jaldi bhi aur jaida bhi, ab hamare kaam ko koi bhi kar sakta hai (kapil, 2014, Ratanpura, Agra)

(Now there is no need of us in this work, our value was because of our skill/work, today there are kinds of machines in market which can do the work quickly, these machines have made us useless, earlier only we knew the minute detais from cutting the leather to manufacturing, today all this work can be done by machines, anybody can do this work now)

Mechanization has changed dalits' relationship with their work. Due to mechanization the dalits have lost their historical knowledge which has been acquired over hundreds of years. This knowledge has been their heritage and cultural identity. Mechanisation has resulted in the de-skilling and increased casuality within the community. The highly skilled karigars have become daily wage labourers. Mehcanisation has made the work simple and easy. On the one hand it has reduced the quantum of the work on the other hand it has led to the entry of upper caste especially in the highly mechanized and automised enterprises. Whatever new

opportunities have been created has been appropriated by the upper castes. One worker puts in

Pehle kaam jaida tha aur kamai bhi jaida thi kyuki karne wale kum log them, aj karne wale log jaida hai aur kaam kum hai, Pehle is kaam ko sirf hamare log karte the, na to koi is kaam ko janta tha aur nahi ise karna pasand karta tha, aj is kaam mein har tarah ke log ghus gaye hain, Brahman, kumhar, thakur, jat, teli, yadav, sabne is kaam ko karna shuru kar diya hai, hamai caste ke haath se yeh kaam chala gaya hai, hum log majdoor bane ke reh gaye hain apne hi kaam mein (Naval kishore, 2014, kalyanpura, agra).

(there was more work so was the income because very few people used to do this work, today there are more people and the work is limited, earlier only our caste used to do this work, no one either knew this work nor they were interested in it, today all castes are doing this work, in big factory all caste do this work, like Brahman, nai, dhobi, kumhar, thakur, jat, teli, yadav, we have lost our work, we have become labourers in our own work).

Mechanization has made the work simpler, faster and easier. The upper castes have appropriated all the lucrative work, employment and economic opportunities that arose due to expansion of the industry. They displaced and pushed dalits to bottom at different levels and different sphres of work. All the export oriented factories are owned by the upper castes. All the lucrative and highly paid jobs have been appropriated by them. Dalits have been pushed down below in their own work. This has created resistance between different groups. The working sites have become dangerous as the traditional animosity between different castes has intensified making the working sites dangerous for dalit workers.

The small factories and karkhana and workers were already facing stiff competiton from the corporate houses and larger factories. The competition has further intensified due entry of Chinese goods in Indian market. Government opened leather industyr for 100 percent FDI since 2002. It has removed trade restrictions which led to the dumping of Chinese goods. Vedprakash is in his late 50s and lives in panchkuyian had a small karkhana earlier. Now his sons work in the factories of others says

Jab se Chinese maal market mein aaya hai hamari to raed hi pit gayi hai, hamare maal ki bikri kaam ho gaye hai, gali moholla mein karkhane band ho gaye hai, logon mein berozgari badh gayi hai, market mein competition itna badh gaya hai is ka farak gharon mein chalne wale chote chote karkhano pe pada hai, vyapari/dunkandaar to maal bech rahe hain chahe, unpe koi farak nahi pada (Vedprakash, 2014, Panchkuyein, Agra).

(Ever since Chinese goods have come to the market, we have been ruined, the sales of our goods have decreased, many sweatshops have shut down in dalit and

Muslims localities, the unemployment has increased, it has affected the smaller sweetshops, the retailers have not been affected by it, they are still selling goods).

The Chinese ready made goods have affected the lower level workers badly. Many of the small karkhana and small factories have been shut down. It led to severe reduction in the income and opportunities. It has pulled down the profits of the workers as they have to be competitive to the cheap Chinese goods. It has resulted in the lowering of the profits and shrinking of the margins. The small income that workers used to generate has become difficult. The conditions have become tough and hard for them. Many workers who could not sustain this onslaught have closed down their karkhana and they rented them out for living.

China has emerged as one of the most important destination of the machines over the last decade. Italy and Germany were the main source of machines and technology which used to cater to the largest factories. China is emerging one of the biggest suppliers of technological equipment, machines, tools and raw material. The Chinese machines cost roughly 50 percent to 40 percent cheapter compare to machines from Italy and Germany. The medium and small factories have started importing machines from china. This is fast becoming a dominant fashion in the industry which is likely to create more unemployment and casuality in near future.

Women are the worst affected section of the changing nature of work and shifting of work from home to factories. As long as the work was in home, women participated directly and indirectly in the work activity therefore economically stable. There were many processes which women used to do like *chipkai* (applying glue/adesive to the pieces, *chantai* (sorting the pieces), *chapai* (putting labeling on pieces by hand machine), *bunai/kadai* (emprodiary), *safai* (finishing) etc.Savitri a middle aged women in her 50s used to assist her husband in his karkhana. Now the karkhana has been closed down since 2007. She says,

"pehle ghar ghar mein karkhane the jahan pe aadmi aur aurat milke kaam karte the, jab kaam jaida hota tha to raat-din eik kar dete the, ab to karkhane bhi band ho gaye hai, 2 paisa ki amdani ho jati hai ab who bhi khatam ho gayi hai, ab sirf aadmi/ladke kaam pe jaate hai, ab hum puri tarah unke bharose hai... When asked about what they do these days, she further says, *"ab kaam to sab khatam ho gaya to kya karein, ghar bar sambhal rahe hain, baccho ko dekh rahe hain, nati-poote paal rahe hai"* (Savitri, kalyanpuri 2015, Agra).

(Earlier there were karkhana/swetshops in every house, men and women used to work together, when there was more work, we used to work day and night, now most of the karkhana have closed down, the small money that we used to earn has been lost, now only men/boys go for work, we are completely dependent on

them…now our work has been ruined so what we can do, we are managing the house, looking after children, raising grandchildren).

The shifting of work from house has brought significant changes in the household structure. The role, function and status of women have changed in the house. When the work was in home they had a clear idea of the production output, quantity and income. They had control over the production processes and earnings and income per day. They have lost control over the economic resources ever since the work has shifted from homes. When women had important role in the production activities they were economically and socially independent. They had a stable and life both within and outside of family and community. Women had a strong say in the family politics and internal affairs of house. Now the women have become full time wife and mother. The women have become dependent on their husbands and sons. It is a huge loss of economic opportunities for the women.

These losses of opportunites have affected the workers badly. The loss is not mere economic it has its own social implications for the workers. The unemployment has increased and huge numbers of workers have lost their livelihood. They have lost their social standing and respect in the society. It is a huge humiliation, pain and stigma to be sitting idle in the homes. Rajkumar has actively retired from this work as his small karkhana has been closed down. Now he is a full time unemployed person and has rented out his portion on rent to sustain. He says,

pehle log is kaam ki wajah se humse door rehte the, aj to kaam bhi khatam ho gaya hai, karigar log bekar baithe hai gharon mein, amdani ke sadhan khatam ho gaye hain, Bekari badh gayi hai, baccho ko rozgar nahi mil raha, Pehle kaam tha to logon ke saath uthna baithna tha, milna julna hota rehta tha, eik dusre se jude hue the, samaj mein izzat thi, ab koi puchta bhi nahi hai samaj mein, jiske pass kaam hai uski puch hoti hai, kae baar log taunt maar dete hai ki ghar mein pada hai, baith ke kha raha hai (Rajkumar, 2014, kalyanpura, Agra)

(earlier people used to avoid us due to our work, today we have lost our work, karigar are sitting idle in their homes, the sources of income have ruined, people have become useless and unemployed, earlier there used to be interactions and meetings (within community) when there was work, we were attached with each other, we had respect in the community, now no one is bothered about us, now those are respected who have work, many a times peole taunt that we are lying idle and eating without work)

When there was work in the community there was sense of belonginess to each other. Now the work has transformed into wage work which is located outside. The work has become depersonalized and it has increased isolation of workers. The changes have affected the personal and commuity relations of the community. There

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are very few peole who have been able to manage or hold their position. The competiton has increased which led to jealousy and lack of trust among members.

INDEBTNESS AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Workers are trappned in the vicious cycle of credit poverty. Work is insecure and irregular in nature and the wages are very low compare to some other professions and occupations. The earnings are never sufficient to meet the family requirements. Whatever the workers earn in the season time is spent in the off season. The workers are hardly able to save some money for any eventuality in life. This makes them highly dependent on credits. There are hardly any workers who do not have any small or big debt on its head. This is so widely prevalent phenomenon among the workers that many people will simply deny that they have any debt on their head. They associate credit with big amount like five thoudsand or ten thousand and so on. It is so common for workers to borrow 20, 50, and 100 in their daily lives from friends, relatives and family members. It brings shame and humiliations if somebody is having a debt on their head.

udhari hamari zindagi ka eik hissa hai, hum karja lete hai phir use season pe chukka dete hai, phir off season mein lete hai phir season pe chukka dete hai, yeh chakkar laga rehta hai, bahut saara paisa byaz dene mein hi nikal jata hai, kul mila ke hamari koi bachat nahi ho pati, jo kamate hai usi se saara saal katna padta hai (Ravinder, 2014, Nai ki Mandi, Agra)

(Credit taking is part of our life, we take credit and then we pay it back in season, then off season we take it then pay it back in season, this cycle goes on like this, whatever we earn a large portion is spent in paying the interests, we are unable to save any money)

Credit is part and parcel of the lives of workers. Many workers often take pride that they not under any debt. But it is a common phenomenon for people in basties to take credit not only for starting work but also for school fees, paying for LPG cylinders, doing small repairs in houses, electricity bills or doing some small work etc. big credit are often taken in case of marriages, construction of houses or starting small work.

The workers live under conststat insecurity and threat. It made life so vulnerable and hard. A large part of the earnings go in paying the interests. If any worker is unable to find work then the amount keeps increasing. They not only have to pay the principle amount but also the increased interests. They are unable to save money. The fear is always there in the minds of workers and haunts them.

Pehle log kaam ke bharose karja de dete the, lekin ab kaam dhande bhi khatam ho gaye hai, log karja dene se bhi katrate hain, jo dene ko bhi tayar hai who khoob vyaz lete hain, pehle 1-2 rupaya sekra pe mil jata tha, ab log 4-6 rupaya tak byaz wasulte hai, hamesha karjedar ka daar maan mein laga rehta hai ki agar nahi diya to kya hoga, bahut se log jo karja nahi chukka pate yeh to apna ghar girvi rakh dete hai yeh phir bech ke chale jate hai, bastioyon mein bahut saare aise ghar mil jayenge apko jo yeh to girvi rakhe hain yeh bich chuke hain (Ranjeet, Ratanpura, 2014, Agra)

(Earlier people used to give credit against the work (as security), now our work has been ruined, people hesitate to give us credit, those who are ready to give, they charge huge interest, earlier credit was available 1-2 rupees per hundred now people charge upto 4-6 rupees per hundred, the fear is always there in our mind, what will happen if we fail to pay it back, many people who could not pay back the credit have mortgaged their houses or they have gone somewhere after selling it, you will find many such houses in our localities which are either mortgaged or sold out).

The loss of employment and work has affected their credibility. They could get credit against their work on easy terms and affordable interests without security. The terms and conditions of credit have also changed. Now money lenders not only charge higher interests but also mortagage houses or goods as security. Many of the workers lost their houses as they could not pay back the credit. They were forced to sell off their houses and shift on rent. There are many houses within basties which are either mortagaged or have been sold off.

The work is not available throughout year that makes workers change the work sites frequently. As factories and karkhana do not work round the year in the same ways so workers keep changing and explore the work availability at different sites. Many of the karkhanedar and factory owners frequently give credits to the workers. The workers are supposed to serve in that particular factory/karkhana/thekadar until it is levelled. The workers become bonded they cannot leave the factory or karkhana until they pay off the credit or complete the work. They are at the mercy of factory owners or thekadars. This system is very much prevalent in the Agra leather industry. They have to suffer huge humiliations, abuses and at times physical violence. They hardly have any other options therefore they have to bear. One worker says,

"*eik baar kisi ne karkhanedar se paisa pakad liya phir to zindagi gulamo jaisi ho jati hai, na kuch bol sakte hai na kuch kar sakte hain, wahan dub ke rehna padta hai, malik ne jo bol diya to karna padta hai chahle woh sahi ho yeh galat* (Sonu, 2015, Ratanpura, Agra).

(Once you accept money from the sweatshop owner then the life become more of a slave, neither you can say something nor you can do something (at your will), we

have to be suppressed, whatever they (owner/thekadar) you have to do it whether it is right or wrong).

The factory owners/thekadars exploit the vulnerability of the workers. They control the workers through these unwritten contracts. Even if there is no work in the factory or karkhana the workers are tied to the factory. They have to bear all kinds of abuses, humiliations and insults. Many of the workers although do not like to peshgi/advance as it becomes took for their humiliations. But many a times workers do not have any other alternatives therefore they are trappned into these. They have to be subjucated.

The marginal position of the workers is reflected in the poor social network and support system. Caste network play an import role in accessing the resources. These networks, links and cultural resources play an important role in accessing community resources in any eventuality. There is negligible presence of dalits in the powerful positions whether within the government or outside of it. The poor economic condition and marginal presence in powerful position of this group creates weak and marginal social support system which is otherwise very strong in some of the affluent castes and communities. Social network and relations work as social security and affect one confidence and morale. The whole group is poor and therefore there is hardly any social support in case of any eventuality.

Dusri biradari ke log aachi aachi positon pe hai, paise se majboot hain, prashashan mein aachi jaan pehchan hai inki, jaan pehchan aur paise ke dum pe apna kaam nikal lete hain, yeh log eik dusre ki madad kar dete hai, hamari caste ke log to jaidatar 4th class mein hi milenge, jo kuch aachi position mein hai woh bhi daar ki wajah se help karne se katrate hain, bahut baar chahte hue bhi kaam nahi karva pate (Pintu, 2014, Panchkuyein, Agra).

(other castes are at/in good positions, they are strong economically, they have good links in the administration, they get their work done due money and networks, they help each other, our caste people are mostly in the 4th class position, those who are in good position are scared and hesitate to do our work, despite their will they are unable to help us.)

The higher castes have higher representation in the government jobs and also in most powerful positions whether it is in banks, polilce, administrations, hospitals, schools etc. They are able to extent their power privileges to their caste fellows both formally and informally. It is common to find caste affiliated organization and institutions in different part of Agra. Many castes have their own hostels, credit banks, associations, trusts, merchant and trade guilds, charitable hospitals, educational institutions to look after the needs and requirements of their caste fellows. These work

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as social support system for their caste people. The poor and vulnerable among these communities are supported through these institutions and networks. The resources are shared and provide stability to the community.

The poor perceptions about the dalits and corruption become an obstacle in getting support from government officials. Although there are many government schemes run for the poors but the workers are either do not know about them or the procedures are so complex that they are unable to get any benefits out of it. The government officials function in a highly autocratic, authoritarian and rude ways to the people. What is rightfully belonging to people is also given to them as a personal favour in a highly patronizing manner.

sarkar ki taraf se bhi hamein jaida madad nahi milti, bank walon ke pass jao to woh paise dene se katrate hai, unhe lagta hai ki yeh log paise chukayenge nahi, kha pee ke uda denge, agar koi dene ko bhi tayar hai to chakkar pe chakkar lagwate rehte hai, upar se itne kagaz mangte hai jo ki kisi ke pass hote nahi hai, agar koi kaise bhi kar kara ke de bhi deta hai to, manager aur beech ke logon ko khilane pilane mein hi aadha paisa chala jata hai, 50 hazar ka loan mango to 25 hazar hi haath aate hain, baki beech wale dalal log kha jate hain, hamara to pura soshan ho jata hai, milte hai 25 hazar aur byaz deni padti hai 50 hazar ki (Naveen, 2015, kalyanpura, Agra)

(We do not get much help from government, if we approach bank they are reluctant to give us money, they think we will not pay back and will spend money in eating and drinking, if someone is ready to give, they make us run from piller to post repeatedly, moreover they demand so many documents which hardly any one has, if someone manage to do that, half of the money is spent in giving bribes to the middle men and managers, if we demand 50 thousand we only get 25 thousand in hand, rest is kept by the middlemen, we are completely exploited, we get only 25 thousand but we have to pay interest on 50 thousand).

The lack of work, poor earnings and lack of social support system force people to take credits from moneylenders. They have to sell off their ancestral property and assets to gather monetary resources to meet expenditure on various events like marriages, dowry, health care or injuries and accidents. Amar singh who is 66 years old worker is a bottomer by specialisaiton which require huge physical strenghth, says,

Meri teen ladkiyan hai, umar ho rahi hai shaadi ki par paisa nahi hai, mein yahan 15 din se kaam pe aa raha hue, par kaam hai hi nahi market mein, 15 dino mein sirf 200 rupaya ka kaam hua hai, khana peena jaise taise chal raha hai, kaam dhanda hai nahi, in bachiyon ke shaadi ke liye mujhe yeh to karja lena parega yeh apna ghar bechna parega (Amar Singh, 2015, Nagla Mohan, agra)

(I have three daughters, they are of marriageable age, but I do not have money, I am coming here for last 15 days, but there is no work in the market, so far I have earned only 200 rupees in 15 days, somehow we are surviving, there is no work, I will have to sell my house for my daughters marriage).

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Amar singh is highly under pressure both for not finding work and also having three marriageable daughters. Unlike many people who are retired by his age. He is still working to earn some money so that he can manage his house. Although by his age people loose both their physical and mental strength. Some of the peole are retired from active life and live a leisure life. Amar singh is forced to earn at this age. Many of the factories and karkhanas do not hire aged people.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Leather industry is categorized as an unorganized industry as bulk of the production happens in the small and medium factories and karkhana. Most of the government act and law are by default are not applicable to the industry. Majority of the workers are engaged in the small and medium sized small karkhanas in terms of numbers. Therefore majority of the workers are outside the purview of labour laws and safety mechanism. There is no special act which regulates the work conditions, safety and security of the workers unlike many other industries. The wages and work conditions are not standardized and regulated. The government act and laws are applicable only to the large factories. Even in those large factories where laws are applicable, they are either poorly implemented or not at all implemented.

The conditions were already inadequate and insufficient at work places. It has further been deteriorated. There has been a significant change and shifts in the quality, conditions and nature of work in the last 20-25 years. The factories and karkhana are exempted from regular inspections by the labour laws and enforcement agencies. The chief secterary of uttar Pradesh issued order on 26 October 1998 mentioning that factory inspectors should seek prior permission of DM for inspection of the factories. This has resulted in destandardisation and deregulation of the safety at work sites. Many of the factories do not even fulfil minimum safety provisions leading to industrial disasters. In 2002 factory fire 42 workers were burnt to death in jeevni mandi Agra. There are frequent fires or accidents in the factories and karkhanas which hardly reported unless it is a big disaster.

The physical infrastructure and conditions of work are poor, unsatisfactory and dangerous in the manufacturing units whether big or small. The small factories and karkhana are running from basements, houses and walled compounds. These are makeshift arrangements most of the time therefore there is minimum investment in

the safety of the premises. In the name of facilities, it is only the water and urinals that are provided some do not have that also. The workers are provided bare minimum facilities at the work sites. There is no adequate space for sitting and working. The work places are dingy, crowded and lack sunlight, cross ventilation in their premises. The workers work in small and congested premises with huge waste material and tools here and there. Poor electricity fitting, loose connections open and naked wires can be seen in almost every factory or karkhana. The loose and temporary electricity connections create probability of electrocution many a times workers get electric shock by touching the naked wires and appliances. The safety is hardly any concern for entrepreneurs as their priority is to produce more and reduce the cost of production. This is largely a norm in the industry all are accustomed with it.

Kaam mein khatra to hai par Kahin bhi chale jayo aisi sthiti har jagah milegi, hamare pass koi aur chara hi nahi hai, majboori mein sab sehna padta hai, agar hum in choti moti cheezon pe dhyana dene lage to kahin bhi kaam nahi kar payenge, ab kaam jaisa bhi hai kum se kum roti to chal rahi hai ghar ki (Group discussion, Small workship, Panchkuyein, 2015, Agra)

(there is danger to life but we do not have any other option, wherever you go you will find the same situation, we are helpless so we have to tolerate this, if we start paying attention to it we will not be able to work, how will we fun family, where we will get the money, how we will manage the food).

There is a general acceptance about the insufficient and inadequate facilities at the work sites. But the conditions for survival are so hard that they have accepted this as their fate as there are not other alternatives available. they are not able to complain about it as it may result in loosing the work. They try to take a precaution as much as possible but minor accidents do happen here and there due to neglect whether conscious or unconscious. They have to bear it as part and parcel of their life.

The life of workers is always at risk. If they complain about the working conditions they may loose their job if they do not they are the potential victim of any disaster or accident. In both the ways it is a loss for them. They have to bear all this as there is no alternative for them. The karkhanadars/thekadars do not care to the safety of the workers. They try to extract as much as possible from the workers therefore there is minimal investment in the safety and security of the work conditions and workers health

Karkhanedar logon ko apne kaam se matlab hai, unko unka kaam time pe chahiye, unhe hamari hari bimari se koi matlab nahi hai, koi bimar pad jaye, yeh accident ho jaye to woh log puchte bhi nahi hai, aur na hi koi madad karte hain, turant kisi dusre ko rakh lete hai (Maan Singh, Kalyanpuri, 2014, Agra).

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(These factory owners are bothered about their work only, they want their work on time, they are not bothered about our health, someone falls sick, or meet with an accident the do not even enquire about it nor they give any support, they immediately hire some other person in our place).

Since the workers are not the regular and employees of the enterprises there is no liability, accountability and responsibility of management/owners/contractors towards the workers. The workers are not covered against any fatalities. The work conditions of work are very tough due to the nature of the work and industry. There is no standard mechanism, provisions, facilities or standard rules for the workers anywhere. The facilities and securities like bonus, promotions, hike, minimum wages, wage increment, annual increment, accident coverage, disability compensation, sick leaves, paid leaves, holidays, accident coverage, pension, health care facility, first aid are simply not there anywhere. The workers are not covered by any social security mechanism. The lack of these makes this work highly insecure and dangerous. If someone gets seriously injury they are not compensated rather sent to home and replaced by another person in their place.

Over the last few decades there has been huge upgradation and expansion of the semi-and fully automatic production lines for mass production. This use of heavy machines and extensive use of highly inflammable chemical create dangerous conditions of work. The lives of workers are at high risk both physically and also in terms of their health.

Is kaam mein khatra jaida hai aur pareshaniyein bhi, choti moti chootein to lagti rehti hai aaye din, par bahut baar logon ki aunguli kut jati hai, bottom ke compressor fat jate hain, auzaron se chot lag jati hai, current lag jata hai, sulochan ko agar aache se istemall nahi kiya to aaj lagne ka khatra rehta hai (Bhurelal, Nai ki Mandi, Agra).
(There are more dangers and problems in this work, there are frequent minor injuries very often, many a times people cut their fingers, the compressors burst, injuries from the tools, electrocution, if the adhesive is not handled properly it can lead to fire).

It is largely a manual and labour intensive work with heavy and frequent use of tools. However one tries one cannot escape the injuries and cuts on the body. The machines that they operate do not have any safety provisions. They operate these machines without any safety gears or proper trainings. There have been many cases when the compressors have burst out causing casualties to the workers. Some of the machines are so dangerous that if not properly handled it can cause instant death to the workers.

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Liberalisation has brought the new patterns of work regimes; timings, strict discipline, rules, working culture and new attires. Now the workers are under strict supervision of their superiors. They are not allowed to talk to each other or intermingle while working. There is strict supervision and control over their movements. They are under strict observation through CCTV cameras. No one can enter the factory premises without the identity cards or gate passes. One workers says

bari bari factories jail jaisi hoti hain, kahin aa nahi sakte, kahin ja nahi sakte, eik baar entry ho gayi to sham se pehle nahi nikal sakte chahe jitna bhi urgent kaam ho, wahan log gulamo jaise kaam karte hain, upar se supervisor aur thekadar ki daath fatkar alag se sun ni padti hai, maliko ki hamesha nazar rehti hai, is liye jaidatar log wahan jaida time tak tik nahi paate (Rajkumar, Panchukuyein 2014, Agra)

(These big factories are like jail, you cannot roam/go here and there, once you enter in the premises, you cannot leave before evening however urgent it is, people work like slaves, moreover the supervisors and contractors always scould, there is a constant supervision of managers/owners, because of that maximum people do no sustain there much longer)

The workers are always on their toes and over burdened. They always try to be in "good" terms with their masters/karkhanedar/factory management so that they get some employment when work is available. They have to bear the humiliations and abuses which are thrown at them. The fear, humiliations and insecurity is part and parcel of their every day life experience.

The work relations at the manufacturing sites are highly competitive, tense and violent. There are frequent conflicts, tensions, clashes and occupational and social rivalry between different groups. The dalit workers often become the soft targets due to their location. There are large numbers of upper and intermediary caste people who have joined this industry as workers like *Brahmins, thakurs*, *nai, dhobi, kumhar, jaat, yadav* etc. Since they do not have any special background in this work they are recruited largely in the management, store section, clerks, supervisors, contractors etc. They are recruited above the dalits who are engaged in manual and bottom level processes. This has resulted in significant animosity between different caste groups who detest from intermingling with the dalits. Vivek a young workers who works in a large factory owned by a Sindhi says,

yeh log hamare logon ke saath chua chat karte hai, khate peete nahi hai saath mein, apne apne group mein rehte hai, thekadars/supervisor hum logon se batmizzi se baat karte hain, choti choti baat pe khamiyan nikalte rehte hain, galiyan dene lagte hai,, hum log jitna ho sakein unlgon se jaida matlab nahi rakhte, apne kaam se matlab rakhte hain, jab jarurat ho tabhi baat karet hain, par eik saath kaam karte hai

to baar majboor mein baat karni padti hai…abhi kuch time pehle mera eik supervisor se jhagda ho gaya kisi baat pe, yadav tha caste se, woh mujhe galiyan dene laga jab maine virodh kiya to usne mere gale pe vaar kiya kisi auzar se, mere gale se khoon nikalne laga, mere ghar walon ko phone kiya gaya, mere papa aaye aur mujhe hospital le gaye (Vivek, Kalyanpuri, 2014,Agra)

(These people practice untouchability with out caste people, they do not eat with us, they live in their own groups, the contractors/supervisors talk to us very badly, they try to find small faults in our work, use filthy language, we try to avoid them as much as possible, we concentrate on our work, when it is necessary only then we talk to them, since we work at the same place, we are forced to talk to them…some time back I had a argument with a supervisor, who was yadav by caste, he started abusing me, when I resisted, he attacked me with a shap tool on the neck, it started bleeding, my family members were informed, my father came and took me to hospital).

The occupational rivalries turn into caste clash and caste clashes turn into occupational rivalries at the work sites. These different castes are doing leather work something unknown for them. Moreever they are sharing the same relationship with the dalits at the work sites. It makes them more offensive and at times become really ugly and violent. Dalit workers have to bear the humiliations and pain in every day life in factories. This aggression and offence at times come in the form of humour or sarcastic ways and at times brute force and violence.

LITERACY AND EDUCATION

Majority of the workers are either illiterate or semi literate. Most of them reported to have dropped out of the school very early age due to monetary problems in the family. The marginal education has been one of the biggest reasons to find any other alternative means of survival. Many attended school for some time and left midway to support their families. All of them come into this work by compulsion rather than out of choice. It is hereditary occupation for them and their involvement in this work is more of a cultural continuation rather than an individual choice. As one worker puts in,

Hum logon ke bacche jaida pad-likh nahi paate, bahut hua to aathvi-daswi pass kar liya, uske baad apne kaam pe baith jate hai, kachi umar mein hi ghar ki zimmadi sambhal lete hai, apne maa-baap ka haath batate hai, ma-baap bhi sochte hai ki jitni jaldi apne paron pe khede ho jaye utna hi aacha hai, bahut kum log hi milenge bastiyon mein jinhone puri padai ki hai,

(our children are unable to continue their studies, they barely reach beyond 8-10th class, after that they start working, help their parents, at a very tender age they take family responsibility, parents also think it is better if the children become independent as soon as possible, there are very few people who have complete their education).

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Monetary problems have been the major reason for early drop our and discontinuation of the education. Poor and marginal education forced them to engage in the manual work which by default brings low wages and low income. This creates a vicious cycle of poverty and reinforcement of poverty. The dalits workers are trapped in this they find it very difficult to break or escape. The poor economic conditions in the families largely force children to start earning as soon as possible. Parents are forced to involve their children into their work as helping hand. Many children help their parents simultaneously even while attending schools. Gradually they loose interests in school and become full time workers and starting contributing in the income of the family. There are good numbers of children in the basties who have never gone to any school or not going to school. Some who manage to go to school also have to drop out later. It is common to find children as young as 8-10 years of age and above working in the houses, karkhana and small factories assisting their parents or working as helpers.

Besides economic compulsions, poor living conditions largely responsible for poor education in the community. The poor infrastructures, facilities and social environment in the houses and basties is not conducive for education. The houses are small, congested and lack basic amenities. All the family members share the same congested space. There is hardly any separate space for studying in the houses. There is no one to guide them, anyone to support them as their parents and family members also have marginal or lack of education and awareness. The children see so much of violence in and around in their houses that it is difficult to escape it. There are conflicts, clashes, tensions, abuses, physical violence both inside the houses and also outside. They get dragged in house clashes directly or indirectly. The home environment affects the children both mentally and psychologically. one worker says

Bastiyon mein padai likhai ka mahool nahi hai aur na hi suvidhayein, gharon mein bahut pareshaniyein hai, bacche umar se pehle bade ho jate hai, shuru se hi ghar aur bastiyon mein itni pareshaniyen dekh lete hai ki umar se pehle hi samajdari aa jati hai, bahut to jaldi kamana shuru kar dete hain apne ghar ka karja utrane ke liye, eik baar paise ka chaska lagta hai to phir padai likhai peeche choot jati hai aur amdani pe dhyana chala jata hai, bahut bacche kacchi umar mein hi saare aib karne lag jate hain (Shanta Sundarpara, 2014, Agra)

(The children become older (adult/mature) at a very early age, they see so much of problem in their families and localities that they achieve maturity before their age, many start earning very early in their life so that they can pay off the debt over their families, once they get the taste of money then education left behind and money become their priority, many kids get involved with many bad habits).

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There are huge problems in the families both economic and social. Debt is one of the major reasons for the poor education and drop out. Almost all the families are debt ridden whether small or big. Some are under heavy debt or their houses are mortgaged. It creates huge pressure on the children to start earning and pay off the debt. This forces them to pick up work as early as possible. It is such a paradoxical situation; many children discontinue their education to start earning so that they can pay off the debt of their families while many take take credit or are under debt to pay off educational expenditure. Illiteracy and poor and marginal have been a major issue for the worker. It has further become difficult as education has become expensive. A person who has is sending his three kids to school says,

padai itni mehngi ho gayi hai ki har kisi ke bus ki nahi rahi, school ke feese badh gayi hai, school ki dress, kitabon, copiyon ki kimat badh gayi hai, phir aaye din school mein kuch na kuch laga rehta hai, uske liye bhi paise dene padte hai, log bari muskil se kaise bhi jod-tod kar ke, apna pet kaat ke, apne baccho ko padha rahe hai (Kamlesh, Sundarpara, 2014, Agra).

(now the education has become very expensive that is beyond reach for many, the fees of the school has increased, the uniform, books, copies have become expensive, then every now and then there are some functions (in schools) we have to pay for that also, it is with much hardships, and cutting on basic needs that people are giving education to their children).

The cost of education has sharply gone up due to privatisation of education. Government has pulled back from education which on the one hand led to deterioration of quality of the public schooling system and on the other hand made education expensive. The reduction in subsidies on educational material and emergence of private schooling has raised the cost of education. The cost of school fees and various educational goods has increased and it is difficult for workers who have limited earnings to afford for the education. it is not the formal education which has commercialized but the professional education has increased phenomenally. There is huge reduction in the education budget. The government has pulled back from providing assistance, scholarships and support to the workers. It has started self financed professional courses Madan mohan in his 70s, he had a a small karkhana earlier in his house, says

"*maine 1960s mein CFTI se shoe designing ka course kiya tha, us time wazifa bhi milta tha, jo aaj ke hisab se bahut tha, har koi aadmi hamari biradari ka hota tha, aaj haal yeh hai ki wazifa to door ki baat, koi bhi course wahan 50000-100000 se kaam mein nahi hota, jitney bhi log milenge seekhne wale wahan pe jaidatar dusri*

biradari ke milege, Hamara to quota bhi nahi bhar pata" (Madanlal, Panchkuyein, 2014, Agra).

(I did a shoe designing course from FTRI in the 1960s, that time we used to get stipend, that was too much compare to today, every person was from our caste, forget about the stipend, today none of the course is done below 50 thousand to 1 lakh, whoever is learning there today are from other castes, even our reservation/quota is not fulfilled)

The commercialization of leather work has resulted in commodification of the leather education. There is more demand for the skilled and trained artisans with the expansion of leather trade. This has resulted in increasing the cost of education. The government pulled back and made it professional and self financed. The stipends, scholarships either has been stopped or reduced both in terms of numbers and also in terms of volume. It has affected the poor workers more as they are unable to pay off this high and increased fee. Many of them have to depend on loans whether from government or from relative to support their education. While the cost of education has increased but there is no surety of employability. Many of the formally educated and professionally trained adults are without jobs even after getting education. Maan singh says,

Maine apne baccho ko yeh kaam nahi sikhaya kyuki mein nahi chahta tha ki mere bacche meri tarah sangharsh karein, maine puri koshish ki apne baccho ko padane ki, meri Ladki ne MA kar liya, aur eik ladke ne b.com kar liya par baki do reh gaye, aj naukri ke liye itni mara-mari ho gayi hai ki padhe likho ko bhi naukri nahi mil rahi hai, mere dono padhe likhe bacche bina naukri ke hai, aacha hota ki padane ke bajaye koi aur kaam mein laga deta (Maan singh, Panchkuyein, 2014, Agra).

(I did not teach this work to my children because I did not want them to suffer like me, I did my best to give them education, my eldest daughter finished her MA, elder son finished B.com and other two other sons could not pursue, today even educated are not getting jobs, both my educated children are without any job).

Government jobs were one of the biggest motivations for the people as it is secured and stable. But these jobs have also become scarce and non available for people. It is such a big disappointment and regret for man singh that his children are not able to get jobs despite education. He managed to give education to these children after so much of hardship in life. Whatever money he had spent has been wasted in the sense it did not get the desired results. He is not the only one many of the person who have finished their education are unemployed. Recently his B.Com educated son as joined as *majdoor* for two months contract in university of Agra. In the absence of any opportunities for employment the educated also face the same conditions as of illiterates.

HEALTH AND OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

The health status and conditions are poor due to the kind and quality of life they live. Food is one of the major determinants of health. Majority of the workers are suffering from cronic hunger they are not able to have a balanced diet. A large numbers of families are not able to manage two times of adequate and sufficient food. Hence under-nutrition, mal-nutrition is wide spread and factual realities. It is common practice among the workers and their family to cook and eat food twice a day, once in morning and once in night. This roughly means there is a gap of 12 hours in between meals. This long gap means many suppress their urge for food in between.

This poor food intake and cronic hunger is visible in physical status of the workers. The workers are short, thin, weak, pale and underweight due to poor intake of food and manual nature of their work. They either look older of their age or younger of their age. All the workers more or less have the similar status. There was already a poor intake of food within the families. It has worsend further due to inflation and high cost of living. Inflation has taken a heavy toll and affected the access of food and dietary patterns with the families and community. Meat has been a cultural and social symobol for the dalits. It is considered to be a special delicary among them. It has been one of the major soures of protein for them. Now they do not associate with it in the same ways. The cost of meat has increased very much in the last few years. It has led to reduction of its consumption both in terms of frequency and quantity. Vimla an middle aged home maker says,

khane peene pe bahut farak pada hai, pehle meat hafte mein eik baar to ban hi jata tha, ab eik mahine mein nahi ban pata, jab koi ristedar yeh mehman aata hai tab to banta hai, bahut se logon ne to ise khana hi chor diya hai, yeh bahut kum kar diya hai (Vimla, Panchukuyein, 2014, Agra)

(There has been impact on eating, earlier we could get meat once in every week, now we do not get it even once in a month, we make it only when there are some relatives, many people have stopped eating it or have reduced its intake).

The inflation has made them compromise on their meat intake. Many wish to have it often but they cannot. They have to compromise and control their urge and desires. This compromise is visible in the way they see diseases and health related problems. The disease burden among the workers is very high due to poor living and working conditions. It has led to its normalization and standardization as a way of life. They live and work in such tough and difficult conditions that many do not consider it

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necessary to consult doctors or physicians unless it is extremely necessary. Cough, cold, fever, burns, injuries, allergy, skin problems, small cuts, bleedings, etc. are not considered to be serious problems. These are considred to be part and parcel of life therefore either ignored, or treated with home remedies or left for natural healing.

Diarohhea, pheumonia, jaundice are the common problems in families. Large numbe of families especially the workers and aged people are suffering from TB, asthma, skin disease or allergy. Due to their congested houses, contaminated and poor water supply and poor living conditions there is very high risk of its spread among other members of the family and community. The fear of diseases and its spread is so much that there is a tendency among the people to suppress their health status. One reason is that if others come to know about it they start maintaining distance from them. The revealaiton of one's health status also affect employment and relationship at work. People with disease are avoided largely due to the fear of infection. Any revealation results in loss of employment due to fear of its spread. There are large numbers of workers who are suffering from breath and inhalation problems.

It is frequent for workers to get cuts from tools but no one cares to take tetanus injection for it. It is not due to ignorance it is largely to avoid extra expenditure. Many of the workes are suffering from some health related problem but they do not seek treatment for it. Money is such a scarce resource in the community that they prefer to bear the pain or undermine it in order to escape from spending on it. When asked why they do not consult doctors for their health problems, one aged women says,

Ab choti moti bimari to lagi rehti hai, saara paisa dava daru mein uda denge to khayenge kahan se, Roti khane ke to laale pade hue hai, doctor ki fees aur dawaiyon ke liye paisa kahan se laye, doctor logon ke pass jao to woh mehngi mehngi dawaiyan likh dete hain, test likh dete hain, bahut se log to jate bhi nahi hai isi daar se, (Durgesh, Ratanpura, 2014, Agra)
(Ailment are part and parcel of life, if we spend all money on medicines how we will eat, People are barely able to manage food, where to get money to pay doctor's fees and purchase medicines, if we go to doctors write expensive medicines and tests, many people do not go to them because of this fear)

Allopathy is expensive both due to consultation fees, expensive tests and high cost of medicines. Homeopathy is affordable and easily accessible. This is precisely the reason why many of the workes prefer homeopathy. In less than 100 rupees they get the both the consultation, tablets and treatment. There are many homeopathy clinics in and around basties. Allopathy is not only expensive it is also exploitative. The private clinics and doctors charge too much and write expensive medicines which

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are beyond the reason of a poor person. The private clinics are so brutal they do not give any concessions to the poors. They rather try to extract more and more from them. They try to admit them on pity issues. The poor workers are not able to afford these therefore they like to avoid them as much as possible.

This is largely a labour intensive manual work. It requires huge energy and patience to do this monotonous and energy consuming work. Workers have to sit in one posture from morning to evening. It creates huge pain and fatigue due to the nature of work. Most of the workers are addicted to liquor, kheni, gutka, tobacco, bidi, supari, pan etc. when asked about the reason multiple workers gave different reasons for it. Dinesh maurya who is an owner of a small factory with many workers says

Yeh kaam mehnat ka hai, bina inke is kaam ko karna bahut muskil hai, nache se sudh-budh nahi rehti, bhuk pyas jaida nahi lagti, Pet bhara bhara mehsoos hota, aadmi lambe time tak bina ruke khaye piye kaam kar sakta hai (Dinesh, 2014, Nai ki Mandi, Agra)
(This work is high labour intensive, it is very difficult to do this work without these, intoxication deactivates/desensitise the mind, do not feel hunger, it feels stomach is full, people can work for longer time without any breaks)

These are so widely practiced among the workers that it is more of a norm among the workers. Even the thekadars and factory owners do not object to this practice by workers. They know it is difficult to do this work for a longer time. These are largely substitute to suppress hunger and also to relax the muscles and mind. These works in two ways first reduces the hunger or substitute hunger and secondly an easy alternative to leisure and break.

The workers are habitual of these substances. This habit is passed on to women and children. It can be seen that women and young children also frequently use these everyday in fact many a times a day. There is another toxicant which is rampantly used among the workers and their families. It is called *Gul* which is a tobacco mixed toothpowder. The women and workers are highly addicted to it. The workers and women are so habitual that they feel strong urge to use it frequently. Some end up using it more than 10-15 times a day.

The morbidity is high due to the nature of the work. There are some occupational related problems which show its effects on the physical body of the workers. Pavan who owns a small home based karkhana says ,

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Joote ke kaam mein haath aur paer jawab de jate hai, haath ka bahut kaam rehta hai, seedhe haath ke jod kamjor ho jate haii, reed ki haddi jhuk jati hai, ghutne jum jate hai, aur gardan mein dard rehta hai (Pavan, Panchkuyien, 2014, Agra)

(hand are legs suffer badly, there is too much of use of hands, the right hand joints become weak, the spinal cord is tilted, the knees are frozen, and there is pain in the neck)

This work takes a heavy toll on some body parts like hand joints, knees, neck, spinal cord and eyes. These are the common and standard physiological problems directly associated due to the nature of the work. There are many other problems like high noice of machines, dust inhalation, skin allergy. The accidents and injuries arising out of unsafe conditions create additional problems. These are so common and frequent that hardly any one seeks treatment for it as it is a everyday affair for them.

The morbidity is very high among the workers. Many are suffering from illness but they do not consult doctors. When the conditions become too bad and extreme only then they approach doctors and hospitals. By that time it is too late and not much can be done. This morbidity translates into mortality.One workers says

Hamare kaam mein log jaida nahi chal pate, 50 tak pauchte pauchte sharir jawab dene lagte hai, koi na koi hari-bimari lag jati hai, kya karein? puri khurak mil nahi pati, upar se itni pareshanamein hai zindagi mein, ilaj pe kharcha kar pate hai, chale to insane kab tak chale (Pappu, 2014, sundarpara, agra)

(People do not survive long in this work, the body starts surrendering reaching upto 50, they get one or the other health problem, what to do?, they are not able to get sufficient food and there are huge problems in their life).

This is not an over statement or exeration by any means. They start working by the age of 8-10 or so by the time they reach 50 they have spent around 40 years in this work. The iving and working conditions are tough and harsh. These do not allow them to survive beyond that. It is largely accepted as an established fact in the dalit localities. There are very few old men in the dalit localities and those who survive beyond 60 are considered to be fortunate enough. In most of the cases it is the men who die first leaving women behind. It is evident from the fact that there are more widows than men witout women.

The disease burden is very high in the families and community both due to their occupations and also due to lack of treatment. There is vulnerability and helplessness. Some of the people are suffering from serious ailment and disease and there is no money to pay for the health expenditure.

"*basti-mohallon mein kahin bhi chale jao, ghar ghar mein koi na koi bimar mil jayega, bahut se log to bina ilaj ke khatia pe pade hue hai, dard se tadap rahe*

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hain kyuki ilaj ke liye paise nahi hai, marne ka intezaar kar rahe hain, ki kab is duniya se peecha chuuute…bahut log to itni buri maut marte hain ki kafan kathi ke liye bhi paise nahi hote, bastiyon se chanda ekhatta kar ke unka intem sanskar hota hai (Jignesh, Ratanpura, 2014, Agra)

(Wherever you go in basti-mohalla, every house has one or the other person suffering from illness, many are bed ridden, there is no money for treatment, they are waiting for death, when they will be relieved from this world).

There are many workers and families are living in extreme conditions. There is extreme poverty and distress. Many are suffering from serious illnesses. Some are preventable and some not. They are forced to bear pain due to lack of money for treatment. The life is difficult for those who are aged and do not have much othe support like widows and aged. It becomes extremely difficult with changed weather conditions. Winters brings huge sufferings and pain to those who are suffering some serious ailments. Every now and then people are reported to have died due to excessive cold mostly the old men and women, homeless, diseased and workers. Some people die in highly indignified condition leaving no money even for their funeral. People contribute money for cloths, funeral wood and final ceremony.

Despite having a huge disease burden many do not approach government hospitals for care. These hospitals are approached only during a medical castrophe, accidents or serious injury when there are no other alternative. Although medical treatment is free but people are not treated with respect in hospitals. Have to bear other costs like medicines, tests, food, transportation etc. they have to seek and approach private clinics and nursings homes due to lack of alternatives.

Aspathalon ka bura haal hai, marizon se pate pade hai, agar chale bhi jao to koi sunwai nahi hoti, yahan se wahan ghumate rehte hai, agar apke pass koi jugad hai to ilaj dhang se ho jata hai aur nahi hai to dhakke khate raho (Rajesh, Sundarpara, 2015, Agra)

(The condition of hospital is very bad, they overcrowded and full of patients, if you go there no one listens to you, they make us run here and there, if you have some jack/network/link or known person you are treated otherwise keep waiting)

The condition of government hospitals is bad due to poor conditions. The hospitals are limited and there is huge numbers of patients leading to overcrowdedness. This vulberability is well exploited by the private clinics and doctors. They capitalize on the gaps, weakness and loope holes of government hospitals. They try to exploit people as much as possible by extracting money from them in one heads or the other. All the dalits basties have liquor shops in and around their areas. Government gets huge revenues by liquor sale even it it comes at the cost

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of people lives. The same government does not provide them health care facilities in their areas given the fact that health requirements of workers are huge.

SEGREGATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Social inequalities are very much visible in the location of people in the urban landscape. There is clear demarcations and segregation of different communities in Agra. People have their own caste and religion specific localities and ghettos. Some groups and communities have higher and exclusive presence and density in certain areas and in certain areas they are invisible. Different terminologies are used to denote these clusters and settlements like *basti, nagla, pada, tila, pura, mohalla* and colony. These clusters and settlements are named after caste and occupations like *telipada, nai ki mandi, gadha pada, khatik pada, darjipada, bhangipada, dhakar pada, sunar pada* etc. the jatav/chamar localities and clusters are known by the term *malin basti* or *basti*, Muslim localities are called *mohalla* and upper caste areas are known as colony.

The vertical structure of caste is produced horizontally in the city. The best, desirable and most advantageous areas both in terms of the quality of surface and land are inhibited by the upper castes. Dayalbagh, khandari, sanjay palace, sikandara, vijay nagar colony etc are some of the high caste areas. The areas like mantola, jeevni mandi, jagdishpura, nai ki mandi, nala kaji para, sundarpara, ratanpura, panchukiyan, meera hussani, sadar bhatti are exclusive Muslim and dalit presence. These areas are highly crowded, dense and physically disadvantageous. These areas have single or multiple disadvantages associated with them.

Colony and basti represent two different, separate, parallel and opposite world of urban Agra. The composition, demography and characteristics of these two worlds are the duplication and reproduction of the same social divide and hierarchy. The residential location and outlook works as a marker of social identity in urban landscape. This clear social divide manifest in the way people associate with these areas. Those who live in these areas are aware of their social location in the society. It makes them conscious and aware of their position in the society. People approach and perceive these with certain biases and prejudices. There is hidden fear among the people about other communities. This is reflected in their interactions when they talk about others. When they refer to other communities they lower down their voice or talk symbolically. One worker says,

woh log hamare area mein aane se katrate hai aur hum bhi unke area mein nahi jate, thora ashaj sa mehsoos hota hai, agar jaate bhi hai to turant apna kaam kar ke wapas aa jate hain, hamesha daar laga rehta hai ki koi kuch bol na de, koi ouch neech na ho jaye, apni basti mein kaise bhi raho, kuch bhi karo, kaisa bhi khao-peeyo koi rokne tokne wala nahi hota, yahan azadi hai, har koi kisi ko janta hai, wahan thora dub ke rehna padta hai, hamari caste ke bahut se log hai jo colony mein jo apni jaat chupa ke reh rahe hain (Sonu,2015, Ratanpura, Agra)

(they hesitate to come to our areas, we also do not go into their area, we feel little uncomfortable, if we go there we come back soon after our work, there is always a fear that someone may say something to us, there should not be any issue, we can live as per our will in basti, we can do anything, eat whatever, there is no one to stop us, there is freedom here, everyone knows everyone, we have to be subjugated there, there are many people of our caste who are living there by hiding their caste).

There is no free movement and intermingling of different communities and groups. There is a natural tendency among people to avoid each other areas. The high caste perceives dalits localities as dirty so they more and less avoid them. The dalit workers also try to avoid these areas as much as possible. This fear is most visible during the festivals, celebrations and communal riots which are quite frequent in Agra. There is always some kind of marker which separates one pocket or community from other, in most of the cases it is concrete walls, nailed wires or natural structure like drain or something else. The markers are also visible and present in the form of icons, symbols, statues. Ambedkar, Buddha and Ravidas are the symbols of dalit identity therefore it is very much present in their every day life in the form of statues, parks, calendars, posters, and show pieces in dalit household and localities. Ambedkar symbols starts disappearing as one move from basties to colonies or from small karkhana to big factories from small houses to big houses

These compartmentalized lives and social separation is very much reflected in regard to eating and living. One dalit petrol pump owner who is from a well to do family has taken a house on rent in dayalbagh colony says,

Caste ki wajah se ghar baar milne mein bari dikkat hoti hai, koi bhi choti jaat ko ghar dena nahi chahta khaskar colony mein, thakur ban ke maine yahan ghar liya hai, hamesha daar laga rehta hai ki kisi ko caste ka pata na chal jaye, khane peene mein satark rehna padta hai, jis din meat banate hai naukrani ko chutti de dete hai, aur khane ke baad haddi ghar door phekne jate hai nahi to logon ko pata chal jayega (Vinod, 2014, Dayalbagh, Agra)

(It is very difficult to get accommodation due to caste especially in colonies, I have taken this house after becoming thakur, we have to live accordingly to that, we have to be careful of food and eating, whenever we cook meat we give holiday to our maid, after eating we throw the bones far awar from our house).

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The dalits find it difficult to get accommodation due to their caste. They face discrimination in getting the houses even if they have the capacity to pay rent. Some of those who manage to get houses through some means are always under tremendous pressure. They have to avoid their own relatives and maintain minimum interactions with the landlords. Caste identity creates both ready made enemies and also friends. If people share the same caste there is more interactions otherwise it is restricted or controlled. Food is one of the very strong areas which caste is clearly visible. Some do not even eat garlic and onions and non vegetarian food is such a stigma for many in the society that they strongly keep away from it. They keep away from these and also from people who eat non-vegetarian food or certain other kind of food which is not accepted normally in the society.

This social divide is manifested both in terms of perceptions and also in terms of the quality of infrastructure and facilities. The colonies have been provided better infrastructure and facilities by government. There are good and wide roads, open spaces, parks, clean surrounding, better lighting, sewage system. Dalit settlements have a poor outlook from outside, dirty surroundings, uneven surface, garbage dump and waste, small houses, lack of sewage system, poor roads, poor lighting, water facilities, over-crowded and high density. The infrastructure is poor and highly inadequate compare to the needs of people. The dalit settlements are victim of government neglect and discrimination. There is very unenthusitic effort by the government institutions to provide and clean these areas and provide basic minimum facilities in these areas.

Dalit basties have multiple deprivations and disadvantages associated with them. All dalit basties have geographical and physical disadvantages. These basties are located below the normal surface have uneven and poor surface. somewhere it is too high and somewhere it is too low. Many of the dalit basties are located beside railways tracks, drains, and graveyard. The field work areas like nala kaji pada, sundarpara, panchkuiyan (kalyanpuri), ratanpura, nai ki mandi have more or less same conditions. nala kaji para is located at least 2-3 floor below the normal surface and it is divided into two parts by a big drain. On the one end live Muslims and on the other dalits. sundar para located below 15-20 feet below the normal surface and is located just opposite a railways line panchkuyein is located behind the muslim graveyard, ratanpura has uneven surface is located between vijay nagar colony and jeevni mandi. Dalit areas by default are the dirtiest, dangerous and physically undesirable and

disadvantageous. The conditions become worse due to government neglect and discrimination.

The cost of living in these areas is very high compare to the earning of workers. The vibrations by train weakens the houses as they develop cracks hence needs to be repaired every now and then. Due to the physical location of these areas the water logging is common and the probability of diseases like malaria is very high. The unven and huge low and high surface makes the roads and lanes dangerous and slippery during the monsoon. There occur frequent injuries and accidents especially for children and others. The drains overflow in monsoon leading water to enter in the houses and make them stinking. The drinking water pipelines are old and rusted and polluted water is mixed with the drinking water especially in monsoon leading to dangers of water borne diseases like diarrhea and pneumonia. Majority of the houses are dependent on municipal water for drinking. This water is contaminated and mixed with the sewage and other sources. People are forced to drink the same water after filtering with cloth. Even during the non monsoon season the colour of water is green which is evidence that outside water is getting mixed in it. People are forced to use this due to lack of options. Some even drink this same green water after cloth filter. A dalit worker says while revealing the conditions of basties says

Bastiyon mein to log keede makode ki zingadi jeete hain, na to hawa hai na pani aur na hi roshni, gharon ka haal to aur bhi bura hai, eik eik kamre mein log bhed bakriyon ki tarah thuse hue hai hai, log ghut ghut ke zindagi guzarte hai, upar se agar bijli chali jaye to pura narak ban jata hai (Shanta, 2015, Sundarpara, Agra).

(People in the basties live like insects, with a lot of problems and hardships, there is neither air, water or sun light, the conditions of houses are more pathetic, people are stuffed in the single rooms like sheeps and goats, they live a suffocative life and if the electricity goes it becomes hell).

The living conditions are highly poor and insufficient. The houses in the basties are small, congested, crowded as many generations and families are sharing the same premises. There is no adequate and separate space in the houses for cooking, washing, toilets and other utilities. This leaves no space for privacy and rest for the people. Sunlight and air are luxury for many houses are attached with each other so tightly that there is no possibility of cross ventilation or sunlight. Many of the small houses which are deep inside or small do not get it at all. People are forced to use the bulbs tubelight even during the day time. It becomes really suffocating if there is no electricity. Those houses that get sunlight from morning to evening are considered to be privileged one especially during the winters. Due to these conditions every person

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in the household suffers but it is more painful for the aged, diseased and the women specially the married women in the families as their movement is restricted within the houses.

The space is scarce and limited in the houses therefore many families do not have toilets in their houses either due to space problem or due to lack of money. They use nearby railways lines or open space for relieving. In sundarpara some people were killed by train when they went for reliving early morning. They could not watch the train due to fog and were cut into pieces. Despite that one can see men and women going on railways lines early morning. Many families were forced to make toilets in their houses due to shrinking of the open space around their areas and encroachment of government land. Even though some constructed toilets but there is no septic tank and sewage system. The human waste flows through the open drains even through there are toilets.

There was already crunch in the resources in the basties. The conditions have deteriorated over a period of time both in terms of quantity and quality. The cost of water and electricity has gone up significantly after privitisation. Besides, there has been significant reduction in water availability both in terms of regularity and quantity. The ground water level has gone down and quality of water is also suffered badly. They do not get sufficient water now and many have to use electric motors for that. One resident lady in sundarpara says

Pehle pani bina motor ke aata tha, aj motor lagane ke baad bhi pura nahi padta, upar se bijli itni mehngi ho gayi hai ki koi apni bijli kharch karna nahi chahta dusro ko pani dene ke liye, aaye din jhadge ho jate hai pani ko lekar, jo pani aata bhi hai who bhi ganda hare rang ka aata hai babdu aati hai,yeh pani peene layak nahi hota, bahut se log jinke pass sadhan hai woh apni peene ki jaruraton ke liye bazar se can kharid lete hai aur jinke pass nahi hai woh usi pani ko peene ke liye majboor hain (Shanta, 2015, Sundarpara, Agra)

(earlier water used to come without using motor, today we do not get sufficient water despite using motor, above that, the cost of electricity has increased so much that no one wants to use their motor to give water to other, every now and then there are conflicts for water, whatever water we get it is green coloured dirty and smells, it is not suitable for drinking, those people who have resources they buy water can from market for drinking purposes and those who do not have are forced to use the same water for drinking)

The community life has been badly affected due to commercialization of water and electricity. After privatisation the cost of electricity is approximate seven rupees per unit one of the highest in the country. The cost of water has increased whereas it availability has reduced significantly. Per person water availability and consumption

has gone down sharply over the years. Since the availability has decreased it has led to rationing and competition both within families and community. Now there are frequent conflicts over water something which was uncommon earlier. The dalit localities were already poorly lit as there is hardly enough and sufficient lighting in the basties. Majority of the houses have stopped using electric bulbs at night in order to save electricity. These areas remain in absolute dark during night and many people avoid these areas during nights. It is so difficult to live in the houses if there is no electricity especially during the summers and these localities become the first target for load shedding when the demand is at peak.

DISCRIMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

Dalits have to face humiliation and discrimination in different sphres of life whether it is schools, temples, markets or public places. The discrimination is so deeply imbedded into the culture that it has been naturalized. It is very much present in language, beliefs, attitudes, customs and perceptions that people carry. It is common and normal for people to use or call caste names both as abuses and also as pride to show their superiority against other. Many feel shy and apologictic of their caste identity. There is poor perception about chamar in general, one young student says

Hamare bare mein jaidatar logon ki soch yehi hai ki hum log kamchor, beiman, juari, sharabi aur gande hote hai, society mein log hamaein neechi nigah se dekhte hai, hamein apni caste batane mein bhi sharm aati hai, kae baar dusri jaat ka bata dete hai, mayawati ke time mein chamar yeh bhangi shabd pe police mein complain ho jati thi, tab log code words se baat karte the, chamar ke liye 4 number aur bhangi ke liye 1 number, hum chahte kar bhi kuch nahi kar sakte bolte the (Vaibhav, Sundarpara, 2014, Agra)

(Maximum people think that of our caste as a caste of work evading, dishonest, drunkard, gambler and dirty, they see us lowly, we are also ashamed to tell our caste, sometimes we lie of our caste, during the time of mayawati no one dare to call chamar or bhangi, if they did police took action, nowadays they talk in codes, like they use 4 number for chamar and 1 number for bhangi)

This divide and discrimination does not operate mere at perception level. It takes a more concrete form when dalits are denied the economic opportunities in the markets. They are kept in a inferior positon in the market and denied economic opportunities. They are not allowed to buy property even if they have the capacity to pay. Dalits are not allowed to enter in the most lucrative segment of the work like

whole sale and retailing. Ashok kumar who is in his late 50s is an owner of a middle sized last making factory. But he is a highly skilled karigar llthough he is illiterate by education. He is famous in the market for his last making skills. Despite being owner and an established entrepreneur he still do physical and manual work at this shop from 9:30 morning till 10:00 pm night 7 days a week. He is also an active member of DICCI. He says

hamari caste ko log nafrat ki nigah se dekhte hai, yeh log puri koshish karte hai ki hamari tarikki rok sakein, maan lijiye agar koi dukan bikau hai market mein, to woh log koshish karte hai ki unki caste wala hi kharide, apni caste ke liye keemat thori kum bhi kar dete hai, thora time bhi de dete hai, aur agar hamare mere pass paise hai to us dukan ko lene ke liye to hamein massakat karni paregi, upar se us dukan ki market ki kimat se 1-2 lakh jaida dene parenge, agar dusro ko wahi dukan 5 lakh mein milegi to mujhe woh 6 lakh mein milegi woh bhi paisa turant dena parega. Kul mila ke jati abhi bhi barkarar hai, bhed bhav to hota hai par aj koi khullum khull nahi karta, haah pehle log mooh pe bol dete the aj wahi kaam dimag se hota hai chori chupe hota hai (Ashok kumar, Nai ki Mandi, 2014, Agra).

(People see our caste with hatred, they try their best to prevent our progress, if there is any shop for sale in the market, they give preference to their caste people, they reduce the price a little for them, give them some time, if we have the money to buy that shop we have to butter them, moreover we will have to give 1-2 lakh extra of the market rate of shop, if other get the same shop for 5 lakh we will get it in 6 lakh, that too we have to give the money immediately, in totality, caste still exists/continues, there is discrimination but nobody does it openly, earlier people used to say on face, now they do it in hidden ways)

The upper castes have dominant presence and control over the markets. They not only own and control the large manufacturing factories but they also control all the associated processes. They are head the market associations, credit suppliers and money lenders guild, raw material and retail shops, tools and machines manufacturers and suppliers etc. They have an absolute control over the leather market and trade. There is stiff competition in the market and caste networks play an important role at various levels. It is very difficult for any person to establish oneself without using caste and community links and networks.

Dalits face discrimination not only in the markets but also in the employment. They are kept away from the lucrative employment in the large factories. They are not recruited in the jobs which are not traditionally associated with them. They are largely avoided in some of the powerful and responsible positions in the factories. their caste status affect their employability They are employed in those jobs which are lowly paid, manual and physically demanding., one worker says

Hamari caste ke logon ko jaidatar bari bari factories mein rakha nahi jata, agar rakha bhi jata hai to wahi rakha jata hai jahan koi aur us kaam nahi kar sakta, jaidatar log labour class mein hi milenge, manager, accountant, designer, supervisor, thekadar, store keeper, yeh sab post pe utchi caste ke hote hain, hamein yeh log is kabil samajte hi nahi hai ki hum yeh kaam kare saktein hain (Group Discussion, Nai ki Mandi, 2014 Agra)

(Generally our people are not kept in large factories, they are kept they are kept in those works which cannot be done by anyone else, maximum they are the labourers, the posts like manager, accountant, designer, supervisor, thekadar, store keeper are occupied by upper castes, they do not think we are capable enough to do these works).

There is a clear segregation of dalit workers at the bottom both in structural hierarchy of work and also in occupational hierarchy of employment. There is hardly any presence of other caste in the lower level karkhanas and factory. It is mostly the Muslims and jatavs who work in these establishments. The large factories have workers from diverse castes and dalit workers are located at the bottom in occupational hierarchy of work in large factories. The upper castes have direct contol over the dalit workers in large factories which is also the reason for conflict and tension. Dalits have to bear humiliations, violence and suppression in everyday life at work sites.

It is not within the markets and factories that they are denied equal opportunities. They also face the same exclusion and discrimination in government institutions. Vikram is 39 year old gentleman had done a shoe designing course from central footwear and training institute (CFTI) some 15 years back. CFTI is a government institution established in 1963 to provide professional and technial training to the leather workers. Vikram is well exposed of the internal dynamics of this work and has worked in many big factories in different states. While narrating about his experiences in the CFTI he says,

CFTI mein hamare log bahut hi kum hai aur jo hai woh neeche level pe hai, jaidatar log dusri caste ke hain, theory padane wale log upper caste ke hote hai aur practical kara ke dikhane wale hamari caste ke, jitney log (students) bhi wahan top karte hai sab ke sab dusri caste ke hote hai, top karne ke baad unhe aachi placement mil jati hai aur hum peeche reh jate hai, hamare saath bhed bhav hota hai, hamein jaan buj kar peeche rakha jata hai taki hum age tarikki na kar sakein, agar hum top kar gaye to hamein foreign mein posting mil jayegi, hum aage badh jayenge jo ki in logon ko bardast nahi hota, hamare baap dada ka kaam, karne wali hamari caste, majdoor hum log phir bhi hum mein se koi top nahi karta, yeh hamare saath bhejbhav nahi hai to kya hai? jin logon ko is kaam ki koi jankari nahi hai who log jugad se aage nikal jate hain aur hum wahi ki wahi reh jate hain, (Vikram, 2015, ratanpura, agra).

(there are very few people from our caste in CFTI, majority of them are from other castes, those who teach theory are from upper caste and those who show by

practical are from our caste, whoever tops there are from other other castes, they get better placement and we are left behind, we are discriminated, we are purposely kept behind so that we do not progress, if we excel we will get foreign placement, we will march ahead which they cannot tolerate, it is our ancestors work, our caste's traditional occupation, we are the workers still we do not top, if it is not discrimination what it is? those people who do not have any knowledge/background they excel through hook and cook and we lag beind)

Dalits are the victim of structural violence and discrimination. They face discrimination and exclusion everywhere and treated in the same ways whether it is police stations, hospitals, educational institutions or other public institutions. They don't have just, balanced and rational representaiton at different levels. They are more ghettoized at the lower levels. The composition, character and ideological orientation of government institutions and officials is such that it lacks diversity. These public institutions have heavy and hegemonic presence of certain groups. This hegemonic presence of certain groups makes these exclusive, sectarian and closed. This makes these institutions and officials work in an autocratic, irresponsible, insensitive and undemocratic manner. This is very much reflected in the ways the government officials function and behave with the larger masses. There is more of a fear, repulsion and humiliations when people interact with them.

Dalit workers are exploited in the markets. They have to sell their goods to middle men in the market as they do not have much presence in the marketing networks. Pawan is a small karkhana owner; he makes leather shoes out of the small waste leather pieces which he purchases from the local haat (fair). While showing the shoes, he says,

Yeh juta meri factory se 350 mein nikalta hai sab kuch kaat ke aur market mein bikta hai 800-850 ka. Heeng ki mandi mein baithe vyapari baithe baithe is mein 450-500 rupaya kama lete hai, hamare haath jaida kuch nahi lagta, agar hum paisa bandane ki baat karte hain to maal lena band kar dete hain, mehnat hum karte hain, labour hum lagate hain, saari sirdardi hum lete hain aur malai khate hain woh log, uspe bhi hamare maal mein 50 tarah ki khot nikalte hain aur hamein chakar pe chakkar lagane padte hain, aur unki daath fatkar bhi sun ni padti hai, hum log chah kar bhi kuch nahi kar sakte (Pawan, 2015, panchkuyein, agra)

(This shoe is made from my factory at 350 rupeers after all deduction (including profit) and it is sold in the market for 800-850, the merchants in heeng ki mandi make 450-500 rupees without doing anything while we get very little, if talk about raising the price they stop taking our products, we do hard work, we put labour, we take all tensions and they take the cream, above that they find 50 kinds of faults in our products and make us visit repeatedly, we have to tolerate their scouldings and threats, we cannot do anything about it).

The labour of dalits is controlled by the upper caste in the market. The whole sellers and traders keep the lion's share in the profits. The upper castes exploit the workers due to their hegemonic position in the markets. They try to extract as much as possible from them. The workers are vulnerable and weak and they have to tolerate the dictates of these merchants and traders. They never get the just and rational share in the profits and that is why the the small factory owners are not able to grow naturally. They are forced to remain small and self servient to these big men in the markets.

The workers are exploited by them through different pretexts and mechanism in the markets. Some of the most cruel and highly exploitative practices that exist in the industyr are "purchi" and "katauti" system. These practices are largely responsible for the elimination of dalit from the markets. The small karkhana and factories have to pay illegal tax called katauti. While revealing the internal dynamic of these exploitative systems, maan singh says,

hamara soshan hota hai heeng ki mandi mein, yeh log hum garib logon ka khoon chuste hain hamari majboori ka faida uthate hain, hum agar maal supply karte hain to pehle to yeh katauti kat te hain, phir nagad paise ki jagah eik purchi pakda dete hain 2-4 mahine ki, hamari gunzaish nahi hai to hamein woh cash karani padti hai, cash karne wala apna commission alag se kat leta hai, kul mila ke hamare pass kuch nahi bachta, meri kitni baar in logon se behas ho gaye, kae bar to hatapai bhi ho gaye, par yeh log sudharte nahi hai, katauti ko apna adhikar samajte hain, isi wajah se hamare jatav bhai barbad ho gaye unke kaam dhande dhapp ho gaye hain, hum log khatam ho rahe hain aur yeh log panap rahe hain (Maan singh, 2014, panchkuyein, agra).

(we are exploited in the heeng ki mandi, these people suck blood of poor people, they take advantage of our vulnerability, if we supply goods in the market they firstly deduct katauti, then they give us slips for 2-4 months rather than cash, since we do not have capacity to sustain that long, we encah it in the market, they further deduct their commission, we are left with nothing in sum, I have had argument over this, many a occasion physical fight also , but they do not improve, they consider katauti as their right, this is precisely the reason why our caste people (jatav) we have been destroyed and they have lost all their business)

The untouchable castes were prevented to own economic resources historically. They were largely dependent on their labour for their survival. Their labour has been controlled though strict customs laws and codes. This relationship has not changed and continued in various forms. *katauti* and *parcha* systems are some of the means by which it is still continued in the leather industry of agra. These unfare trade practices emerged in the industry with the entry of upper castes in this work. The large business houses, factories are not affected by it as they have their own

marketing and paralle chain to sell their goods. It is the small and local level artisans and factories which are dependent on these whole salers and traders to sell their goods. It is the small and lower level artisans, karkhanadars, factory owners who are exploited by these middlemen. This exploitation has become a politicsl issue in Agra. Mayawati constructed large shoe market near GIC ground nearby panchkuyein during her tenure as chief minister so that the small level entrepreneurs and manufacturers could trade there. But the upper caste traders purchased most of the shops using though hook and crook using poor dalit workers as covers. They purchased the shops but never shifted there eventually leading to failure of the market.

The upper castes have displaced dalits from their own work. They have monopolized and maintain complete hegemony over the leather work. Dalits have been pushed down further in their own ancestoral occupation. It is a reason of conflict and tension and there is so much anger and resistance among dalits against their marginalisaiton. Naveen is a middle aged person who runs a small shoe shop at *bijlighar*, Agra and is well aware of inner dynamics of the work. He says,

aj hum puri tarah in logon pe ashrit hai, hamare saare kaam dhande in logon ne cheen liye, hamare hi kaam se hamein bedhakal kar diya hai, aj poore leather ke kaam pe in logon ka kabza hai, market mein karza dene wale yeh log hai, raw material supply karne wale yeh log hai, bazaar mein maal ko kharidne wale yeh log hai, bechne wale yeh log hai, hum log to ab majdoor bane ke reh gaye hain, in logon ne puri tarah hamein gulam bana liya hai (Naveen, 2015, panchkuyein, agra)

(There was freedom earlier, today we are completely dependent on them, they have snatched all our work from us, they have displaced us from our own work, they hae a absolute control over the market, they are the one who give credit, they are suppliers of raw material, they are purchaser of manufactured goods, they are seller of the goods, we have become complete slave, the conditions is going to be worst ahead, we are going back to same conditions).

Liberalisation and globalisation has helped upper caste strengthen their position in the leather work. They have monopolized and hegemonised the leather work. Today they control the large factories, raw material suppying chains, marketing networks etc. the dalits have lost all the lucrative aspects of the leather trade. They have been pushed down in the leather work which has resulted in the disempowerment and suppression in their own work. The freedom and economic prosperiety that the leather workers enjoyed during colonial times have been lost. They have again become depedent on the caste Hindus for their survival. Their status in the leather work is reduced to more of a labour supplier and worker rather than an entrepreneur and factory owners.

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IDENTITY AND POLITICS

Liberalisation has brought opposite consequences for dalits it has produced more marginality and violence for dalits. Therefore dalits see liberalisation as continuity and repetition of the same historial relations, deprivation and consequences. It has created, sharpened and reinforced the same social inequalities. The loss of opportunities, disempowerment and caste discrimination has become a political issue in Agra. It is a widely shared view among the jatavs of Agra that the upper caste has snatched their traditional work from them. The caste based exploitation of dalit workers and marginalization of dalits is a huge political issue today. It is presicely the reason that the dalit workers particulary the leather workers have a huge and mass support for the politics of BSP. They can easily identify themselves with the ideas, ideals and ideology of BSP.

During the rule of BSP the condition of the dalits and basties improves not because the party does some extradordinatry things for them rather the system becomes more responsible and law and order situation improves. One worker puts in,

Aisa nahi hai ki behin ji ke aane ke baad hamari sthiti bahut badal jati hai, par unke aane ke baad garib logon ki sunwai hone lagti hai, police prashashan thik se kaam karne lagte hain, gundagirdi kum ho jati hai, bastiyon-mohollo mein saf safai hone lagti hai, bhed-bhav kum ho jata hai, sarkari daftaron mein hamare kaam hone lagte hain, daar kum ho jata hai, lagta hai koi to hai ham logon ki sun ne wala (Vikram, 2014, Nai ki Mandi, Agra).

(it is not that our conditions change drastically after behin ji (mayawati) comes to power, but poor people start getting heard, police and administration work properly, there is reduction in hooliganism, there is cleanliness in basties and mohallas, reduction in discrimination, our works are done in government offices, there is less fear in our minds, we feel there is somebody who is there to hear us)

The workers who are located at the bottom feel dignity and empowerment during the rule of BSP. It is not at mere at perceptional level, but felt at the ground level too. The administration and police become sensitive, responsible and accountable to some extent. The laws are strictly enforced and implemented specially the SC/ST atrocities prevention acts. The frequency, degree of communal riots and hooliganism decreases due to better law and order. The water and electricity situation improves in dalit basties and there is more cleanliness and improvement in the infrastructure and facilites in poor areas.

The workers have a very clear preference for BSP and Mayawati. She is a symbol of identity, assertion and pride among them. It is evident from the fact that many do not prefer to call her by her first name rather address as "behinji" (elder sister). She is specially a role model for the women within the community. A vocal, bold and assertive in the family are jokingly called "mayawati". She had introduced many policies and schemes for the poors, widows, and small entrepreneurs in the past. One widow said

Log kuch bhi kahein par behin ji ki wajah se mere bacche pal gaye, unhone garib majboor logon ke liye vidhwa pension dilwa di, unke raj mein hamari basti mein pani ke nal lag gaye, hamare liye to woh kisi devi se kum nahi hai (Shanti devi, Tila Nand Ram, Agra).

(Whatever peole call her but it is because of her that I am able to raise my children, she introduced widow pension for powerless and vulnerable, the basti got tab water during her rule, she is not less than a goddess to us)

These are not mere perception or romantised account arising out due to identity politics. There has been a lot of change that have been observed since 2006 when a study was done on the same subjects. Concrete or *puccka* roads have been laid in and around dalit basites after the BSP assumed power in UP. Scarcity of water is one of the most common problems faced by these basties. Large water Tanks have been installed from the MLA development funds in many of the basties that faced severe water crunch. It has solved the water problems to some extent. Besides that group discussion with the workers revealed that SC/ST acrocity act was strictly implemented. Special days and special politice officials were designated to file FIR in case of caste abuse. There comes significant changes at the ground level whenven Mayawati assumes power in UP. Special cleanliness drives are initiated to clearn the garbage from the residential areas.

The workers are able to connect with her as they feel she is one of them. They can very well relate with her due to their shared experiences and history. Workers give their own valorized account and example how the powerful shivers in her rule and the poor get their voice. The fire incident of 2002 in which 42 workers died due to industrial accident. Mayawati not only punished the culptit but gave immediate compensation to the workers as per workers accounts. According to the workers, it is the government officials and bureaucracy that is to be blamed for the corruption and failure. They do not allow the policies and schemes to be implemented properly. The poor and workes feel empowered and rejoice when the same government officials

who do not care for the poors are punished by her rule. During the rule of BSP, a multi-story complex was constructed at GIC ground near panchkuyein to give equal opportunities to the dalit workers to sell their products directly to the customers. The plan was to shift the "Hing ki Mandi" market to new complex. The plan was failed as the big entrepreneurs largely the trading caste Hindus Punjabis, Sindhis, banias etc. purchased the shops directly on their names or the poor dalits. They blocked the market and did not shift their business which resulted in failure of the new market eventually. People have very high hopes and aspirations from her rule and when these aspirations are not met it readily get enough attneiton and critique from different quarters of the society.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Dalits have been the victim of historical violence for centuries. They were not allowed to access resources and opportunities. Hence, they were dependent on the caste Hindus for their survival. The caste Hindus had control over them and their labour. They treated them worst than animals and basic human requirements like water, food and housing were denied to them. Their standing in society was no more than slave and treated like object with no independent will. The harassment, humiliation and suppression were part and parcel of their lived in experiences. They were subject to ill-treatment, exploitation and violence throughout history. There was control over their movement and mobility by the traditions and customs. This is clearly visible in the religious doctrines and "sacred" text, historical literature, colonial documents and records etc. The dalit narratives, literature and writings revolve around the experiences of pain, suffering, humiliation and violence.

The dalits were denied economic resources and assets hence they were completely dependent on their labour for survival. The historical deprivation and continuity is visible even today. There is disproportionate representation of dalits in the manual, physical and labour intensive works and occupations. These professions, occupations and works are temporary, seasonal, and low paid. The sources of their income are limited and fluctuating due to the nature of work they are involved in. Some of these occupations that are considered filthy, hazardous and accident prone are exclusively done by dalits. Besides, they face discrimination in job opportunities and face stigma and psychological violence associated with their identity and occupations. Caste still determines their social and economic standing in the society. The experiences of dalits are clear evidence of this.

Leather work is one occupation which is relegated to them by the society. They have been associated with this work for hundreds of years. It is one occupation which has been inseparable part of their culture, history and identity. The leather work not only gave them their identity but also provided them employment. The dead animal was a liability to the society as it is considered to be impure and dirty. However, it was an asset and source of livelihood and income for them historically. They sustained by utilizing the carcass for making different products that played important role in the economy and civilizational progress. The animal carcass and leather products therefore on the one hand played an important role in economy and

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on the other hand provided dalits income, stability and opportunities. They faced no competition in this work as others maintained a safe and dignified distance from this work due to concerns of pollution. Hence they virtually owned the dead animal and have had exclusive presence in this occupation for hundreds of years.

The work is considered to be stigmatising and impure as it involves dealing with a dead body of animal. The collection of hides & skin, skinning, flaying and manufacturing products are highly labour intensive processes. These processes are largely filthy in nature due as it involves dealing with decaying bodies, foul smell, huge animal waste. It requires altogether different kinds of skills, aptitude, attitude and specialization which are passed on from one generation to other. It is a group and community oriented work which cannot be done by one single person or family. The dalits particularly the leather workers faced double discrimination. Firstly, due to their identity and another due to their stigmatic profession. Secondly, due to their stigmatized profession. Although they faced discrimination, stigma and psychological violence due to this work but it was an important part of their identity, livelihood and culture. The occupation although very important in their life but it was never sufficient to provide them round the year employment. The situation changed when the Muslims came to India. The social and economic standing of the occupation not only improved but also brought vast opportunities for them.

The leather work has been an informal and unorganized occupation throughout history. It was during the colonial period that the work acquired the status of a craft. It was perhaps the first time that leather work was considered to be rather than a degraded occupation. The British took initiatives to develop this work and produced many monographs. These monographs presented rich and diverse information about the various processes of leather making and the castes involved in this work in different parts of India. During colonial period initiatives were taken to explore the potential of leather trade from India. The colonial motive was more to take advantage of the vast animal livestock which remained unused and underutilized due to traditional values.

The colonial association with this craft brought huge monetary, social and economic benefits to the Dalits and Muslims. These two groups achieved considerable progress as they closely worked with the British. The British induced Industralisation changed their economic condition compare to past but it failed to check the menace of caste. Chitra joshi's and Nandini Gooptu's works shows how the dalit leather workers

continued to be segregated and ill treated at different sites. Their shared, experiences, discrimination and better economic condition in the cities compelled them to assert, resist and revolt against caste and create movement for social equality. This led to reconstruct their symbols, icons, history, culture and politics. The earliest resistance and movement for social equality emerged from those cities which emerged as industrial hubs like Kanpur, Delhi, and Agra. A new leadership emerged which was ideologically clear, articulative, assertive and had political consciousness for social liberation as the works of O.M. Lynch shows. Many of these leaders were successful leather entrepreneurs and had great respect in the community. They focused on the social work and emphasized on modern education which was now available in the missionary schools. This was the beginning of social awakening and emerging political consciousness among the untouchable castes for liberation.

The Muslims and Dalits have been sharing similar situations in India due to their location in the social hierarchy, dietary practices and history. This relationship emerges more strongly in the case of leather work. Muslims have been supplying animal skins and Dalits working on it to manufacture goods. Leather entrepreneurs and workers largely come from Muslims and Dalit castes due to their shared economic and cultural bonds. They complement each other naturally and have deeper economic ties. The British have been instrumental in developing leather industry in India. They patronized leather industry and all the earliest leather factories and ventures in India operated using British capital, links, networks and resources. Leather products emerged as one of the most important goods exported from India. According to colonial records, leather products placed at 5th position among the top 6 commodities that were exported from India during colonial period.

The British patronage and relationship with the leather industry suffered heavily during the nationalist and anti-colonial moment. The question of cow protection was one of the issues that was dear to Gandhi. The issues acquired prominence due to its emotional and sentimental value. It was used to gather masses around Gandhi and congress party. The cow protection was one of the main issues picked up by the nationalist movement. The British were demonized for killing cows and hurting the sentiments of the Hindus. The mobilization turned not only against the British but also affected the leather workers directly. The nationalist movement on the one hand targeted British and on the other hand the Arya Samaj movement in different parts of India involved in persuading the Dalits to reform themselves by

changing their "dirty" ways of life. In many parts it resulted in dalits leaving this occupation en masse and adopted other occupations which may not have been remunerative. Chitra Joshi and Vijay Prasad discuss these aspects quite extensively in their works. Besides that there was growing antagonism between Muslims and Hindus due to communal polarization which resulted in frequent riots and property loss. The division of India into two nations affected the leather industry badly. The northern Indian regions particular the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi were badly affected. Thousands of Muslim workers left the country which resulted in almost collapse of the leather industry.

The nationalist legacy of cow protection continued even after the colonial rule was over. Once the British left the country the cow protection acts were brought into force. After independence the ban was implemented in large part of India. As the new states formed they also extended this ban in their jurisdiction. The cow protection laws badly affected the Muslims and Dalits. It resulted in controlled and restricted supply of animal skins which resulted in significant increase in the price of leather. Cow slaughter is still a political matter and continues to shape and affect government policies. The India society and state have shown its flexible and liberal approach while perceiving cow as an animal and cow leather as a valuable commodity which can earn billions of Dollars and simultaneously create million of jobs. India holds one of the largest livestock in the world especially in the case of buffaloes and cows. This livestock is not properly utilized due to the orthodox religious attitudes of people. The social component weighs more than the economic benefits, or in other words the society and state has placed customs above and over the economics. It has not let its customs, traditions and cultural practices to be scrutinized and debated.

The post independence period developments in the leather industry clearly reflect the close and deep inter-linkages between culture, state, economy and politics. It clearly brings out the how the state played a dubious role in preserving and maintaining the social structure through economic policies. It is clearly visible in the case of leather industry as it was one of the first industries that was opened for private sector and corporate houses. The industralisation of the Indian economy can be conveniently traced to the decade of 1960s due to the sudden and structural changes. The 2nd five year plan (1956-61) emphasis of heavy industralisation which resulted rapid urbanization of the country. Subsequently in the 3rd plan (1961-66) many municipal bodies came up, Kshetra Samiti and Zilla Parishad were constituted which

gave significant powers to take local decisions. These administrative bodies had significant power and rights in their jurisdiction. If an animal die in their controlled area it naturally became their property. The Kshetra samiti, Zilla Parishads and municipal councils claimed exclusive right over the carcass. These administrative bodies gradually started auctioning the animal carcasses to the highest bidders. The dalits lost their traditional right over the carcass and skin and were displaced and replaced in their own traditional work. There were series of court cases filed against government and these municipal bodies by dalits but did not succeed. Their tradition rights were overtaken by the upper castes and dalits were displaced from their own occupation. The dalits lost their traditional right over the carcass and skin of dead animals.

Leather industry has been reserved for the small sector since independence and in the industrial policy of 1967 it was exclusively reserved for small sector. There were sudden changes in the national and international politics which affected the industry. Indian faced two wars one in The domestic socio-economic situation and international developments 1962 with china, another with Pakistan in 1965, the disturbance in west Asia due to Arab-Israel conflict, Drought in many parts of country, severe food crisis and global slowdown due to emerging oil crisis. As a result of these the economy was weakened, foreign exchange depleted, rise in unemployment and increasing unrest in the country. The industry which was reserved for the small sector in the industrial policy of 1967. The state dramatically reversed its position and policy due to the economic crisis. The leather industry was identified as a major sector for earning foreign exchange and revenues. This was one of the first industries which were opened for large corporate houses and private sector. Hence it was the dalits and Muslims that became the first and biggest victim of early industralisation and liberalisation of the economy as has been discussed in chapter six.

The process started with the implementation of the Seetharamaiah committee recommendation in 1972. The Seetharamaiah committee recommended ban on exports of semi-processes hides and skins, diversification of exports, mechanization of the production processes, and subsidies and concessions for to promote exports. The Kaul committee (1979) paved the ways for modernization, mechanization and use of sophisticated technology for production in the industry. The Pandey Committee's (1985) recommendation led to import of leather substitute, imports of raw hides and skins, west blue leather and crust leather, promotion of value added products and

commercialization of the leather knowledge. Murthy Committee (1992) recommended encouragement to greater consumption of non leather material in the domestic market, joint ventures and alliances with national and international bodies, import of chemicals, machinery, bring standardization in processes etc.

The developments in the 1960s and 70s have been disastrous for the dalits. They became the first victim of emerging liberalisation of the economy. One of the most important milestones was the Seetharamaiah committees of 1972. The industry which so far was largely the unorganized and informal sector started evolving into as organized sector. The transition of work from unorganized to organized saw many important changes and shifts. The industry was organized, the production structures expanded and enlarged, new channels were formed to acquired leather, push by government to mechanize the production processes, entry of corporate houses and outsides, and significant changes in the market processes. These changes were important as it changed the nature, forms, demography, composition and operational structures of the industry. The work, which so far was, restricted into the dalit clusters and hamlets saw drastic changes in its operations. The work started shifting from rural to urban, from dalit clusters to specific zones and from dalit houses to factories. These changes were very huge and drastic and it changed the whole dynamics of leatherwork. The changes in the government policies were sudden and were taken without taking into consideration their opinions.

The process was complex and had multi-dimensional effects on the dalits as has been discussed in chapter 6. The upper caste emerged as clear beneficiaries of the policy level changes since 1972. After 1972 the leather industry came into tight grip of upper castes. Their influence in the leather sector grew phenomenally due to the emergence of organized sector. They gradually expanded their activities in the newly emerging international trade and started controlling, dominating and monopolizing the markets networks, supplying chains, factories, control over the hides and skin trade etc. The entry of upper caste changed the ownership patterns and relation of dalits with their work. The cottage sector suffered badly as Lakhs of small workshops, home based artisanal activities, small entrepreneur and service activities like contractors of skins and hides, small retail shops etc. were closed down. This resulted huge employment loss and increased of vulnerabilities for the workers. The Dalits started reducing in their own work. They have been displaced and replaced by upper castes in their own traditional occupation.

One of the most important phases in the leather industry was observed with the introduction of new economic policy in 1991. This marked the official integration of Indian economy with the world. The New Economic Policy started the process of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG). The leather industry saw the entry of foreign brands in the industry, which increased huge competition for the leather workers. They were already suffering from loss of economic opportunities since 1960 it further added to their marginalization. The entry of MNCs led to additions of new segments and diversification of the leather trade. A major event came with the rising concerns for the environment, pollution and global warming debates. A large number of the tanning units specially the smaller ones were closed down displacing thousands of workers at one go in the mid of 1990s. It brought huge economic disasters to the Muslims and dalit entrepreneurs and workers. One of the major disasters came in 2001 when the government allowed 100 percent FDI in the leather industry and opened leather sector for foreign imports. This paved ways for the entry of cheap Chinese goods in the markets. The competition in the leather sector increased, intensified and became severe. The small home-based sector could not compete with the cheap Chinese goods. It ruined the small artisans; cottage sectors and home based small enterprises. The smaller units were closed down and it resulted in loss of economic opportunities and employment. The unemployment in the industry and particularly in the leather sectors declined significantly as it has been pointed out in various government reports. The losses in economic opportunities have brought huge cultural and social change in their lives.

It is not only in the leather industry that the dalits have suffered huge losses. Dalits have excessive and disproportionate share in the unorganized sector due to historical reasons. The huge unorganized sector which is almost 92 percent is facing the burnt of changing government policies and LPG processes. The small marginal farmers and landless workers, industrial workers all have been affected badly. People are dying in want of heath care and basic human needs. Farmer's suicides, hunger deaths, work displacement, increasing unemployment due to weakening of unorganized sector, tougher labour conditions i.e. Informalisation, Casualisation of work force in various industries making the life difficult for the majority of people. They have suffered badly due to the shrinking of agriculture, decline of the unorganized sector, ruining of the self-employment opportunities, reduction in the public employment, changes in the labour laws, and withdrawal of the social security.

Dalits are the most severely affected by these as they are located at the bottom in all the economic hierarchy and work processes across all these sectors.

The LPG processes have contributed to the existing inequalities as the basic and essential commodities and services like water, healthcare, education, electricity, PDS have been privatized. Over a period of time there has been significant reduction in subsidies and concessions on fuel, petrol, LPG, food, stationary, seeds, fertilizers etc. and significant rise in the inflation resulting in increased cost of living. Moreover, the government allotment of funds and expenditure is also going down in key areas like health care, education, public health, infrastructure and development projects, mid-day meals, pensions, rural development etc. result in into a deep crisis in the society. It is the dalits that have suffered badly given their historical and economically marginalized condition. It is resulting in deep social unrest, disturbances and conflicts in the society.

The Dalits have long suffered due to the discriminatory attitude of society towards them. They have also becomes victim of the state's neglect and discriminatory attitude over the years. Post reforms the state has particularly targeted the SC and ST development funds known as Special component plan (SCP). The plan came into existence in 1979 to look after the welfare of the dalits and Adivasis and provide those funds for their development in the areas of poverty reduction, primary education, basic infrastructure, health, drinking water, electricity, nutrition, roads, housings etc. The central government has denied them approximately 53,403.36 Crores between 2005-06 to 2008-09. In the 2009-10 budget 23,287 Crores is denied to the SCP. Total amount denied from 2005-06 to 2009-10 is approximate 76,690 Crores. It is not only the present situation, they have been denied their just share in the resources for a very long time since the SCP was devised. They should have been allocated 8,75,380.36 Crores as per SCP plan. However they were allocated only 3,47,656.64 Crores ever since the SCP plan was implemented. This means that 60 percent of the funds were never allocated to them. This is gross violation of the SCP policy of government.

The abnomalities were not only revealed in the allocation but also its expenditure. Series of RTIs have revealed that of the total funds that were allocated to them 2.8 Lakh Crores were never spent in the last 35 or so years. In the year 2014-15 SCSP and TSP was allocated 82,935 Crores but the actual amount that was spent was 49,955.79 Crores. The remaining 32,979.21 Crores were not spent at all. This is 251

percent increase from the previous year. These are the figures of central government only and there are no track records of the status of states of which many do not even have the data. This shows the seriousness of the state, sincerity of policy maker's and commitment of the law enforcement agencies. This is simply disastrous and criminal act given the fact of the historical marginality, vulnerable and depressing conditions of the SC and STs in the country. Large number of huger deaths, deaths due to lack of healthcare, sanitation and suicides due to debts are reported from these particular groups across different sectors, industry and tribal belt. The money could have been utilized to empower them and providing them education, health care, food, basic facilities and creating employment.

Based on our study we discuss some of the important findings. The share of leather industry in the Indian GDP has gone down significantly since colonial period. During colonial period it was the 5th largest items exported from India. It has come down to 8th today. This is despite the fact that India holds the largest livestock particularly bovine animals in the world. The livestock has increased over a period of time but it utilization has not improved according to its growth. India still has comparative advantage to other countries in this area. The share of India in the global leather trade has gone down drastically. India was the one of the largest exporter of leather and raw hides and skins in the world in the 50s and 60s. According to Ministry Of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation report of 1965-66, India was the 3rd largest leather exporting countries in the world. Today it has slipped to 8th position among the leather exporting countries according to export and import bank of India (Exim Bank). The share of India in the overall world leather trade was 8.8 percent in 1981. It has gown down to 2.5 percent in 2014-15. Meanwhile, china's share in the world leather trade was 0.41 percent in 1981 which has increased to 31 percent now. China has registered a 75 fold increase in growth in the leather trade while Indian lagged behind. The leather industry has been neglected and other sectors have been promoted and encouraged at the expense of leather industry. This has resulted in the stunted growth of the industry on the one hand and reduction in employment opportunities on the other.

There has been growth of the organized sector in the industry particularly after the 1972 after the adoption of the Seetharamaiah committee recommendation. This resulted into the entry of the large corporate houses and MNC in this work. There has been phenomenal growth of the organized corporate sector led by large firms and

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factories after 1991. The MNC and local corporate brand like Adidas, Reebok, Nike, Lotto, Action, Lakhani, Relaxo, Fila, Gliders, Action, Puma, Sparx, Mochi, Woodland, Liberty, Red Tape, Red Chief, Bata, Srileather, Khadims, Louis Philippe, Allen Solly, Reliance, Tata, Valentino, Paragoan, etc have captured the Indian markets. These brands and firms are exclusively owned by MNCS and large corporate houses. Today all the large and medium factories and famous brands are owned MNCS and upper castes like *Khatri, Muslims, Punjabis, Bania, Jains, Sindhis, Brahmins,* etc. None of these brands and firms is owned by dalits. The structure of the leather industry changed significantly in favor of upper castes.

These large national and international brands have captured the Indian market which reduced the demand of the local and small scale manufactured shoes and goods. These large firms and factories are selling diverse products with huge range. Some of the firms are exclusively known to manufacture genuine leather products. These firms have monopolized and controlled the leather supply in the market forcing the small scale units to use the Faux, pseudo or Rexene leather which has less market value. The organized sector has displaced the small and cottage sector as a major player in the Indian market. The demand of the locally manufactured shoes and goods has decreased over the few decades. The dalits have been pushed down to the bottom even with their own work and occupation. Today dalits are located at the bottom within the organizational hierarchy of the leather trade. The dalits have lost leather which was so deeply associated with their identity and culture.

The growth of the organized sector is at the cost of the small and cottage sector. The share of dalits has gone down drastically due to the collapse of small sector. The dalits have been pushed down over a period of time due to government promotion to large corporate houses. The dalit own only few small level factories. Even these small units are facing tough completion from the middle and large units. Their share in the leather trade has gone down there are not many successful entrepreneurs today as it was during the colonial period. Dalits have been displaced and replaced from their own traditional occupation and work. It is a commonly hold notions among the leather workers that they have lost occupation to the upper castes. They have been reduced to the status of workers. It is one of the areas of conflict and tension that has acquired political significance.

This industry has heavily due to the national and international politics. Indian leather industry has been hard hit due to global warming concerns, restrictions

imposed by western countries in the mid 1990s, the Supreme Court orders arising due to pollution concerns in the 1995 onwards leading to closure of tanneries, mechanization and modernization, cheap imports from china, the campaign of PETA etc. These factors played significant role in shaping the functioning of the industry. On the one hand exports suffered badly on the other hand the cost of the production cost also gone up significantly due to the conditions imposed by the western counties. The employment in the industry has gone down significantly over the few decades. The Indian leather industry was known to employ 2.5 million workers in the early 1990s. The number has gone down to 1.1 million till 2009-10 as per planning commission report. This means 14 Lakh jobs have been lost directly due to the above mentioned reasons from early 1990s to 2010. This is more than 60 percent reduction in direct employment in the industry. Over the years there has been emphasis on automation, digitalization and mechanization of the production and marketing processes. There has been phenomenal rise in online shopping with the establishment of online sites like Flipkart, Amazon, Snapdeal etc which are directly selling goods from warehouses. Following this method, a lot of leather goods MNCs and Corporate have also started selling leather products online leading to further reduction in employment. This has brought huge economic and material disasters in the lives of workers.

There emerged huge competition among the workers for the employment as the availability of the work has reduced significantly due to mechanization of the production processes. The leather work has always been demand and fashion oriented therefore fluctuations was part and parcel of the work. but over the years the availability and accessibility of the work has reduced and competition has increased and intensified due to foreign capital and cheap imports. The work which was earlier available for 6-8 months a year has now reduced to 4-6 months. It has also affected the wages as there is more competition to get the limited work. The mechanization has made the work dangerous as the work today is executed with the use of heavily and sophisticated machines in large factories. The toxic and hazardous chemicals are used widely to fasten the manufacturing processes. The workers are hired without much training and skills leading to fatal hazards. The 2002 incident of the fire in a shoe making factory in Agra is a clear evidence of that. According to conservative estimate around 42 workers died in that industrial accident.

Dalits continue to face discrimination in the society at various sites and areas. Today they are facing discrimination in their own work. The caste identity still plays a major role in determining access to resources, opportunities and employment. It plays significant role in the market networks, employment patterns, and shaping the experiences at work sites. The dalits are kept away from lucrative employments, power positions in the factories and marketing channels. There are very limited kinds of jobs available to them in the factories. They are not recruited in the well paid jobs, professions and in certain sections within the occupational hierarchies of work. They face discrimination and the jobs which are available to them are at the lower ends which are largely manual, filthy and dangerous. There is a general tendency among the large and organized factories not to employ Jatav workers as has been reported by a SSI report in Agra. This is due to certain prejudices and biases of the management,

China has emerged as one of the most important and strong competitor of the Indian leather industry. It has emerged as one of the important sources of the imports of raw material, machines and leather components and finished goods after 100 percent FDI allowed in 2001. It has severely affected the home based cottage sector. On the one hand the cheap Chinese imports have ruined the home based cottage sectors on the other hand the middle and smaller enterprises and units have started using the Chinese machines, technology and components. This is creating huge loss of opportunities and employment. In the coming years it is likely to become more severe with the passage of time. Many successful families of the past have seen inter-generational and intra-generational downward mobility. The employment and opportunities have reduced in the industry leading to severe conflicts, tensions and competition within the dalits and their families.

The sizes, volume, numbers, sites, nature of the production structures and processes have changed over the few decades. The leather work which used to be executed in the dalit clusters and basties have shifted to new economic zones and designated industrial sites. The work which used to be executed in the houses is now done in the large factories outside dalit basties. This has changed their relationship with the work. Earlier they controlled the timing, conditions of work, had bargaining power to decide the orders, wages, price of the product etc. Now they are at the mercy of owners of factory, management and supervisors. The freedom which they enjoyed earlier has now been lost due to changes in the nature of the work. They have become

dependent on caste Hindus for their survival. This has brought new kind of modern slavery to the dalit leather workers.

The economic conditions of the leather workers have deteriorated over a period of time. The industry is showing growth year by year but their share is consistently decreasing and reducing. The changing structure of the industry has brought serious changes in the lives of workers and also in the families. The loss in the employment, earnings, and inflation has brought new cultural change within the community. Meat was one of the important cultural symbols of their identity and history. The consumption of meat has reduced both in terms of quantity, quality and regularity. Many families have altogether stopped eating meat due to its rising cost. The statuses of women in the families have changed considerably with the changes in the work patterns and sites. The women of the community enjoyed considerable freedom compare to others. As long as the work was in house women participated equally in the labour processes. Now the work has gone outside of their houses which resulted in their dependence on their husbands and sons. The condition of women has been weakened over a period of time. The change has brought them closer to brahmanical ways of living.

Traditionally dalits have been historically poor and vulnerable. They always lived with insecurities and fear and loans have been one of the most important strategies for survival. The situation has not changed over a period of time. A vast section of the workers are surviving on credits due to the nature of work. It has rather deteriorated over a period of time due to employment crisis. The debt bondage is very much prevalent in the industry due to the nature of work. There is hardly any family that does not have any loans on their head. The workers are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty and debt. They work to pay off their outstanding loans and take loans again when there is no work. When the loans reach beyond limits they have to sell off their houses or land or assets. This vulnerability is utilized by thekadars, middlemen and management to negotiate hard with workers on terms of employment, fixing the wages and work conditions.

One of the most striking features is observed in the residential patterns. There is segregation in terms of living, physical disadvantages associated with residential areas and poorly built infrastructure. The residential clusters are known by the residing caste or group. Hence different terms are used to denote these like *Mohalla, Basti, Malinbasti* and *Colony*. There is further categorization on the basis of

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occupation or identity, like Kasai, qureshi, kumhar, Jatav, Bhangi etc. there is some kind of natural or artificial markers which separate different communities and groups. Almost all the dalit clusters are located on uneven surface. Either they are too high or too low geographically. Most of these basties are located either beside the railways track, open drain or near to garbage or graveyard. Many of the dalit basties lie 2-3 floor below normal surface. One can easily identify dalit cluster just by looking at the facilities and symbols like roads, street lighting, sanitation facilities, water provisions and the size of houses. All these bring different and specific kinds of problems for the people living there. The social structure produces itself in hierarchal, segmented and segregated spaces.

Education has been very poor among the leather workers due to historical reasons. More so, it did not require one to be formally educated to do this work. This work is learnt within the community through apprenticeship. Many of the workers who were interviewed were either illiterate or semi-literate. The work is highly manual, energy consuming and exhaustive in nature. The burden is largely on the shoulder of boys to continue parent's occupation and run the family. Hence boys have very bad educational achievements compare to girls. Girls manage to get education while boys put themselves to work from a very early age. However, many of those who have managed to finish their education find it difficult to get jobs or jobs of their choice. There are still many children in the dalit clusters who are not going to schools at all either due to financial reasons or family problems. The increase in the cost of education has put additional burden to the already burdened workers.

The cost of the living has gone up significantly due to withdrawal of the state from welfare. It has caused huge burden on them as the earnings have gone down significantly and economic resources have dried up. Over a period of time there has been huge inflation which resulted in increased cost of living. The cost of essential and daily utilities have gone up, the electricity has been privatized (one of the highest cost per unit in India), water bills have increased leading to lower and decreased consumption. It has affected the quality, quantity and regularity of food. Moreover, there has been huge water crisis in the basties due to downfall of water level resulting further crisis. Many are forced to buy water from the market for their survival while huge section is managing with difficult or has cut down their consumption. The situation reveals that these castes and communities have always lived with scarcity throughout history and now it has further gone to that level.

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The poor living and working conditions are reflected in their health status. The TB, Malaria, Asthma, Jaundice and pneumonia are common problems in the dalit basties. The basties neither have proper sanitation nor have safe drinking water sources. The houses are small and congested which lack sunlight, fresh air and proper space to fit large families. The diseases in the community are suppressed due to the fear of stigma. Besides that, the workers are suffering from many occupational diseases due to the nature of their work. The back pain, weakening of eyesight, fatique, freezing of knees, right hand joint problems, neck pain, spinal problems, cuts, injuries are common at the work place. The treatment is usually avoided due to monetary issues or managed with home remedies. The mortality is also very high in this work a person who live up to 60 is considered to be tough and lucky.

The larger perceptions affect their social standing and morale in the society. They are seen through those preconceived notions and prism of biases and prejudices. These affect confidence in their day to day interaction with government officials, police or government institutions. They are not considered to be trustworthy people and banks do not given them loans readily or do not share schemes to them. These poor workers are treated like second class citizens. The narratives reveal fear, pain and humiliation when they talk about them. The police also behave in the same manner and there is so much of fear of police among them. Whenever they are talking about them they lower their voice or make sure no one is listening as if they are talking something very serious or secretive. The huge funds that the various ministries and schemes allocate for their welfare is remain unused or returned without spending or lost in corruption. The biases of government officials and prejudices affect them as a community.

The leather work was the occupation of Muslims and dalits historically. The losses of opportunities to upper castes have reduced opportunities for both of these communities. These two groups have frequent conflicts and tensions over this. Moreover, the Muslims and dalits live in close proximity to each other. Hence in the case of tensions and riots these two communities are the worst affected by it. Each communal riot and communal tension creates fear, antagonism and hate which restructure and affect the business transactions. The situation is well capitalized by different political parties for their own penetration within these two groups and communities. The more the communal conflict and tensions with these groups the more it benefits upper castes. Many people in the dalit basties narrated their oral

account how the upper caste factory owners instigated the dalits to fight Muslims during Ram temple Agitations in the early 1990s. During the field work there were numerous incidents of communal riots occurred which led to disruption in the field work.

DISCUSSION

When one imagines India, the natural images that are generated are of plurality, diversity, rich cultural heritage, dynamic history, exotic food and dressings, festivals and celebrations and diverse landscape. These images, symbols and identities fulfill certain purposes and marketed to suit certain interests. In the last 70 years India has registered many notable achievements in the field of agriculture, energy, science and space technology, pharmaceutical industry, bio-technology, information science, development of software industry and automobiles. These achievements are cited by state and government to claim competitiveness with the western powers. Below and beyond these achievements and images lies a world which is seldom talked about at various platforms due to obvious reasons. It is the critical India which has remained at the margins for a hundreds of years. There has not been much qualitative change in the lives of people even after more than 70 years in independence.

Dalits is one group of society which has been victim of historical marginalization in India. They have suffered severe violence and deprivations throughout history. They have been labeled and treated as degraded, impure and polluted. The rigid social structure, cultural values and customs never allowed them to acquire power, prestige and wealth. They have been kept out of the lucrative positions, occupations and jobs. This segment of the society has been suppressed, ostracized and discriminated for centuries. Therefore they have very different and critical experiences from society. They are exploited, suppressed and mis-treated worst than animals in situations. They are still prohibited and prevented from accessing basic human needs be it drawing water from common sources, eating food of their choice, choices of work and choices regarding residence all is pre-determined and fixed for them by society. On almost daily basis one can hear cases of discriminations, untouchability, mass massacre, burning of people and their houses, mutilation of Dalit bodies, killing, physical torture, humiliations, physical violence,

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tortures, rapes, parading women naked, ex-communications, sanctions, prohibitions of various other kinds reported in newspaper or electronic media etc.

Caste never disappeared from the society. It is very much evident from the life experiences of dalits. The historical deprivations continued to shape their experiences in the present society directly and indirectly. It is very much evident in the sphere of labour and work. Dalits have disproportionate representation and dominant presence in some of those works which are highly manual, physically exhausting and filthy in nature. These works are seasonal, temporary, fluctuating, accident prone, health wise dangerous with tough working conditions. Therefore the earnings are also limited and highly inadequate to meet their ends. The relationship of Dalits with physical work is so deep that it has acquired cultural significance because it is so widely prevalent, produced and reproduced in the society. One cans easily speculate the caste of a person just by observing the nature of work they do. Dalits are largely part of huge unorganized and informal sector of the economy. They have exclusive presence in some of the works and services which nobody wants to do due status and nature of work and associated dangers to health and life like manual scavenging, drainage cleaning, cremation services, removing dead animals, skinning etc.

The Indian economy stands on the labour of dalits and other marginal groups. In every sphere of economic activity they located at the bottom providing base to it. Some of the works which nobody does or take due to its being dangerous, physically exhausting, tedious, life threatening and manual are exclusively done by dalits and Adivasis. It is these people who provide physical labour be it in agriculture as labourers, be it mines and mineral extraction, dangerous occupations or menial services. Their contributions remain neglected, invisible and under valued. It is contrast that the product of their labour adds prosperity and status to the lives of people but their sight and touch bring impurity, hatred, stigma, guilt, shame and violence. They remain untouchable but their labour is touchable. There is no repulsion, hatred and shame in utilizing their labour in constructing building, eating food that they produce, dams they construct, articles they make, goods they manufacture, or using the roads they clean. Their labour is important but these people are not considered to be human or of equal human worth. They are part of society at the same time they are also outside of society. As long as they work as a meek servant they are good if they demand dignity and their rights they become evil.

The society has been violent to them historically and it continues to be violent in the present. People are able to enjoy the benefits of nature because someone is paying the price for their luxuries. The leather work which is an art and highly scientific skill reduced to be dirty, impure, and defying. The same sets of people if born elsewhere would have got prestige, respect, money and scholarship. It shows the nature of this society which has reduced the most skillful and productive people at the bottom of social hierarchy. If these people were born in some other society they would have been appreciated for their skills, knowledge, and science and would have accorded as scientists, scholars or technicians. It is labour which add value to the commodity, without labour there is no value of the commodity. While the marginal communities are able to create value but their own life is devalued in the very process of creating that value. They can add value to the commodity but they cannot add value to their own lives. Their skills can make someone feel special but their very lives are at the mercy of society. Marx says, it is labour which add value to the commodity but when the work and labour itself has been devalued in a society how it can add value to the commodity; when the people themselves become commodity or objects with differential valued and prestige. Their devaluation is the essential condition to be able to extract more than what is given to them by society. People have been converted into machines and objects with specific tasks and functions. How they will come together for a common cause of liberation and claim their subjectivity.

The duality of the society is visible in the fact that it keeps enjoying the fruits of their labour but treat them with hatred, repulsion, enmity and violence. Their product is pure but they remain impure and non-existent for society. Their labour is touchable but they remain untouchable. The marginal communities are able to create value but their own life is devalued in the very process of creating that value. They can add value to the commodity but they cannot add value to their own lives. Their skills can make someone feel special but their very lives are at the mercy of society. This society fails to recognize them and their labour with dignity. They survive on minimum subsistence and most of the time they are not able to gather enough to live a dignified lives. They are the ones who provide the essential commodities to the people of this country. But their own life remains miserable; and work hard and struggle hard to manage two times meals for their families. Their lives are example of dual character of society which at the same time feel pride in showing their labour but at the same time treat them like animals and at time worst than animals. They still feel

problems in having access to public water sources, cannot use the roads, discriminated in public spaces, not allowed to sit equally with others, regularly called by demeaning names, publicly beaten for minor offenses, exploited by both state and society in one way or the other. The cultivated illusions of progress, change, development get crumbled and shattered.

The capitalism, development in science and technology, urbanization and industralisation have altered and changed many things in the society but it has failed to change the attitude of people regarding caste. People are still governed by their caste beliefs, traditions and superstitions. The lives and experiences of dalits in the society reveal only pains, sufferings and destitution. There has not been any qualitative improvement in the lives of millions of people who are still the bonded slave of this institution. The more the dalits resist and struggle to free themselves from traditional bondage there is counter opposition and resistance against them. This is visible in the patterns of atrocities, crimes and discrimination against them. There has not been any qualitative change in the lives of dalits barring some few who have managed to come up by coming out from the vicious cycle of caste and poverty. Even these people face continued resistance and oppression in their daily lives at different sites. The reservation and reserved categories people are repeatedly targeted in private and public by projecting them as meritless, incapable and inefficient because they have emerged in the public domain, started giving stiff competition and changing and challenging the historically privileged. They are the ones that are raising demands for equality, fair treatment, justice and questioning caste, inequalities and discrimination. The projections of them as greedy, inefficient and meritless are the counter mechanism by the ideology and system to maintain status quo.

There is a certain essentialisation and reification about caste in public imagination. Hence it is neither seen as denial nor is it treated as subjugation and violence. The power and control that it has been having on the people can be understood by the durability of its existence. The flexibility and rigidity of this institution can be imagined by the fact that it has survived various phases and events like external invasion, colonialism, reform movements, industralisation, commercial revolution, enlightenment and scientific rationality, development in science and technology, and modernity. It has changed very little and has adjusted with these events. It is constantly changing its forms, nature and outlook without diluting the philosophy, rigidity, essence and principles. The caste both as structure and ideology

forces people to accept the present world in its current form and accept inequalities as their fate and destiny. It does not give enough space and room for choices, alternatives and options. It is deeply located in the social structure, institutions, cultural belief and value system and history. Therefore rejection of caste translates into rejection of religion, customs, beliefs, history, and identity. It is therefore not possible to study Indian society without bringing history, culture and institutions at the core of social inquiry.

Caste is not merely a site of the production of inequalities and violence. It is also a site of silencing and shielding the anger and resistance against these. It has a long history and a continued relevance even in the present society. It is simply not enough to blame politicians, colonial rule, America and capitalism or any other external agency for the creation of caste. The society has to take moral and ethical responsibility for its creation, continuation and its relevance. It is therefore necessary to bring culture, history and institutions in studying caste and also its role in neutralizing it. There are certain interest groups in the society have benefitted from its presence and they are likely to lose more by its absence. The worldviews of those who benefitted from it and those became its victims are contradictory in nature. In order to maintain status quo, the beneficiaries have projected false and fabricated unity with the victims. The beneficiaries have taken shield in and behind history, culture, nation, traditions, and shared identity to neutralize resistance. They are the ones who by default deny contradictions and opposed to multiplicity, diversity and heterogeneity of opinions. It is therefore necessary to bring and expose those interest groups, agency and also those events in history which led to its naturalization and normalization.

State is one of the major institutions that play a major role in shaping, determining and affecting society in numerous ways. The state functions within the boundaries of society hence it is also not insulated by the lager social and cultural realities. The social structure, the cultural values, beliefs and traditions also show its effects on the functioning of the state. The inequalities in the society are also reproduced in the structure of the state. This is very well reflected in representation, hierarchy, and distribution of power within different groups, sections and segments. The social contradictions also reflect and manifest in the priorities, visions and social goals of the state. The state gets its strength from the society which also applies in the case of weaknesses. Hence the nature and character of any state is the reflection of the nature and character of any society. This character is very well manifest the way it

responds to inequalities, making public policies, implementation and regularity framework, the accountability and responsiveness of state institutions, enforcement of law and order, attitudes and behavior of officials towards the citizens. The state has played an important role in preserving the status quo by denying and controlling the subjects.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General Information

Name .... sex................. DoB/Age.................

Physical status: if differently abled yes/no, if yes, nature of disability specify...

Residential Locality Name……………………..……,

Name of Establishment where working at present (if any)………………………….…

Religion……………faith……………Caste……………..... sub-caste……………

Marital status: married…………….…unmarried…………………

Age at the time of marriage............................

Family type: nuclear…………….. Joint……….……. Others...........…………

Occupation: a) primary .... b) secondary................................

Whether work at home…, small factory……, medium……, large factory………

Department/Specialisation (if, any) in work………………………………………..

Locality of living…………………………place of work……………………………

Accommodation: rented/owned (tick), if on rent, amount paid per month………........

Number of immediate family members………….

Parent's occupation: Fathers………….. Mothers…………….…

Education:

Illiterate......till 5th....... till 10th........ Graduation...... Above Graduation …………

Mode of education: private……..…regular…………correspondence……………..

Schooling whether government/private/missionary/trust? tick

If drop out, in which class……….reasons for drop out…………………………

Parental education: father………..…mother……………..…

Any immediate family member in government jobs, if yes, rank………………….

Number of family members living together ……....

Family member's education: Mother........... Father.........., husband..........Wife ...……..

Whether children getting education: yes/no, Daughters…………. sons………….…

Material possessions (moveable and non moveable)

TV…..…..colour/BW……....cable……,fridge……...,vehicle…..…….,radio…….….....,

cooking gas…..,Audio system………..,

cooler…..…….,fans……....bed……….sofa………..washing

Machine………others………….

How many of these are pre owned

………………………………………………(optional)

What are the things you got in gift in marriage?

TV……..vehicle………radio……audio

system……….cooler……..…others…………motor cycle............. (Optional)

How many of these are non-functional or not in present use?...................................

Non moveable property (type specify)

No land…... < than 1 acre…,<2 acre……, <5 acre……, < than 10 acre…….

Have you ever sold land/jewellery/house/mortgaged house/ or other valuable items for money to be used in business/construction of house in city/marriage or any other reason…………………………………………………………………

Source of income: work……. Rent….…chit fund…….part time work…...small shops……..livestock………..

Gross Monthly Income…………………………… (Optional)

Whether parents/grandparents owned agriculture landyes/no

Housing and living conditions

House type: puccha/semi pucca/partly pucca/kuccha (tick)

Whether living in same caste/religion locality?Yes/no

Whether house is ancestral property? if yes, How old is your house in terms of years………….

If on rent, how much rent you pay per month………….

How long you have been living in Agra……. in present locality……………….

Distance between work place and residence in (KM)……………………….

Number of rooms in the house......and approximate size of rooms roughly)………………………………………….

Do you have separate kitchen, yes/no, if no where do you cook your food...........................

Do you have toilet in your house, yes/no, if no, where do you go for relieving..........................

Do you have water storage facility in your house, like terrace tank or ground water tank, yes/no

Do you get sufficient sunlight and natural air in your house? How would you rate that: a) very good…..b) good……c) satisfactorily……. d) poor…….(tick)

Do you use electrical bulb or tube light in your house(tick)

Do you use electric bulbs/tube lights in your house during day? Yes/no

Sources of drinking water: (tick) Piped water in side house, Municipal tap, Hand pump, Submersible boring pump, Wells, Bottled water, Others (specify)

Regularity in days: Everyday………Twice in a week…….every alternate days……….

Duration of availability of water in hours…………..

Quality of drinking water: hard……….sweet……..…dirty..……..

Are you satisfied with the water regularity and quality?Yes/NO

Any specific comments

Do you get sufficient water supply for bathing/washing/cleaning? Yes/No

Quality of water: yellowish……sand mixed……clean…...…stinking…….(tick)

Availability of toilet/latrine in the house, if Yes, whether it is sewage or septic tank type..............

Is your locality properly lit during nights Yes/No

Does your *basti* have properly built road/sewage system/sufficient lightening at night (Tick)

What are the specific physical disadvantages associated with your basti? (tick)
   A) uneven surface
   B) below normal surface
   C) nearby railway track
   D) near/beside drain
   E) deep inside and away from road

F) none of these/all of these
G) beside graveyard/garbage dump
If any or many of these disadvantages exist, how does it affect your life?

In what ways does it affect the Aged,diseased/children/women? Has there been any injury or accidents due to any of these? Comment

If there is water logging/drain overflow/sewage water accumulation in the rainy season, in what ways your life is affected and how do you cope with it?

Segregation and Ghettoisation

Can you identify localities or lanes on the basis of caste? Yes/no
Do other caste people avoid coming in your basties? Yes/no
Do you feel hesitation/shame/guilt/apologetic to invite your friends to your locality? Yes/no
In what ways dalit basties are different from other places like colonies? How people see and perceive dalit basties?

Have you ever tried to move out or buy/rent house in other caste locality? Yes/no, What are the problems generally faced by people of your caste who try to change their place of living?

Is there any segregation/ghettoisation of communities on the basis of religion/caste in city? Why it is so?

Do people have preferences in living in their own caste locality? Yes/no
Do people hesitate/avoid to purchase house in low caste localityyes/no
Whether caste affects the price patterns of the land? Yes/no

Work and working conditions

Name of the establishment/owner where you presently work………………………………………………………………………
Year of establishment…………or years since operation……………
Religion/caste of the owner……………………………………………………….
How many co-workers you have at your work site…………………
Are you a native or migrant?(tick)
Whether job is temporary/permanent/casual/daily wage? (tick)
How many places you have worked before joining the current one………………….
Age since started working…………or number of years since working……………………..
Years/months/weeks in current establishment………………
What is the standard piece/wage rate in your specialised work?……………………
How much you are paid per piece here? …………………………
How many pieces you make daily………………………..
Do you work on machines or do manual work……………………………………….
Availability of work in a year: months……..days………….. (Including/excluding holidays or disruptions specify)………………..
How many hours you work daily? In peak season…………slack season……….
How are you paid in work? salary …...Piece rate wise……….,lot wise……...,day wise……...time wise............. (tick)
Have you worked as a child labour?Yes/no
Mode of payment: monthly…..….fortnightly……...weekly……….daily…….…...……
How much do you usually earn per day/week/month……..and for how many days in a year……….
How many holidays you get in a week/month……………
How do you get your jobs/recruitments/manufacturing orders:(tick)
Recommendation, Family contacts, Friends Networks, Caste networks, Information, spread though contacts, Factory notices, Media news, Others....................................
Whether toilets/drinking water/urinals available at your work place? (tick)
Whether first aid/canteen facility/creche facilities available at your work place? (tick)
Have you ever utilised them?Yes/no
Do you take advance against working for a specific period of time or the factory owners give you advances for work?Yes/no
What are the recreation facilities available at your work place? Name few or what do you do for recreation and entertainment at your work places?

Do you get annual increment/bonus/hike in your job/work? Yes/no

Have you ever been promoted in your work? Yes/no

Are you satisfied with your wages or piece rate given to youyes/no

In the last 10 or so years, whether the wages/piece rates have been revised or changed in your work? Yes/no

Is there any wage differential for different sets of workers for same work? i.e. men/women/children/aged/diseased/disabled etc? Yes/no

Do you get holidays/sick leaves when required? Yes/no

Have you ever been removed/lost job/order cancelled/work lost due to due to sickness/ accident/injury? Yes/no

Have you ever worked below standard wages or charged below piece rate when in distressyes/no

Do you get safety equipment at your work placeyes/no

How do the traders/managers/supervisors/factory owners treat you? Have you ever abused on caste lines or harshly treated? Specific comments.

Have you ever been replaced/removed from work due to any conflict with the management or conflict with co-workers or with middlemen/contractors? Yes/no

Have you appealed against it to any authority? Yes/no

When you seek employment in factories, what kind of jobs you are readily accepted in? Do you find any segregation of workers according to caste in particular processes?

Whether there exists any union to represent your interests? Yes/no

How do you negotiate with the management/traders regarding your wages, work conditions, conflicts/accidents or facilities?

Do the workers share food or water with each others?Yes/no?

Do people hesitate to share food and drinks with you and what are the reasons they cite for not sharing?

Leather work is not available through out year in the same way like the peak season. How it affect you and your family members?

Do you currently have by debt on you? Yes/no
Reason for taking………………………….
Amount taken………………………………
Rate of interest………………………………
Have you ever sold/mortgage jewellery/house utensils/house/ to pay back that? yes/no
Is credit an un-avoidable and necessary part of your life? Yes/no
How do you pay back the credit given the irregular, uncertain and insecure working conditions of leather workers?

People consider leather work as dirty and filthy. What is the value of this work in your life?

What are the changes you have observed in working and work over a period of last 20-30 years or your older generations?

How these changes have affected you and your domestic and personal life?

Has there been any deductions/*katauti* from your salary/goods due to any reasons? Yes/no, what was the reason for that? Elaborate

What is *purcha/purchi* and *katauti* system? How does it add to your vulnerability?

Are you satisfied with your work conditions? What are the problems generally you face at work places?

What are the chances of your promotion in this work? Have you ever been promoted in other non-manual departments/processes?

How are your relations with other caste people at your work place? Are there any specific ways in which you are treated differently from others?

Have you ever had a clash with traders/merchants or co-workers? What was the reason for this clash?

Have you ever had any injury/accident at your work place? In what ways it affected you? Did your employer give you compensation or monetary help for it?

How do you cope up with the perceptions of dalits being considered as drunkards/lazy/untruthworthy/clever/violent?

Discrimination and exclusion

Do you feel any kind of caste discrimination or *bhed-bhav* at work places? public places or markets etc? Elaborate

When you go to sell your goods in markets? What are the problems you face? Does your caste identity put you in disadvantageous position when negotiating for the price?

Do you face any specific problems purchasing plots/land/shops at your desired places? Yes/no, if no, what kind of problems you face?

In what ways, your superiors try to take advantage of your lower status/position in society/markets/work places? How does it affect your self esteem and confidence?

Health

How many times you have your meals everyday? Morning……..Lunch………, evening…………dinner………..

How often you eat meat? Once in a week……more than once in a week……..fortnightly………..monthly…………special occasion……………….

What proportion of money you spend on food roughly out of total money earned……............

Have you ever remained hungry due to lack of money? Yes/no

Have you ever fallen sick? Nature of sickness, did you consult doctor for it?

Do you have any specific health problem? What are the common ailments and diseases suffered by workers in your work?

Have you taken any treatment for this? If yes, where? What kind of treatment you received? Are you cured completely?

Have you ever sold or mortgage land/jewellery/house for treatment of any family member?Yes/no

Have you taken any major credit for the sickness/disease of you or your family members? Yes/no, how much was the amount?...................................

Is there any sick member in your family currently? Yes/no. In what ways does it affect you? Do you take loans/credit for this? If so, how it affects your normal cycle?

Is there any death/suicide in your family? What was the age of the deceased? Could it have been avoided/prevented?

Do you know any person in your area or work place who died due to occupational injury/accident or lack of money or health treatment?

Social life

Where and when you first realised that you are different from others? How it affected your interaction with other people since that realisation?

Have you ever lied about your caste to somebody? If yes, why? How does your caste identity affect your interactions with others?

Which places you feel insecure/hesitant/fearful to go?

Whether there is any specific ways by which others make you feel lower and inferior? When somebody does chua-chhaat/bhed-bhav how do you feel? If somebody discriminate you, how do you cope with it?

*Danga/*Riots are frequent in Agra. In case of communal riot/violence and disruption of work? How does it affect you and your family, how do you manage?

Which festivals you enjoy more that are celebrated in Agra, which festivals you feel belongingness and feel empowered/happy?

State and institutions
Are you aware of any government schemes run for poors? Have you ever utilised any of government schemes?

Do you have PDS card? yes/no, if yes, are you utilising it?, if no, reasons for not having it or utilising it.

What are your experiences in government offices i.e. police stations/government hospitals, educational institutions etc? How you are treated there? Does your caste identity affect their attitude towards you?

Have you ever tired for financial assistance/bank loans to establish workshops/factories or opening some business? What are the problems you face?

Have you ever paid bribes/gifts to middle men or government servant for any government work?

Is their a labour union of leather workers in Agra? Can you identify with labour unions? How they function, do you feel related with them or the issues they raise?

What kind of opportunities you see for yourself and your coming generations in future? Is the future dark or bright for you?

Politics and identity

How do you feel about your caste identity? In what ways it makes you vulnerable?

How does being a dalit and that too working with leather create dual deprivations to you?

What are the reasons that leather workers are considered to be politically closer to BSP?

There is so much of popularity of mayawati among dalits specially the leather workers of uttar pradesh? Is there any noticeable difference between mayawati and others, if so, in what ways?

What kind of changes you notice when mayawati comes to power? How does it affect/change your life?

CHECK LIST

For group discussion and personal observation

- Discussion about the geographical and spatial distribution of leather workers residential basties within the urban landscape in the city.
- observe any specific pattern, character, peculiarity, feature of these residential locations in urban landscape
- observe and discuss the conditions of basties in terms of electricity supply, roads, sewage system, street lighting and cleanliness
- General information about the workers, their family background, education status, history in this work.
- General observation about the workers, their physical attributes and conditions, and health status.
- Discuss if they feel any isolation, segregation, exclusion compare to others in living and working.
- How other see dalits basties? Do they have negative perceptions about the basties and its people?
- The conditions of housing, structure of the house, size, rooms, space, availability of toilets/bathrooms, cross ventilation, sunlight, air etc.
- Amenities in house: water availability, separate kitchen, water storage facilities, electricity supply, sources of drinking water etc.
- Quality of living: asset base of family, income, expenditure and their perceptions about of quality
- importance of loans in their lives, the reasons for credit, interests and its social and economic consequences to the families
- Their views about work insecurity, availability and conditions of employment and work, leisure, entertainment etc.
- What are their views about the quality of life that their community people live? How it is different from others?
- The difference in season and off season work schedules, fluctuations, pressures, work load and stress etc.
- The changes that they have observed in their work over the last few decades, how these changes have affected them
- What kind of changes they have noticed in education, health care and water supply in recent past?
- What are the common problems they face in their work and living conditions and how they cope with these?
- In what ways the inflation has affected their family budget, education and accessibility of daily use commodities

- Discus about their aspirations, dreams, insecurities, fears, stress, conflicts and experiences in the society.
- How do they see caste? How it affect them and shape their experiences in the society
- Their perceptions about themselves, their occupations, their community people and others.
- Their views about caste, discrimination, and segregation and how it affects them, their opportunities and aspirations.
- The religious and cultural lives of leather workers, how different it is from other people around given their historical and social isolation.
- Which places do they feel hesitant/uncomfortable or fearful in/while visiting? What is the reason for this?
- Their coping mechanism when someone discriminate, bully them, call them by their caste name etc.
- The leather work has shifted from homes to large factories. How it has impacted on the family income, how it has particularly affected the women in the house?
- Their ideals, symbols, role models, inspirations, festivals, celebrations etc.
- the inter-generational and intra-generational changes that have taken place in their lives during recent and past
- How do they see politics? what kind of treatment or institutional support they get from government and its officials and how they perceive it
- their fears, frustrations, isolations, discrimination and day to day interaction with police, governmental officials and how they cope with it
- The continuous presence of police in their working and living areas, how it affects them and how they feel about it.
- What are the facilities given by the government to them and what they expect from the government?
- What are their views about political situation in the country? How do they see the functioning of the government?
- There is a wide support among the community for BSP. Is there any specific reason for preference for BSP over others among the community?
- In what ways they find BSP to be different from other political parties? Whether BSP made any difference to their lives when it ruled in the state?

Hand made last sample making picture of a small workshop at Meera Husseni Chowk

Picture 1 last finishing at workshop at Nai ki Mandi: picture 2 home based non-leather chappal making by a worker at Panchkuyein, kalyanpuri

Product comparison of two genuine leather shoes from different locations:

Product 1: woodland shoes manufactured in a large factory selling price Rs. 3510 @ Jabong.com

product 2: manufactured in a small workshop selling price Rs. 450 @ footpath at GIC ground
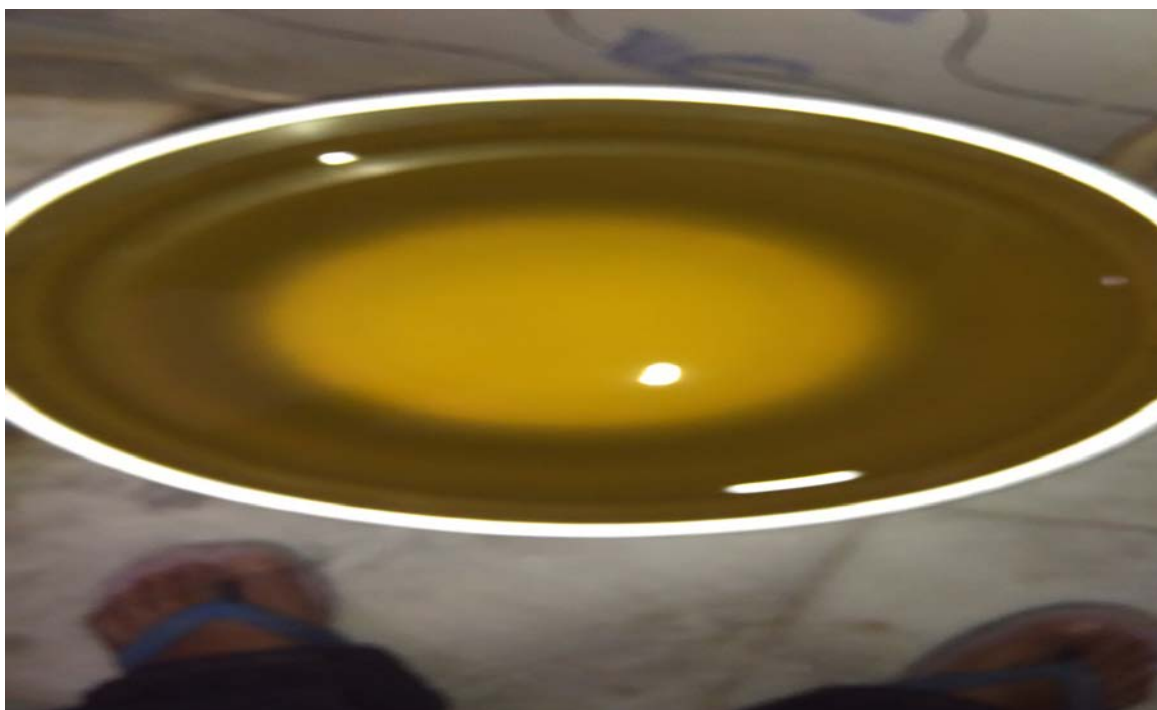
Quality of water received in Dalit Basties through municipal supply
picture 1 taken at Ratanpura and picture 2 taken at Sundarpara

Cleaning the basti with bare hand by a contract worker at sundarpara

Claiming the heritage and asserting their political voices in search for identity, dignity and equality
Picture 1 Bhim Nagri celebration, Ratanpura,
Picture 2 Guru Ravidas Jayanti celebration, Rampur

All women group singing Ambedkar and Buddha songs at Nai ki Mandi community hall

Ambedkar parks are part and parcel of their everyday life as there is lack of open spaces within the dalit basties. These parks are used for national day celebrations, social, political gatherings and marriage functions etc. Those who could not afford community halls expenses organize their functions at these parks.

picture 1 The parks is decorated before a marriage function at Ratanpura

picture 2: Ambedkar idol is clean by a worker