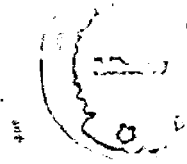


**UNDERSTANDING DALIT MOVEMENT
IN UTTAR PRADESH: A STUDY
OF ALLAHABAD DISTRICT**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of*

Master of Philosophy



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July 21, 1997

Certificate

Certified that the dissertation entitled **UNDERSTANDING DALIT MOVEMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH: A STUDY OF ALLAHABAD DISTRICT** submitted by **PRADEEP KUMAR SHARMA** is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University, or any other University, and is his own work.

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

Professor Balveer Arora
Chairperson

Professor Kiran Saxena
Supervisor

*Dedicated to
the Pious Memory of Amma*

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Acknowledgement

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*New Delhi
July 21, 1997*

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(Pradeep Kumar Sharma)

Introduction

Indian society is divided into numerous castes and sub-castes numbering roughly over four thousand, besides the sizeable number of Tribes and other religious communities. The Hindu caste system is broadly classified into three: the *dwijas* or the upper castes which are also called, in some regions, the forward castes, the middle level castes commonly known as Backward castes or classes, and the lowest castes or Untouchables of the earlier times. G.S. Ghurye¹ has earmarked six classical features of Indian caste system, viz., segmental divisions of society based on birth, a definite scheme of social hierarchy, restriction on feeding and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and restriction on marriages. This caste system puts the Brahmans at the top while the 'Shudra' varna was kept at the bottom, with the population outside the varna scheme being subsequently categorized as Untouchables. The Untouchables or the Dalits as they are presently known are one of the most vulnerable sections of people in India. They constitute nearly 17 percent (over 13 crore) of the total population in the country. But, despite being one of the larger sections of the population, they have been subjected to oppression, subjugated for centuries and had lived a very miserable life, as Mukundrao Patil, a major figure of the Maharashtrian anti-Caste Satyashodhak Samaj, writes

India is a strange place which collects all sorts of social groups, divided by different religions, thoughts, practices and understandings. But, broadly speaking, they can be categorized into two-the majority low castes who have been devoid of humanity for centuries and a handful who take their pleasure, call themselves superior and live at the cost of the majority. One's welfare is another's misery; that is their connection.²

In this context, the "majority of the low castes" was the 'Untouchable' section of the society, this section was called by different nomenclatures in the course of the time, for example, Harijan, the Scheduled Castes and the Dalits. The term Dalit has a wider connotations, as was done by the Dalit Panthers in 1972-73 when they add various religious minorities, women, tribals, backward castes and economically deprived sections in their definition of the term Dalit. But, the term Dalit is currently used for and by the ex-untouchables all over the country, many social scientists have started referring to the Dalits and Untouchables or the Scheduled Castes inter-changeably. We have also used the term Dalit, in this work, for ex-Untouchables or the Scheduled Castes by articulating their self-realisation and their struggle against the caste - oppression, their "will to act against exploitation, a rise from oppression, from death to life, from darkness to light"³ and continuing their movement. The main figures of this movement, Jotiba Phule, Babasaheb Ambedkar and E.V. Ramasami 'Periyar', with many other through out India (Narayanswami Guru in Kerala, Acchutanand in U.P., Mangoo Ram in

Punjab) all attacked the system of exploitation at all levels, culturally, economically and politically.

THE PROBLEM

There has been an upsurge of the Dalits all over India right from the late nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, "the broader anti-caste movements" have become a "central democratic movement of Indian society. In the pre-Independence period this anti-caste movement comprised strong non-Brahmins movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu as well as Dalit Movements in Maharashtra, Punjab (the Ad-Dharam movement), Western U.P. (the Adi-Hindu movement), Bengal (Namashudras), Kerala (Narayanswami Guru's movement), and Hyderabad (Adi-Hindus). Independent India saw two decades of quiescence for anti-caste struggle, then a renewed upsurge from the early 1970s marked by the founding of the Dalit Panthers in 1972. This time the Dalits and their organisations were clearly in the vanguard, with the non-Brahmin Castes, now known as 'OBCs' 'Other Backward Castes following'.⁴ Then during the 1980s, a new wave of assertion was felt when the Dalits wanted to exercise the political power themselves, particularly in the northern states of India, more specifically in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The present study will attempt to analyse this assertion, its spread and impact on the lives of the Dalits. For this purpose the present study will analyse the roots and the course of the Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh, its socio-political context and its limitations. In order to understand the role of the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh politics, a two way strategy has been adopted in the coming chapters. First, the problem and the role of the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh has to be studied at macro level. For this purpose, the problem has been seen and analysed with historical and political perspective. Secondly, after arriving at broader trends, the problem has been taken up the micro level at the level of Allahabad district using preferably the non-participant observational techniques and the interpretations of the electoral data.

Allahabad district is one of the most important districts of Uttar Pradesh for several reasons. For it has been a historical city and has been one of the nerve centers in the political, religious and social life of India. Allahabad district is the biggest district of Uttar Pradesh in terms of population and percentage of the population of the Scheduled Caste in Allahabad district is 24.46%. This ratio is higher than the Scheduled Caste population of Uttar Pradesh which is 21.05% Yet we don't find much of the Dalit assertion in the district while the social structure is very similar to the other parts of the State, where upper castes predominate in the

affairs of the social life. This study will endeavour to understand the reasons for the less assertion by the Dalits. Then, the focus of the study will be on the pattern of Dalits' political participation in electoral politics and what have been the organisational or party(ies) vehicles of such participations? What have been the nature of the Dalits political leadership and parties?

There are two main objectives of this study:

- (1) To understand the Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh: its nature, its aims and objectives, and its trends; and
- (2) To understand that whether the State politics affects the politics at the local level. This will be done through the study of the Allahabad district where we will analyse the political situation of the Dalits and will try to find out whether their political participation is being affected by the general U.P. politics or there are some other trends in the local political preferences.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DATA BASE

To understand Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh the present study will use historical-political approaches. The Scheduled Castes constitutes 21.05% of the total population of Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the role of the Dalits in the politics of Uttar Pradesh. This

is being done after the brief analysis of the history of the Dalit Movement in India where the logic of Dalit politics involved three major themes:

- (i) a challenge to the very definition of Hinduism as the majority religion and the core of Indian tradition; an insistence that it was rather a Brahmanic Hinduism that represented the hegemony of an elite over that tradition, and that this tradition had to be overthrown;
- (ii) a spreading of this theme beyond Dalits themselves to involve all the sections of those oppressed, exploited and marginalized by the process of the caste exploitation, including tribals, the other backward castes, peasants and women;
- (iii) a synthesis of a new economic and political direction with the cultural challenge."⁵

These themes will be critically evaluated using political - historical perspectives. Then, we will analyse the emergence and situation of the Dalit Movement in Allahabad district.

This study is primarily based on the secondary sources. Authoritative works on Dalit Movement in India and particularly in Uttar Pradesh, news-papers, journals, seminar reports and research papers etc., were consulted time and again. Information regarding socio-economic and political data were collected from various sources. Other sources include Census of India (1991), Census of U.P. (1991), Allahabad District Census (1991), Election Reports, Election Results of U.P. and Allahabad district, Gazetteer of Allahabad district etc. Some data from the field work were also collected through informal interviews and non-participant observations. Since the time-period of the study is confined to the late 1980s, the analysis of the data, particularly of the Dalits parties in U.P., is being done for that period, though, the historical analysis of the other organisations and parties in also being carried out.

PLAN OF THE STUDY

The study has been divided into four chapters. In the first chapter we have already dealt with a brief analysis of the problem, its nature, conceptual framework and database. In the second chapter an endeavour will be made to give a historical account of the Dalit Movement in India where we will discuss, in detail, the meaning of the terms Dalit and movement, its beginning and history and then deriving some of the important trends of the Dalit Movement. The third chapter deals with the

political consciousness and participation among/by the Dalits and their
role in the U.P. politics. Fourth chapter analyses the history, role and
political participation by the Dalits in Allahabad district. We have also
attempted in this chapter, to find out the reasons for less Dalit assertion in
Allahabad district. Finally, the conclusions, obtained from the study have
been presented in a holistic manner which aims at providing some
meaningful insights and possible remarks.

Notes

1. Ghurye, G.S. *Caste and Race in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1932).
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3. Omvedt, Gail. *Dalit and Democratic Revolution: Dr.Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India* (Delhi:Sage Publications, 1994) p.11.
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Chapter II

A Brief History of Dalit Movement

The very first question which comes to our mind while studying Dalit Liberation Movement is 'who is a Dalit'? The confusion centres around the connotations of the word 'Dalit' which was originally used as a Marathi & Hindi translation of the British term 'Depressed Classes'. There are varieties of nomenclatures such as Untouchables, Harijans, Depressed Classes, Dalits, servile classes, weaker sections, *Panchamas*, Atishudras, *Avarnas*, *Antyajas* and Scheduled Castes. The term 'Depressed Classes' refer to those castes which belong to the lowest rung of the Hindu caste hierarchy and whose touch and proximity is considered polluting by the Caste Hindus. This is a British innovation from an article written by Dr. Annie Besant in the Indian Review, February 1909 with the caption 'The Uplift of the Depressed Classes'. Further, the term 'Depressed Classes' was mentioned in the Census Report, 1921, but the castes constituting the 'Depressed Classes' were not defined. The term 'Depressed Classes' was used before 1930, but since the enactment of Government of India Act, 1935, they are consistently referred to as 'Scheduled Castes'.

In 1901, Risely, then Census Commissioner of India, attempted to classify the Hindu castes. The term 'Scheduled Castes' appeared for the first time in the Government of India Act, 1935. This term was coined by the Simon Commission, 1928, later on the British Government issued the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936, specifying certain

castes and tribes. This category of the Scheduled Castes was known as Harijans, i.e., Children of God- a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi in 1933. The Harijan nomenclature is considered pejorative by some leader of the castes. They prefer to be called 'Dalits' i.e., oppressed. The Dalit Panthers, once a militant organisation had used the term in its Manifesto. It says "Members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless poor peasants, women and those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion are called Dalits".¹ Thus, "the Untouchables of India had themselves chosen 'a new identity', 'a revised self image' that of Dalit to indicate their lack of belief in being polluting, their sense that their condition was the fault of the caste system, and their inclusion in the Ambedkar movement of all those subordinated by their religions, social and economic status".² Through this 'new identity', Dalit Movement directed itself "towards status - improvement vis-a-vis social mobility among Dalits and shaping their agitational sensitivity and assertion for achieving their rights of equality and equal opportunity, self - respect and a respectful identity."³ Thus the Marathi word 'Dalit' was chosen by the group itself and is used proudly; and even in the English Press, this word has to be used without translation. "None of the normal words Untouchable, Scheduled Castes, Depressed Classes, Gandhi's euphemism, *Harijan* - had the same connotation. *Dalit* implies those who have been broken, ground down by

those above them in a deliberate and active way. There is in the word itself an inherent denial of pollution, *Karma*, and justified caste hierarchy."⁴ Professor Gangadhar Pantawane, founder - editor of *Asmitadarsh* (Mirror of Identity), the chief organ of Dalit literature, defines the word as follows:

To me Dalit is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country. He does not believe in God, Rebirth, Soul, Holy Books teaching separatism, Fate and Heaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe in humanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution.⁵

These are the changing perceptions about the community, which was subjected to 'institutionalised deprivation' for centuries and its struggle for Liberation. It started with very reformative kind of attitudes and passed through several radical and revolutionary phases. These were the dynamic change which occurred at the definitional level of the movement and today in socio-political system the word 'Dalit' is widely acceptable and used. But, not much of elucidation is available about the introduction of the term 'Scheduled Castes' either in the Constitution or in any laws or rules. It was in 1901 that the then Census Commissioner of India Risley tried for the first time to classify the Hindu Castes. Then in 1911 an enquiry was made to identify which of the castes and tribes were discriminated against on religious and social grounds. In 1921, these castes and tribe were called the 'Depressed Classes' and J.H. Hutton, the then Census Commissioner, systematically categorised the Depressed Classes.

The expression of the term 'Scheduled Castes' first was coined by the Simon Commission and was placed in the Government of India Act, 1935. Prior to this Act, they were known as Untouchables, Depressed Classes or exterior castes. In April 1936, the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order issued by British Government specified certain castes, races, and tribes as Scheduled Castes in different Provinces of India and the list was continuation of the earlier list of Depressed Classes. Further, the list drawn in the Constitution of India (1950) was a revised version of the above-mentioned Order of 1936. The test applied was the social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the historical customs of Untouchability. Certain specific provisions were made to fulfil the assurance of "JUSTICE, social, economic and political" which has been held out by the Preamble of the Constitution.

There is no definition of Scheduled Castes and tribes in the Constitution itself. But the President is empowered to draw up a list in consultation with the Governor of each States, subject to revision by Parliament (Articles. 341-342). Here it is proper to mention the Constitutional provisions with reference to Scheduled Castes.

In the Preamble itself we have the pledge to secure to all citizens: "JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression,

belief, faith of worship: EQUALITY of status and opportunity", whereby the concept of disabilities arising out of the practice of Untouchability in earlier period find no place. Then, there are various Articles safeguarding the Scheduled Castes, they are Articles. 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 25, 29, 38, 46, 164, 330, 334, 335, 338, 341, and 366, (see Appendix for detail). Further, the Parliament passed the Untouchability Offence Act (UOA) to make the practice of Untouchability a cognizable offence punished under the law. This Act came into operation in December 1956 and was amended in September 1976 and is known as "Protection of Civil Rights Act" (PCRA).

Thus, "The Scheduled Castes (SCs) are known as Harijan - a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi in 1933. The Harijan nomenclature is considered pejorative by some leaders of the castes. They prefer to be called *Dalit*, i.e., the oppressed occupying the lowest rank in the Hindu caste system, they are called Avarna, those whose place is outside the Chaturvarna system. They are known as Perial, Panchamas, Atishudra, Antyaja or Namashudra in different parts of the country. Their touch, and sometimes their shadows and even their voices are believed to pollute caste Hindus. Legally they are no longer untouchables, though in practice many of them still bear that stigma."⁶

The next conceptual issue is concerning the term 'Movement' with reference to Dalits, we find various concepts such as 'Social movement', 'Revolt', 'Agitation', 'political action'. 'Collective action', 'Reform and 'Revolution' which have major thrust to bring about changes in socio-political system. But it needs a serious attention to define the terms, particularly, the movement with special reference to Dalits.

There is no precise definition of the term 'social movement' accepted by scholars of all disciplines or even scholars belonging to the same discipline. "Like many other terms, such as, 'democracy, 'masses,' 'popular', equality', the term 'movement' is often used differently by different social activists, political leader and scholars. Some scholars use the term 'movement' interchangeably with 'organization' or 'union'. Some use it to mean a historical trend or tendency. It is fashionable for political leaders and social reforms to call their activities 'movement' even though their activities are confined to the forming of organizations with less than a dozen members. Some claim to launch movements by issuing press statements on public issues. Like many other words, the term 'movement' is still regarded a 'Hurrah!' word' to use T.D. Weldon's memorable classification".⁷

It was during early nineteenth century that the term 'social movement' gained currency in Europe. This was the period of social upheaval and change where political leaders and authors were concerned with the emancipation of the exploited classes. But there was not a consistent definition of the term 'movement', and it was since early 'fifties that various scholars have attempted to provide 'thorough-going' definitions of the concept of social movement. Here we will discuss first some of the alike concepts before going into details of the term 'social movement'.

One of the most important term synonymous to movement is Collective action which may be of two kinds:

- A) Institutionalised collective action;
- B) Non-institutionalised collective action.

The action which is legally permitted and "widely accepted as binding in society or part of society"⁸ at a given point of time is institutionalised action. Such action includes petitioning, voting in elections, and fighting legal battles in courts of law. Non-institutionalised collective action takes several forms, such as, protest, agitation, strike, Satyagraha, Hartal, gherao, riot. Agitations or protests are not strictly speaking social movement, though a social movement develops in course

of time, and it begins with protest or agitation which may not have the 'organization' or 'ideology' for change.

Ghanshyam Shah⁹ classifies movements as revolt, rebellion, reform and revolution to bring about changes in the political system. Reform does not challenge the political system per se. It attempts to bring about changes in the relations between the parts of the system in order to make it more efficient, responsive and workable. A revolt is a challenge to political authority, aimed at overthrowing the government. A rebellion is an attack on existing authority without any intention of seizing power. In a revolution, a section of society launch an organised struggle to overthrow not only the established government and regime but also the socio economic structure which sustains it and replace the structure by an alternative social order.

According to the Marxist scholars, the causes for social movement are located in the economic structure of society. Antagonistic interests between the propertied and labour classes are inherent in the class-based society which generates contradictions. Subaltern studies group has began to study 'history from below' and emphasised on cultural factors and also viewed a linear development of class consciousness. As per the Marxist ideology, the propertied classes in a class-based society use the coercive

power of the State, as well as of the other institutions, including religion, education, mass media, to expose their ideology on society and to control the exploited classes, whereas, the labour classes resist, protest and occasionally revolt or launch organised and collective action against the dominance of the propertied classes. It is their effort to bring about revolutionary political change by overthrowing the dominant classes in power. Though to Marxists structural causes of conflicting economic interests are central to their studies, a number of Marxist scholars have begun to pay attention to ethnic, religious and other cultural factors. Some of them have attempted to analyse the nature of the consciousness of the exploited classes.

There is another line of argument which asserts that mass movements or protests are redundant in the Indian culture and civilisation due to its 'multilinear character' and all 'pervasive hierarchy'. Because of the Brahmanical ideology and hierarchical social structure the oppressed classes have become docile, obedient and fatalist. But such assertions are refuted by the scholars who point to a number of struggles by the oppressed classes in pre- and post Independence India. Some explain these protests as a result of the conflict between 'tradition' and 'modernity'. According to them parliamentary democracy has been transplanted in India, where there is no tradition of voluntary effort. People have

developed an ambivalent attitude towards authority, they take advantages offered by the political authority but at the same time do not legitimise it. Morris - Jones argues, "Even after Independence government is relied upon and at the same time spat upon and abused. The same man who is "looking to government" one moment may in the next take part in demonstrations involving violence and on a scale that threatens to make any government impossible.¹⁰ This is the outcome of the constant conflict between traditional values and modern institutions.

According to Rajni Kothari, democracy in India has become a playground for growing corruption, criminalisation, repression and intimidation of large masses of the people. The role of the State in 'social transformation' has been undermined. People have started asserting their rights through various struggles:

There is discontent and despair in the air still highly diffuse, fragmented and unorganised. But there is growing awareness of rights, felt politically and expressed politically, and by and large still aimed at the State. Whenever a mechanism of mobilisation has become available, this consciousness has found expression often against very odds, against a constellation of interests that are too powerful and complacent to shed (even share) the privileges. At bottom it is consciousness against a paradigm of society that rests on deliberate indifference to the plight of impoverished and destitute who are being driven to the threshold of starvation by the logic of paradigm itself.¹¹

Kothari feels that mass mobilisation at the grassroots level is both necessary and desirable. He asserts that it is in the state of

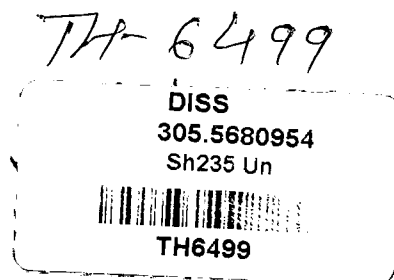
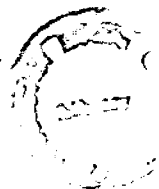
Vaccum in the traditional superstructure of the liberal polity that was supposed to render it humane despite powerful trends that the real counter trends are to be found not in the party system, not in the area of electoral politics and of State power, not in the typical confrontation between the so-called haves and have-nots within the conventional economic space dominated by trade unions. In their place there is emerging a new arena of counteraction, of countervailing tendencies, of counter-cultural movements and more generally of counter-challenge to existing paradigms of thought and action.¹²

Another theory on agitation and mass movements is that of relative deprivation developed by American scholars, particularly by T.R. Gurr¹³ in 1970, but the limitations of this theory have been pointed out by a number of Indian scholars. M.S.A. Rao asserts that relative deprivation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for protest and movement. He argues, "A sufficient level of understanding and reflection is required on the part of the participants, and they must be able to observe and perceive the contrast between the social and cultural conditions of the privileged and those of the deprived, and must realise that it is possible to do something about it".¹⁴ Ghanshyam Shah argues that the theory of relative deprivation ignores the importance of the consciousness and the ideological aspects of the participants. T.K. Oommen also argues that the deprivation theorists view movements as 'temporary aberrations' rather

than as 'on going processes of change'. Moreover, they do not deal with the source of deprivation. For Gurr, 'deprivation' is primarily psychological; therefore he does not deal with the socio economic structure which is the source of deprivation.

Partha Mukherji classifies social movements as accumulative, alternative and transformatory. Accumulative changes are changes within the given structure and system.¹⁵ M.S.A. Rao also offers more or less similar typologies: Reformist, transformatory and revolutionary.¹⁶ However, T.K. Oommen believes that "the movements will neither have the potentialities to root out the existing system completely nor will they succumb to the traditional structure entirely. Essentially then, social movements, provide the stage for confluence between the old and new values and structures".¹⁷ His typologies are related to the process of movement crystallisation, the life style and phases of social movements. For him, movements are charismatic, ideological and organisational.

After analysing the above typologies, it is evident that to define a social movement is a difficult and complex task. However, a working definition of the social movement is necessary to examine the Dalit movement. Paul Wilkinson gives the following working concept of 'social movement':



27/1/91

A social movement is a deliberative collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence illegality, revolution or withdrawal into utopian community. Social movements are thus clearly different from historical movements, tendencies or trends. It is important to note, however, that such tendencies and trends, and the influence of the unconscious and irrational factors in human behaviour, may be of crucial importance in illuminating the problems of interpreting or explaining social movements. A social movement must evince a minimal degree and organisation though this may range from a loose, informal or partial level of organisation to the highly institutionalized and bureaucratized movements and the corporate group. A social movement's commitment to change and the *raison d'être* of its organisation are founded upon the conscious volition, normative commitment to the movement's aims or beliefs, and active participation on the part of the followers or members.¹⁸

This particular characterization of social movements in terms of volition and normative commitment is endorsed by something approaching a consensus among leading scholars in this field. Heberle, for example, conceives of these belief systems as an expression of the collective will of the people among whom they are accepted. He is emphatic that it is the element of volition that makes the beliefs socially effective. It is the conscious volition of individuals acting collectively that brings about the embodiment of ideologies in social movements.

Thus objectives, ideology, programmes, leadership and organisation are the important components of social movements. They are independent, influencing each other. We will examine the Dalit movement with the above working concept of the social movement where I shall try to seriously

examine the important components and their effect on the Dalit movement in its search for 'new self-image' and new identity - building process.

The third problem, which needs attention, is that of the beginning of the Dalit movement. This is also a complex issue and there are many contending views where some scholars trace the beginning right from the Bhakti movement or even back while many others consider the Mahar movement in Maharashtra as an important milestone in the movement. There seems a consensus among the scholars that Dalit struggle during the colonial period, particularly after the arrival of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, gained momentum where the main issues were gaining recognition, representation and power within the changing political order.

We will trace a brief history of Dalit movement where we'll deal with the important issues raised in the course of the movement and finally with the identity building process.

Ghanshyam Shah¹⁹ has classified Dalit movement into two broad categories, viz.,

- A. Reformative Movement,
- B. Alternative Movement.

The Reformatory movement tried to reform the caste system to solve the problem of Untouchability, whereas, the Alternative movement attempts to create an alternative socio-cultural structure where caste domination is eliminated and social justice is ensured to every person with a dignified human life.

The Reformatory movements are further sub-divided into the following categories;

- i. Bhakti Movement
- ii. Neo-Vedantic Movement
- iii. *Sanskritisation* Movement

The Alternative movements are also sub-divided into the following;

- i. Proselytization Movement
- ii. Secular Movement

Bhakti Movement (12th to 18th centuries) attempted to purify Hinduism of its evils and fought against the tyranny of caste-system. This movement, after the Buddhism, left a great appeal for the establishment of an egalitarian society and produced saints like Chokhamela and Eknath, whose poetry become instrumental in the Dalit awakening. Both of them offered models for contemporary change in regard to Untouchability. The lives of both are known by legend; their songs are sung by devotees on the

pilgrimages and in *bhajan* sessions. Chokhamela was a Mahar, the only important Bhakti figure in Maharashtra from an Untouchable caste. Eknath was a Brahman from the holy city of Paithan who wrote about Chokhamela, ate with Maharas, allowed Untouchables into his *bhajan* sessions and wrote poem in the persona of a Mahar who was wiser in spiritual matters than the Brahmans.

Saint Chokhamela was born in the second half of the thirteenth century, probably about the time that Dnyaneshwar, who is considered the founder of the Bhakti sect in Maharashtra, was born. He died in 1338 in Mangalvedhe, a town in Sholapur district. Chokhamela and his family seem to have followed the traditional duties of a Mahar.

There is an inherent element of protest against the concept of Untouchability in Chokhamela's Bhakti songs, though his songs also reveal the traditional devotion and piety of the *Bhakta*. Chokhamela questioned the very basis of the caste system, which preached purity:

The only impurity is in the five elements.
There is only one substance in the world.
Then who is pure and who is impure?
The cause of pollution is the creation of the body.
In the beginning, at the end, there is nothing but pollution.
No one knows anyone who was born pure.
Chokha says, in wonder, who is pure?

Abhanga 11 in *Chokhamela Abhang Gatha*, 1950.

The central argument of Chokhamela's poetry was protest and question, though he lived in his traditional role as a Mahar and with its traditional limitations. The spirit of most of the *abhangas* is delight in the Lord, delivery from life's sufferings through devotion. Even though agony is there, the central message is that Chokha, even though a Mahar, could experience the grace of God.

The next important figure of the Bhakti Movement is Shri Eknath Maharaj (C.1533-1599), whose background was completely different from that of Chokhamela. He belonged to a Brahmin family of considerable fame and the political world around Eknath was also dissimilar to the fourteenth century world in which Chokhamela lived. Chokhamela was probably a very young man when Alla-ud-din-Khilji stormed Devagiri in 1296; his time also witnessed the raids of Muhammad Tuglaq, who shifted his capital to Daulatabad in 1327, but Chokhamela died before the stable Bahmani kingdom was created in 1347. It is also noticeable that the political life is missing in Chokhamela's works. But Eknath lived at the time of the Ahmadnagar Sultanate, whose influence can be seen in the number of Persian words which Eknath used in his writings, in the Muslim terms for administration which he wove into the poetry which used obligations to government as an analogy for debts to God.

Eknath's most important contribution of Bhakti tradition is for the Untouchables. He wrote some three hundred *bharuds*, drama poems meant to be acted out, and of these almost fifty are written as if an Untouchable were the author. Forty-seven *bharuds* seem to come from the mouth of Mahar men or women; one is written in the name of Mang, one of the three important Untouchable castes.

The poems in which the Mahar is the speaker are *Johar* poems, beginning with the greetings used by Mahars to their superiors. Most are very different from the poems of Chokhamela; in Eknath's *bharuds*, the Mahar not only preaches to others about morality, the necessity of a *Guru* and the company of the *Sants*, but also of the calamity of the rebirth that is inevitable for those who do not follow the Bhakti path, and of the false lives of the pseudo-pious.

Eknath's writings make it clear that there is no caste distinction in the sight of God, as he puts in the following song:

God baked pots with Gora,
drove cattle with Chokha,
cut grass with Savata Mali,
wore garments with Kabir,
coloured hide with Ravidas,
sold meat with butcher Sajana,
melted gold with Narahari,
carried cow-dung with Janabai,
and even become the Mahar messenger of Damaji.²⁰

Thus, with the growth of nationalism and the awakening interest in the upliftment of the depressed classes, Bhakti movement, still very much alive, came to serve a new purpose. Mahadeo Govind Ranade, a member of the reformist religious group, the Prarthana Samaj, as well as a leading nationalist, wrote in 1900 of the historic importance of the Bhakti movement:

.... like the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century, there was a Religious, Social and Literary Revival and Reformation in India... This Religious Revival was not Brahmanical in its orthodoxy; it was heterodox in its spirit of protest against forms and ceremonies and class distinctions based on birth, and ethical in its preference of a pure heart, and of the law of love, to all other acquired merits and good works. This Religious Revival was the work also of the people, of the masses, and not of the classes. At its head were Saints and Prophets, Poets and Philosophers, who sprang chiefly from the lower orders of society - tailors, carpenters, potters, gardeners, shop-keepers, barbers, and even *Mahars*-more often than Brahmins.²¹

In Northern India, there was a Bhakti resurgence from the late nineteenth century. In this period Untouchable ideologues, who spearheaded social movements against caste distinctions, challenged, in particular, social division of labour based on ritual status - this, they argued, prevented occupational diversification and in turn precipitated material deprivations, powerlessness and lack of education. In the early twentieth century, adherence to Bhakti tradition and veneration of Kabir and Ravidas became widespread among the Untouchables in Uttar

Pradesh. We will discuss, in detail, the social context of Bhakti resurgence in the course of this work.

After Bhakti Movement, Neo-Vedantic Movement attempted to a re-interpretation of the doctrine of Hinduism so as to cleanse it of its evils and render it back to the original priestly purity. Exponents, like Dayanand and Vivekanand, played an important role during this period. These movements attempted to remove Untouchability by taking them into the fold of the caste system. According to the pioneers of these movements, Untouchability was not an essential part of Hinduism, and for that matter, of the caste system. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, believed that the caste system was a political institution created by the rulers. He said, 'in fact, any Brahmana, who is disqualified for his work, becomes at once a Sudra *de jure* and a Sudra, who qualifies for it becomes at once a Brahmana *de jure*...' ²² The Arya Samaj started various educational and welfare programmes for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes. Satish Kumar Sharma's book 'Social Movement and Social Change (1985) is an important study which examines the relationship between the Arya Samaj and the Untouchables. The study is confined to Punjab only but some of his observations are also applicable for the other parts of the country. Sharma observes that Arya Samaj was against the political movements of the Untouchables. It went against any move initiated by the Untouchables for their solidarity and integration.

Thus seen the neo-Vadantic movements and non-Brahmans movements played 'an important catalytic role'²³ in developing anti-caste or anti-Hinduism dalit movement in the country. The Satyashodhak Samaj and the Self Respect movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the Adi-Dharma and Adi-Andhra movements in Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, are important anti-untouchability movements which were launched in the last quarter of the nineteenth and early part of this century. We also get scattered references on the Adi-Hindu and Nanashudra movements. Mark Juergensmeyer's book 'Religion as Social Vision' (1982) deals with the Adi-Dharma movement against Untouchability in twentieth century Punjab. It began in 1920s. The main plea of the movement was that the Untouchables constituted a *quam*, and their *quam* existed in India from time immemorial, i.e., before the Hindu arrived. According to Mark Juergensmeyer, "It had established a fact which previously had been unproved: that the Untouchable castes were capable of mobilising for their own benefits, and of organising in ways that permitted them to compete under the conditions that governed the socio-political area at large."²⁴ Later on, the movement was absorbed in Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation in the late 'forties.

Through Sanskritization movement, a section of Untouchables who could improve their economic condition, either by abandoning or

continuing their traditional occupations, launched struggle for higher status in the caste hierarchy. The concept of Sanskritization is defined by the founder of this concept, M.N. Srinivas as follows:

The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism or teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its rituals and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins and the adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called '*Sanskritisation*.'"²⁵

In this way the lower castes followed Sanskritic norms and rituals. They tried to justify their claims to a higher social status in the caste hierarchy by inventing suitable mythologies. The Sharar or Nadar of Tamil Nadu have crossed the boundary of untouchability. The Iravas or Ezhavas of Kerala have also blurred, if not completely destroyed, the line of untouchability. The Nadar organised movements in the late nineteenth century against the civic disabilities they suffered. They entered the political system by first supporting the Justice Party in the early 1930s and later the Congress party. They have moved from the lower rungs of the ritual hierarchy to "a position of status and power". Similarly, the Ezhavas formed their caste organisation in 1903, known as SNDA Yogam (Association for the Maintenance of Dharma founded by Sri Narayana). The Association launched activities for Sanskritizing norms and customs

of the Iravas. They launched a *Satyagraha* for temple entry in 1920s, as well as bargained with the government for economic opportunities and political positions, thus, improving their status.

It is clear by now that Dalit movement in pre-Independence period had achieved a respectable status. Though reformatory in nature, the Bhakti movement, the neo-vadantic movements and the Sanskritization movement have contributed much in Dalit awakening and it can be said that these movements laid the firm foundation for the Dalit Liberation movement whose agenda include recognition of human existence, social mobility, political participation, social change and establishment of an egalitarian society. Now we will discuss the Alternative movements.

Through Conversion Movement, Dalits offer a new alternative religion, Buddhism, in negation of Hinduism. It started with Ambedkar's personal conversion announcement in 1935 which was followed by a Mahar Conference in 1936 where Ambedkar declared:

Religion is for man; man is not for religion,
If you want to gain self respect, change your religion.
If you want to create a co-operative society change your religion.
If you want power, change your religion.
If you want equality, change your religion.
If you want independence, change your religion.
If you want to make the world in which you live, happy, change your religion....²⁶

Buddhism offered scriptural justification for worth achieved by mind and action, not by birth. So in 1956, Ambedkar took Diksha from the oldest Buddhist monk in India before a large audience in Nagpur and set in motion the conversion process that brought over three million Indians into the Buddhist fold in the next few years. The Conversion Movement gave new, changed identity, as Professor Gangadhar Pantavane, stated,

Bhimrao has placed us in the lap of a life giving religion and so has awakened psychological independence...This is the religion of Gautam, who with love won the world, and the spine of this religion is humanity.²⁷

Commenting on the Conversion, Namdev Dhasal said,

Conversion to Buddhism... freed the Scheduled Castes from mental and psychological enslavement... Religion has an attraction for the common man and it was not easy to change his attitude towards it... The Buddhists have liberated themselves from old ideas of *Karma* and destiny and from worship of Hindu gods. To the extent this facilitated their adopting rational attitudes to their conditions in society, the chance of their actively striving to change their conditions were better.²⁸

Thus, the Conversion Movement left an immense appeal to the Dalits, though its benefits are mostly limited to mental relax but its otherwise impact is remarkable. It rejected Hinduism, thus, the caste system. But the Conversion has one facet of a multi-level effort. Economic improvement of the masses, freedom from village harassment and urban prejudice etc. all must come through some other path. The Conversion seems to have helped to create the will to probe every possible means to pressure group

unity. It also hailed the vision for an alternate society where all people are equal and enjoying a dignified life.

In the Secular Movement, which includes economic issues also, we find an attempt to build an alternative socio-cultural identity for the oppressed classes. During this movement, Dalit literature flourished well and people started propagating their ideas by publishing original literature such as poems, stories, plays which are used as a means of protest against Hindu intellectual tradition, the Hindu religion and Hindu ethics.

There occurred land grab movements in the late 'sixties where Harijan agricultural labourers participated at a number of places in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. These movements are still alive in the numerous villages of the country. They have contributed in generating class consciousness among the people living in a caste-structured society. Some of the movements have seen violence also whereas others are being fought with the changed socio-politico-economic context. These movements are also helping to develop consciousness among the oppressed classes regarding the socio-economic structure and cultural reality which keep them subjugated.

Thus, all these movements have provided "ample evidence of a Dalit Movement prior to the enactment of the 1919 Constitution, growing in size

and political significance through the 1920s and 1930s. Dalits may not have had a single organisation parallel to the Muslim League or Hindu Mahasabha, but they did have grassroots organisations, a recognised leadership, pre-eminent among whom Dr. Ambedkar; and a common demand for political recognition, for representation of their own, as well as for dignity, equality and justice".²⁹

Study of the awakening of the Dalits in this century can be sub-divided as:

- A. Era of struggle for the recognition of human existence and socio-political rights till Independence (1920-1950)
- B. Era of restructuring through social mobility and political participation (1950-1985)
- C. Era of actual sharing or exercise of power (1985 onwards).

As it is evident from the earlier analysis that long before the era of struggle for recognition human existence and socio-political rights, attempts were made to emancipate Untouchables from the clutches of upper castes exploitation and degradation by various saints and social reformers. But they tried to do so on the basis of philosophical and religious grounds, but failed as they connived at the continuation of the Varna system. Basic challenge to this exploitative system came from the Conversion Movement which rejected the philosophical tenets of the caste

system. Another powerful challenge came from the incursion of Islam in India which had both material and spiritual aspects. But reform movements within the Hindu society continued to keep Untouchables at the mercy of good will of the upper castes people. None of them made any attempt to encourage these depressed and distressed people to stand on their own feet and assert as human beings. From this point of view, they had no idea to make the Dalits politically conscious of their rights and privileges, however, some of them did succeed in making them socially mobile. It was only during the Freedom Movement that these castes were trained to think in terms of socio-political awakening based on social mobility.

Analysing the periods of the Dalit movement of this century, one finds that the level of socio-cultural awakening and consciousness was raised in the first two decades of this century, and with the arrival of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), this movement reached its zenith. The years between 1930 and 1936 were a turning point in the history of the Dalit movement in India. These years witnessed the All-India Depressed Classes Conference at Nagpur in 1930; Ambedkar's attendance at the First Round Table Conference; his clash with Gandhi before and at the Second Round Table Conference, culminating in the Poona Pact of 1932; and the famous Conversion announcement in 1935,

I have been born a Hindu but I will not die a Hindu.³⁰

The events of this period led to Ambedkar's final disillusionment with Hinduism and with the Congress leadership. At the same time these events revealed the power represented by Ambedkar and by the Dalit movement which had risen with him and confirmed him as an unparalleled leader of the Dalits, forcing the Congress leadership to deal with his demands.

Thus, Dr. Ambedkar played three important roles during his life time: that of a caste leader, that of an Untouchable spokesman, and that of national statesman. In his first leadership role, he was guide, *guru* and decision maker for his own caste, the Mahars of Maharashtra, from the mid-twenties of this century until his death. From the early 1930s onwards he was chief spokesman of the Untouchables. In his third role, he spoke on all phases on India's development, worked on problems of labour and law as a member of the Government, and even put aside some of his own theories to help create a viable, generally accepted Constitution.

It was at the time of Simon Commission that Dr. Ambedkar came forward with his demands categorically. He submitted, on the behalf of the Depressed Classes of Bombay, a Statement³¹ for asking some guarantees before Simon Commission, which are mentioned hereunder:

- i. That the education of the depressed classes shall be recognised as the first charge on the revenues of the Province and that an equitable and just proportion of the total grant for education shall be earmarked for the benefit of the depressed classes.
- ii. That the right of the depressed classes to unrestricted recruitment in the army, navy and the police shall be recognised without any limitation as to caste.
- iii. That for a period of 30 years the rights of the depressed classes for priority in the matter of recruitment to all posts, gazetted as well as non-gazetted, in all civil services shall be recognised.
- iv. That the right of the depressed classes to effective representation on the local bodies shall be recognised by the Provincial Government.
- v. That the right of the depressed classes to appeal to the Government of India in cases of violation of these rights by the Provincial Government shall be recognised and the Government of India shall be given the power to compel the Provincial Government to conform to the law in these matters.

Thus, it became clear at the time of the Simon Commission that Dalits were becoming politically conscious and they had started agitation for the recognition of their socio-political rights. During the Simon Commission, it was announced that after the work of the Commission was

over, the representatives of India be assembled for discussion on the future Constitution of India. This was the background of the three Round Table Conferences which took place in London from 1930-32. Dr. Ambedkar attended the First Round Table Conference along with M.N. Srinivasan of Madras to represent India's Untouchables, he was unequivocal that Untouchables needed political power and equally definite that this could only be gained within the framework of an Independent India. He stated:

The point of view I'll try to put as briefly as I can. It is this, that the bureaucratic form of Government in India should be replaced by a Government which will be a Government of the people, by the people and for the people...³²

Arguing that the goodwill of the British is irrelevant, he went on:

The Government of India does realise the necessity of removing the social evils which are eating into the vitals of Indian society and which have blighted the lives of the downtrodden classes for years. The Government of India does realise that the landlords are squeezing the masses dry and the capitalists are not giving the labourer a living wage and decent conditions of work. Yet it is a most painful thing that it has not dared to touch any of these evils. Why?... These are some of the questions raised by the depressed classes... we feel that nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can and we can not remove them unless we get political power in our own hands. No share of this political power can evidently come to us so long as the British government remains as it is. It is only in a Swaraj Constitution that we stand any chance of getting the political power in our own hands, without which we cannot bring salvation to our people....³³

Ambedkar spoke at the Conference for a unitary state and adult suffrage with reserved seats and safeguards for Untouchables. It is to be

noted that it was this Conference that shaped the 1935 Government of India Act: A Federal Constitution in which the Princely States could enter as an autonomous units; a slightly expanded electorate but hardly adult suffrage; and responsible government at the Provincial level highly qualified by residual powers given to British-appointed governors. The Indian National Congress did not attend the First Round Table conference.

At the second Round Table Conference, Ambedkar confronted Gandhi, who not only refused to consider separate electorate for the depressed classes but also opposed any form of special representation involving reserved seats. The two men had met for the first time in Bombay just before the Second Round Table Conference and this meeting ended in distress, hence, this unsatisfactory meeting and the basic disagreement between two on the issue of special representation for Untouchables, made negotiation during the Round Table Conference session difficult. The situation was exacerbated by Gandhi's questioning of Ambedkar's bona fides:" I say that it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of Untouchables of India... I myself in my own person claim to represent the vast mass of the Untouchables.."³⁴

After the Third Round Table Conference, during which Gandhi was in jail, the British government announced a decision regarding

representation. This Communal Award of 1932 gave the Depressed Classes a double vote, one in special constituency for a modest number of reserved seats, and another in general electorate. Gandhi's response to Communal Award was to enter a "fast unto death" on September 20, 1932, which led to a compromise between Gandhi and Ambedkar, known as the Yerwada or the Poona Pact.

But the differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar surfaced, again, as soon as Gandhi started his League Against Untouchability (which was to become Harijan Sevak Sangh) and Ambedkar attempted to intervene. There were two important issues: whether the League would be controlled by caste Hindus or the Dalits would have at least a share in control, and whether it would seek only to abolish Untouchability or aim at abolition of Chaturvarna itself. Gandhi firmly held out for caste Hindu control on the grounds that since Untouchability was an evil of Hinduism that had to be purged, Hindus themselves must do this; he also stressed that he was not against Chaturvarna as a system. In this way, it became impossible for Gandhi and Ambedkar to work together on the issue of Dalit emancipation.

Another important contribution which needs serious attention is the political initiatives taken by Dr. Ambedkar, who was instrumental in

establishing three political parties; Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1936, Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) in 1942, which led to the formation of the Republican Party of India (RPI) in 1956. These were the attempts to join Untouchables to larger group or in a solid mass to seek political power. The Programme³⁵ of the ILP was "mainly to advance the welfare of the labouring classes" and the Party accepted with socialist flavour, the principle of state management and state ownership of industries wherever it may become necessary in the interests of the people". Aid to agriculturists through land mortgage banks; co-operative and marketing societies; technical education and the promotion of the new industries; reform of the tenants system; free and compulsory education and a pledge to bring about a fair mixture of caste in the administration were planks of the platform. This Party was able to secure 14 seats out of 18 it contested in the 1937 elections. Eleanor Zelliot writes on this,

With the Conversion announcement in 1935, the establishment of a political party in 1936, and to considerable success in 1937 elections, the shift from attempting to gain status in matters of religion to organising political activity was nearly complete."³⁶

Then, in July 1942, the All-India Depressed Classes Conference was held at Nagpur which brought the ILP to an end and constituted SCF before a mass of 70,000 of which one third were women. There were two specific demands; one, for "separate village settlement of entirely Scheduled Castes villages", away from and independent of Hindu villages"

and the other was renewing the demand for separate electorates. Aside from this, the SCF maintain most of the other specific demands of the ILP. In 1956 Dr.Ambedkar made an attempt to transform the SCF into a party which would speak for all the 'dispossessed' and thus, the RPI was created which, later, put its Charter of Demands³⁷ in details, some of the demands are as follows:

1. A portrait Dr.B.R.Ambedkar as "Father of the Indian Constitution in the Central Hall of the Parliament.
2. The Nation's land given to the landless tiller.
3. Idle and wasteland given to landless labour.
4. Full implementation of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
5. Extension of Scheduled Castes privileges to the SCs members who have embraced Buddhism.
6. Full justice under the Untouchability Offence Act.

Thus, Ambedkar's contribution to the Dalit movement is most precious. His was a committed personality for the emancipation of Dalits in particular and for the nation-building and social transformation in general. His writings are full of serious analysis of the caste-ridden Indian society and of the Hindu social system. He also gave the most desired direction for modernisation and development by framing the Constitution of Free India and served as the first Indian Law Minister for sometimes in

the Nehru Cabinet. Finally, he offered an alternative vision of religion by embracing Buddhism.

Now it becomes important to deal with several pertinent questions of Dalit movement in continuity. Here our endeavour will be to find out Dalits as a category of caste, class and religion, thereafter to recognise the important trends in the Dalit movement. First of all, we will discuss Dalits *as a category of Caste*.

Caste is the most striking feature of the Indian society and every one recognises that caste system determines the very texture of Indian politics. It has become part and parcel of the Indian Political System. Castes have come out of ancient fourfold classification of society known as '*Varna*', viz., (1) *Brahmins* who were supposed to be the priests and the custodians of knowledge; (2) *Kshatriyas*, who were expected to be the rulers and soldiers; (3) *Vaishyas*, that is traders and land holder, and (4) *Shudras*, who provide the other needed services. A fifth group, the *Panchamas*, are put at the lowest level, and performed menial and despicable tasks. They were considered external to the system and were called Untouchables now known as the 'Scheduled Castes.' These '*Varnas*', later on, in due course of time, became, '*Jati*' or caste which, in turn, was divided into several sub-castes. Here, what is desired is to examine public activity and politics in

a society articulated along caste lines. There are three aspects of this view. The first is what may be called the secular aspect which includes the governmental aspect (Caste Councils, village arbitration procedures and so on) and the political aspects (within caste and inter-caste authority and status alignments). Second, there is the integration aspect. The caste system not only determines the individual's social station on the basis of group to which he is born but also differentiates and assigns occupational and economic roles. It thus gives a place to every individual from the highest to the lowest and makes for a high degree of identification and integration. Third, there is the aspect of consciousness which leads to variation of *Varna* according to one's level of understanding of the social system as a whole.

After analysing the history of Dalit movement, we can say that this movement started as non-Brahman movement which led to anti-caste movement during the Bhakti period. It also attempted to purify Hinduism of its evils and fought against the tyranny of the caste system. This anti-caste movement was, in turn, a part of a broader revolutionary movement which included the National Movement and the Communist and socialist led working class and peasants movements as well. Thus, Dalit movement initiated against the evils of the caste system but later on it broadens its horizons and addressed to and affiliated with the working class and peasant struggles.

Coming to the next category of Dalits *as a class*, we find some important observations of the caste-class analysis; actually we have a mixing up of two social differentiations. One, based, on caste, is a legacy of the past but has been carried over into the present. The other is class differentiation, based on the development of productive forces and the commensurating production relations. Inevitably, the second is growing more powerful each day, and is breaking up the rigid framework imposed by the caste system. Objective developments are strengthening class divisions and antagonisms and the struggle between the classes is becoming sharper. It is well established that caste based associations can no longer improve the social conditions whereas class consciousness and class struggle unite all sections of the exploited masses against their exploiters, while caste consciousness and caste struggle divide the exploited masses according to their castes while claiming to fight the exploiters. The caste ideology of the dominant castes cannot be fought by building a counter-caste ideology of the lower or backward castes. Dalit movement can achieve significant success where it will polarise itself on the class line and will associate itself with the larger struggles outside the caste framework.

The next category which needs attention is *that of religion vis-a-vis Dalits*. Hinduism was rejected by the Dalits because of its several faults

which have infiltrated pains and atrocities on them. They embraced Buddhism as it preaches egalitarianism and thus Dalit "liberated themselves from old ideas of *Karma*, destiny and from worship of Hindu gods".³⁸ It was the Conversion movement, which Ambedkar announced in 1936, that "galvanized Dalits through out India and it was the choice of Buddhism that lay down the challenge for an alternative Indian identity."³⁹

On the basis of this historical analysis, we can identify some of the trends in Dalit Movement in India, that:

The Dalit Movement in the beginning, was a Reformative movement which attempted to purify Hinduism of its evils and fought against the tyranny of the caste system. During this period, Saints like Chokhamela, Eknath, Kabir and Ravidas played a very important role in the awakening of the Dalit consciousness.

Second, with this Reformative movement, there were Alternative movements too, which attempted to create an alternative socio-cultural structure where caste domination is eliminated and every person can live with self-dignity.

Third, the Dalit Movement did not emerge only in Maharashtra as a result of Ambedkar's leadership there were similar trends, though of varying degree of strength, in all regions.

Fourth, the Movement was genuinely anti-caste, not merely a caste reform movement. Internal reforms, like giving up drinking and rejecting customs which marked the caste as 'low' in a Brahmanic hierarchy, were themes everywhere, along with demands of education and entry into employment and political institutions.

Fifth, Dalits as exploited workers, peasants and agricultural labourers were involved with economic or class issues everywhere, and these were expressed in demands, like land grab movement, made in all regions.

Sixth, Dalit Movement emerged as a great political force but much weaker in organizational strength and financial resources.

Seventh, Dalit Movement has come up with new identity, rejecting Hinduism and embracing Buddhism to build an alternative equitable and egalitarian society.

Finally, in the present century, "Untouchables of India had themselves chosen a new identity, that of Dalits - to indicate their lack of belief in being polluting, their sense that their condition was the fault of the caste system and their inclusion in the Ambedkar movement".⁴⁰ It is also evident that in the course of the Movement the connotation of the word 'Dalit' is broadened and now it is not confined only to the 'ex-Untouchables' but it refers to those also who are deprived of their socio-economic and cultural rights.

To understand contemporary Dalit struggle two approaches seem to predominate. One is that represented by Professor Nadu Ram who sees three types of contemporary Dalit Movements:

Movements against socio-economic exploitation and numerous types of atrocities committed on the Dalits; movements for better access to the opportunities and for realisation of goals of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice; and finally movements for gaining self-respect and dignified social identity.⁴¹

The second approach seeks an underlying unity beneath this diversity, as represented by Rajni Kothari:

The Dalits' expectations and strategy seem to be designed to challenge the dominant castes by means of education, employment and special rights, in short, a struggle against the system that begins with challenging injustices within it, thinking of a struggle against 'domination' and imperialism. Or as some of them would say, redefine nature of imperialism in essentially social terms both locally and globally.⁴²

Thus, in the post-Independence India, it is urgently needed that political situation of the movement should be clearly underlined. "At the time of Independence and after, Dalits have not become powerholders themselves, the movement was not controlling events, it was suffering a process of co-optation and incorporation. Repression continued and still continuing open and brutal in the villages, but it was overlaid in the co-optation, the winning over with the individuals with few crumbs and the erosion of movement organisations, accompanied by the overflowing

paternalistic and benign rhetoric of the party which Ambedkar had described as the party of 'Brahmans and the bourgeoisies.'⁴³

Then, what seems the possible path to liberation. Dr. Ambedkar, in one of his works titled. 'What Path to Liberation', had argued that a necessary condition was to overthrow of 'Hindu religious-ideological hegemony'. He had tended to see economic and social oppression as separate structures, taking up cultural change as the way to challenge Hinduism; socialism as the way to overcome exploitation and a combined struggle, dealing with economic and socio-cultural issues is always needed. Today, this combined struggle is needed greater than ever.

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Chapter III

*Political Consciousness and Participation
of Dalit in Uttar Pradesh*

With a total population of 13.91 crores, Uttar Pradesh is the biggest State, in terms of population of the Republic of India. The biggest district of the State, in terms of population, is Allahabad (49,21,313) followed by Varanasi (48,60,582) and Deoria (44,40,024), while Uttarkashi stands the smallest one with a population of 2,39,709. The Literacy Rate of the State is 41.60 percent. The total Scheduled Castes population of the State is 2,92,79,455 which is 21.05 percent of the total population. Thus, Uttar Pradesh is one of the States in the Indian Union in which SCs constitute more than 20% of the population, ranking third after Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.¹

Uttar Pradesh has been politically the most important State in India. Its vast, fertile, Gangetic plains attracted invaders from West and Central Asia, and in many ways the history of Uttar Pradesh became history of India. The impact of Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Rule was most penetrative in this region. The Mutiny of 1857 remained largely confined to the plains of Uttar Pradesh and later, most of the important leaders of the Freedom Struggle were drawn from this State. "The roots of many developments in twentieth century Indian politics lie not in nineteenth century Calcutta or Bombay but in the nineteenth century Benaras, Allahabad and Aligarh".² The introduction of democratic politics after 1947 has further increased its importance as it elects one out of every six members to the Parliament.

Political consciousness and participation in politics by the Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Uttar Pradesh has been traditionally low. The State witnessed no anti-upper caste movement as in the western and parts of South India during the colonial period. It was only in the immediate post-colonial period that a small upwardly mobile section of the community, influenced by the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar, under the Republican Party of India was able to mobilise the SCs for a short period of time. Then, since mid-1980s a new wave of caste-based mobilisation in North India has brought the SCs into politics in the State under the leadership of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) formed by Kanshi Ram. In this chapter we will discuss the emergence of political consciousness, political participation and attempts to form a new social identity by the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh since the colonial period.

According to the 1931 Census, the SCs constitute 21% of the population as Table 1.1 shows standing second after the intermediate cultivating castes who comprised 41.9%, while elite castes together comprised about 22.1%.³ This proportion remains more or less the same since then. However, two features of the geography of the castes and particularly of the SCs in Uttar Pradesh should be noted as they help in explaining the role of the Scheduled Castes in politics: (1) No single caste group in U.P. has a numerical majority in the total population; (2) there is no regional concentration of any caste group in the state.

Table 1.1

CASTES IN THE UNITED PROVINCES IN 1931

Caste Category	Percentages in the total population
A. Upper elite non cultivating castes	20.0
B. Elite cultivating castes	2.1
C. Intermediate cultivating and other backward groups	41.9
D. Scheduled Castes	
1. Chamars	12.7
2. Pasis	2.9
3. Dhobi	1.6
4. Bhangi	1.0
5. Others	2.8
Total	21.0
E. Muslims	15.0

SOURCE: Census of the United Provinces, 1931.

Except in the hill areas where Thakurs constitute more than 50% of the population, there is no caste with more than a quarter of a district's population. Only in five districts in Uttar Pradesh - Mainpuri, Azamgarh, Ghaziabad, Mathura and Saharanpur - does a single caste approximate to nearly 20% of the total population, in the case of the last two districts, the caste being Chamars, second larger castes like Brahmins, Rajputs, Ahirs, Chamars and Kurmis tend to be evenly spread throughout the State. Jats,

Tyagis and Gujars in the West, Kachchis in South-central, Kewats and Kurmis in the few North-eastern districts and Bhumihars in Varanasi and Ghazipur have regional concentration. Thus, Uttar Pradesh is a multi-caste State and is probably the most extensive area of India without a clearly dominant castes. Not only the districts but even the villages are multi-caste in nature though some are predominantly single caste villages. An average village would have 15 to 20 castes represented in its population. As a result, mobilisation of a single caste across the State becomes difficult for any political party.

Among the Scheduled Castes, the Chamars, known as Kureels in Central Uttar Pradesh and Jatavs elsewhere, account for about 10-12% of the total population in the State, more or less as same as the Yadavs. They have been active in politics in parts of the State as a dominant group since 1920, though internal differences have been an important hurdle in political mobilisation of Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh. The 1911 Census showed that the Chamars were scattered fairly even over the United Provinces, numerically strong in Gorakhpur and Basti but also found in large numbers in Saharanpur and Meerut. A study in the 1960s which attempted to map the distribution of castes in the Northern plains, showed that Chamars are the most numerous caste in six out of seven regions in which the U.P. plains were divided.⁴ However, nowhere was their plurality

very large, and over no extensive tract did they constitute over a fifth or less than an eighth of the total population. There are three areas (Rohilekhand, Agra and Eastern Plains) where Chamars have dominance, and these are the same areas where Scheduled Castes parties have been able to build a strong base. The second most numerous group among the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh is that of Pasis who occupied the Central part of the State thus separating the regions of the Chamars' dominance of eastern and western Uttar Pradesh.

That the Scheduled Castes constitute one of the poorest and marginalised sections of the population in Uttar Pradesh is evident from a brief look at their socio-economic conditions. Traditionally, Scheduled Castes have been placed outside the caste hierarchy and were considered 'Untouchables'. Although the notion of purity and pollution are no longer as strong they still suffer from the trauma of social inequality, economic backwardness and psychological inferiority. The Literacy Rate for the Scheduled Caste in Uttar Pradesh is only 26.85% as against the State average of 41.06% and is also lower than the National average for Scheduled Castes which stands at 37.21%. The Literacy rate among Scheduled Caste women is as low as 10.69% as against 25.31% in the general population.⁵ The 1931 Census shows that although they formed 12.7% of the population, only 0.6% of Chamars were literate, whereas the corresponding figures for the upper castes who took the western education

much earlier are 70.3% for Kyasthas, 38.4% for Baniyas, 13.3% for Rajputs and 2.44% for Brahmins.⁶

The number of workers among the Scheduled Castes is 35.29% which is higher than 32.20% in the general population, males constituting 53.04% and females 17.61%. Only 11.79% of the Scheduled Castes live in the urban areas which is lower than the National average of 18.72%.⁷ Most of them are, hence, involved in agriculture where the large majority being landless labourers or poor peasants.

Traditionally, control over land has always been in the hands of the upper castes. During the colonial period, unlike the Rajputs and Kyasthas, the share of Brahmins was higher in many districts on the cultivated land as compared to their share in the ownership. Thus, whereas the former lost land as a result of terminal reforms, Brahmins gained security of tenure and finally ownership in 1952 as a result of Zamindari abolition, upper castes also owned the best quality of the land in the villages and paid less rent than the middle and lower castes.

Table 1.2 from a recent study shows that today as against their share of 21% in the total population, the Scheduled Castes households operate only 9.5% of the land. Area involved in general holdings upto five acres

is 47.8% of the total area, whereas the Scheduled Castes holdings is as high as 67.5% of those who operate on large holdings of 25 acres and above, only three percent belong to Scheduled Castes. Thus, Scheduled Castes own very little land which is a major source of livelihood and socio-political power in rural India.

Table 1.2

NUMBER AND AREA OF LANDHOLDINGS WITH SCS IN U.P.

Size in Acres	No. of Holdings in OOOs			Area of Holdings in OOO acres		
	With SCs	Total	%	With SCs	Total	%
0-2.5	2149.3 (81.6)	12344.3 (70.4)	17.4	1766.2 (42.6)	11075.3 (25.2)	16.0
2.5-5.0	334.9 (12.7)	2819.7 (16.3)	11.5	1115.0 (26.9)	9907.3 (22.6)	11.2
5.0-10	120.1 (4.6)	1595.6 (9.2)	7.6	795.5 (19.2)	10896.2 (24.8)	7.3
10-25	28.8 (1.0)	658.0 (3.7)	4.4	390.5 (9.4)	9297.5 (21.2)	4.2
More than 25	2.1 (0.0)	71.2 (0.4)	3.0	79.5 (1.9)	2720.2 (6.2)	2.9
	2635.20 (100.0)	17563.8 (100.0)	15.0	4146.7 (100.0)	43896.3 (100.0)	9.5

Source: Imtiaz Ahmed and N.C. Saxena, 'Caste, Land and Political Power in U.P.', in K.L. Sharma (ed.) Caste and Class in India (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1994), p.190.

However, there have been improvements in the conditions of Scheduled Castes in more recent years although the pace of change has

been slow and poverty and exploitation remains, this is substantiated by a recent study of agricultural labourers in three villages in eastern Uttar Pradesh. The dependence on landowner and old patron-client relations has been minimised due to the new employment opportunities on farms, brick kilns, construction activities and also urbanisation. Culturally, Scheduled Castes have also improved their conditions. The catalyst for change has been education and spread of electoral process while welfare programmes of the government have had a negligible impact. A small urban elite has also arisen within the Scheduled Castes community in post-Independence period, particularly among the Chamars. They were the first to avail the education facilities and were consequently placed to avail the benefits of the Reservation policies some of them have prospered in their traditional leather business. This has equipped them to form the vanguard of the new Dalit assertiveness since the mid-1980s.

II

Colonial Period

In contrast to the Southern States, Uttar Pradesh did not experience any large-scale anti-caste movement during the colonial period. The reasons lie in the rigid and unchanging character of the social structure in Uttar Pradesh, the nature and form of mobilisation experienced during the National Movement and thirdly, the impact of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was felt

much later than in Maharashtra. A brief comparison with Maharashtra is instructive in understanding the delayed development of political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh.

The caste structure in North-Indian plains differs from that of the South in a fundamental respect, that in the South Brahmans were the only representatives of the twice-born castes and there being no equivalent of North Indian castes, such as, Rajputs, Kyasthas and Baniyas. This created a steep ritual pyramid increasing the social distance from the Untouchables at the bottom of the caste hierarchy leading to an oppressive system in the parts of the peninsula. In contrast, in the Uttar Pradesh plains there is a greater continuity in the ritual ranking of castes which led to a better sharing of social status and political power. Anti-Brahmanism seems to have developed in the regions with steep and discontinuous traditional social hierarchies. "Regions with relatively higher proportion of twice-born castes and having more gradual and continuous hierarchies seem to be less susceptible to horizontal mobilisation from below comprising ritually deprived castes seeking opportunities to improve their status and political power".⁸ Secondly, in Maharashtra, the rigidity of the caste system was so strict and carried to its extreme creating hardship for those at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. This system in turn contributed to the feelings of anti-Brahmanism. Maharashtra also experienced many anti-caste

movements beginning with the Mahanubhava Saint Chakradhar in 1196, and the Bhakti movement under Janeshwar, Chokhamela and Eknath. Jyotiba Phule was also instrumental in awakening and raising the Dalit consciousness. His Satyashodhak Samaj attempted its best to provide a non-Brahmin social order.⁹ The lack of such movements in the Uttar Pradesh plains meant the lack of any widespread anti-caste ideology and passive acceptance of the unequal socio-political system. Further anti-colonial movement in Uttar Pradesh was more influenced by Gandhiji whereas in Maharashtra, though Indian National Congress played an important role, it was profoundly influenced by Dr. Ambedkar.

In the United Provinces both during the Kisan Sabha Agitation in 1920-21 and the Civil Disobedience and Rent Campaign in 1930-31, lower castes tenants and labourers participated in large number and even threw up a Scheduled Castes leader- Pasi Madari. The Congress leadership under Gandhiji recognised the political importance of mass mobilisation of the peasantry by supporting their grievances as a part of the Freedom Struggle. However, once the movements acquired a degree of autonomy throwing up peasants leader and incorporating some of the basic contradiction of Indian society, such as the unequal caste system, the leadership made a conscious effort to separate the 'political' and 'social' issues and called off the movements. In contrast, the Mahars had

alternative path of mobilisation under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. They used 'political means' consistently and unitedly in their attempt to ameliorate social conditions and participated in the political process in order to acquire political skills and develop behaviours and responses favourable to their assimilation in the broader political mainstream. Dr. Ambedkar provided a specific focus in the political movement by the establishment of the Independent Labour Party in 1936; the rejection of Hinduism in 1935; and the formation of the Scheduled Castes Forum in 1942.

The differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar helped shape different identities among the Dalit community in Uttar Pradesh with different levels of consciousness and it was only in the 1940s that a section of the Scheduled Castes in parts of Uttar Pradesh rejected the Gandhian framework and adopted the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar. It is from such areas that the Republican Party of India (RPI) emerged in Uttar Pradesh in the post-Independence period. This development is best traced in Agra district where the Chamars in 1901 made up 19.13% of the total population.¹⁰ The Jatavs of Agra influenced by the teachings of the Arya Samaj from the late 1800s began a process of Sanskritization in order to gain respect and higher status in the caste system, but later on they were disillusioned from the Arya Samaj, also.

The Jatavs became politically conscious of action from 1920s. In 1920 they gained a seat in the Legislative Council and subsequently one member of the community was appointed to each district board every municipality, town area as well as to other official bodies, such as Excise Committee, Jail Committee and Housing Committee of the District Board. The educated Jatavs formed the Jatav Youth League, which by 1941, had branches in Rajasthan, Punjab and Madhya Bharat. Then in 1944-45, the Scheduled Castes Federation of Agra was formed which was linked to All-India Scheduled Castes Federation of Dr. Ambedkar.

The transitional period of 1945-50 saw a marked change led by the newly educated elite among Jatavs. By becoming a part of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, their self-identity underwent a change. Their reference group of identity now became the Scheduled Castes with whom they identified as a part of the oppressed, deprived and 'Untouchable' section of the population. Independence brought with it Parliamentary democracy, a Constitution and Universal Suffrage with other protective measures. All this emerged as a functional alternative to Sanskritization and a better means for entering the new power structure.¹¹ Two other major events in the 1950s were the Conversion movement and formation of the Republican Party of India (RPI) in 1956. Substantial numbers of Jatavs in Agra, Scheduled Castes in Aligarh and other districts of Uttar

Pradesh followed Ambedkar into Buddhism, which was an indigenous but non-Hindu tradition and presented an alternative to the caste-system within which the Scheduled Castes had failed to rise. Thus, these two events were put in a complimentary relations. The principles of equality enshrined in the Constitution, in Buddhism and in the ideology of the RPI were described as virtually the same and allowed an appeal to both the religious and traditional and the revolutionary and secular groups among the Scheduled Castes.

III

Post-Independence period

The RPI in the 1960s

The formation of the Republican Party of India (RPI) inaugurated a new phase in the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh, but it proved to be shortlived. Following its formation, the RPI contested election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly in the Third General Elections in 1962. It contested 68 Parliamentary and 301 Assembly seats all over the country, winning only three in the former, all in Uttar Pradesh; and 11 in the latter, 3 in Maharashtra and 8 in Uttar Pradesh. Thus, it performed better in Uttar Pradesh than in Maharashtra, but it rapidly declined after the 1967 elections when it gained ten Assembly seats. Table 1.3 shows the rise and

decline of the RPI in the electoral scene in Uttar Pradesh during the 1960s. The Party could not gain more than about 4% of the total votes and disappeared after 1969. This is a very low percentage considering that the Scheduled Castes constituted 20% of the total population of Uttar Pradesh. In 1974, 1977 and 1980 elections in Uttar Pradesh, the Party put up a total of 52; 11 and 2 candidates respectively in the State but could not win a single seat. However, in the 1962 and 1967 elections, the Party performed well and gained most of its seats in Agra, Allahabad, Rohilekhand and Meerut division, i.e., in the *doab* and plateau regions. In Central and Eastern Uttar Pradesh its performance was poor except in Lucknow and Gorakhpur. These were the areas in which the Scheduled Castes had undergone a modicum of political mobilisation during the colonial period. Starting from these bases, before it could improve its vote share or spread into new areas, the Party disappeared.

Table 1.3

ELECTION RESULTS OF THE RPI DURING 1960S

Election	Seats contested	Seats won	Lost Deposit	Percentage of Votes
1962	122	8	96	3.7
1967	168	10	139	4.1
1969	181	2	153	3.5

Source: Compiled from, Craig Baxter District Voting Trends in India: A Research Tool (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

The success of the RPI in small pockets of Uttar Pradesh in 1962 and 1967 elections can be attributed to two reasons: one, the poor performance of the Indian National Congress after its early success in the 1952 and the 1957 elections. In 1962 the Congress vote fell to 36.33% from a high of 47.93% in 1952. By the early 1960s, discontent with Congress policies began to emerge and its full impact was felt in the 1967 elections when the Party gained only 32.20% of votes, small parties, such as, RPI was able to cut into the vote share of the Congress in the pockets of the State; the second reason was an electoral alliance between the Jatavs of the RPI and the conservative Muslims in the western districts of Uttar Pradesh, particularly, Agra, Aligarh, Moradabad and Badaun. This alliance was a result of the discontent among the Scheduled Castes and the minorities with the Congress policies which brought them together briefly on a common platform. In areas where the alliance was in operation passions were aroused. In Agra slogans were used which described Jatavs and Muslims as brothers and attacked Hindus specially Brahmans. In Aligarh, the RPI under the leadership of B.P. Maurya, appealed, very specifically, to the antagonism of lower caste groups to upper castes specially Brahmans.

The reasons for the brief existence of the RPI lie both within the Dalit community and the nature of Uttar Pradesh society and politics during this period. Dalit community was not very well consolidated on

secular and economic issues and remained a poor, backward, uneducated and exploited community whereas the Congress incorporated and co-opted this community in the coming years. Thus examined, three factors were responsible for the brief existence of the RPI in Uttar Pradesh; first, the lack of dynamic leadership; second, division among the Dalit leadership over the strategy to consolidate the community and its development; and third, the ability of the Congress as a broad-based dominant party to attract the votes of a majority of the Dalit community.

THE DALIT MOVEMENT IN THE 1970s & '80s

Two important and inter-linked processes, visible from the mid-1960s, were introduced which brought changes in the power structure of Uttar Pradesh with noticeable consequences for the Scheduled Castes. The first was the defeat and temporary decline of the Congress after the 1967 elections; and the second was the entry of the middle and Backward Classes (BCs) mobilised by the Opposition parties, such as, the BKD, into politics, which is reflected in the changed caste composition of the Legislature and the Council of Ministers of the coalition government following the 1967 elections. This caste based mobilisation was possible due to simultaneous class-based changes in the countryside, as Frankle's study¹² analyses the impact of the Green Revolution on electoral behaviour during this period, which shows that it was the medium and big farmers

among the middle and BCs in parts of Uttar Pradesh, who made the maximum gains. The Dalits, who are either petty tenants or landless agricultural labourers, were not able to improve their economic or political position. As a result of these changes a new rural landed elite, majority of whose were from the middle and BCs, emerged in parts of Uttar Pradesh and caste - conflict in the countryside increased and acquired a new dimension now being more between middle and lower castes. At the same time Congress after 1969 began an attempt to rebuild the popular strength, adopted radical image and populist policies, such as 'Garibi Hatao' and the 20 Point Programme, this led Congress to integrate the Dalit community within its fold. So, during this period independent and autonomous political mobilisation of the Dalit community was not very high and successful and it was during 1980s, that the Dalits asserted to their best which may be attributed to the second wave of caste-based mobilisation in Northern India, the first being in the mid-1960s which brought the OBCs into politics. In Uttar Pradesh, the mobilisation of the OBCs was aided by the spread of the Green Revolution from the western to the parts of eastern and central Uttar Pradesh, which enabled them to demand a share in political power. These developments, seen historically, made possible the victory of the JD-combine in 1989, which successfully brought these groups together on a common platform.¹³ The acceptance of the Mandal Commission Report by the V.P.Singh government in August 1989, gave a

further push to OBCs movement in Uttar Pradesh. In the 1993 Assembly elections, the Samajwadi Party (SP) under the leadership of Mulayam Singh Yadav was able to consolidate the BCs and OBCs votes.

The formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984 was a result of increasing political mobilisation and consciousness among the deprived community and the leadership provided by Mr. Kanshi Ram, has also been a crucial variable in bringing the deprived people alongwith minorities to a common platform. The nature, organisation, goals and ideology of the BSP can be understood by comparing it with three reference points; the RPI which would place it within the Scheduled Castes movement in Uttar Pradesh; the Dalit movement in various parts of the country with which it has similarities and substantial differences; and its relationship with the Congress Party because this reveals its relevance and origin as a reaction against Congress variant of SC welfare policies and enables it to establish a distinct identity.

The roots of the BSP, and consequently, its nature and ideology are different from the Dalit movement or parties in other parts of the country. Kanshi Ram, a Punjabi Dalit from Sikh Chamar background employed in a Pune laboratory resigned his job in 1964 following a long-drawn dispute on caste issues and following a discovery of Ambedkar, determined to

dedicate his life to the movement. He joined the RPI but after seven years of working with it he was disappointed and was also not attracted by the radical Dalit movements emerging in various parts of the country and thereafter, Kanshi Ram formed the Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) in 1978 which was "considered a think-tank, a talent bank and financial bank of the oppressed and exploited society to move its mission ahead".¹⁴ Later on, it was broadened with the formation of an agitational wing with Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4) in 1982, which had a greater presence in rural areas. Its agitational role is best seen in its denunciation of the fiftieth anniversary of the Poona Pact of 1932, an Act criticised by all Dalit groups in Maharashtra. The DS-4 under Kanshi Ram held that due to the Poona Pact all educated elites were turned into 'Chamcha' (Puppets) of the upper castes, a role which they should now discard under the DS-4.¹⁵

The BSP is the political expression of the changing socio-political context of Uttar Pradesh. In contrast to the other Dalit organisations its formation appears "deliberate and not reactive",¹⁶ emerging almost twenty years after Kanshi Ram's resignation from the government job. It has consistently refused a reactive agitational stance and a reformatory agitation as well. It is, in fact, a political organisation whose aim is to capture power and use it to improve the conditions of the Bahujan Samaj.

The ideology of the Party is based upon the writings and speeches of Kanshi Ram who holds that Congress has been the 'main instrument'¹⁷ of the upper castes but all other parties are described as equally 'Brahmanical' and 'Manuvadi'. Kanshi Ram visualises two stages by which the position of Bhaujans would undergo a transformation: first, to capture political power by winning elections; and second stage would penetrate deeper into society transforming it, though how this would be realised is not clearly explained. Thus, caste is to be used as a tool to upset the existing social order. This amounts to the 'ideologisation'¹⁸ of caste i.e., using caste as ideology.

According to Kanshi Ram, the BSP sees no difference between the philosophy of Ambedkar, the emancipation of the Dalits and the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. But, this principle is seemingly, not fully realised in practice when Kanshi Ram first took the outside support of the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) to install Ms. Mayawati as the Chief Minister in Uttar Pradesh and then, it went into an alliance with BJP to form the government in this State with an adjustment of rotational Chief Minister of both the parties after every six months.

Regarding Reservation which has always been a contentious issue, Kanshi Ram does not agree that it is the only way to eradicate inequality

and is against permanent reservation in jobs. He feels," I will never approve of a system in which people are made to walk on clutches. What we need is a socio-economic environment in which we can eat, talk, walk and compete on equal footing... Our aim is to create a Bahujan Samaj".¹⁹ For realisation of such goals, the BSP launched a five fold struggle for social transformation on August 15, 1988: for self-respect, liberation, equality, annihilation of caste, Untouchability, injustice and atrocities²⁰. Thus, BSP has a vague ideology as Gail Omuedt comment on this:

In the face of these complexities and uncertainties, then, the lack of ideology of the BSP may be a kind of advantage - an open-mindedness in an era of uncertainty. There is also something to be said for the assertion that bringing the low caste "oppressed and exploited" into political power, into organisational leadership and intellectual competence, is a prerequisite to any real building of ideology.²¹

ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE BSP IN UTTAR PRADESH

The BSP entered electoral politics soon after its formation and has been steadily building up its strength at the State and National level. Although its a registered Party in 15 State and three Union Territories, Uttar Pradesh and to a lesser extent Punjab are its stronghold. The Party contested the Lok Sabha elections in December 1984 and the UP Assembly elections in March 1985. It lost all the seats contested in both the elections but won over a million votes in the former and, in the latter, was instrumental in drawing away votes from the Congress. In the Bijnore Lok

Sabha byelection in December 1985, the prestigious candidate from the Congress, Meera Kumar, could barely win the seat with only a five thousand margin over the BSP candidate who secured 18% of the votes. Throughout this period the Party and the DS-4 were organising huge rallies, and its support base among the SCs and BCs, particularly the government employees, was growing.²²

The BSP emerged as an important Party in Uttar Pradesh due to its impressive performance in the by- election held in 1987 for one Lok Sabha and three State Assembly seats. In the Hardwar Lok Sabha constituency the BSP leader Ms.Mayawati stood second losing by only 23,000 votes against the Congress candidate. In the Assembly byelections, the BSP obtained 26.3% of the votes, the Congress 33%, while the other parties obtained only a total of 2%. In June 1989, during the Allahabad Lok Sabha by- elections, Kanshi Ram was projected as a national figure, where he stood third but was able to gain 19% of the votes in an important three-cornered contest. Thus, by 1989 the BSP emerged as the second most important Party in Uttar Pradesh by making inroads into the Congress traditional vote banks consisting of the SCs, a section of the BCs and the minorities, even though it did not win a single seat. As Kanshi Ram, at this point asserted, "We may not win even a single seat, but we are going to demonstrate our strength".²³

Table 1.4

SEATS AND VOTES WON BY MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES
IN UP STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: 1989-1996

Parties	Seats Won				Vote Secured (%)			
	1989	1991	1993	1996*	1989	1991	1993	1996**
INC	94	46	28	33	27.94	17.5	14.8	
BJP	57	221	176	174	11.63	31.6	33.4	
JD	208	92	27	7	29.75	19.0	11.6	
CPI	6	4	3	1	1.56	0.9	0.5	
CPI(M)	2	1	1	4	0.37	0.3	0.2	
SJP	1	-	-	1	0.74	-	-	
SP	-	34	106	110	-	12.5	17.9	
BSP	13	12	67	67	9.46	9.2	10.0	

* In the 1996 elections, Other parties results are: Samata Party-2
Cong.(T)-4; BKKP-8;

** During The 1996 elections, combined vote-share of the Congress
and the BSP was 29%; the aggregate vote share of the constituents
of the UF was 28%. The BJP vote share was 31.8%.

Source: Compiled from India Decides: Elections 1952-1995 David et.al.
(Delhi: Books and Things, 1995) and 543 Faces of India, H.D. Singh (Delhi:
Newsmen Publishers, 1996).

In Table 1.4 the results of the State Assembly held between 1989
and 1996 are provided. It reveals the marked improvement in the electoral
performance of the BSP from the 1989 elections when it gained 13 seats to
the 1996 elections when managed to gain 67 seats, retaining its status of
the 1993 elections. However, while the number of seats won by the Party

rose sharply between the 1989 and 1993 elections, it is noticeable that in terms of percentage of votes the rise is only a little over one percent of the votes cast. In the 1996 elections, it contested elections in electoral alliance with the Congress and the combined vote-share was 29%. The regional distribution of seats secured by the BSP is also noteworthy, the BSP gained majority of the seats from three regions, Central, Bundelkhand and Eastern Uttar Pradesh, which form its base. In the 1996 State Assembly elections, the BSP-Congress combine won majority of the seats from the Eastern region, followed by the Bundelkhand region.

One striking feature is to be mentioned. A comparison with the regional performance of the RPI in the 1960s shows a shift eastwards by the BSP. The RPI gained most of its seats in the *doab* and plateau regions and fared badly in Central and Eastern Uttar Pradesh the reverse being true in the case of the BSP. In Central and Eastern Uttar Pradesh there were visible signs of the emergence of the Dalits as a distinct social group. The Dalits who played an important role in the anti-feudal struggle in the past now shifted towards BSP wherever the Left parties became weak and radical Left parties could not fill the gap in the electoral arena. Thus, it can be deduced that the BSP, unlike the RPI, is a Party supported by the Dalits from regions which have a background of struggle under the Left parties.

In the 1993 elections, all political parties showed a marked awareness of the assertion by the Dalits and the need to gain their support. The BJP organised 'community feast' in Dalit areas and made a Dalit lay the foundation stone of the Ram Mandir in Ayodha; the JD organised Dalit senas, supported the Dalit Shiksha Andolan and associated itself with the activities of the Ambedkar Mahabasha; the IPF also formed a Dalit Mahasasha in October 1993 to gain the support of the Dalits, mainly in the eastern Uttar Pradesh.

In 1993, the coalition, formed by the SP and the BSP under the leadership of Mulayam Singh Yadav, was the first government in Uttar Pradesh in which a Scheduled Castes Party participated, but this coalition faced a series of crises and problems from its inception and lasted for only eighteen months, the BSP withdrawing from it on June 1st, 1995 and made government of its own headed by Ms. Mayawati, on June 3rd 1995, with outside support of the BJP.

Two factors led to a steady deterioration in the relationship between the SP and the BSP; the clashes between the workers and supporters of the two parties (between the backward and the lower castes), and the sustained efforts of Mulayam Singh Yadav to expand and consolidate the base of the SP at the expenses of the BSP. This may be examined through the by elections results. In the by- elections the SP had progressively made inroads into the OBC-Dalit constituencies and increased its support. In the

first byelections for six Assembly seats held on June 1st 1994, the SP-BSP alliance performed well gaining 4 seats - the SP 3, the BSP - 1 while the BJP obtained 2 seats. In the second by-elections held on May 28th 1995, the SP won three seats and the BJP one but the BSP did not win any seats. There occurred problems during the Panchayats elections held in four phases between April 7 and April 21, 1995, where the SP gained control over 45% of the 52,111 Grampanchayats, the BJP and the Congress won 20% and 10% respectively, while the BSP could gain only 10%. The BSP had alleged that this was achieved by amendments in the Panchayat Act in 1994 which provided electoral reservations for OBCs and SCs; revision of the delimitation of the constituencies and electoral rolls in a manner favouring BCs; the rapid Census ordered by Mulayam Singh Yadav to estimate the OBCs population and large-scale electoral irregularities. As a result of all these development, in addition to the Yadavisation of the bureaucracy and also consistent effort of the SP to split the BSP, the BSP withdrew its support from the government and made government with outside support of the BJP on June 3rd 1995 which lasted only for a short period of four and a half months. It was observed that BSP took the outside support of the BJP to oust Mulayam Singh Yadav but it went in 'opposite alliance' with an upper-caste and Manuvadi party, as Kanshi Ram characterised it.

In 1996, BSP contested elections with an electoral alliance with the Congress. This alliance was considered 'historical achievement'²⁴ as for the first time the 112 year-old Congress had been forced to accept the political identity of Dalits and play second fiddle to a political organisation of Dalits. Both the partners agreed on seat adjustment where majority of the seats were contested by the BSP and it was agreed that the BSP General Secretary Ms. Mayawati will be made Chief Minister if the combine gets a majority. But, this combine managed to get 100 seats in the 1996 State Assembly elections where the BSP secured 67 and Congress only 33 seats and the total vote-share was 29%. Kanshi Ram, in an interview, said, "When the BSP was formed in 1984, the Congress was the main Manuvadi party. Now, it is number two or three in the list. The BJP has become the main Manuvadi party. The important task is to weaken the biggest enemy. We are not yet in a position to do this alone. So we have to associate with less dangerous Manuvadi parties".²⁵ But, when the BSP failed in forcing the Congress to make MS. Mayawati the Chief Minister by threatening or even withdrawing the support from the United Front government at Centre, it went into coalition with the BJP to install Ms. Mayawati as the Chief Minister of the State and made an agreement to rotate the Chief Minister of each party after every six months. Thus, on March 21, 1997, nearly six months after elections created a hung Assembly in the State, Uttar Pradesh got a popular government led by a combine of the BSP and the BJP, which

have conflicting political philosophies - of Dalit assertiveness and Hindutava respectively and divergent support bases. According to Kanshi Ram, whichever party that accepts the BSP's policy of social transformation can be its ally. He added that it was easier for Dalits to associate socio-politically with the upper castes than with the intermediate castes, who are the immediate oppressors. But, this coalition is being seen as 'opportunistic' when the BSP is leaving its main plank of combating the 'Manuvadi parties' and the Brahminical culture which has oppressed the Dalits for several centuries. Kanshi Ram claimed that this coalition will improve the conditions of the Dalits but the prognosis is not positive. The outcome of this coalition is yet to come, but this makes one thing clear that the BSP has emerged as an important political party among the triangle which is, at present, prevalent in Uttar Pradesh politics that of the SP, the BJP and the BSP.

THE DALIT MOVEMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH: AN ASSESSMENT

An assessment of the Dalit movement Uttar Pradesh makes it clear that compared to the Western and Southern India, Dalit movement in U.P. rose later and in the colonial period was both weak and limited to pockets of the State. The absence of anti-caste social movements and the moderating effects of Gandhiji upon the anti-colonial struggle shaped the identity of the Scheduled Castes as 'Harijans', as a result, they remained

submissive and politically backward, hence poor. Attempts for change were limited largely to Sanskritization in order to rise in the caste hierarchy. It was only towards the end of the colonial period that a small section of the Scheduled Castes, influenced by the ideas of Ambedkar, rejected their earlier identity and position and began to use politics as a means to achieve an equal position in the Indian polity. This small elite minority attempted to mobilise the large mass of the Scheduled Castes community, particularly, after the formation of the RPI in 1956. Hence, the Dalit movement is not as old as the movement in Western India and lacks its depth, intensity and assertion.

As our analyses shows, the rise and assertion of the depressed classes has not been an incremental movement increasing in size and intensity since Independence, rather it has passed through a number of phases of strength and weakness; autonomy and co-optation and faced a number of problems which has given it a complex nature. In the post-Independence period, it was hoped that industrialisation, education, equal opportunities and a secular culture, would break down caste hierarchy and identities leading to homogenisation creating a national identity. A section of the Dalit community supported this view and went in support of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere, but, the failure of the Congress to fulfil the requirements for the upliftment of the oppressed classes

disillusioned these people, who later on, formed radical Dalit organisation which led to the increasing consciousness in the 1980s. This led to the formation of the new Dalit parties, such as, the BSP, which argue that the traditional path to social transformation has left the poor, and particularly the Dalits, outside the power structure, and coupled with this understanding these parties seek to take their own path of development and upliftment, based upon caste identities, thus, making caste as a tool of mobilisation creating solidarities among the oppressed. These parties choose the Parliamentary path of gradual democratic, social and economic change and their first aim become to capture the political power by their own and to secure the power share in more equal ways in association with the government benefits, representation in Legislatures and political bodies and the policies. But, in Uttar Pradesh, where the Scheduled Caste constitutes more than 20% of the total population, the militant ways of protest seem to be absent for more basic change and to break down the caste system, as was done by the Iravas of Kerala, Nadars of Tamil Nadu where these groups were able to mobilise their members to acquire political means, including militant protest, and sustained their protest over a long period of time, as a result were able to not only improve their status but are no longer regarded as 'Untouchables'.

An analysis of the ideological perspectives of the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh shows that apart from an emphasis upon organising the

'oppressed' and exploited' for breaking the caste hierarchy in order to throw the supremacy of the upper castes., the RPI and the BSP lack any clear ideology or political programme as for basic transformation of the society. The economic policy is quite ambiguous and sometimes is not stressed, so is the case of the concrete programme of what the Dalits might do once they obtain power. The movement for dignity is becoming so impulsive to mobilise the Dalits but the real change is not being carried out in their socio-economic status. So, the movement is, sometimes, characterised as conservative, elitist and election oriented.

However, the BSP attempted to introduce some radical aspects into the movement which have enabled it to capture the power twice with the support of with the BJP, the Party which was described the 'main Manuvadi' Party by Kanshi Ram and against which the BSP is supposed to continue its struggle. But the BSP has succeeded in breaking down the vertical patron-client relationship with the upper castes and accompanying political mobilisation pattern of vote banks, which was characteristic of Uttar Pradesh politics for a long time and has constructed new solidarities on horizontal dimensions. The new solidarities using the concept of the 'Bahujans' has also tried to bring the OBCs and the minorities on a common platform with the Scheduled Castes, stressing their common characteristics. Second "the use of caste as class, as an ideology and a tool

for mobilisation of the Scheduled Castes, and capturing of power through Parliamentary means is an important development in Indian political system which would help in democratisation of civil society.²⁶ This is possible because of the corresponding relation between caste and class as it was regarded immediately after the Independence but in recent years, this corresponding relation is becoming less visible and caste is becoming a major tool for mobilising the Dalits and other oppressed sections of the society, However, the purpose of the BSP remains to gain political power and increase the share of state benefits to the Scheduled Castes and their protection from upper castes atrocities, rather than "to fight for the change in the economic basis underwriting the State structure".²⁷ Nonetheless, the BSP played an important role in channelling the Scheduled Castes against the upper castes hegemony. Thirdly, the BSP is trying to build a political party with a broad social base. It attempted to gain political power and refused to be co-opted by other political parties, as was the case with the RPI. As a result, it occupies a central position in Uttar Pradesh today. Finally, the rise of the BSP has introduced far-reaching changes in the socio-political system of Uttar Pradesh. It has contributed, with other factors also, in ending up the 'single dominant party system' and eroding the rigid upper castes controlled social structure.

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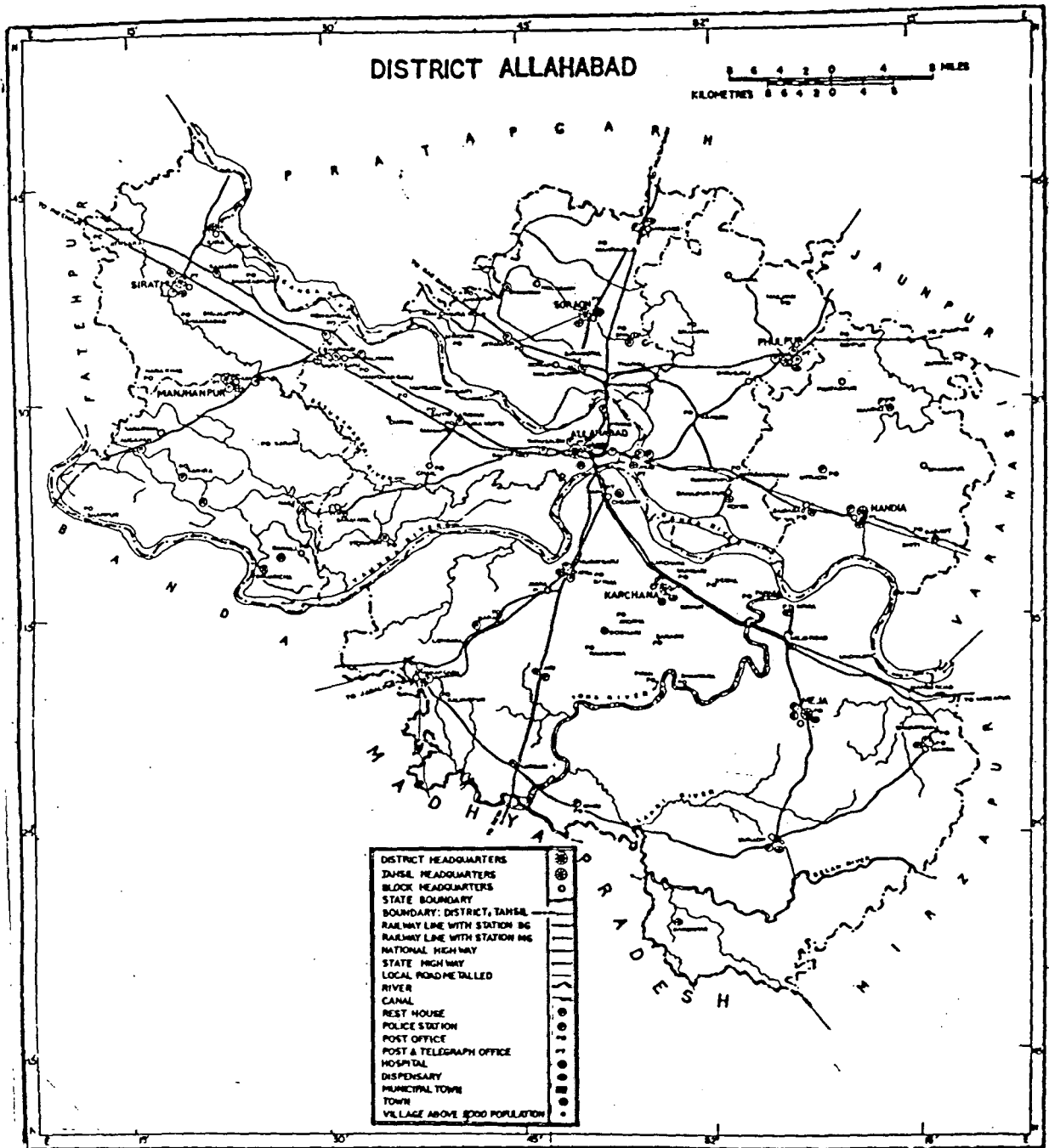
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Chapter IV

*Dalit Movement and Politics
in Allahabad District*

Situated at the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna, and according to tradition also the invisible Saraswati, Allahabad (also known as *Prayag*, *Tirth-raj*) has been one of the most important districts of Uttar Pradesh since very early times and has been one of the nerve centres in the political, religious and social life of India. The lineage of Allahabad is very ancient, deep-rooted and continuous which defines its character. It is also ancient *Prayag* of the Legends; here lay the powerful *Mahajanapada* of *Vatsa* (600 B.C.); Buddha preached here; it was the heart of the Gupta Empire; here the Chinese pilgrim Huein-Tsang saw Emperor Harshavardhan donate his accumulated treasure to the people; it became an important centre of the Mughal Empire when Akbar built a mighty fort near *Sangam*; it was the storm centre of the 1857 Revolt and later the crucible of our Freedom Movement. Allahabad is a city of antiquity, learning, wisdom and writing. It is most vibrant, lively, politically and intellectually conscious city of Uttar Pradesh, There are two important Museums at Allahabad, one is the Central Museum having not only archaeological and art collections but also a rich library; the second is the University Archaeological Museum which has mostly the collections from the University conducted excavations at Kaushambi. Allahabad University, established in 1887, incorporates elements of Hindu, late Mughal and European architecture; the University Senate Hall, Vijayanagram Hall and

Mayo Hall manifest this aspect respectively. The State High Court is situated at Allahabad. There is All Saints Cathedral, built in 1871, of red and white stone which is perhaps the finest specimen of Gothic architecture in India. The tomb of Mulla-Do-Pyaza, one of the Nine-gems (Nav-ratnas) at Akbar's court stands in a dilapidated condition at Handia. The massive archaeological mound at Jhusi, believed to be the site of ancient Prathistanpur gives more historical identity to Allahabad. The Khusro Bagh is the tombs of Khusro, son of Emperor Jehangir, and Shah Begum. The Civil Lines of Allahabad, built as an exclusive residential area by the English after the 1857 Revolt, has numerous Victorian and Georgian buildings in synthesis with Indian architectural tradition, though the present day Civil Lines has changed much with the passage of time. There are Minto Park with the Proclamation Pillar; the Chandrashekhar Azad Park where Chandrashekhar laid down his life in a police encounter; the Anand and Swaraj Bhawans and the Allahabad YMCA. There is a State Public Library which has rare collections, particularly of the newspapers of the Freedom Struggle period. Together with all cemeteries (in a serious state of despair) Mughal monuments in Daraganj and Khusro Bagh and obscure but centuries - old temples, there is no place in Allahabad that is not suffused with our history and heritage.



According to the Surveyor General of India the area of Allahabad district is 7,261 Km² and stands 8th in area amongst the 73 districts of the State. Lying in the South-East centre of the State Allahabad touches districts Varanasi and Mirzapur in the East, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Jaunpur districts in the North, Fatahpur and Banda in the West and Rewa and the State of Madhya Pradesh in the South. Figure 1 shows the location of Allahabad. The district comprises nine *tehsils*, viz., in the West Sirathu, Manjhanpur and Chail; in the East Phulpur and Handia while in the North Soraon and in the South Karchhana, Bara and Meja. Alongwith these nine *tehsils*, there are twenty eight development blocks in the district (Table 2.1). There are more than 4000 villages and 16 town areas in the district.

Table 2.1

**TEHSILS AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS
IN ALLAHABAD DISTRICT**

CODE NO.	TEHSIL	DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS
1	SIRATHU	KARA SIRATHU
2	MANJHANPUR	MANJHANPUR SARASWA KAUSHAMBI
3	CHAIL	CHAIL NAWEDA MURATGANJ
4	SORAON	SORAON MAUAIMA HOLA GARH KODIARAH
5	PHULPUR	PHULPUR BAHARIA BHADURPUR
6	HANDIA	HANDIA SAIDABAD DHANUPUR PRATAPPUR
7	JASRA (BARA)	JASRA SHANKARGARH
8	KARCHHANA	KARCHHANA CHAKKA KAUDHIYARA
9	MEJA	MEJA URUWAN MANDA KORAON

The total population of the district is 49,21,313 (1991 Census) with a population density of 676 persons/Km². The Scheduled Caste population is 12,03,847 which is 24.46% of the total general population. This ratio is higher than the Scheduled Caste population of the State which is 21.05%. There are 33.81% literates in the district. Allahabad is one of the ten fastestgrowing districts in Uttar Pradesh. Table 2.2 shows the decennial growth of the district. Accordingly, there has been a regular growth since 1931 which was + 6.20% and it rose upto about 30% in 1991. Table 2.3 shows absolute population of Allahabad district in each *teshil* with the Scheduled Caste population, their percentage in total population and total literates and their percentage in each *teshil*. The Index of Location Quotient represents the concentration of the Scheduled Caste in each *teshil*. Thus, Handia is the most populous *teshil* followed by Meja, Phulpur, Soraon, Chail, Karchhana, Manjhanpur, Sirathu and Jasra. In terms of the population of the Scheduled Castes, Chail is the most populous followed by Meja, Handia, Phulpur, Soraon, Manjhanpur, Sirathu, Karchhana and Jasra, but the maximum percentage and concentration of the Scheduled Castes is in Manjhanpur (37.10%).¹

Table 2.2

GROWTH RATE OF ALLAHABAD DISTRICT: 1901-1991

Census Year	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
Growth Rate (%)	-1.56	-4.27	+6.20	+21.46	+13.01	+19.29	+20.46	+29.27	+29.31

Source: Census of India, 1991.

Table 2.3

**TOTAL POPULATION, SCHEDULED CASTES POPULATION
AND LITERATE, ALLAHABAD DISTRICT**

Code No.	Total General Population	Scheduled Castes Population	Percent of SCs Population	Literates	Percent of Literates	Index of Location Quotient of SCs
Allahabad	49,21,313	12,03,847	24.46	16,64,096	33.81	
1.	3,17,269	1,06,883	33.69	71,303	22.47	1.36
2.	3,36,545	1,24,870	37.10	69,611	20.68	1.52
3.	4,39,436	1,57,240	35.78	1,12,347	25.57	1.46
4.	5,18,789	1,30,392	25.13	1,48,912	28.70	1.02
5.	5,39,289	1,31,518	24.39	1,61,878	30.02	1.00
6.	6,06,015	1,35,853	22.42	1,68,978	27.88	0.91
7.	2,15,024	58,624	27.26	61,488	28.60	1.11
8.	3,91,430	87,694	22.40	1,20,421	30.76	0.91
9.	5,48,779	1,39,459	25.42	1,56,433	33.81	1.04

Source: Census of India, 1991 and Data provided by the District Census Office, Allahabad.

SEATS AND CONSTITUENCIES IN THE DISTRICT²

At the beginning, like other constituencies, Allahabad was also a multi-member constituency, e.g., in 1952 Allahabad had two constituencies:

- (1) Allahabad East-cum-Jaunpur District West (It was a double member constituency), and
- (2) Allahabad.

In 1957, both the constituencies were re-named, (i) the name of Allahabad East-cum- Jaunpur District West was changed to Phulpur (a double member constituency) and (ii) Allahabad West. There was lack of one-to-one correspondence between the members of seats and constituency, as the constituency used to return two members, one belonged to Scheduled Caste community and other general. Later, Reservation was provided by law to socially and economically deprived population (Scheduled Castes) in order to ensure their representation in the Parliament. So, later in 1962 double-membered constituency was bifurcated into two single member constituencies, one general and another Reserved. From then onwards, Allahabad has three constituencies;

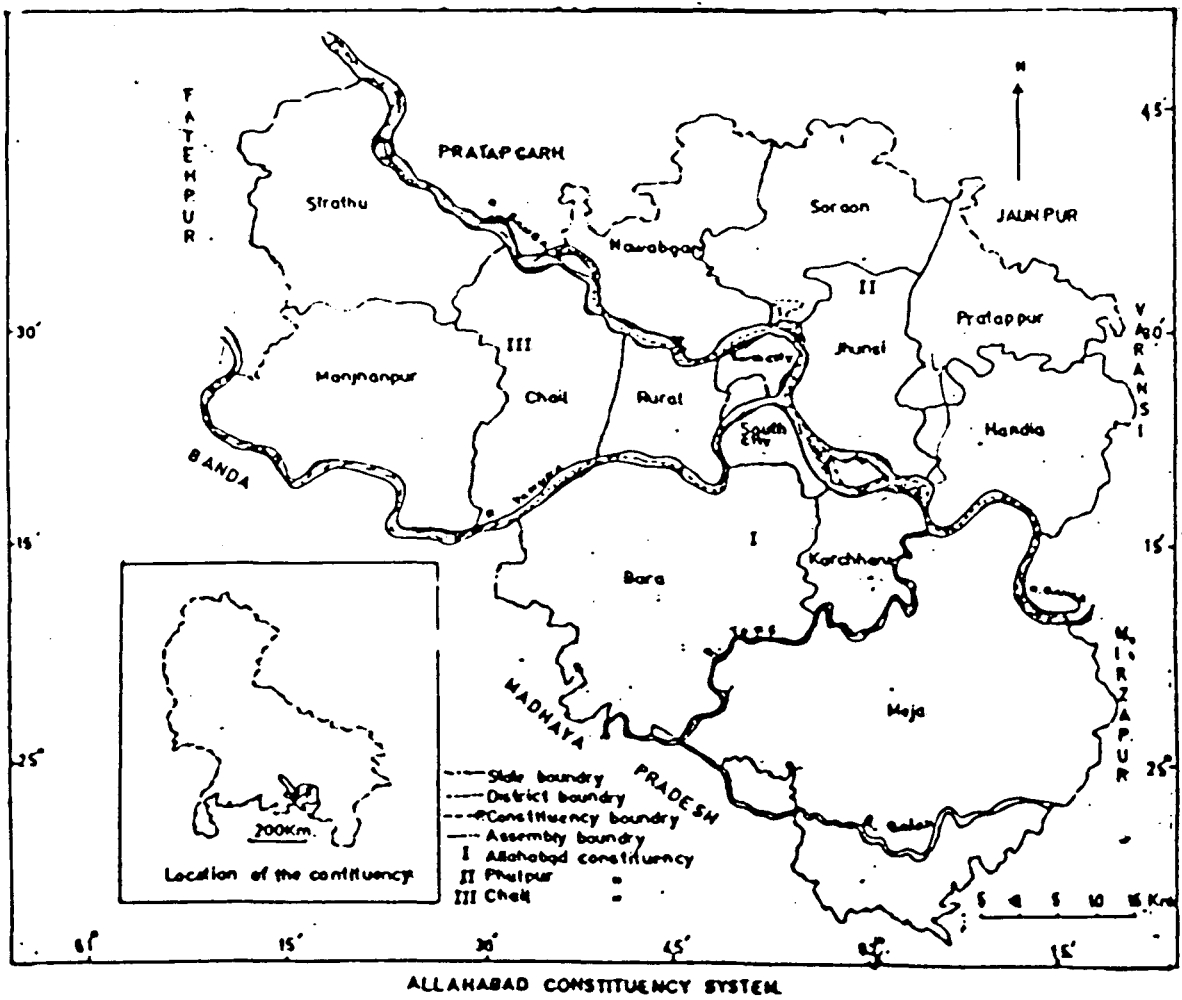
I. Phulpur (55), which includes: (a) Jhunsi (b) Handia (c) Pratappur (d) Soraon (e) Nawabganj.

II. Allahabad (56), which includes: (a) City North (b) City South, (c) Meja, (d) Karchhana (e) Bara. III. Chail (57) Reserved, which includes:

(a) Allahabad West (b) Chail (c) Manjhanpur (d) Sirathu, (e) Khaga.

Figure 2 shows Allahabad Constituency System.

Figure 2:



There are fourteen Assembly Seats in Allahabad District out of which four are Reserved Seats:

Table 2.4
Assembly Seats of Allahabad District

No.	Name	General/Reserved
267	MEJA	Reserved
268	KARCHHANA	General
269	BARA	General
270	JHUNSI	General
271	HANDIA	General
272	PRATAPPUR	General
273	SORAON	General
274	NAWABGANJ	General
275	ALLAHABAD (NORTH)	General
276	ALLAHABAD (SOUTH)	General
277	ALLAHABAD (WEST)	General
278	CHAIL	Reserved
279	MANJHANPUR	Reserved
280	SIRATHU	Reserved

ANALYSIS OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ALLAHABAD DISTRICT;

In all, eleven Parliamentary elections were held since 1952 to 1996 and three byelections, viz., 1955, 1974, and 1988 in Allahabad. Table 2.5 gives the elections summary since 1952 to 1996.

Table 2.5

**ELECTION RESULTS OF PARLIAMENTARY SEATS:
ALLAHABAD DISTRICT: 1952-1996**

Elections Year	Winner Party	Vote %	Runner Up	Vote %
Allahabad:				
1996	BJP	42.7	JD	22.35
1991	JD	29.7	BJP	28.4
1989	JD	42.9	INC	33.6
1984	INC	68.2	LKD	25.1
1980	INCI	45.8	JPS	23.9
1977	BLD	57.7	INC	30.5
1971	INC	58.8	INCO	19.4
1967	INC	49.2	SSP	42.1
1962	INC	58.1	BJS	29.1
1957	INC	58.4	PSP	32.2
1952	INC	52.9	KMPP	24.7
CHAIL:				
1996	BJP	35.5	SP	27.0
1991	JD	34.1	BJP	27.3
1989	INC	42.9	JD	39.6
1984	INC	47.1	LKD	46.0
1980	INCI	41.0	JPS	34.0
1977	BLD	69.5	INC	22.9
1971	INC	60.2	INCO	32.6
1967	INC	42.7	IND	29.8
1962	INC	42.4	BJS	21.0
1957	INC	36.9	INC	32.2

PHULPUR:				
1996	SP	29.4	BSP	26.51
1991	JD	34.0	BSP	20.6
1989	JD	39.8	INC	33.3
1984	INC	53.8	LKD	28.4
1980	JPS	41.3	INCI	30.3
1977	BLD	65.2	INC	26.3
1971	INC	51.3	BKD	23.5
1967	INC	42.9	SSP	26.6
1962	INC	61.6	SOC	28.2
1957	INC	36.9	INC	32.2
BYELECTIONS ALLAHABAD				
1955	INC	Elected	uncontested	
1974	BKD	56.0	INC	
1988	JM	53.5	INC	24.3

Source: District Elections Office, Allahabad

Analysing the elections results, it becomes evident the Allahabad district was the Congress bastion, particularly from the First General Elections upto Fourth General Elections. In 1977, like in other parts of the country after Emergency, it was anti-Congress wave and the all three constituencies elected BLD in 1977, though the seeds of anti-congress were sown in the Second By-elections in 1974 in Allahabad constituency when BKD with 56% of vote won this seat. In the 1980 elections, though Congress came back in two seats but Phulpur from where Jawahar Lal

Nehru contested thrice, the JPS won with 41.3% of vote. In the 1984 elections, after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, 'the sympathy wave' swept the elections all over India, hence, in all three seats of Allahabad, Congress was victorious with 56.36% of average vote. But, significantly from the 1989 elections, Congress was rejected in Allahabad district and it remained either on periphery or the runner-up party, except in Chail in 1989 election where the Congress candidate R.N. Rakesh secured his seat with 42.4% of vote. It is noticeable that from this elections, Congress was rejected in the State politics also and in the 1989 and the 1991 elections, Janta Dal secured Allahabad and Phulpur constituencies with average vote share of 36.75%. In the 1991 elections, Janta Dal took the Chail constituency from Congress. But in the 1996 elections Allahabad and Chail constituencies were won by the BJP with 39.1% of vote; From 1989 onwards, Allahabad electoral politics was affected by the State politics where J.D. was an important actor earlier, then SP, BSP and BJP became the major parties, pushing Congress(I) to the periphery of the State politics.

Here it is important to look at the break up of the major communities. Table 2.6 shows the over-all community break-up in all three parliamentary Constituencies of Allahabad where we find that the Scheduled Caste community is much more prevalent in each constituency and the dominant among the Scheduled Castes community are Chamars

and Pasis who comprises almost 12% each in all the constituencies, and local Scheduled Caste politics is much decided by the moves of these two dominant groups.

Table 2.6

COMMUNITY BREAK-UP OF ALLAHABAD DISTRICTS
PARLIAMENTARY SEATS

COMMUNITY	ALLAHABAD	CHAIL	PHULPUR
SCs	25	32	26
AHIRS	10	11	10
MUSLIMS	12	12	18
BRAHMINS	15	11	10

The BSP, in the 1991 elections, stood fourth in Allahabad district with 13% of vote. In the 1988 By-elections, Kanshi Ram, President BSP, contested Allahabad Constituency elections against V.P.Singh and made that election a triangular contest with Sunil Shastri of INC in the elections. Kanshi Ram ranked third in the election but secured 19% of vote as against V.P.Singh who secured 53.5% of vote. From this elections, BSP became an important party, recognised at the national level and then onwards a very significant actor in the State politics. In the 1991 elections BSP ranked second in Phulpur constituency where it secured 20.6% of vote. In the 1996

elections, BSP increased its vote share and secured 26.51% of vote share in the Phulpur constituency and stood runner-up party as against S.P. which secured 29.4%. In Allahabad constituency, BSP ranked third, after Janta Dal, with a vote share of 20.15%. In Chail constituency, BSP improved its vote share from the 1991 elections which was 11.2%. to 26.89% and remained third, after S.P. Thus, in the 1996 elections, the average vote share of the BSP was improved and touched a mark of 24.5% in Allahabad district whereas in the 1989 elections, BSP polled 18.5% of votes and remained third in all seats of Allahabad district. Table 2.7 shows the comparative electoral performance of the BSP in the '89, '91 and '96 elections to Lok Sabha in Allahabad district. The first figure in the table represents the percentage of vote share in each constituency while the number in the parantheses shows the party position of the BSP.

Table 2.7

PERCENTAGE AND POSITION OF THE BSP IN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ALLAHABAD DISTRICT: 1989-1996

ELECTION YEAR	ALLAHADBAD	CHAIL	PHULPUR
1989	19 (III)	13.3 (IV)	23.2 (III)
1991	15 (IV)	11.2 (IV)	20.6 (II)
1996	20.15 (III)	26.89 (III)	26.51 (II)

Source: District Election Office, Allahabad.

BSP PERFORMANCE IN THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: 1993 and 1996:

In the 1989 and the 1991 elections to the State Assembly, the BSP won 13 and 12 seats respectively and in Allahabad district, its performance was not impressive though it managed to appeal the people, particularly during the Parliamentary election. But, it was in the 1993 elections that the BSP, with an electoral alliance with SP, secured its biggest victory when it secured 67 Assembly seats with a vote share of 10.8%. In Allahabad district the BSP won nine out of fourteen seats and also increased its vote share. In the 1996 elections, the BSP went into an electoral alliance with the Congress but retained 67 seats as also in the 1993 elections. In the Allahabad district the BSP contested on eleven seats but managed to win only three seats. In the 1996 election, Allahabad district gave a different verdict where BJP-Samata Party combine won four seats; the SP-led United Front secured five seats; and the BSP-Congress alliance got five seats. Thus, Allahabad district clearly manifested the State politics in the 1996 elections which was a unique triangular contest involving the BJP-Samata Party combine, the SP-led UF and the BSP-Congress alliance. Table 2.6 shows a comparison between the 1993 and the 1996 elections in Allahabad when the BSP fought elections in alliance with the SP and the Congress respectively.

Table 2.6

ELECTION RESULTS OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY SEATS:
ALLAHABAD DISTRICT: 1993-1996

Constituency	1993 Elections		1996 Elections		BSP Performance 1996	
	Party won	% of vote	Party won	% of Vote	% of vote	Position
Meja	BSP	33.16	CPI(M)	51.7	13.3	III
Karchhana	BSP	44.04	SP	48.7	24.6	II
Bara	BSP	32.04	BSP	38.6	38.6	I
Jhunsi	SP	54.25	SP	38.8	29.5	II
Handia	BSP	47.27	BJP	39.6	21.1	III
Patappur	BSP	45.45	SP	36.3	24.6	III
Soraon	BSP	60.23	BJP	34.5	30.4	II
Nawabganj	BSP	45.30	INC	37.1	*	*
Allahabad (N)	BJP	40.35	BJP	39.9	*	*
Allahabad(S)	BJP	54.55	BJP	47.9	21.7	III
Allahabad(W)	Independent	49.85	SP	53.9	15.4	III
Chail	BJP	36.03	INC	36.7	*	*
Sirathu	BSP	42.65	BSP	35.8	35.8	I
Manjhanpur			BSP	39.7	39.7	I

* NOT CONTESTED

Source: District Election Office, Allahabad

Thus, it becomes evident that in the 1993 elections, when the BSP fought elections in alliance with the SP, its vote share and gain in seats were increased because of the SP supporting the BSP, but it did not repeat its electoral performance in the 1996 elections though in alliance with the Congress. Nonetheless, it secured three seats: Bara, Manjhanpur and Sirathu.

From the above analysis, it can be easily inferred that the support base of the BSP in Allahabad district is increasing and becoming consolidated. Starting from the 1988 by election to Lok Sabha when Mr. Kanshi Ram contested election from Allahabad constituency, the BSP has been able to mobilise the Scheduled Caste to rally around its politics and the BSP polled its best in Allahabad in the 1993 Assembly election when it was in alliance with the SP. What is to be noted is that Allahabad, earlier being the Congress bastion, has rejected the Congress in both Parliamentary and Assembly elections. Here, we can also infer that the trends which were manifested at the State level politics clearly affected the politics of Allahabad.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE DALIT MOVEMENT IN ALLAHABAD

C.A. Bayly³ in his 'The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880-1920' has dealt with the social context and social structure of Allahabad district and finds out that there was upper castes domination in the affairs of the district, but, from the late nineteenth century, untouchable caste groups from rural areas begun to migrate to Allahabad, where demand for the menial services they performed was expanding. As Nandini Gooptu commented "After the uprising of 1857 and its suppression, British military and civil administration were consolidated in

the towns and army cantonment and civil stations were reconstituted on a larger scale. To accommodate these, as well as for the settlement of Indian professional groups and government servants who converged on the towns, urban built-up areas, extended substantially. Urban territorial growth has coupled with the expansion of sanitary infrastructure and municipal services, which created a demand for scavengers, sweepers and conservancy workers."⁴ This demand was increased in the coming years and the untouchable groups found jobs in these areas. This factor marked a change in economic and social relationship. This untouchable rural migrants found quite different ways of social behaviour and there was a change from their past economic relations of the countryside. "But, the experience of segregation and exclusion of the untouchables in rural life was not reversed in the urban context. They were absorbed almost entirely in ill-paid, menial service jobs or in work connected with handling leather, in keeping with their traditional low or 'impure occupation', and alternative awareness of employment for them were virtually non-existent"⁵ There were least opportunity to the untouchables to enter educational institution, both because they were unable to afford the expenses and because these institutions were usually unwilling to accept untouchable students. This was the replication of the occupational division along caste lines in the urban areas, with this, there was spatial segregation of the untouchables in terms of residential settlement pattern." The untouchables

had lived on the village periphery; in the towns, they similarly had no access to the residential areas of higher castes. Untouchables settlements were concentrated in secluded pockets on urban outskirts, in unreclaimed, insanitary areas, almost invariably devoid of water supply and conservancy facilities, or in the isolated niche of servants' quarters in cantonment and civil stations".⁶ Thus, there were two simultaneous processes which appear to have created an urgency among the untouchables, particularly the urban untouchables, to assert themselves and to undermine the caste-barriers, the first was the high expectation and aspirations for the economic advancement, improved living conditions and education, and the second was the continued caste-distinction and non-availability of the opportunities.

It was against this background that the self-assertion by the untouchables took the form of *Bhakti*, for *Bhakti* cult encapsulated a message of the social equality of all castes. We have dealt at length the *Bhakti* movement in the second chapter. In Allahabad, there was a *Bhakti* resurgence and untouchables added the terms *Kabirpanthi*, *Shivnarayani* or *Ravidas* after their names to indicate the gurus whom they revered. "They projected themselves as adherents of *Bhakti* cult by wearing necklaces of beads, called *Kanathis*, which were distinctive mark of the *Bhakti* sects, in contrast to *Brahminical* sacred thread or 'janeyu'. Temples

dedicated to Bhakti gurus were constructed in Allahabad, and a Shivranayani Sant Sampradaya was initiated in Allahabad by the untouchable Chamar, who worked in the British cantonment as horse-keepers, gardeners and domestic servant".⁷ This Sampradaya is still functioning in Allahabad.

But, the nature of the Bhakti resurgence was different that from the Bhakti movement. The Bhakti movement had flourished among various religious sects or cults, not identified with any particular caste groups, even though lower castes had been the prominent adherents, as we have seen in Chapter II. This had continued to be the case until the end of the nineteenth century. But in contrast, twentieth century Bhakti was resurrected as a castes-based religious expression solely of the untouchables. This notion of Bhakti led to the emergence of the argument that Bhakti was the religion of the original inhabitant and rulers of India, the Adi-Hindus, from whom the untouchables claimed to have descended, as we have also discussed this argument, explored by Mark Jurgensmeyer, in the second chapter. This notion of Bhakti enunciated ideology and the political content of Adi-Hinduism and it is to be noted that there was much influence of this ideology in Allahabad. Thus, the Bhakti resurgence and Adi-Hinduism were the clear expressions of the attempts, by the untouchables, at self-assertion and for advancement. Nandini Gooptu

comments on this development as "however, the catalysts for re-thinking about the caste system were the political and intellectual cross-currents of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where caste-upliftment movements and various theories about the caste system developed and lent themselves to elaboration and reinterpretation by untouchable ideologues. The growing familiarity of the untouchables, especially of a newly-literate section among them, with the ideas preached by religious reformist groups like the Arya Samaj or Christian missionaries, as well as deliberations about the representation of caste and religious communities in government and political institution, accelerated the development of urban low-caste social movements from the 1920s".⁸ This ideology was formulated in the 1920s by a new generation of the literate untouchables. They insisted, first of all, for education, which was highly valued, to improve their social and economic conditions. There was a prevalent notion that illiteracy was a cause both of the untouchables' social domination by the educated higher castes, and of their exclusion from better jobs and opportunities. There emerged many untouchable leaders whose influence on the Dalits of the Allahabad district is still seen, though not much pronounced, leaders, like Swami Acchutanand⁹ (1879-1933) and Ram Charan¹⁰ (1888-1938) worked a lot to improve the conditions of the untouchables. The untouchables, under the leadership of these two leaders, gradually became convinced that the Arya Samaj acted as the 'army of high caste Hindus', whose only

intention was to rally the Hindu community against the Muslims, and that the Samaj's attempt to uplift the lower castes was merely a part of this strategy. They argued that the Samaj did not aim to eradicate untouchability and that 'Shuddhi' was a cunning ploy to perpetuate the hold of the higher castes over the untouchables. Swami Acchutanand in a speech claimed that the Samaj aimed "to make all Hindus slaves of the Vedas and the Brahmans".¹¹ At this time, the political reforms of 1919, introduced by the British government brought into sharper focus the issue of the relative numerical strength of various religious groups as the principle of communal representation was fully recognised. Ram Charan argued that "in 1919 reforms and representation was given according to population; those religious groups who are more numerous get more places; and then what else but *acchhutoddhar* (uplift of untouchables) conferences everywhere to uplift untouchables".¹² Therefore, in the 1920s, due to disillusionment with the Arya Samaj and increasing consciousness among the Dalits, they dissociated themselves from the Samaj and formulated the ideology of Adi-Hinduism and took the initiative of independent assertion. A book entitled *Mool Bharatbasi aur Arya* (Original Inhabitants of India and Aryans) was published, written by Swami Bodhanand, to propagate this ideology. The *Kumbh Mela* of 1928-29 at Allahabad saw the most strident proclamation of Adi-Hinduism. At the *Mela*, a *Mohotsav* or great festival of all Adi-Hindu Bhakti Sant panths

(devotional sects) was held, in which Kabirpanthi, Navidas and Shivnarayani groups participated.¹³ By 1924, local Adi-Hindus Association had been organised in Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi and Lucknow. In Allahabad, the Chamars had declared themselves to be a "Self-contained" community, having broken away from high-caste Hindus, and celebrated their festivals separately in 1926.¹⁴ Many local festivals were organised by the untouchables in Allahabad and they rejected several rites and rituals, practised by the Brahmans. Their attacks on the caste system was directed specifically at its function as a vehicle of exclusion from rights or opportunities and for imposition of 'low' roles on the untouchables, which in turn was seen to be the cause of their continuing deprivation, but they did not attempt to address the basic principles underlying the caste system, ideas about purity and pollution or about the inheritance of social duties. The Adi-Hindu leaders thus did not pose a direct threat to the caste system, even though their conception of it as an instrument for imposing social inequalities implied a critique of ritual hierarchy. The Adi-Hindu movement was, in essence, conceived as and remained a protest movement against the attribution of 'low' roles and functions to the untouchables by means of a claim not to be Aryan Hindus; it was not developed into a full-blown, direct attack on the caste system.

Later, Allahabad played a leading role in the Freedom Struggle, it became an important political centers and many prominent leaders were

represented from Allahabad, like, T.B.Sapru, P.D.Tandon, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri to name a few. It was at Allahabad that the Indian National Congress passed a Resolution in 1921 in which they called upon the people to organise whenever possible, individual or mass civil disobedience along non-violent lines. In 1930 during Satyagrah movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Allahabad played a significant role. During the Quit India Movement, 1942, people from Allahabad actively participated and many people sacrificed their lives. Thus, since 1930 onwards, Allahabad was much influenced from the Freedom Struggle and the influence of Gandhiji was more pronounced there than that of Dr.Ambedkar. Here we, again, find that Allahabad was more affected by the over-all national politics so, during this period, we don't find, except some reference, the impact of the Dr. Ambedkar on the affairs of Allahabad; it was felt after Independence particularly during the RPI period.

Allahabad, after Independence, became the bastion of the INC and much of the Dalit politics was accommodated by the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru contested from Phulpur constituency of Allahabad thrice and other important leaders also made Allahabad as their workplace. The effect of this factor was so important that it accumulated and incorporated the Dalit sections within the Congress dominance. It was only in the 1977

elections that Congress was defeated in Allahabad but the full assertion of the Dalits from Allahabad took place only after 1985, particularly, after the formation of the BSP and the execution of the Mandal Commission, which affected the polarisation between the backward classes and the lower castes.

The BSP attempted to make inroads in the Allahabad politics and earlier it came out with a very important political stand which is clubbed in the slogan of "Educate, Agitate and Organise"¹⁵ which the BSP took from Dr.Ambedkar, who asked his people and followers to fight for their own rights. The BSP has picked up this slogan in order to mobilise the people who they think need to be educated and there is also an urgent need for agitation for their just demand and above all every one should be united so that they can fight their main enemy - people of higher castes. With this main political stand, Mr. Kanshi Ram contested elections from Allahabad and secured 19% of vote share. Here, Kanshi Ram made his intention that of awakening the lower castes and not just winning the elections. The main job of the BSP, as Kanshi Ram envisaged, is to tell the people that "we poor people can no longer remain in passive state giving in to the whims and fancies of the rich and upper caste. We no longer want to be ruled, we want to be the rulers in a society in which all have equal rights and self respect. We have to change this system where the poor have a life

of degradation and insult and BSP is trying to deliver this message to the people".¹⁶

With this propoganda plank against the 'Brahmanical Culture', the BSP worked in the areas of Allahabad district where the conditions of the Dalits were more poor and concentrated on these areas. This helped it to increase its social base there as is evident from the electoral results, discussed earlier in this chapter, when it started from the fourth position with 13% of vote share in Allahabad district in the 1991 elections, but reached upto 24.51% in the 1996 elections. It also increased its social base in the Assembly elections and improved a lot, as is clear from the election analysis.

It is clear, by now, that there was not much of the Dalit assertion in Allahabad, as we find only one important example during the last quarter of the last century which was sustained upto around 1925, but, that remained largely a protest against the 'low' status assigned to the untouchables, and, thus, not challenging the basic principles underlying the caste system which made them deprived of everything, even their self. So, after analysing all these, the obvious question which comes to one's mind is what are the reasons that there was not much assertion in Allahabad? Now, we will endeavour to find out these reasons.

The social structure of Allahabad is very much representative of the over-all Uttar Pradesh. The proportion of the Scheduled Castes in the population of Allahabad is higher than the average proportion of the Scheduled castes in U.P.. The Scheduled Castes consists 24.46% in the total population of Allahabad, while in the State it is 21.05%.¹⁷ But, there is dominance of the upper castes in the affairs of the district and politically the Scheduled Castes were accommodated by the Congress in the first thirty years of Independence and later on, they were appeased by other political parties, thus, leaving themselves at the others good wishes. Actually, "the greatest failure of the Dalits has been the inability to organise themselves as a strong and durable political movement."¹⁸ It is the case in the Uttar Pradesh politics and so is with Allahabad. The first reasons for this is that of social composition where middle castes (class) are much vocal and in direct contest with the upper castes; the lower castes, either followed the backward classes or appeased and accommodated by the upper castes parties. The Scheduled Castes were not able to organise themselves on the class line, as was the case in Agra where Jatavs organised themselves, more particularly due to their industrial base, or the Scheduled Castes in Kanpur. Allahabad is not a very big industrial area and a very few people of the lower castes are occupied there; the larger section of the lower casts are engaged in th agrarian works and their economy is basically dependent on the rural agricultural industry. Thus,

they suffer more directly the discrimination in social structure which is economically agricultural. Here middle classes made much dent in local politics as they gradually controlled land and made a command over the rural economy. This factor left the Scheduled Castes again at the receiving end. But since 1985 there have been many changes in the State politics which certainly affected Allahabad where the Scheduled Castes attempted to organise themselves and started asserting for their rights. The second reason is that of the 'Congress dominance'.¹⁹ For Allahabad was a Congress bastion is clear from the elections results; where Congress was first defeated in the post-Emergency 1977 elections, but regained all seats from Allahabad in the 1980 elections. The Congress utilised the Scheduled Castes for its own sustenance, through its various welfare programmes but "the post-Independence policies directed at ending the condition and basis of untouchability have failed to achieve their putative object... The fundamental reason for this failure is political: the elite which had the task of devising and carrying through anti-untouchability programme would have been directly disadvantaged by its comprehensive success. Not only were the class interest of the elite antagonistic to those of the untouchable population, but so were their more diffused caste interests. In the absence of a powerful untouchable movement, the untouchables were simply bound to end up with programmes that did not meet anything like their full needs."²⁰ Thus, the Dalits remained poor and the discrimination,

continued. It was only during the mid-1980s that the Dalits realise their pathetic conditions and its reasons and increased consciousness about their self and the rights made the assertion more organised.

Clubbed with the second reason is another one that of the leadership. The Congress ideology was much pronounced in Allahabad as is evident from the leadership provided by this district. It produced leaders like Pt.Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Mrs.Indira Gandhi, H.N. Bahuguna, who were serious protagonists of the Congress policy. This fact also shaped the course of Allahabad politics.

Another reason for less Dalit assertion in Allahabad is that of the cultural attitudes, as practiced by the Scheduled Castes in this area. As a matter of fact, there was much Sanskritization among the Dalits in Allahabad. As a result, they have improved their status but the real change in the caste system does not occur. There was not direct contest with the upper castes domination and the Sanskritization became much pronounced in the cultural area. Though, Sanskritization remained an integral part of social mobility and some sections of the Scheduled Castes opt for it, many others, particularly in the late 1980s, emphasise their Dalit identity and adopt a confrontationist attitude towards the higher castes and their authority. Commenting on the role of the Sanskritization, M.N. Srinivas

writes, "Most interestingly, the Sanskritization of SCs embodies a strong element of protest against the high castes: 'We dare you to stop us emulating you' seems to be the spirit underlying emulations. In other words, both Sanskritization and emulation challenge the positions and authority of higher caste".²¹

The next reason, which is so important, is that of the Gandhi-Ambedkar differences. Uttar Pradesh, during the Freedom Struggle was more influenced by the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi than that of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar was very much influential in Maharashtra. Here, in U.P. Gandhiji's influence was much felt almost in every arena of socio-political life. The people of U.P. participated in the Freedom Struggle more organised against the British Rule under the powerful leadership of Gandhiji. Then, there were several efforts to infold the untouchables within the Hindu fold through Arya Samaj and its ideals. The Gandhian attitude towards untouchability was more moralistic than political and we find that in U.P. this attitude left much appeal to the upper castes, except in the regions of Agra where Jatavas attempted to transform the question of untouchability from a moral problem to a matter of political rights, undoubtedly, under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar. But, Allahabad was affected by the general U.P. politics also on this issue where questions of untouchability was considered as a moral one and we find several branches

of Arya Samaj there, established during the first quarters of this century, which attempted to consolidate the lower castes within Hindu folds, but, as we have seen earlier, how the depressed classes, later on, disillusioned from the Samaj.

Thus, we find four important reasons, discussed above assertion of the middle-castes which absorbed the Scheduled Castes assertion; Congress dominance; role of Sanskritization and the Gandhian influence on U.P. much more pronounced than Ambedkar; for less assertion of Dalits in Allahabad district. But, there has been important change in the Dalit politics now in U.P. particularly after the formation of the BSP. Now, in Allahabad also atrocities on Dalits can't go unattended, people from the lower section of the society are organising themselves, as was evident in the painful Dauna incident in the district. Social oppression on the caste lines is very significantly diminishing and wherever it takes place, a very strong challenge is there to thrash it away. At the level of consciousness, Dalits in Allahabad are understanding the dynamics of politics and also envisaging their role in the polity. They are realising that the liberation of the Dalits is ultimately a task for themselves and that the mechanisms are political. They have understood that the urgent need for them is education, political maturity and organised effort. During the fieldwork, I observed that all the people of the Dalit sections are very serious for the education

of their children. The old generation have the bitter memories of the acute caste discriminations and oppression but at the same time very optimistic about the future of their children. The Dalits in the areas of Phulpur and Manjhanpur showed political maturity where they can discuss almost on every issue, like a responsible citizen, of course, on political lines. Thus, it becomes clear that a new identity among the Scheduled Castes is emerging, that of the Dalits, and that the Dalits will not forever acquiesce in their subordination. They are demanding to be equal & their struggle and resistance to search are steps in the emerging Dalit identity.

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NOTES

1. *Census of India, 1991.*
2. For this section, Data were provided by the District Elections Office, Allahabad. Compilations of tables is based on those data.
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5. *ibid.*, p.280.
6. *ibid.*, p.281.
7. *ibid.*, p.282-83.
8. *ibid.*, p.285.
9. Jinjnasu, C.P., *Adi Hindu Andolan Ka Prabartak Sri Swami Acchutanand Harihar* (Lucknow: 1968, Second edition) [hereafter *Acchutanand Biography*], pp.9-10.
10. Chaudhury, A.P. *Picchre Tatha Dalit Barg Ke Mahan Neta Rai Ram Charan Ka Jivan Charit Tatha Unke Sansthapita Karya* (Lucknow, 1973) [hereafter *Ram Charan Biography*], pp.1-2.
11. *Acchutanand Biography*, pp.11-12.
12. *Ram Charan Biography*, pp.8-9.
13. *Acchutanand Biography*, pp.72-4.
14. *Weekly Police Abstract of Intelligence, U.P.*, 35, 11 September, 1926.
15. Ram, Kanshi. *The Chamcha Age: An Era of Stooges* (Delhi: Privately Printed), p.117.
16. Sarin, Ashwini. 'Lending a Voice to the Oppressed', *Indian Express*, Delhi editions, 29 March, 1987.

17. *Census of India, 1991.*
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Chapter V

*Understanding Dalit Movement in Uttar
Pradesh: Summary and Conclusions*

Understanding Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh is a challenging and complex task. For Uttar Pradesh is an important nerve-centre of socio-politico-economic change with much rapidity ; Uttar Pradesh has played a significant role during the Freedom Movement and it is suffused with antiquity, intellectual depth, social change and, now, with the politicisation and assertion by the lower castes, the Dalit community and the subaltern classes. Earlier the Dalit movement was weak and limited to the pockets of the State but now it is being felt almost in every area of the State. To understand this proliferation, we have thoroughly discussed the history of Dalit movement in India and derived some of the important trends which affected the politics of Uttar Pradesh immensely.

As our study shows the Dalit movement started far back where some scholars traced the beginning of the movement right from the *Bhakti* period which produced great Saints like Chokhamela, Eknath, Kabir and Ravidas whose writings were/are so instrumental in the Dalit awakening and whose works served as a sound background to the modern Dalit assertion which made its appearance on national political scene soon after the Montague declaration in August 1917 and there has been a general consensus that the Dalit struggle, during the National Freedom Movement, particularly after the arrival of Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar, gained momentum where the focus of the struggle was upon gaining recognition,

representation and power within the changing political order. Our study also reveals that the Dalit movement in the beginning was Reformatory in nature where attempts were made to purify Hinduism of its evils and fought against the tyranny of the caste system but later on Alternative movements were also envisioned to create an alternative socio-cultural structure where each individual can enjoy respectfully a dignified life without any kind of discrimination. The themes of the movement were felt in every region of the country, not only in Maharashtra, though with varying degree of strength. That Dalit movement was not a caste-based movement but Dalits as workers, peasants and agricultural labourers were involved with economic or class issues everywhere, and an important observation which came out of this study is that of the broadening of the term Dalit, which has now a wider connotation and refers to all those who are deprived of their socio-economic and cultural rights.

To understand the political consciousness and participation of the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh this study examined thoroughly the origin, nature and strength of the Dalit movement in State and found that the Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh arose later than the Western and Southern India and during the colonial period was both weak and confined to the pockets of the State. We find only a few examples of the anti-caste movement in the State during the colonial period and the Dalits were not

able to consolidate themselves for various reasons, one important reason was that of the effects of Mahatma Gandhi upon the anti-colonial struggle, this shaped the identity of the Scheduled Castes as 'Harijan' and made the problems of the Untouchability as a moralistic rather than a political one, as a result they remained poor, submissive and politically backward. But a small section of the Scheduled Castes rejected this view under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar towards the end of the colonial period and began to use politics as a means to achieve an equal status in the Indian polity. Then, since Independence, Dalit movement has passed through a number of phases of strength and weakness, autonomy and co-optation and faced a number of problems which has given it a complex nature. The RPI in the 1960s raised some hopes for independent Dalit assertions but it proved to be shortlived, the reasons were the lack of dynamic leadership; internal divisions over the strategy for the struggle and the ability of the Congress to consolidate the majority of Dalits. But the formation of the BSP gave a new push to the movement and the BSP has succeeded in breaking down the vertical patron-client relationship with the upper caste and accompanying political mobilisation pattern of the vote banks which was characteristic of Uttar Pradesh for a long time and has constructed a new solidarities on horizontal dimensions. Though the political programme and ideological perspectives of the BSP are vague in nature, as our study reveals, it has been successful in capturing political power

twice and infused confidence among the Dalits. However, our examination of the BSP also uncovers that the BSP seeks to be both a movement and political party with a short-term goal of capturing political power and a long term aim of social transformation.

Coming to Allahabad district, area of the study, we have analyzed with all depth and seriousness the context and situation of the Dalit movement in the district. The analysis of the election results reveal that Allahabad was a bastion of the Congress party and it was during mid-1980s that the Congress was not able to retain this area; then onwards, the BSP has attempted to make inroads in this district whose Scheduled Caste population percentage is quite higher than the other districts.

But the historical account of the Dalit movement in Allahabad shows that there has not been much Dalit assertion in the area and we found four-fold reasons for the less Dalit assertion, viz., assertion of the middle castes which absorbed the Scheduled Castes assertion; role of Sanskritization; the Congress dominance and the Gandhian influence upon Uttar Pradesh was much pronounced than Dr.Ambedkar. Further, this study also shows that the politics of Allahabad district is much affected by the over-all general politics of the State though local dynamics play but their limited role.

Thus, in the course of the study, we find that the political mobilisation of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh is undermining, decisively, the traditional caste hierarchy of a social order which has made them subjugated for centuries. Uttar Pradesh is experiencing a new phase of social change where lower castes are playing an important role and an egalitarian restructuring of the social order is the final aim of the movement where caste should not determine whether an individual is treated as an inferior or superior human being. The Dalit movement concentrates its struggle "against socio-economic exploitation; for better access to the opportunities; and for gaining self-respect and dignified social identities".

Appendix

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Clause 1 states; "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. Clause 2 states "No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to

- (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and place of public entertainments;or
- (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

Clause 3 states nothing in this Article or in Clause 2 of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes vide 1st Amendment Act, 1951.

Article 16, Clause 4 highlights, "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

Article 17 states "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of 'untouchability' shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 19, Clause 1, sub-clause (g) provides the right to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation trade or business.

Article 23, Clause 1, states "Traffic in human beings and *begar* and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 25, Clause 2, sub-clause (b) states, "Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus".

Article 29, clause 2 refers "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion., race caste, language or any of them."

Article 38, clause 2 states "The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only among individuals, but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations".

Article 46 states, "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation".

Article 164, clause 1, keeps the provision that in the State of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, there shall be a minister in charge of tribal welfare who may in addition be in charge of the welfare of the Schedule Castes and backward classes or any other work.

Article 330, clauses 2 states, "The number of seats reserved in any State or Union Territory for the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes under clause 1 shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State or Union Territory in the house of the people as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the States or the Union Territory or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or Union Territory

or part of the State or Union Territory as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State".

There are temporary provisions for special representation of and reservations of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislatures (Articles 330, 332,334).

Article 335 states that claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

Article 338 clause 1 states, "There shall be special officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be appointed by the President
Clauses 2. It shall be the duty of the special officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under this Constitution and report to the President upon the working of those safeguards at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament. As to clause 3 in this Article reference to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be construed as including reference to such other backward classes as the President may, on receipt

of the report of a Commission appointed under clauses 1 of Article 340, by order specify and also to the Anglo-Indian Community.

According to Article 341 clause 1 The President may with respect to any State (or Union Territory) and where it is a State...after Consultation with the Governor...thereof, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purpose of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State (or Union Territory, as the case may be.). Clause 2 says Parliament by law may include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause 1 any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notifications.

Article 366 states, in the Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions have the meanings hereby respectively assigned to them, that is to say: according to clause 24 'Scheduled Castes' means such castes and races or tribes as are deemed under Article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purpose of this Constitution.

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