

# **Identity Formation And Political Consciousness Among Dalits of Haryana**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
award of the Degree of the Master of Philosophy*

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Identity Formation and Political Consciousness among Dalits of Haryana”, submitted by Murali Dhar, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, is his own work, and to the best of our knowledge has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

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

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***In***  
***Memory***  
***of***  
***Papa***

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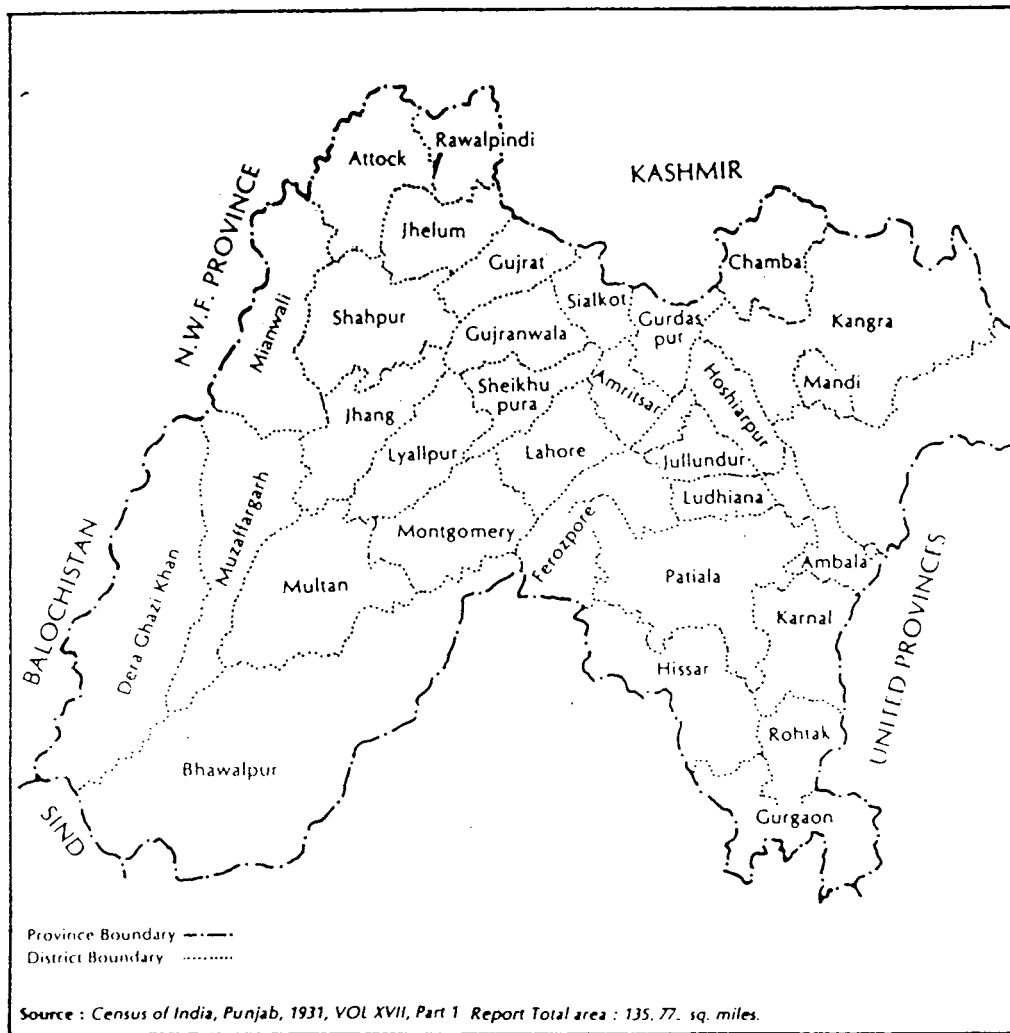
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## Abbreviations

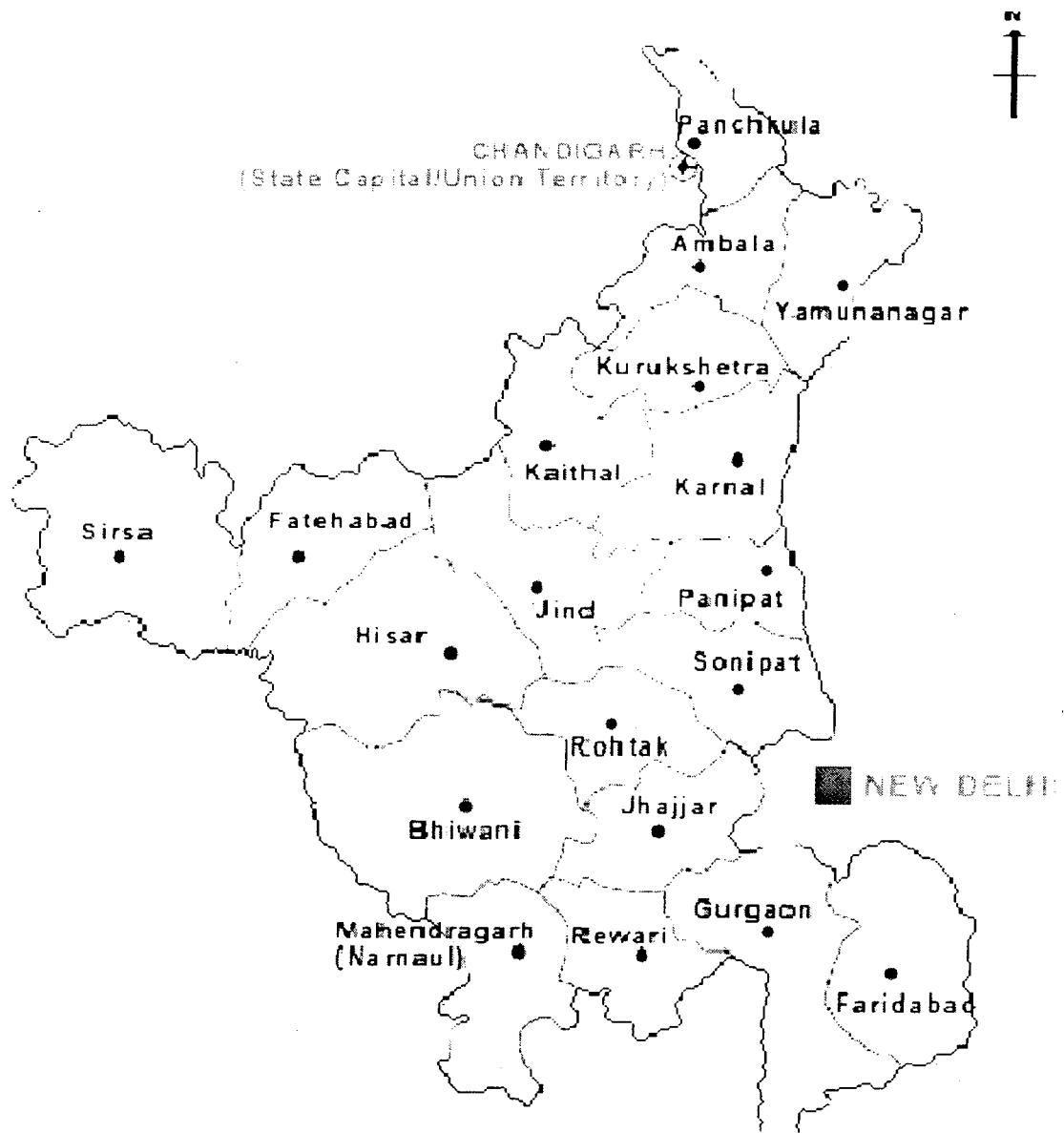
BCs	Backward castes
BJP	Bhartiya Janta Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
HVP	Haryana Vikas Party
INC	Indian National Congress
INLD	Indian National Lok Dal
NML	Nehru Memorial Library
LJS	Lok Jan Shakti
SCs	Sched <sup>u</sup> led Castes
SP	Samajwadi Party



Map 1.



# HARYANA



Map 2.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The contemporary India is witnessing political as well as socio-cultural assertion(s) of dalits, genealogy of which is often traced to the late nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> however sometime it is extended to as back as the thirteenth century when Bhakti movement attempted to cut ground beneath the caste system.<sup>2</sup> Today, dalits are not merely a passive, voiceless and unchanging object of the caste discrimination; rather they present themselves as active subjects. It is in this context that issues of dalit identity and politics have acquired the centre stage in dalit discourse, which, however, is not homogenous and fixed body of ideas. To begin with, therefore, we need to understand the meaning of dalit identity and identity formation.

Identity, in the general sense is about how one understands one self and how they are understood by others. It is concerned with three important queries: Who we are? What position do we have in society vis-à-vis other communities? How are we related to others? Infact, every person or group has an inner sense or an estimate of themselves that says- 'This is real me.'<sup>3</sup> This is subjective element of their identity. However subject is always involved in dialogue with the others, who may or may not give due recognition to a person's or group's self-perception. According to Charles Taylor, if the society mirrors back an inferior or demeaning image of a subject, its self-image may get distorted. Infact

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<sup>1</sup> Mendelsohn and Vicziany, for instance, states that the conditions for development of resistance by dalits into militancy were put into place only during the period of direct British rule after 1857. See, Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) *the Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.77-117.

<sup>2</sup> Shah, Ghanshyam (2001) 'Dalit Movements and Search for Identity' in Shah, Ghanshyam (eds) *Dalits Identity and Politics*. New Delhi: Sage Publication. p.198.

<sup>3</sup> Erikson, Erik 'Identity: Psychosocial' in David L. Sills (eds.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol.VII. New York: Macmillan Company and The Free Press. p.61.

identity of subject is always in interaction with, sometime in struggle against, the things which others want to see in them.<sup>4</sup> Thus, identity formation involves a conflict with demeaning image.<sup>5</sup> It may also involve construction of images, myths, symbols or marks of identification that may help the subject to evolve a positive image of themselves.

In India, status, role and position of social groups particularly caste groups is determined by the social structure. According to it, Dalits have been considered as occupying the lowest rank in the social hierarchy. For centuries they were considered untouchable and were segregated. A host of social disabilities were imposed upon them. Thus, social structure in India mirrors back a demeaning image to dalits. For centuries, dalits internalized this image. They lost self-respect and self-pride.

Identity consciousness among dalits, therefore, is concerned with self-esteem.<sup>6</sup> It is related to inculcation of the feeling that they are no longer untouchable and that they are equal to others. As this consciousness is growing among dalits, they have attempted to redefine their position in the society. Identity formation among dalits, therefore, is related to resisting attempts to impose demeaning image upon them and redefine their relations with others. It is important to note that dalits are not a homogenous group of people and are differentiated variously. These differences have impacted upon the process of identity formation among them. Therefore, urge for positive identity has not crystallised among them equally. Moreover, they have adopted different expressions to articulate their identity. It may be expressed in the language of protest and resistance, which may be subtle or violent. It may be expressed in the

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<sup>4</sup> Taylor Charles (1994) 'The Politics of Recognition' in David Theo Goldberg (eds) *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell p.79.

<sup>5</sup> Erikson, Erik, *op.cit.*, p.61.

<sup>6</sup> Shah, Ghanshyam, *op.cit.*, p.195.

socio-cultural realm or in the political realm. It may involve construction of symbols, myths and marks of identity to carve out a distinct identity. It may also involve dissociation with those marks of identity which are associated with their demeaning image. However, it is the urge for self dignity and honour that underlies all the above mentioned expressions.

Though the earliest attempts to challenge the depreciating image and low position of dalits can be traced to the rise of Buddhism and Bhakti movement, it was only in the colonial period that the conditions for development of an urge among dalits to have positive identity were put into place.<sup>7</sup> This is not to state that Britishers intervened consciously to uplift dalits. Infact, some of their policies proved disadvantageous to them.<sup>8</sup> Yet, with the advent of British rule in India, certain conditions were created that stimulated growth of consciousness among small but politically significant number of dalits. These conditions were created with the introduction of British education to small number of dalits, the urbanisation and opening up of a host of new occupations for them. As a result a small number of dalits emerged who were not willing to accept a degraded social status and demeaning self-image.

It is this section of small number of dalits who began to assert for dignity. Their earliest attempts focused upon entry to temples, access to streets and village ponds and wells. In some parts of country, dalit women were not allowed to cover their breasts. Dalits started to react angrily to such derogatory social obligations. These symbolic gestures were the earliest signs of growth of urge for self-respect. Even Ambedkar led such symbolic protests for some time. During 1920s, dalits from some regions started to claim that they were the original 'sons of soil' and rulers of the

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<sup>7</sup> Mendalohn and Vicziancy, op.cit., pp.77-117.

<sup>8</sup> Omvedt, Gail (1994) Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India, New Delhi: Sage Publications. pp.80-88.

country. They rejected the denominations like 'Panchama' or 'Avarnas'. They coined new identity by adding prefix 'Adi' (meaning original) to their respective regional identities. In Telegu speaking area, they called themselves 'Adi-Andhras' and 'Adi Hindus', in Kannada speaking region they called themselves 'Adi-Kannada', in Tamil speaking region they called themselves 'Adi-Dravida' and in Punjabi speaking region they called themselves 'Ad-Dharmi'. They also established their own organisations, constructed new objects of identification and some among them even attempted to create a separate political identity. Some of the advocates of Adi-identity argued that they were Hindu whereas some asserted that they were non-Hindu.

Dalits also tried to redefine their social position through 'sanskritisation'.<sup>9</sup> For instance, Jatavs of Agra started to claim for 'Kshatriya status' in the colonial period.<sup>10</sup>

Many dalits also converted to other religions in an attempt to redefine their social position. Even Ambedkar adopted Buddhism. He had the conviction that dalits could not attain self respect and sense of their true-self until they shun their Hindu identity. However, others sought to remain within Hinduism and claim for self respect within Hinduism.<sup>11</sup> Gandhi also tried to instill a sense of self respect among dalits. He adopted the term 'Harijan' that was coined by Narisnh Mehta, the seventeenth century Gujarati seer. Harijan means 'people of God'. Gandhi

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<sup>9</sup> The term Sanskritisation was coined by M.N. Srinivas, According to him, "Sanskritisation is the process whereby a social group placed lower in social hierarchy attempt to attain upward mobility by adopting rituals, customs etc. of those placed above them." M.N. Srinivas cited in Lynch, Owen (1969) *The Politics of Untouchability*. New York and London: Columbia University Press. p.5.

<sup>10</sup> Owen Lynch shows that Jatavs of Agra city attempted to redefine their social position in colonial period through sanskritisation. *Ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> For example Bhimsen Kadrak, follower and associate of Ambedkar, observed: 'I do not agree with his call for conversion... What's wrong with our staying Hindus and continuing our struggle for equality?' Cited in the Shah Ghanshyam, *op.cit.*, p.201.

intended that this term would replace the derogatory caste names and, thereby, instill a sense of self respect among dalits.

Though the term Harijan became popular even among dalits, some among dalits despised this term for they construed it to be pejorative and patronising.<sup>12</sup> In fact in the recent years, a new term Dalit has been gaining ground among dalits. The term 'Dalit', a Marathi word that means 'ground or broken to pieces', was seemingly first used by Phule. However it got eminence in the public discourse in 1970s and 1980s when Dalit Panthers and BSP emerged.

Dalits have also attempted to construct symbols, myths and marks of identification that instill a sense of self-pride among them. An alternative stream of Dalit literature has been generated by Dalit poets, writers and scholars. In the present context, a large number of dalit organisations have emerged throughout the country. Ravidas, Periyar, Phule, Sahuji Maharaj and Ambedkar have become symbols of dalit identity. All these expressions of dalit identity suggest that dalits do not regard themselves as passive and mute object of discrimination.

It is important to note that politics is an effective means for upward mobility.<sup>13</sup> Ambedkar seemed to have realised this. Therefore he attempted to organise dalits and sought to give them a political identity. He formed various political parties like Indian Labour Party, Scheduled Caste Federation and Republican Party of India.<sup>14</sup> However, it is in the recent years that one witnesses a rise of political consciousness among dalits. Though political consciousness and identity formation are distinct processes, they may be interrelated to one another. Two may foster each

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<sup>12</sup> Paradoxically, the term harijan is also used for children of Devdasins (temple "prostitutes").

<sup>13</sup> The literature on upward mobility of backward castes and intermediate castes demonstrates this.

<sup>14</sup> RPI was, infact, established after Ambedkar's death.

other. The existing literature shows that dalits have shown greater inclination towards politics. Their increasing electoral participation and normative understanding about the politics is a testimony to it. They have invoked their caste identities in politics in hope to redefine their position. Infact, political parties have emerged in some parts of country that endeavour to impart a political identity to dalits. However, the growing consciousness among dalits may not have translated into an urge for distinct political identity. Dalits might have realised the value of their vote. Yet they may not be coming together to forge a common political identity.

It is clear from the above discussion that identity for dalits is an urge for self-respect and self-esteem. They seek to redefine their social position and relations with others which mirror back to them a depreciating self-image. Dalits have tried to claim for a positive identity in a number of ways depending upon the context. Identity formation among them may take place in the socio-cultural realm and even in political realm. It is also visible in their subjective change.

With this background, we make an endeavour to understand identity formation and political consciousness among dalits of Haryana. Our aim is to find out as in what form dalits of Haryana articulate their identity. The objectives of the study are given below.

### **Objectives**

This study aims at understanding identity formation and political consciousness among dalits of Haryana. It intends to find out whether there is any socio-cultural assertion by dalits in Haryana. The work also aims at exploring as to what extent the general economic prosperity of the state has improved their socio-economic conditions. The objective is to understand the relationship between identity formation and socio-

economic condition of dalits. The present study also intends to analyse dalit politics in Haryana. It intends to explore their political preferences in order to ascertain if dalits of Haryana endeavour to assert through electoral politics. This study is, therefore, a modest attempt to map out content and context of identity formation and political consciousness among dalits in Haryana.

### **Review of Literature**

The issue of identity in general and dalit identity in particular has generated tremendous interest among the scholars. Anthropologists, sociologists, historians and political scientists- all have generated a mass of literature pertaining to the issues of dalit identity and politics. The present study relies upon some of the major contributions on these issues. Charles Taylor ('The Politics of Recognition' in David Theogoldberg (eds) *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) argues that identities are formed dialogically, and that misrecognition by others may distort one's self-image. Rajiv Bhargava ('Religious and Secular Identities' in Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh (eds), 1999) analyses as to what it is to have an identity while discussing religious and secular identities. Robert Deliege (*The Untouchables of India*. Oxford: Berg Publications, 1999) raises many pertinent issues related to dalit identity and the context and content of their struggle.

Mendelsohn and Vicziany (*The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) gives a general account of dalit assertion as well as their socio-economic disabilities. Ganshyam Shah (*Dalit Identity and Politics*. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2001) focuses upon the issues of dalit identity and politics. In 'Introduction' to this volume, he observes that dalit identity is still in making.



Gopal Guru ('The Politics of Naming' in Seminar, No.471, November.1998) looks at the meaning of various denominational categories coined by and for dalits. R.S. Khare (The Untouchable as Himself: Ideology. Identity and Pragmatism among Lucknow Chamars. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) attempts to demonstrate that dalits have an alternative cultural ideology. Owen Lynch (The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) shows how Jatavs of Agra City sought to form an identity through sanskritization in the colonial period and through politics in the post-colonial period.

The issue of dalit politics particularly in the context of Uttar Pradesh has been discussed in many articles by Sudha Pai (State Politics, New Dimension: Party System, Liberlisation and Politics of Identity. New Delhi: Shipra Publication, 2000). Yogendra Yadav ('Understanding the Second Democratic Upsurge: Trends of Bahujan Participation in Electoral Politics in the 1990' in Francine R Frankel et al (eds.) Transforming India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) shows that political participation has increased among the socially under privileged sections of society in the recent years. Pushendra ('Dalit Assertion Through Electoral Politics' in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXXVI. No36.September.1999) demonstrates that dalits are no longer captive voters of political parties. They are shifting their traditional party affiliations.

Nonica Datta (Forming an Identity: A Social History of Jats. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) puts light upon social relations of dalits in the colonial period while discussing formation of identity among Jats. Prem Chowdhary (Punjab Politics: The Role of Sir Chhutu Ram. Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1984. Also, The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana, 1890-1990. Delhi: Oxford

University Press, 1994) and Surindar Jodhka (Debt, Dependence and Agrarian Change. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1995) put light upon different aspects of Haryana. These contributions also provide information on the conditions of dalits in Haryana. Ranbir Singh ('The Contest in Hindi Belt: A Study of Haryana' in Subrata K Mitra and Chiriyankanath (eds) Electoral Politics in India. New Delhi:Segment Publications, 1992) maps out the emerging pattern of politics in the post 1989 parliamentary election period. Narendra Kumar (The Scheduled Castes and Panchayat Elections in Haryana, New Delhi, Indian Social Institute, 2001) looks into the question of participation of dalits in the panchayat elections. Ram Avatar Gautam and Prem Kapadia (Haryana Ke Dalit Harit Kranti Se Vanchit, New Delhi, Indian Social Institute, 2001) looks into various aspects related to dalits in Haryana.

However it must be mentioned that to the best of our knowledge there has been no researched work concerning the issues of identity formation and political consciousness among dalits of Haryana. The present work is, therefore, a modest attempt to fill in this gap.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study relied upon an analysis of primary as well as secondary sources. It also relied upon the empirical field work. For the present study four villages were selected from three districts. These villages are: Chuli Khurd (Hisar), Ismaila 9-B (Rohtak) Ledi and Rasulpur (Yamunanagar). The selection of the Villages was done after a preliminary survey of the district census. The selection was purposive. Two villages were taken from the regions where electoral performance of BSP was better. These villages were from the regions where the proportion of dalit population was relatively higher. The other two villages were selected from the regions where electoral performance of

BSP was poor and proportion of dalit population was relatively lower. It was seen, however, that all the villages had significant proportion of dalit population.

A sample of 50 respondents was taken from each village. Thus a total of 200 respondents were interviewed. The respondents in each village were selected randomly. For interview of respondents, an interview schedule was prepared in English which was communicated to them in Hindi or Haryanvi. Besides the questions covered in the schedule, related questions were also asked and responses were recorded in the register.

### **Chapterisation**

The present study is divided into five chapters.

*First Chapter* gives an introduction of the objectives of the study.

*Second Chapter* deals with the socio-economic conditions of dalits, in Haryana.

*Third Chapter* analyses identity formation and socio-cultural awareness among dalits in the sample villages.

*Fourth chapter* deals with political consciousness among dalits in the study-villages. It also analyses identity-formation among dalits in the realm of politics.

*Fifth chapter* sums up the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF DALITS IN HARYANA

This chapter deals with the socio-economic profile of dalits in Haryana. Located in the neighbourhood of Delhi, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, Haryana is a small state with an area of 44,212 sq. km. (1.34 percent of India's total area) and population of 21,082,989 (2.05 percent of India's total population according to 2001 census).<sup>1</sup> Haryana became a separate state on 1 November 1966. Before this, it was part of Punjab. It is important to mention that Haryana region came under the British control in 1803, much earlier than that of Punjab. In 1832, this region was transferred to the then United Provinces. After 1857 'movement' in which people of Haryana region participated vehemently, this area was tagged with Punjab (see Map.1). During the colonial period, Haryana remained the most backward area of Punjab.

The Britishers treated this region with apathy.<sup>2</sup> Even the great irrigation projects drawn up by the Britishers were to benefit only the northern or the central parts of Punjab and not the region of Haryana.<sup>3</sup> The imperial powers saw this region primarily suited for the supply of draught animals to the rest of Punjab and also to the other parts of India.<sup>4</sup> They emphasised upon the cultivation of low value food-cum-fodder crops. The frequent famines<sup>5</sup>, arid soil and water scarcity made lives of people in this region arduous. However, after independence, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> The population figures are based upon 2001 Census. Gathered from the website of the Census of India 2001. <http://www.censusindia.net/results/state.php?stod=A>.

<sup>2</sup> Gopal, Madan (1977) *Sir Chhotu Ram: A Political Biography*. Delhi: B.P. Publishing Corporation. p.9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Chowdhary, Prem (1994). *The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana 1880-1990*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. p.14.

<sup>5</sup> Famines in this region struck as follows: 1753-3, 1782-3, 1802-03, 1812-13, 1817-18, 1833-34, 1837-38, 1860-61, 1868-69, 1877-78, 1810-11, 1899-1900, 1905-06, 1909-10, 1918-19, 1929-31 (3 years), 1938-40 (3 years), See Board of Economic Inquiry, *A Cattle Survey of Rohtak District in the Punjab*, Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, 1935, pp.3-4, Cited in *ibid.*, pp.24-25 (See foot notes)

in the post 1966 period, Haryana registered tremendous economic growth. It is one of those regions where impact of Green Revolution has been effective. In the contemporary period, the state of Haryana is one of the richest states. At this juncture, few questions become pertinent.

What was the socio-economic condition of dalits in the colonial period in Haryana region? Did the backwardness of the region during this period affect their social life adversely? What is the socio-economic conditions of dalits in the contemporary period? Has the overall development and prosperity of state brought any change in the objective as well as subjective state of dalits in Haryana? In the light of these questions, in the present chapter we shall construct the socio economic and historical profile of dalits in Haryana. Our purpose is to layout a broad contour of the universe of the subjects which may affect identity formation and political consciousness among them.

## I

### **Haryana: A Brief Sociological Introduction**

The population of Haryana can be divided into many sociologically significant groups, viz., religious groups, linguistic groups, division between rural and urban population and the caste groups. Majority of population of Haryana is formed by Hindus (89.21 percent), followed by Sikhs (5.81 percent), Muslims (4.64 percent) and Jains, Christians, Buddhists (together forming merely 6.32 percent of total population).<sup>6</sup> Sikhs and Muslims are concentrated in some parts of Haryana. Sikhs are found in large number in the districts of Fatehabad, Sirsa and Kurukshetra where as Muslims are mainly concentrated in Gurgaon and Faridabad

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<sup>6</sup> Calculated from Statistical Abstract of Haryana 1999-2000. Economic and Statistical Organisation. Planning Department. Government of Haryana, Chandigarh, 2001, p.65.

districts.<sup>7</sup> Infact during partition, a significant portion of Muslim population of the region migrated to Pakistan.

Linguistically, population of Haryana can be divided mainly into two groups, viz., Hindi speaking (88.43 percent) and Punjabi speaking (9.17 percent). Besides these two groups, 1.64 percent people speak Urdu.<sup>8</sup> Punjabi is spoken mainly by Sikhs and the 'refugees', i.e., migrants from Pakistan during partition. Location-wise, majority of population of Haryana is rural (75.37 percent) and only 24.63 percent live in the urban area.<sup>9</sup> Caste occupies an important role in Indian social life and Haryana is no exception to it.

Major caste groups in Haryana are Jats, Gujjars, Rajputs, Ahirs, Aroras, Khatri, Baniyas, Brahmins, Bishnois, the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Castes like Nai, Khati, Saini, and Kumhars etc. The 'refugee Punjabis', too, have come to be recognised as distinct caste category.<sup>10</sup> Jats are the single largest caste group as they form 23 percent of total population of Haryana.<sup>11</sup> The Scheduled Castes with 19.75 percent population are the second largest group.<sup>12</sup> The proportions of other caste groups are as follows: Brahmins (12 percent), Baniyas (8 percent), Ahirs (8 percent), Aroras (6 percent), Rajputs (8 percent) and Gujjars (8 percent).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Table 2.1

<sup>8</sup> Statistical Abstract of Haryana, op.cit., p.66.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.23.

<sup>10</sup> Jodhka, Surinder S. (1999) 'Haryana: Change of Government and Beyond' in Economic and Political Weekly. Vol.XXXIV. No.32. August 7. pp.2218.

<sup>11</sup> Singh, H.D. (1996) 543 Faces of India: Guide to 543 Parliamentary Constituencies. Newsmen Publishers. pp.103-107.

<sup>12</sup> Statistical Abstract of Haryana, op.cit., p.23 and 67.

<sup>13</sup> Singh, H.D., op.cit., pp.103-107.

**Table 2.1**

**Parliamentary Constituency-wise Distribution of Major Caste Groups in Haryana**

Constituency	Dalits				Jats	Ahirs	Sainis	Sikhs	Bania	Brahman	Gujjars/	Rajput	Arora	Muslims
	Total	Chamar	Balmiki	Dhanak/ Mazhabi										
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Ambala (SC)	26	18	5	-	09	-	9	13	6.8	6.8	6.8	-	6	5
Bhiwani	21	12	-	5	33	-	-	-	6	8	-	6	6	-
Faridabad	16	10	3	-	13	-	-	-	6	8	6	-	10	25
Hissar	22	11	-	3	38	-	-	5	6	9	-	-	6	-
Karnal	20	09	7	-	12	-	-	9	5	9	-	-	14	-
Kurukshetra	22	11	7	-	14	-	5	15	5	9	-	-	9	-
Mahendragarh	19	12	-	-	09	34	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-
Rohtak	20	10	4	4	38	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	10	-
Sirsa (SC)	27	11	-	5	20	-	-	15	5	5	-	-	5	-
Sonepat	19	10	5	-	40	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-

Source: Singh H.D. (1996) 543 Faces of India: Guide to 543 Parliamentary Constituencies. Newsmen Publishers. New Delhi, pp.103-107.

Note: These are estimates calculated by the author (OBE- Our Best Estimate) based on:

- 1981 Census
- Delimitation Commission 1976
- Juxtaposition of administrative and Constituency boundaries
- Other Contemporary data/opinion available

Table 2.1 shows the percentage distribution of major caste groups in the parliamentary constituencies.<sup>14</sup> It is clear that whereas the caste groups like Brahmins, Banias, Aroras, Khattris and the Scheduled Castes are scattered throughout the state, the castes like Ahirs, Rajputs and Gujjars have some 'islands of concentration'. Ahirs are preponderant in some parts of Rewari, Mahendragarh and Gurgaon districts.<sup>15</sup> Gujjars are found in the large number in Karnal district whereas Rajputs have large concentration in Jhajjar, Karnal and Gurgaon.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Jats are highly concentrated in the regions of Hisar, Rohtak and Bhiwani districts. Table 2.1 makes clear that in the four parliamentary constituencies, viz., Hisar, Bhiwani, Rohtak and Sonapat the percentage proportion of Jats varies from 33 to 40 percent of the total population. The preponderance of Jats in these districts continues since the colonial days. Table 2.2 shows that in the districts of Hisar and Rohtak, Jats constituted 28.48 percent and 36.80 percent of total population of the districts in 1931.

**Table 2.2**  
**Numerical Strength of Different Castes in Various Districts of Haryana**  
**in Terms of Percentage of Total Population in 1931**

District	Jat	Rajput	Chamar	Brahmin	Bania	Meo	Ahir
Hissar	28.48	16.82	9.55	5.62	7.46	0.07	1.35
Rohtak	36.80	7.10	9.15	9.67	5.95	0.02	2.68
Gurgaon	11.5	6.72	12.73	7.95	4.38	19.54	12.80
Karnal	15.20	13.22	9.00	8.58	6.32	0.08	0.27
Ambala	16.28	10.81	11.48	5.57	2.24	0.29	0.24

Source: Calculated from Census of Punjab, 1931, Vol.XVII, Part-II, Tables. Lahore. Civil and Military Gazette, 1933, pp.282-302, Cited in Chowdhary Prem (1994). *The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> We are aware that the boundaries of present day districts of Haryana are not same as that of parliamentary constituencies. The data of concentration of castes at the level of parliamentary constituency may vary at the level of districts and tehsils. But unfortunately, data showing concentration of castes at district and tehsil level do not exist. Therefore, we use data at parliamentary level to have a rough estimate of the preponderant castes in the region. While doing so, we also read Table 2.2 that gives account of distribution of various castes in the districts in 1931.

<sup>15</sup> Verma, S.C. and Sukhbir Singh (2001) *Haryana*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, p.82.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* pp.77-81.



In Haryana, the agriculturist castes, particularly Jats have been the dominant caste.<sup>17</sup> They have been not only numerically preponderant but also own majority of the agricultural land in the regions where they are preponderant. During colonial period, Jats owned more than fifty percent of the agricultural land in three districts of Hisar, Rohtak and Karnal.<sup>18</sup> In Rewari tehsil of Gurgaon district, Ahirs dominated and in many other tehsils, Rajputs dominated. In Jagadhari and Pipli tehsils of Ambala, Rajputs owned more than a quarter of land.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, where Jats were less numerous, other agriculturist castes occupied the position of dominant castes.<sup>20</sup> The economic as well as social position of the agriculturist castes, particularly Jats and Bishnois have been further consolidated by Green Revolution. In such a situation of dominance of the agriculturist castes, though Brahmins and Banias remained sacerdottedly superior, socially they are treated inferior.<sup>21</sup> The dominance of the agriculturist castes and weakness in the position of Brahmins had a severely restricting effect on the hold of Brahmanical

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<sup>17</sup> The concept of dominant caste group was given by M.N. Srinivas. According to him 'Caste may be said to be 'dominant' when it preponderates numerically over other castes and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power..... (and)..... if its position in the local hierarchy is not too low'. M.N. Srinivas quoted in Srinivas (1991) 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura: Mobility in the Caste system' in Dipankar Gupta (eds) Social Stratification. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p.308. M.N. Srinivas specifically mentions Jats as the dominant caste in Punjab and Haryana in Caste in Modern India and Other Essays. Bombay Asia Publishing House, 1962.

<sup>18</sup> Chowdhary, Prem (1994). op.cit. p.39.

<sup>19</sup> ibid. p.40.

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that the castes like Jats and Ahirs had ambiguous ritual status. They were considered above Shudras but were treated like Shudras by Rajputs and Brahmins. However, in the first four decades of the twentieth century, a marked transformation came in their social position particularly under the influence of Arya Samaj and political mobilisation by Chhotu Ram. The Land Alienation Act of 1900, the myths of 'martial race' and 'agriculturist caste' further exacerbated Jats' sense of superiority. See Datta, Nonica (1999) Forming an Identity: A Social History of the Jats. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp.52-53 and 154. Also Chowdhary, Prem (1984) Punjab Politics: The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram. Delhi: Vikas Publications. pp.61-62.

<sup>21</sup> 1901 Census of Punjab mentions that socially Brahmins were 'the lowest of low'. Prakash Tandon in Punjabi Century 1857-1947 mentions that he discovered the privileged position of Brahmins outside Punjab. P.K. Chowdhary in a recent study of a Haryana Village shows that Jats feel reluctant to eat at a Brahmin's place as they consider themselves to be at the position of giver. All cited in Chowdhary Prem (1994), op.ct., pp.41-43.

Hinduism and, consequently the spread and acceptance of its socio-cultural norms and attitudes in Haryana region.<sup>22</sup> At this juncture, we may analyse the condition of dalits in the agrarian society of Haryana. In the first section, we deal with their socio-economic conditions in the colonial period . The second section deals with contemporary period.

## II

### **Dalits in Colonial Haryana: A Brief Survey**

As elsewhere, during colonial period dalits of Haryana were engaged in the traditional occupations of the shoe-making, sweeping and the scavanging. Chamars were mainly shoe-makers, Chuhras were sweepers and Dhanaks were the scavangers. Besides these occupations, they rendered certain 'customary services' to the landowners. These 'customary services' termed as 'customary begar' by the British Officials operated in various forms. Some of them were providing assistance in reaping of harvest, clearance of fields before ploughing, cutting or gathering of fodder, tending the landowners' cattle, digging of the village ponds and rendering of domestic service by their women's folk.<sup>23</sup>

It is already mentioned that Brahmanism had very weak influence in this region. With the upward mobility of Jats and Ahirs, Brahmanical ideology received another set-back. Though the status of Jats and Ahirs improved and their social degeneration diminished,<sup>24</sup> the castes considered to be at the bottom of social hierarchy were treated

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* p.44. 1901 Census Report also suggests - 'Caste system in this region was different from the lower India'. See, Preface, Census of India 1901, Punjab, its Feudatories and the North-West Provinces. Vol. XVII, Part-I, p.xii (microfiches available at NML, New Delhi).

<sup>23</sup> Chowdhary Prem (1984), *op.cit.*, p.66.

<sup>24</sup> Nonica Datta's interview of nonagerian Chowdhary Lajpat Rai (Alakhpura Hisar) shows that by 1920s Jats were reacting aggressively to any attempt to degenerate them. According to Datta, earlier jats used to eat 'Kuchha Food', some of them would marry even 'Chamars' women but as Jats went up the social hierarchy, they distanced themselves from the lower castes. Though Brahminical values and norms diminished with the dominance of Jats, the lower castes continued to be considered 'polluting'. Datta, *op.cit.* pp.52-53.

differentially. Dalits were considered 'untouchables' not only by Banias, Brahmins and Rajputs but also by Jats, Ahirs and Gujjars. Infact, some groups like Chuhras and Dhanaks had more social disabilities than Chamars.<sup>25</sup> The village wells, temples and schools were not open to them. In some villages, they were not allowed to fetch water from pond with a pot. Instead, they had to use small brass jug.<sup>26</sup>

They were forbidden to use 'khand' or 'bura' (sugar), but they could use 'shakkar' (brown sugar). Their women were forbidden to wear jewellery. In some villages, they could not construct pacca house.<sup>27</sup> Chuhras were not allowed to enter the house except when their service was required but Chamars did not have this restriction.<sup>28</sup> However, in some villages, even Chamars had to wait outside home and make a call from there only.<sup>29</sup> If an upper caste was physically contacted by Chamars, Dhanak or Chuhras, (s)he would wash his or her body and clothes.<sup>30</sup> In the assemblies, dalits had to sit on the earth and at a distance from others and not on the cloth sheet.<sup>31</sup>

Besides these social disabilities, dalits were oppressed economically too. In the backward economy of the colonial Haryana, as already mentioned, dalits had to depend upon the landowners for economic assistance, jobs etc. The Alienation Act of 1900 had deprived them of the right to be 'agriculturist castes'. Consequently, they were compelled to borrow money from landowners and thus remained indebted

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<sup>25</sup> This was true in the district of Gurgaon. Darling, M.L. (1930) *Rusticus Loquitur or the Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village*. London: Humphrey Milford and Oxford University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Chowdhary (1984), *op.cit.*, p.76.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> In Gurgaon, Chamars were not considered untouchable. Darling, *op.cit.*, p.135.

<sup>29</sup> In Karnal district, Chamars were ranked untouchables. *ibid.* p.93.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.* p.91, 93, 94 and 135.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

to them.<sup>32</sup> Apart from this, four other factors contributed greatly towards their oppression.<sup>33</sup> These were: The proprietary body of the village exacted village cesses known as "kodi-kamini" from them,<sup>34</sup> they were compelled to render customary begar, the landowners kept the wages of the agricultural labourers determinedly low<sup>35</sup>, and, lastly, they objected to use of the village shamilat (common land) by dalits.

If dalits ever tried to defy these obligations, they were punished through several repressive measures like the socio-economic boycott, expulsion from the village, forcing them to work outside the village abadi (residential area). During boycotts, dalits were forbidden to use the shamilat land even for defecation purpose. The Bania shopkeepers were told not to sell their goods to them. Additional taxes were imposed upon them. They were threatened, and, in some village even their women would be raped.<sup>36</sup> This social and economic subordination of dalits would aggravate during famines and epidemics.

Thus, the social and economic subordination by the landowning castes and the general deprivation and the backwardness of the region restricted their mobility and contributed to reduce dalits of Haryana to the status of wretched. Confronted by such situation, they either resorted to the weapons of weak or migrated to relatively better-off areas of Punjab. There were several instances of crop-burning, killing or wounding of the landowners poisoning or stealing of their cattle especially in the districts of Rohtak, Karnal, Ambala, Hisar and Gurgaon.<sup>37</sup> Reports of migration of

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<sup>32</sup> Chowdhary (1984). op.cit. p.66.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* pp.66-82.

<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that the proprietary body would impose taxes on all irrespective of their caste distinction. In case of dalits, this proved to be oppressive because they felt difficulty in paying these taxes. *ibid.* p.67.

<sup>35</sup> The districts of Rohtak and Gurgaon had very low wages (4 and 4 annas a day) for the unskilled labour in 1917. However in the eastern and the central Punjab, the wages of unskilled labour were relatively much higher. *ibid.* pp.70-71.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* p.75.

<sup>37</sup> Chowdhary, Prem (1984), op.cit., p.79.

dalits from Haryana region to Lahore, Amritsar, Montgomery and other districts of Punjab were also very frequent.<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that in Punjab, many socio-religious movements started during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of twentieth century. These movements aimed at social reforms like abolition of caste system, amelioration of the dalits and women etc. The significant among these were Arya Samaj and Ad-Dharam Movements. Founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875<sup>39</sup>. Arya Samaj starting from Lahore spread to the entire Punjab. Arya Samaj started many social reforms.<sup>40</sup> To uplift the social status of dalits, Arya Samaj started 'Shuddhi' (i.e., purification) movement. It was presumed that untouchability emanated from ritual impurity, therefore, a ritual for removing impurity could render the untouchable pure castes.<sup>41</sup>

Initially, those dalits who had converted to Christianity or Islam were purified. Later on, however, 'Shuddhi' began to be performed on Hindu dalits also, perhaps to prevent their conversion. Total number of person purified in the province of Punjab during 1901-1911 was about 60,000 to 70,000, the detail of which is as follows: Rahtias (3000-4000), Ramdasia (200), Ods (2000-3000), Meghs (3,000), Jats (30,000) and many lower castes of Hindus in Kangna, Dalhousie, Hoshiarpur and Ambala whose number was not known.<sup>42</sup> Initially Arya Samaj membership was drawn mainly from the upper castes. 1901 Census report

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Dayanand Saraswati belonged to Kathiawar (Gujarat). He established first organisation of Arya Samaj at Bombay in 1857. In Lahore, organisation of Arya Samaj was set up in 1887.

<sup>40</sup> These includes programmes for widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage, removal of untouchability, programmes for educating people including dalits and women. Arya Samajists opened DAV Institutions across Punjab.

<sup>41</sup> Sharma, Satish K. (2000) 'Arya Samaj Movement in Punjab' in Harish K Puri and P.S. Judge (eds) *Social and Political Movements: Readings on Punjab*. Jaipur and Delhi: Rawat Publications. p.104.

<sup>42</sup> Chowdhary Rambhaji. B.A. President of All India Shuddhi Sabha. Quoted in *Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Vol.XIV, Part-I, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, p.149.*

gives the caste-wise break-up of Arya Samaj. Whereas the number of Khatari, Arora and Brahmin members were 3394, 1627 and 1293 respectively, the menial castes like jhinwar and Kumhar had only 110 and 69 members.<sup>43</sup> As about dalits, the report says, "it may be doubted whether 24 chamars who profess to belong to sect are really member of it."<sup>44</sup> However it seems that, in the later years, Arya Samaj started to admit people from the lower castes also.

According to 1911 Census, 63 percent of total members of Arya Samaj belonged to the higher or middle castes, 3 percent were drawn from the menial castes and 34 percent were from the "untouchable" castes.<sup>45</sup> Arya Samajists also opened their educational institutions for dalits. Infact, many dalits who attained education in these institutions became leaders of dalit movement in the following decades. Thus, even if, the social status and economic conditions of dalits continued to be miserable, Arya Samaj created an environment for individual mobility among dalits.<sup>46</sup>

Although the activities of Arya Samaj influenced the whole region of Punjab, in some parts its impact was relatively weak. According to 1901 Census, Arya Samaj was not popular in the districts of the South-East Punjab (i.e., present day Haryana). In Ambala, there were 313 members and in Karnal only 263 members.<sup>47</sup> Infact, activities of Arya Samaj were much popular in the districts of Jullundhar, Amritsar,

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<sup>43</sup> Census of India 1901. Punjab, its Feudatories and the North-West Frontier Province, Vol.XVI, Part-I, p.116.

ibid.

The number of various castes that constituted members of Arya Samaj are as follows: Khatri (17237), Arora (10547), Jats (9203), Tarkhan (553), Jhinwar (471), Kumhar (313) all menial castes (2533), Meghs (22115), ods (5102), Chamar (311), Dumna (94), Dogi-Koli (67) all low castes (27689), Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Vol.XIV, Part-I, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, p.134.

Sharma, Satish K, op.cit., p.106.

Census of India 1901, Punjab, op.cit., p.116.

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Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Lahore and Gujranwala.<sup>48</sup> Though the membership of Arya Samaj in Hisar and Karnal swelled up in the later years<sup>49</sup>, the members were drawn mainly from the upper castes like Jats and Brahamins. The 'Shuddhi' movement became popular mainly among Jats. 1911 Census report observes that 'Jats have been raised to status of Dwija in the Districts of Karnal, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Hisar and Ambala'.<sup>50</sup> Thus in Haryana region, Arya Samaj contributed in enhancing the status of Jats and not that of Dalits.

Similarly, Ad-Dharm movement failed to create any base in this region. Ad-Dharm movement started around 1926 and aimed at changing the identity of dalits. Ad-Dharmis defined themselves as a separate quam like Hindus and Muslims. They asserted that they were original inhabitants of this land. This movement was strong in the central regions like Jullundhar, Hoshiarpur and Layallpur.<sup>51</sup> In the Census of India 1931, it is mentioned that very few Ad-Dharmis were found in the South-East Punjab. Whereas, the number of Ad-Dharmis in Jullundhar, Hoshiarpur and Layallpur were 113580 (27.12 percent), 111829 (26.70 percent), 50718 (12.11 percent) respectively, Haryana region had only 5070 Ad-Dharmis (1.21 percent of total Ad-Dharmis). Most of the Ad-Dharmis in Haryana were found in the Karnal district (5011) where as Ambala and Hisar reported to have 50 and 9 Ad-Dharmis respectively.<sup>52</sup>

As these two social-reform movements failed to take up the cause of dalits in Haryana, some sections among dalits converted to Sikhism and Christianity. Christianity was active in Punjab since the last quarter

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> In 1911, Hisar returned 3506 Arya Samajists and Karnal 3470 Census of India 1911, Punjab, *op.cit.*, p.13

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.* p.150.

<sup>51</sup> Jurgensmeyer, Mark. (1988) *Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Social Vision of Untouchables*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications, pp.45-58.

<sup>52</sup> Census of India 1931, Punjab, Vol.XVII, Part-I, pp.294, 278.

of the nineteenth century. Originally, the missionaries of Punjab attempted to convert the upper castes. But, to swell Christian members, they began to baptize lower castes also.<sup>53</sup> In 1881, Christians converts numbered 3,912. In ten years they reached 19,750 - a rise of 410 percent. In 1921, they were around 1,63,994.<sup>54</sup> Among dalits the missionaries recruited mainly Churas (sweepers). In Haryana region, Christian missionaries had opened their missions in all districts. However they were more active in Ambala and Rohtak. In 1931, 5735 Chuhras (sweepers) notified their religion as Christianity, out of which 3392 were from Rohtak and 1162 from Ambala districts.<sup>55</sup>

Chuhras and Chamars in some districts of Haryana also preferred Sikhism. Sikhism did not have caste, at least theoretically. Sikhs enjoyed social prestige. Dalits and the artisan castes converted to Sikhism to attain social prestige by becoming a Sikh.<sup>56</sup> In 1931, Chamars and Chuhras who reported to be Sikhs numbered 15,622 and 7259 respectively.<sup>57</sup> Out of these, 5168 Chamars were from Hisar district and 10454 from Ambala. Among sweepers, 3662 were from Hisar district and 3184 were from Ambala.<sup>58</sup> Infact, Hisar and Ambala districts were geographically proximate to areas where Sikhism was dominant. It is important to note that dalit converts to Christianity and Sikhism constituted a small section of total dalit population in Haryana.

Infact, any attempt of mass conversion to Christianity or Sikhism was resisted often violently. Moreover, very soon Sikhism and

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<sup>53</sup> Jurgensmeyer, M. op.cit, p.184.

<sup>54</sup> Census of India, Punjab 1881, pp.XIV 93 and 97, Census, Punjab Report, 1901, p.158; and Census, Report 1911, p.129, Cited in Kenneth W. Jones (2000). 'Social Change and Religions Movement in Nineteenth Century Punjab' in M.S.A. Rao, (eds) Social Movements in India, Delhi: Manohar, p.229.

<sup>55</sup> Census of India. Punjab . 1931, op.cit., p.278.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* p.293.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* p.278.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*



Christianity acquired the caste-bias within their members, even though such discrimination did not have any religious sanction. The socio-economic conditions of dalits did not improve much even after conversion to these religions.

Thus, dalits of Haryana region could not be mobilised significantly by Ad-dharm movement or Arya Samajists, Christianity or Sikhism. Yet these movements induced some changes in outlook of society as well as that of few dalits. In many villages, dalits particularly Chamars began to observe some cleanliness. They stopped eating meat. They began to purchase tanned skin rather than tanning it themselves.<sup>59</sup> Though overall literacy among dalits remained abysmally low, a very thin layer among them could attain education. In 1931 there were 257 Chamars in Haryana who were literate in English. This number among Chuhras was 274.<sup>60</sup>

Dalits had also started discarding the traditional occupations, Chamars being in the lead. Infact, the customary position of Chamars as agricultural labourers had been changing to a contractual one in Rohtak district. Chamars were becoming tenants and Sanjhis (co-Sharers).<sup>61</sup> However, this change was gradual, more individual than social and many times invited more suppression from the dominant sections of society. Jats felt hurt if dalits attempted to equal them. They would attack violently and damage the property and lives of Chamars.<sup>62</sup> What made their lives more vulnerable to oppression was absence of political protection. The Britishers thought that any intervention on their part on the question of Begar, wages and other customary practices would upset the social equilibrium of the agrarian society. Whenever there was any revolt or resistance by dalits, the Britishers deliberately suppressed it.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Darling M.L. op.ct, pp.116-117.

<sup>60</sup> Census of India, Punjab, 1931, op.ct. p.264.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.* p.232

<sup>62</sup> Chowdhary, Prem (1984), op.cit. p.85.

<sup>63</sup> Chowdhary Prem (1984), op.cit, p.65.

Infact, many British officials followed the policy of favouring the landowners and the agriculturist castes.<sup>64</sup> The dominance of Unionist party further weakened the position of dalits. Infact, Unionist Party safeguarded the interests of peasantry. Its leader Chhotu Ram had been mobilising the agriculturalists particularly Jats since the inception of Party. For a long time, he continued to deny that dalits were oppressed. Instead, he would threaten dalits on the question of begar, wāges and traditional taxes. Once he remarked:

"I cannot annoy my own brothers to benefit you. If the Zamindars do not want to stop these practices, I can not do anything .If on this basis you want to deprive us of your votes, do so, for it does not matter . The Zamindars are numerically stronger than you in the villages."<sup>65</sup>

Infact, where the agriculturist castes were dominant, dalits did not come forward to claim votes, particularly in the districts of Hisar, Rohtak and Gurgaon.<sup>66</sup> In such an atmosphere, some help came from Congress. The leaders of Congress promised them to save from rendering begar.<sup>67</sup> Congress leaders also launched 'Harijan' movement of Gandhi. Dalits began to be called Harijan. However, this did not improve their socio-economic conditions. Thus, dalits of Haryana were living under the socio-economic and political subordination. Though Brahmanism did not enjoy popularity in Haryana region, dalits were considered 'impure' and untouchability was practiced against them. Economically too, they were indebted to and dependent upon landowners who had unique mechanisms of taxes, begar etc. to perpetuate their pauperization. Politically, they lacked any protection. Only Congress party promised to help them.

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<sup>64</sup> Tuteja, K.L. (2000), 'The Congress in Punjab' in Puri, Harish and Paramjit Judge (eds) Social and Political Movements: Readings on Punjab, Jaipur and Delhi: Rawat Publications. p.197.

<sup>65</sup> Haryana Tilak, 14 March 1939, p.3, Cited in Chowdhary Prem, op.cit., p.67 (footnotes).

<sup>66</sup> Census of India, Punjab 1931, op.cit., p.373 (Appendix III).

<sup>67</sup> Chowdhary, Prem, op.cit., p.80.

Though, Arya Samaj, Sikhism and Christianity could not consolidate their base among dalits of Haryana region, they induced some changes among a section of them. In the following section we shall see as to what extent the socio-economic conditions of dalits have improved in post-Independence period.

### III

#### **Dalits in Haryana in the Contemporary Period**

As already mentioned, Haryana registered tremendous economic growth after independence, particularly in post-1966 period. Today, Haryana is one of the most prosperous states in India with relatively extensive and better infrastructure, a sound agricultural base and burgeoning industrial sector. Per capita income at the current prices stands to be Rs.16454.<sup>68</sup> The percentage of the population living below the poverty line is 25.50 which is quite lower than that of all India figure (i.e., 35.77 percent).<sup>69</sup> Ironically, indices indicating social development of Haryana are relatively low. For example, literacy rate of the state in 1991 was 55.85 percent, which, no doubt, was little higher than all India figure (52 percent in 1991) but was lower than many states like Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra etc.

We shall see in the following account that this hiatus between economic development and social development gets reflected even among dalits. Though the condition of dalits is not as miserable as it was during

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<sup>68</sup> Statistical Abstract of Haryana 1999-2000, op.ct. p.205.

<sup>69</sup> The reference year is 1993-94, latest year for which data are available. Manorama year Book (2002), Kattayam: Malayala Manorama Press, p.566.

the colonial period, yet their development has been slower than the rest of population of Haryana.

### (1) Demographic Features of Dalits

According to 1991 Census, the population of dalits of Haryana is 32,50,933. Dalits account for 19.75 percent of the total population of Haryana, that is higher than the proportion of dalit population at all India level (16.32 percent). Table 2.3 shows dalit population and its percentage (in parentheses) to the total population of Haryana for 1971, 1981 and 1991. It is clear that dalit population in Haryana is growing. Infact, the growth rate among dalits is higher than that of the general population (Table 2.4). During 1971-81, the general population of Haryana grew by 28.47 percent whereas the growth rate among dalit population for the same period was 29.96 percent. In 1981-1991 the growth rate of dalit population increased from 24.96 percent in 1971-81 to 31.99 percent. However, during this period the growth rate among the general population came down from 28.47 percent to 26.33 percent.

**Table 2.3**  
**Growth of Dalit Population in Haryana During 1971-81 & 1981-1991**

1971	1981	1991
1,895,933 (18.89 percent)	2,464,012 (19.07 percent)	3,250,933 (19.75 percent)

Source: Census of India, 1971, 1981, 1991 (A Portrait of Population of Haryana 1991, Director of Census Operations, Haryana, Chandigarh, (2000), p.90).

**Table 2.4**  
**Growth Rate Among Dalit, General and Total Population In Haryana During 1971-81, 1981-1991**

1971-81			1981-91		
SC	General Population	Total	SC	General Population	Total
29.96	28.46	28.75	31.94	26.33	27.40

Source: Calculated from Haryana Statistical Abstract, 1999-2000, p.40. Also, Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol.XII, No.304, July-Dec. 2000, p.609.

It is important to note that population in Haryana is growing at a faster rate than that of all India. In 1961-71, Haryana's decennial population growth in percentage was 32.23 percent. In 1981-91, though it came down to 27.40 percent, it was still higher than the all India figure. Infact, the necessities of the agrarian economy, availability of better medical facilities and a developed economy capable to support big population have contributed to higher population growth. Haryana government has focused upon population control measures and has encouraged people for family planning. The declining population growth among the general population indicates that this section of population has responded positively to the population control programmes. However, it seems that among dalits, the family planning has not become much popular.

**Table 2.5**  
**Percentage Proportion of Major Caste-Groups among Dalits in Haryana**

Caste Groups	Balmiki/Bhangi	Chamar	Dhanak	Others*
Proportion (in percentage)	19.7	52.9	10.9	16.5

Source: Deliege, R. (1999), *The Untouchables of India*, Oxford: Berg., p.23.

\* There are 37 groups of dalits in Haryana. The category 'other' include 34 groups of dalits.

Infact, majority of dalits, as we shall discuss later, are agricultural labourers. They might feel need of more hand to earn. Besides this, ignorance and various apprehensions and anxieties account for lack of popularity of family planning among dalits. As elsewhere, dalits in the contemporary Haryana are not a homogeneous category. There are 37 groups of dalits with their own individual identities, different levels of cultural disabilities and socio-economic development. A list of 37 groups of dalits is given in the Appendix. In Haryana, Chamars are the largest group within dalits. In 1931, they formed 7.47 percent of total population of Haryana region, forming the third largest group after Jats and ragouts

(Table 2.2).<sup>70</sup> Table 2.5 gives the percentage proportion of major groups among dalits of Haryana. Clearly, Chamars form more than half of total population of dalits (52.9 percent). Other two numerically strong communities within dalits are Balmikis (19.7 percent) and Dhanak (10.9 percent). Thus 83.5 percent population of dalits is formed of only three sub-caste groups. Rest of 34 groups account for 16.5 percent, each group roughly forming 0.48 percent. From Table 2.1, it is clear that chamars are scattered throughout state, however Balmikis and Dhanaks are more concentrated in some parts. Balmikis are found in large number in parts of Karnal, Kurukshetra and Ambala regions. Whereas Dhanaks are found mainly in Hisar, Rohtak and Bhiwani districts.

**Table 2.6**  
**District-wise Distribution of Dalit Population in Haryana in 1991**

District	Population (In millions)	Dalits As percentage to Total Population
Ambala	0.20	25.18
Panchkula	0.05	17.52
Yamunanagar	0.20	24.96
Kurukshetra	0.12	19.77
Kaithal	0.17	21.44
Karnal	0.21	20.64
Panipat	0.11	16.45
Sonepat	0.19	18.17
Rohtak	0.14	18.75
Jhajjar	0.12	17.77
Faridabad	0.23	16.06
Gurgaon	0.15	13.59
Rewari	0.12	19.30
Mohendragarh	0.10	15.46
Bhiwani	0.21	18.97
Jind	0.18	19.56
Hisar	0.25	21.36
Fatehabad	0.17	26.70
Sirsa	0.24	26.65

Source: Haryana Statistical Abstract 1999-2000, Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Government of Haryana, 2001, p.67.

<sup>70</sup> Chowdhary, Prem (1994), op.cit., p.37.

**Table 2.7**  
**SC Population in each District as percentage of**  
**Total SC Population of the State**

SC	General Population
Ambala	6.17
Yamunanagar	6.31
Kurukshetra	3.90
Kaithal	5.41
Karnal	6.61
Panipat	3.42
Sonepat	5.94
Rohtak	4.56
Faridabad	7.29
Gurgaon	4.79
Rewari	3.70
Mahendragarh	3.24
Bhiwani	6.65
Jind	5.80
Hisar	7.92
Sirsa	7.40
Panchkula	1.72
Fatehabad	5.24
Jhajjar	3.86
Total Haryana	100.00

Source: Haryana Statistical Abstract 1999-2000, Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Government of Haryana, 2001, p.61

Table 2.6 and 2.7 give district-wise distribution of dalits in Haryana in 1991. A look at figure suggest that dalit population is highly dispersed throughout the state. Table 2.6 shows the percentage of dalit population to the total population in the various districts: Dalits are found in large numbers in the districts of Fatehabad, Sirsa, Ambala and Yamunanagar. The percentages of their population to the total population in these districts are 26.70 percent, 26.65 percent, 25.18 percent and 24.18 percent respectively. Kaithol, Karnal and Hisar are the districts where the proportion of dalit population exceeds the figure of 20 percent. Their proportion is lowest in Gurgaon (13.59 percent).

Table 2.7 gives account of dalit population in each district in percentage of total dalit population in the state. It is clear that dalits are concentrated more in the districts of Hisar, Sirsa and Faridabad. Out of

total population of dalits in Haryana 7.92 percent live in Hisar, 7.90 percent in Sirsa and 7.29 percent in Faridabad districts. The other districts having relatively higher concentration of dalit population are Bhiwani (6.65 percent) Karnal (6.61 percent), Ambala (6.17 percent) and Yamunanagar (6.31 percent). The districts with the lower concentration of dalits are Panchkula (1.72 percent), Rewari (3.70 percent), Mahendragarh (3.24 percent), Gurgaon (4.79 percent), Panipat (3.42 percent) and Kurukshetra (3.90 percent). Infact, the area of the northern and north-western Haryana has relatively higher proportion of dalit population.<sup>71</sup> The north-western districts of Hisar, Sirsa, Faridabad and Bhiwani contain 27.77 percent of total dalit population. Similarly the northern districts of Kaithal, Karnal, Yamunanagar, Ambala and Kurukshetra together account for 28.4 percent. Thus, more than half of dalit population (56.17 percent) is concentrated in these regions. On the other hand, the southern districts of Mahendragarh, Rewari and Gurgaon account for only 11.73 percent.

Infact dalits of Haryana have been the agricultural labourers since the colonial days. The availability of agricultural labour decided their spatial distribution. The southern districts of Haryana suffered from paucity of water. The famines had greater impact upon this region. Large number of people particularly dalits had migrated from this region to other districts. Moreover, this region had higher concentration of Meos who did not have the scheduled castes among them. The subsistence agricultural economy (determined mainly by lack of irrigational facilities), small size of land holding and large family size among Meos restricted the requirement of additional labourers in the cultivation.<sup>72</sup> All these factors discouraged large concentration of dalits in these regions.

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<sup>71</sup> A Portrait of population of Haryana 1991. Director of Census Operations - Haryana, Chandigarh, p.91.

<sup>72</sup> A Portrait of Population of Haryana 1991, Director of Census Operations, Haryana, Chandigarh, p.91.



**Table 2.8**  
**Rural-Urban Division of SC Population in Haryana**

Urban	Rural	Total (Percentage in Percentage)
26,75,277 (17.71)* (14.20) <sup>ψ</sup>	5,75,656 (82.29)** (21.56) <sup>ψψ</sup>	32,50,933 (100.00) (19.75) <sup>ψψψ</sup>

Source: Haryana Statistical Abstract 1999-2000, Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Government of Haryana, 2001, p.67.

\* and \*\* Shows percentage of SC Population to total SC population

<sup>ψ</sup>, <sup>ψψ</sup>, <sup>ψψψ</sup> shows percentage of SC Population to total population of the state

**Table 2.9**  
**District-wise Rural Urban Distribution of SC Population in Haryana in 1991**

	SC Population as Percentage of Total Population in District		SC Population as Percentage of Total SC Population in District	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Ambala	31.61	13.66	80.54	19.45
Panchkula	21.25	10.53	79.07	20.93
Yamunanagar	31.53	12.03	83.75	16.25
Kurukshetra	22.79	10.21	87.59	12.41
Kaithal	22.78	13.67	90.62	9.38
Karnal	22.93	13.72	83.40	16.60
Panipat	19.26	10.17	80.84	19.16
Sonepat	18.95	14.95	83.72	16.28
Rohtak	20.19	15.68	73.22	26.78
Jhajjar	18.59	12.74	89.91	10.09
Faridabad	18.93	13.00	60.64	39.36
Gurgaon	13.37	14.40	78.47	21.53
Rewari	19.80	16.54	86.90	13.10
Mahendragarh	15.76	13.28	89.32	10.68
Bhiwani	19.04	18.57	83.10	16.90
Jind	20.96	12.80	88.74	11.26
Hisar	22.76	16.83	81.27	18.73
Fatehabad	28.20	18.88	88.58	11.42
Sirsa	28.31	20.44	83.76	16.24
Total Haryana	21.56	14.20	82.29	17.71

Source: Haryana Statistical Abstract 1999-2000, Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Government of Haryana, 2001, p.67

Dalits of Haryana mainly reside in the rural area. Table 2.8 and 2.9 give rural-urban distribution of dalits in Haryana. Dalit population is highly rural as 82.29 percent of them live in the rural area. Only 17.71 percent live in the urban area. The respective figures for the general

population are 73.66 percent (rural) and 26.34 percent (urban). Thus dalits are less urbanised than the general population and the gap between two is 9 percent. Interestingly, there are area where dalits are relatively more urbanised. In Faridabad district, 39.36 percent of dalits live in the urban area whereas 60.64 percent live in the rural area. Infact Faridabad has high level of urbanisation with 48.58 percent of total population of the districts living in urban area. The other districts where population of dalits living in urban areas is above 20 percent are Yamunanagar (20.93 percent), Rohtak (26.78 percent) and Gurgaon (21.53 percent). In the remaining districts, it is less than 20 percent. In Kaithal district only 9.38 percent dalits live in urban area. Thus, despite development of large number of towns and cities (in 1991 there number was 94). In Haryana, a large majority of dalits live in the village. Thus dalits have not been benefited by the processes of urbanisation and modernisation.

## **(2) Socio-Economic Conditions of Dalits**

Dalits constitute the poorest section of our society throughout India. Dalits of Haryana despite the overall development of the state are no exception to it. Though a change in their socio-economic condition. has been witnessed, it seems to have affected only a thin layer among them. In this section, we shall analyse level of literacy among dalits, their access to land and various occupations and, finally, atrocities perpetrated against them.

### *(i) Literacy*

Literacy and education reflect the social development of a community. As already mentioned, literacy rate in Haryana was 55.85 percent in 1991, little above than all India average (52 percent). Among dalits literacy rate was much lower than over all literacy rate in Haryana. In 1991, Literacy rate among dalits of Haryana was 39.55 percent, a little more than the literacy rate among dalits at all India level (37.41 percent).

However, it was lower than literacy rate among the general population that was 59.66 percent in 1991. Thus the gap between the literacy rates of dalits and that of general population was 22.25 percent. Another feature of literacy rate among dalits was that literacy was higher among males than females. 52.06 percent dalits males were literate in 1991 as against 24.15 percent female.

It is important to note that Haryana is highly patriarchal society. The adverse female ratio (865 females per 1000 males) that has persisted since the colonial days, poor literacy among women and the practice of veiling females' faces are few manifestations of the social bias against women in Haryana, which seems to be operating irrespective of distinctions of caste, class and religion. According to Prem Chowdhary, "the social norms governing the role of women in Haryana have been defined by the geo-economic needs and.... existing and emerged customs and attitudes of the dominant peasant caste groups."<sup>73</sup> Women are considered as human resources available for labour, and need for their education was hardly felt. This holds true both for the general as well as dalit women. This explains low-literacy among dalit women.

**Table 2.10**  
**Literacy Rate Among SCs in Haryana (1971-1991)**

Year	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
1991	3955*	52.06	24.15	37.67	50.62	22.48	46.42	58.69	31.89
1981	20.15	31.45	7.06	18.73	29.33	5.82	28.16	39.84	14.21
1971	12.60	20.88	3.09	11.73	19.77	2.54	20.10	30.22	7.96

Source: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991. (Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol.XII, No.384. July-December, 2000, p.622)

\* Exclude Children in the age group of 0-6 years.

Table 2.10 shows that the literacy rates among dalits of Haryana since 1971. Statistics show that since 1971, literacy among dalits has gone upward. In 1971, literacy rate among dalit was only 12.60 percent. In 1981, it increased to 20.15, almost 8 percent increase in a span of ten years. This growth nearly doubled in the next ten years. In 1981-1991, number of literate dalits grew by 19 percent. However, growth rate of

<sup>73</sup> Chowdhary Prem (1994), op.cit., p.14.

literacy among dalits is lesser than that of the general population. The low rate of literacy among dalits is mainly due to their late entry into the educational field. We have already seen that during colonial period, literacy among dalits was negligible as compared to literacy among social groups like Aggarwals, Aroras, Brahmins, Jats, Rajputs etc. In 1931, there were 8 Chamars, 8 Chuhras literate per 1000 person aged 7 years and above in Punjabi, whereas, the respective number for Aggarwals, Brahmin and Jats were 284, 164 and 34 respectively.<sup>74</sup>

**Table 2.11**  
**Literacy Rate Among SCs in Haryana 1991**

Year	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Ambala	50.36	61.28	37.64	48.26	59.65	34.88	58.85	67.97	48.54
Panchkula	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yamunanagar	46.06	57.39	32.95	45.49	56.96	32.25	49.01	59.60	36.61
Kurukshetra	40.23	51.27	27.63	38.89	50.00	26.19	49.59	60.10	37.62
Kaithal	25.58	35.61	13.50	24.78	34.81	12.68	33.27	43.40	21.34
Karnal	37.17	98.91	23.28	34.79	46.77	20.34	48.09	58.46	36.08
Panipat	36.99	50.23	21.25	36.05	49.66	19.86	41.72	53.14	28.19
Sonepat	48.50	63.21	30.84	47.19	62.26	29.03	53.88	67.12	38.23
Rohtak	45.72	60.02	28.53	44.86	59.44	27.34	49.80	62.81	34.52
Jhajjar	-	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Faridabad	41.94	58.31	21.79	40.43	58.49	19.01	4.24	58.06	26.23
Gurgaon	49.58	66.11	30.38	48.47	65.45	26.66	53.58	68.48	35.46
Rewari	55.41	74.23	34.69	54.90	74.01	34.03	58.76	75.67	39.16
Mahendragarh	49.13	68.02	29.00	48.55	67.63	28.38	53.81	71.02	34.19
Bhiwani	39.96	54.16	23.41	39.62	53.97	22.89	41.59	55.09	25.93
Jind	30.36	41.89	16.34	28.91	40.39	14.93	41.56	53.69	27.13
Hisar	28.08	39.36	14.87	25.93	37.04	12.89	39.49	51.70	25.32
Fatehabad	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sirsa	23.38	31.81	13.71	21.29	29.37	12.04	34.12	44.29	22.34
Total Haryana	39.22*	52.06	24.15	37.67	50.62	22.48	46.42	58.69	31.89

Source: A Portrait of Haryana's Population 1991, Director of Census Operations, Haryana, Chandigarh (2001), p.95.

Note:

Information of District Panchkula is included in District Ambala

Information of District Jhajjar is included in District Rohtak.

Information of District Fatehabad is included in District Hisar

(These districts did not exist at that time)

It is important to note that literary rates among dalits of certain districts are relatively better (Table 2.11). These districts are Ambala (50.36 percent), Rewari (55.41 percent), Mahendragarh (49.13 percent),

<sup>74</sup> 1931 Census, Punjab, Report, op.cit., p.266.

Sonepat (48.50 percent, Yamunanagar (46.06 percent) and Rohtak (45.72 percent) In fact, in these districts, literacy rate among dalit male go as high as 60.02 percent (as in Rohtak) to 74.23 percent (Rewari). The relatively better literacy rate among dalits in these districts may be attributed to high literacy rate among these districts.

**Table 2.12**  
**Number of Dalit Students Receiving**  
**General/Vocational/Professional Education (1988-89)**

Primary	Middle	High School/Senior Secondary	Under Graduate			Teacher Training
			Arts	Science	Commerce	
35,91,02	10,23,50	39,429	2,273	285	336	37

Source: Education of SCs & STs 1998-89, Department of Education, Ministry of HRD Planning, Monitoring and Statistics Division (SC/ST Cell) Government of India New Delhi 1993 (Appendix-A), pp.23-28

**Table 2.13**  
**Number of Rates of Dalit Students in Haryana**  
**Compared To All India Figures (1988-89)**

	Primary	Middle	High School
Haryana	36.14	61.43	70.32
All India	49.62	67.78	79.82

Source: Education of SCs & STs 1998-89, Department of Education, Ministry of HRD Planning, Monitoring and Statistics Division (SC/ST Cell) Government of India New Delhi 1993 (Appendix-A), p.xxii

Table 2.12 shows the number of dalit students receiving general or vocational education in 1988-89. It is clear that the number of students receiving general education decreases as the standard increases. This indicates towards a high rate of drop-outs among dalits students. Infact, 36.14 percent student dropped studies at primary level, 61.43 percent at middle level and 70.32 percent before or after matriculation in 1988-89 (Table 2.13). Statistics show that very less number of dalit students opt for the higher studies. In 1988-89, total number of students pursuing undergraduate studies was 2894, out of which 2273 were Arts students, 285 were Science students and 336 were Commerce student (Table 2.12).

The less number of students opting for Science and Commerce is not due to lack of potential, but because they cannot devote time and money required to pursue these streams. Often, dalit students work along with their studies.<sup>75</sup>

**Table 2.14**  
**Percent Distribution of Drop-Outs Reasons for**  
**Discontinuance (July 1986- June 1987)**

Persons	Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Not Interested in Education/ further Studies	35.88	33.74	42.01	14.78	22.13	55.48
For Participation in Household Activities	10.57	42.18	5.98	26.02	25.22	21.61
For Further Economic Reasons	29.90	29.87	30.01	20.91	17.13	-
Busy in Attending Domestic	0.90	-	3.64	-	2.34	12.96
Failures	18.43	19.01	16.78	32.25	26.42	-
Others	4.27	5.21	1.58	6.04	6.75	9.94

Source: Statistical Supplements, Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol.XII, No.3 & 4, July December 2000, pp.690-694.

Table 2.14 gives the percentage distribution of the drop out reasons for discontinuance from July 1986 - June 1987. In Rural area, as statistics show, a great number of students (35.88 percent) are not interested in the studies. Another 18.43 percent drop studies for they failed in the examination. Almost 11 percent said to have dropped studies for participation in the household activities. Almost one-third seemed to have left studies for the economic reasons. In the urban area, failure, economic reasons and participation in household activities are major reasons of dropping out the studies. It is important to note that presence of large number of dalit students up to primary and middle levels indicates that a normative understanding among dalits that children ought to go school is catching up. However, after some education dalit students have to drop studies for the reasons already discussed. The statistics available so far

<sup>75</sup> Navratan, respondent in Ismaila 9-B, interviewed on 13-10-2001.

clearly show that literacy and education among dalit of Haryana is far from being satisfactory. Yet, a small class of educated dalits seems to have emerged. This class has been able to improve its socio-economic conditions by gaining white collar jobs and in some cases moving into position of power.

*(ii) Employment*

Table 2.15 gives percentage distribution of main workers among dalits into broad industrial categories. It is clear from the data that more than half of dalit working population is engaged in the agricultural labour. In 1981, the percentage of those who were involved in this occupation was 51.28 and in 1991, the respective figure was 55.08 percent.

**Table 2.15**  
**Percent Distribution of Main Workers Among**  
**SCs into Broad Industrial Categories**

Persons	Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Cultivators (Haryana)	11.86	11.96	10.91	8.07	7.96	8.88
(All-India)	28.17	32.12	16.12	25.44	28.32	17.51
Agricultural Labourers (Haryana)	51.28	50.54	58.23	55.08	53.92	64.27
(All-India)	48.22	41.75	68.00	49.06	42.72	66.65
House hold Industry Manufacturing (Haryana)	3.56	3.62	3.05	1.60	1.61	1.55
(All-India)	3.31	3.20	3.63	2.41	2.17	3.06
Others* (Haryana)	33.30	33.88	27.80	35.25	36.51	25.30
(All-India)	20.30	22.30	12.65	23.09	26.79	12.90

Source: Compiled from Census Reports 1981, 1991 (Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol. XII, No.3 & 4, July-Dec. 2000) p.615.

\* Includes industrial categories numbered VI to IX in Census Reports

Dalits seemed to have very less access to land. In 1981, there were 11.86 percent cultivators among dalits which reduced to 8.07 percent in 1991, a decrease of nearly 4 percent. The respective figure for Uttar Pradesh, one of the most backward states, is far much better than that of Haryana. In 1991, the percentage of these dalits in UP who were

cultivators was 42.63 percent. Infact the percentage of dalit cultivators in Haryana is lower than that of all India figure (25.44 percent in 1991).

However, dalits seem to be moving to other occupations also. They are shifting to household industry, construction, trade, transport and other services. In 1991, 35.25 percent of dalit workers were involved in these various occupation. Infact, this percentage in 1981 was 33.30 percent. Within ten years, the increase is nearly 2 percent. For same period, increase among agricultural labourer was nearly 4 percent where as the share of cultivators reduced by 3.79 percent. The low percentage of cultivators among dalits in Haryana may be attributed to improper implementation of land reform measures in Haryana.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover as dalits were primarily labourers and only a small number of them were tenants, so they hardly gained much from the land reforms. As far as high percentage of agricultural labourers among dalits is concerned, it is pertinent to mention that Haryana is one of those regions where Green Revolution has been effective. We have discussed earlier that trend among dalits to come out of traditional occupations was visible as early as 1910. However, the backward agrarian economy did not offer them much jobs. After two decades of independence, the new farm technology, i.e., the Green Revolution was introduced. As a consequence, demand for agricultural labour enhanced manifolds.<sup>77</sup> Dalits, who were earlier constrained by lack of more jobs in the

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<sup>76</sup> Out of total area of 3,82,044 hectares declared surplus, 2,27,709 hectares came under exemption as provided under the laws. Another 17,252 hectares came under the court stays. The area left available for allotment was only 1,36,883 hectares i.e. 35.83 percent of total area declared surplus. Jodhka, Surinder, S. (1995) Debt, Dependence and Agrarian Change, Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, p.56

<sup>77</sup> Jodhka, op.cit., p.395.



agriculture, now switched to the agricultural labour. It should be noted that Haryana has comparatively high agricultural wages. Thus Green Revolution benefited dalits in two ways: by offering them alternative jobs and enhancing their earnings.

Another important repercussion of Green Revolution was transformation in the agrarian social relations. During the colonial period relation between labourers and landowners were governed by the customary law of land, and were highly oppressive from the point of view of the former. However, introduction of new technology left the old practices less beneficial for the landowners. They preferred formalised contractual relations with their labourers to the older structure of patronage and clientele.<sup>78</sup> This freed laourers relatively from the various pressures and obligations that were characteristics of the earlier relations.

Besides these advantages, Green Revolution simultaneously brought many disadvantages also. The new techniques were expensive and proved uneconomical to the dalit cultivators, most of whom had small land holdings. They, often, had to borrow money for investing in various agricultural activities. Many had to sell their land and start working as agricultural labourers. This is why, in the years between 1981-1991, the number of cultivators decreased. It is important to note that social events may lead to different, often contradictory, happenings.

With Green Revolution, the wages of labourers increased but so did their expenditure. Agricultural labourers, therefore, cannot save money. For occasions like marriages,<sup>79</sup> or in times of distress, when they

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> In Haryana, dowry has become wide-spread custom particularly after Green Revolution and is considered as status symbol not only among urban middle class but also in the villages.

need large amount for spending, they have to depend upon loan. Usually, they borrow from farmers for which they have to pay interest. Though these borrowings look like business dealings, in the village they mean much more than it. Farmers do not lend merely for earning interest. They have stakes in the existing structure of the rural society. Money lending for them, is a method with which they reinforce their domination.<sup>80</sup> One of the feature of agricultural labour is that it is not available throughout year, and dalit labourers receive intense competition from the migrant labour from Bihar and UP who work even for lesser wages than usually offered. All these factors make dalit labourers dependent upon the farmers.

After independence, the most important initiative taken by Indian state for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes was the policy of job-reservation. Though it has not led to eradication of poverty or unemployment among them, it has created an influential group of elite among them. Haryana government has 55,697 dalit employees in its various departments (as on 31 March, 1999) which is 7.59 percent of total employees of Haryana.

**Table 2.16**  
**Haryana Government Employees Belonging to Scheduled Castes**

Class	No. of Dalit Employee	Percentage to Total Number of Dalit Employees	Percentage of Total Number of Employees
I	205	0.36	7.46
II	879	1.61	8.05
III	24,342	43.70	12.12
IV	20,173	36.22	30.02
Contingency Paid And Work Charged	10,098	18.13	28.44
Total	55,697	100.00	17.60

Source: Haryana Statistical Abstract 1999-2000, Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Government of Haryana, 2001, pp.706-709

<sup>80</sup> Jodhka, op.cit., pp.182-183.

Table 2.16 shows distribution of dalit employees in different categories. Statistics shows that majority of (43.70) them are class-III employees. Only 0.36 percent of dalits employees belong to class-I category. Another 36.22 percent are class-IV employees. Thus in Haryana, very less dalits could attain white collar jobs. Out of total class-I employees, share of dalits at present is only 7.46 percent. Infact majority of white-collar jobs have been occupied by the upper castes who entered into the education system at an early stage. Even though small in number, educated dalits occupying higher jobs provide leadership in the socio-cultural activities which manifest their urge for a distinct identity. Many socio-cultural organisations of dalits are being headed by some of these dalit 'elites'.

*(iii) Access to land*

As already mentioned Haryana is an agrarian society. Possession of land imparts recognition and respect to an individual or social group. However, dalits in Haryana have been far behind than other social groups in terms of possession of land. We have already discussed that among working dalits only 8.07 percent were cultivators in 1991.

**Table 2.17**  
**Percentage of Land-Holdings of Dalits in Selected States (1991)**

States	Land Holding of SC as % of total holding	% of area of SC holding of total area	Average size of SC Holdings
Haryana	0.34	0.58	1.65
Uttar Pradesh	24.50	14.31	0.57
Bihar	12.11	4.90	1.08
Punjab	0.40	0.72	1.76

Source: Statistical Abstract, Punjab 1999, pp.206.7. Statistical Abstract. Haryana . p.79, Cited in Jodhaka (2000) 'Prejudice Without Population? SCs in Contemporary Punjab' in Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol.12, No.3 & 4, July-Dec, p.396.

**Table 2.18**  
**Percentage Distribution of Households and Area Owned by Size-Class of**  
**Ownership Holding by SCs in Rural Haryana (Jan-Dec. 1992)**

Size Class of Ownership Holding (Ha)	Percentage Distribution of		Area Owned per household	Estimate Number of households
	Households	Area Owned		
Nil	4.49	0.00	0.00	290
<0.002	4.44	0.00	0.00	286
0.02-0.20	73.10	3.63	0.02	4712
0.21-0.40	1.34	0.91	0.21	86
0.41-0.50	3.28	4.31	0.41	212
0.51-1.00	2.81	5.25	0.59	181
1.01-2.00	5.28	23.33	1.39	340
2.01-3.00	2.10	17.51	2.62	136
3.01-4.00	0.44	5.08	3.64	28
4.01-5.00	2.40	33.91	4.44	155
5.01-6.00	0.00	0.00	-	0
6.01-8.00	0.32	6.07	6.01	20
8.01-10.00	0.00	0.00	-	0
10.01-12.00	0.00	0.00	-	0
12.00-20.00	0.00	0.00	-	0
20.01 & above	0.00	0.00	-	0
Alli sizes	100.00	100.00	0.31	6447

Source: NSSO 48th Round, No.399, Jan-Dec. 1992. (Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol. XII, No.3 & 4, July-Dec. 2000, p.701.)

**Table 2.19**  
**Percentage Distribution of Households and Area Owned by Size-Class of**  
**Ownership Holding by SCs in Urban Haryana (Jan-Dec. 1992)**

Size Class of Ownership Holding (Ha)	Percentage Distribution of		Area Owned per household	Estimate Number of households
	Households	Area Owned		
Nil	21.23	0.00	0.00	245
<0.002	4.97	0.00	0.00	057
0.02-0.20	61.07	2.62	1.00	705
0.21-0.40	1.81	4.15	0.38	021
0.41-0.50	0.16	0.47	0.47	002
0.51-1.00	0.55	2.71	0.81	006
1.01-2.00	9.85	80.24	1.34	114
2.01-3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
3.01-4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
4.01-5.00	0.36	9.82	4.45	004
5.01-6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
6.01-8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
8.01-10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
10.01-12.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
12.00-20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
20.01 & above	0.00	0.00	0.00	000
Alli sizes	100	100.00	0.16	1155

Source: NSSO 48th Round, No.399, Jan-Dec. 1992 (Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol. XII, No.3 & 4, July-Dec. 2000, p.709.)

Tables 2.17, 2.18 and 2.19 show different statistics on dalits' access to land. Table 2.17 shows the percentage of land holding of dalits in Haryana. It is clear that only 0.34 percent of all the land holdings occupying 0.58 percent of the total cultivated area in the state were being cultivated by the dalits. In 1992, 90 percent of dalits households were cultivating land holding of the size class 0-1 hectare covering 14 percent area of total cultivated land possessed by dalits. Another 8 percent households were cultivating land holding of the size class 1.01-4.0 hectares occupying 46 percent area of total cultivated land possessed by dalits. The percentage households cultivating land holding of size class 4.01-8.00 hectares was 2.72. Thus, majority of dalits were cultivating marginal and small size land-holdings. Compared to dalits of other states like UP, the position of Haryana's dalit is dismal. In UP, dalits hold as many as 24.5 percent of the land holding occupying 14.31 percent of total cultivated land in the state. Similarly in Bihar and West-Bengal they cultivated 12.11 and 10.89 percent of total land holdings respectively.

### **(3) Atrocities on Dalits**

In 1970s and 1980s, atrocities on dalits increased manifold. Infact, discrimination based upon various forms of ritual untouchability seems to have been replaced by the caste atrocities such as rape, parading their women naked in the village streets, breaking or removing Ambedkar's statues etc.<sup>81</sup> According to Mendelsohn and Viciziany, the sharp increase in incidents of violence against dalits is mainly a manifestation of jealousy among the dominant sections of society due to the upward mobility of dalits, their growing socio-political awareness and assertion.<sup>82</sup>

We have discussed earlier that during the colonial period dalits of Haryana were victims of violence perpetuated by dominant sections like Jats, Ahirs and Rajputs. Infact, in Haryana crime against dalits is still high. However, a large majority of the cases go unreported or are resolved through a compromise at the village level or in police station.

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<sup>81</sup> Pai, Sudha (2000) 'Changing Socio-Economic and Political Profile of SCs in UP' in Journal of Indian School of Political Economy. Vol.12, No.3 and 4 July December, 2000, pp.418.

<sup>82</sup> Mendelsohn and Viciziany (1998). The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and State in Modern India, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp.44-48.

Newspaper reports put a light on the barbarity and cruelty with which the crime is committed against dalits. They are crushed under the vehicle for asking due wages<sup>83</sup> or for cutting fodder from upper castes fields.<sup>84</sup> Women are raped.<sup>85</sup> Many times, measures like social boycott or expulsion from the village is employed to tame the dalits.<sup>86</sup> Incidence of untouchability also, appear in newspaper reports.<sup>87</sup>

**Table 2.20**  
**Atrocities on Dalits of Haryana 1998**

Sr. No.	Frequency (Haryana)	All India
Murder	6	516
Rape	24	923
Kidnapping	12	253
Sabotage	02	49
Theft	13	150
Arson	0	346
Wounded	51	3809
Under CRP Act	0	725
Under SC/ST Atrocity Prevention Act	18	7443
Others	33	1142
Total	159	25638

Source: Crime in India 1998, p.191, Cited in Gautam, R.A. and Prem Kapadia (eds) (2001) 'Haryana Ke Dalit Harit Kranti Se Vanchit', New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p.31.

Table 2.20 shows that in 1998, there were 159 crimes committed against dalits. Statistics show that the proportion of rapes and incidents of wounding is higher than that of other crimes. Dalits are made target

<sup>83</sup> Hukum Chand of Panchala Gram in Assandh tehsil of Karnal district was crushed under tractor by Jagdish Ror on 20 May 2001. Abhimook Nayak, June 2001. Cited in Kamakanth Prasad, 'Haryana Mein Hinduwadi Vayvastha Ka Samanti Chehra' in Gautam and Prem Kapadia (eds), op.cit., pp.33.

<sup>84</sup> In Malasarikhera village, (Jind district), one landowner could not control his anger when he saw dalit children cutting fodder from his field. In a fit of anger, he crushed three of them under his tractor. Cited in ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Amar Ujala dated 15 June 2001, p.11; 11, 13, 15, 17 August 2001, p.10; 8 August, p.7, Danik Tribune dated 5 July 2001. Rashtriya Sahara 31 March 1998 carry many reports on rape and other crimes against dalit women.

<sup>86</sup> In Bapoda village one dalit family was ordered to leave the village by Panchayat. The allegation against the family was that one of their male member had kidnapped a girl of the village few months back, and that another member took off skin of cow several years back. Amar Ujala dated 1 August 2001, p.3, 9 August 2001, p.10

<sup>87</sup> In Safiabhad (Sonapat) and Umravat (Bhiwani) village dalits were not allowed to perform 'Jalabhishek'. Amar Ujala, 20 July 2001, pp.1-2. In Bhandari Village (Sonapat) Balmikis were denied to take water from the tap shared by upper castes. Amar Ujala, Aug. 23-8-2001.

because political democratisation that inaugurated in post-independence era seems to have made them aware of their democratic rights. The spread of general awareness through education, political mobilisation and civil society mobilisation has generated a sense of moral worth among them. They resist their humiliation or denegration by others.

#### **(4) Ambedkarisation and Socio-Cultural Activities**

In the recent years, Ambedkar has become a symbol of dalit assertion in India. Ambedkar is being worshipped like God, even though his ideological moorings are rarely followed. In Haryana, influence of Ambedkarism was not significant ten years before. However, now one can witness statues of Ambedkar being installed in towns and cities, although in the villages, it is rarely found. Newspaper reports suggests that Ambedkar's birthday is celebrated with fanfare in all the major towns and cities. Similarly, Ravidas Jayanti and Balmiki Jayanti is celebrated by the dalits.

In past few years, several organisations have come-up in the state. Some of them are: All Haryana Balmiki Mahasabha (Panchkula), Dr. Ambedkar Mission Society/Sohna, Gurgaon), Dr. Ambedkar Samaj Kalyan Samiti (Sonapat), Bhartiya Soshit Samaj (Panchkula), Ambedkar Yuva Sangathan (Hansi, Hisar), Dr. Ambedkar Welfare Trust (Jagadari, Yamunanagar), Balmiki Mandir Sabha (Sonapat), Dalit Ekta Manch (Sirsa), Adi-Dharm Samaj (Uklana), Guru Ravidas Vani Panchar Mandal (Jind).<sup>88</sup> Besides these, some dalit organisations operating at All India level also have their branches in all districts of Haryana. These include All India Dalit Youth Organisation, All India SC/ST/OBC Employee Association, North India SC/ST Welfare Association/Dalit Sena etc. One

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<sup>88</sup> The names of these organisation have been gathered from Gautam and Kapadia (ed.), (2001). Haryana Ke Dalit Harit-Kranti Se Vanchit. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, pp.129-130. Also see Amar Ujala dated 31 January 2001, p.8, 2 August p.9, 12 February p.8, 4 to 14 April, pp.8-12.

recent study on dalit organisation in Haryana show that in Rohtak District alone 67 dalit organisations are functioning.<sup>89</sup> Majority of Dalit organisations are socio-cultural in nature. They also carry out welfare activities. However, most of these organisations restrict their area of operation to the urban areas. Yet, their existence shows growing awareness among dalits.

## Conclusion

Above discussion shows that the condition of dalits in Haryana has not been better than their counterparts in other regions of the country. During the colonial period, they lived in a state of cumulative subordination. Though Haryana was among those regions where Brahmanical ideology was not dominant, yet dalits were regarded polluting. Economically, they were poor and dependent.

The existing literature shows that Britishers created conditions which proved instrumental in the emergence of dalit activism and movement for upward mobility in many parts of India. However, in Haryana region British intervention helped other social groups. Dalits' miserable conditions continued. They remained illiterate poor and dependent. This may be one of the reasons that no activism or movement for upward mobility dalits emerge during the colonial period. Infact, even the movements like Arya Samaj, Ad-Dharma, Christianity and Sikhism did not create much impact upon dalits of Haryana region. Their area of operation was the Central and Northern Punjab. Dalits were further marginalised with the political dominance of Jats. Jat leaders Chhotu Ram threatened dalits on more than one occasions. Their only ray of hope was

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<sup>89</sup> Rajbala (1997) Scheduled Caste Leaders in Rohtak. Ph.D. Thesis in Sociology CCS University, Meerut Cited in Pundir (2001) Emannicipation From Domination to Fight for Right- Journey of Backward Caste Mobilisation, Unpublished paper presented in Department of Political Science, Punjab University, Chandigarh, (February 27-28, 2001), p.7.



Congress party. Recent literature suggests that Congress adopted a policy of co-option vis-à-vis dalits. Its promise of amelioration of dalits remained by and large upto rhetorical level. Thus, dalits of Haryana remained downtrodden and subordinated. All these factors had an impact upon the subjective conditions of dalits also. The process of identity formation that had started in case of dalit of certain region in colonial period was delayed in Haryana.

Infact, in the post-colonial period, particularly after Green Revolution, Haryana became one of the most prosperous regions of the country. Statistics, however, show that overall prosperity did not alter conditions of dalits. With little land, poor literacy and low level of urbanisation, they remain to be the most disprivileged. Majority of dalits are landless labourers and are economically dependent. Yet, in the post colonial period, a small but significant change has been triggered in their objective as well as subjective conditions. A small section among them has been able to attain education and white-collar jobs. There has been some diversification of occupations also. One of impact of Green Revolution has been rising of agricultural wages. This has improved their income.

All these factors have helped them in reducing their dependence albeit relatively. Above all, political democratisation has led to establishment of norm of equality. It has contributed in transformation of their orientation and outlook. This subjective change is visible in their socio-cultural activities. A good number of dalit organisations have come-up in Haryana. Thus, the process of identity formation, that could not start in the colonial period, seems to have started in the recent years. However, it is much more visible in the urban area. In the following chapter, we shall analyse whether the process of change is also visible in the rural area.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **IDENTITY FORMATION AND SOCIO-CULTURAL AWARENESS AMONG DALITS IN THE SAMPLE-VILLAGES**

This chapter aims at understanding identity formation among dalits in the socio-cultural realm. In the previous chapter, we have seen that though dalits of Haryana region lack any genealogy of socio-cultural assertion, in the recent years we witness development of their organizational activities in the socio-cultural realm. A host of dalit organizations have come up in the urban area. In this chapter, our objective is to find out whether an urge to have positive identity is also developing among dalits in the rural area. We have selected four villages from three districts to understand the content and context of identity formation among dalits in rural Haryana. The chapter is divided into three parts. First part deals with the profile of the study-villages and the respondents. Second part deals with the issues of discrimination against dalits and their economic dependence. It has been intended to show that identity formation among dalits in the study villages is reflected in their attempts to resist and protest against discrimination. Third part deals with self identification among dalits and their orientation towards Ambedkar.

#### **I**

##### **(1) Profile of the Villages Under Study**

The four villages under study are Chuli Khurd (Hisar district), Ismaila 9B (Rohtak district), Ledi and Rasulpur (both in Yamunanagar district). The selection of the villages was done after a preliminary survey of the district census. The selection was purposive. Our intention was to understand the research questions in comparative setting. In two study villages, viz. Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B Jats form the largest caste group. These two villages reflected the broader demographic pattern at the district level. In Hisar and

Rohtak districts, Jats form the largest group and dalits are the second largest group. Above all, these villages are located in the regions where the electoral performance of BSP has been poor over the years. The other two villages, viz, Ledi and Rasulpur reflected the reverse pattern. In these villages dalits constitute the largest group. These two villages matched the broader pattern at the district level. In Yamunanagar district, dalits form the largest group. These villages are located in the area where the electoral performance of BSP has been relatively better. A brief description of profile of these villages is given below (See Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1**  
**General Information About the Study-Villages**

Villages	No. of Households	Total Population	SC Population	Total Area (In Hectares)
Chuli Khurd	251	1647	566 (34%)	1077.36
Ismaila 9-B	710	4999	1006 (21.0%)	1242
Ledi	226	1440	562 (38%)	278
Rasulpur	232	1289	455 (35%)	311

*(i) Chuli Khurd*

The village Chuli Khurd is located in Bhattu tehsil of Hisar district, at a distance of about 47 kms from the district town. The village is spread in an area of 1077.36 hectares. There are 251 households in the village. According to 1991 census, total population of the village was 1647 Dalit population was 566 (34 percent of total population). Other major caste groups in the village are Jats, the backward castes like Goldsmiths, Khatis, Dhobis, Telis, Nayaks etc., and Brahmins. The percentage proportions of population of various caste groups are as follows: Jats – 55 percent, Backward Castes – 6.98 percent, Brahmins - 3 percent.<sup>1</sup> Thus Jats are the largest group followed by dalits. The latter are divided into two sub-caste groups – Chamars and Dhanaks. Among

<sup>1</sup> The percentage proportion of population of various caste groups except dalits in each of study-village are rough estimates as informed by the village sarpanches. Dalit population is based upon 1991 Census.

dalits, Chamars are numerically preponderant as they form nearly 60 percent of total dalit population.

Majority of the agricultural land is owned by Jats. The Backward Castes are engaged in various occupations like cultivation, agricultural labour or shopkeeping. Some are village artisans. Brahmins are the shopkeepers in the village or in neighbouring towns. Some of them are cultivators also. It is important to note that many among these communities are in the government services also. There is one well in the village. Five-six years ago people were dependent upon the village well for drinking water. However now a days, no one draws water from it as water supply system has been developed in the village. There is a government school in the village which is up to matriculation level and, is meant both for boys and girls.

*(ii) Ismaila 9-B:*

The village Ismaila 9-B is located on National Highway No. 10 in Sampla Block of Rohtak district. The distance between the district town and the village is only 16 kms. Spread in an area of 1242 hectares with 710 households, the village is comparatively large. According to 1991 census, population of the village was 4999. Major caste groups in the village are Jats, the backward castes like Sainis, Nayaks, Dhobis, Lohars etc., Brahmins and dalits. The percentage composition of various caste groups in the village are as follows: Jats (60 percent), BCs (16 percent), Brahmins (3 percent) dalits constitute around 21 percent of total population of the village. There are two groups of dalits in the village, viz., Chamars and Dhanaks, both forming equal number. Majority of the agricultural land is owned by Jats who also have a large number of their people in the government services. Other castes are engaged in various occupations like cultivation, shopkeeping. It is important to mention here that a good number of people from the village go everyday to nearby towns like Rohtak, Bahadurgarh, and even Delhi which is 80 km.

away for various jobs. Availability of railway or road transport is easy and cheaper. There are two government schools one for boys and one for girls. There is also one private school in the village. There are two wells in the village which are still in use. Dalits have separate well. No one from the upper castes draws water from it.

*(iii) Ledi*

The village Ledi lies in Chhachhrauli Block of Yamunanagar district. The village is about 7 kms away from the district town Yamunanagar. The area of the village is 278 hectares and the number of households are 226. In 1991 total population of village was 1440. Major caste groups and their percentage proportions to the total population are as follows: Dalits (38 percent), Jats (25 percent), the Backward castes like Saini, Dhobi, Kumhars, Nayaks etc (25 percent), Brahmins (4 percent), Sikhs (8 percent). Dalits are divided into two sub-caste groups – Chamars, who form 90 percent of total dalit population and Balmikis who are less in number. Though most of Jats own the agricultural land, a significant size of the agricultural land is also possessed by Sainis and Sikhs. The only well in the village lies unused. There are two government schools in the village, one upto primary level and another upto secondary level. Many shops have come up near the bus stop, some of which are owned by dalits.

*(iv) Rasulpur*

Rasulpur is located in Sadhaura Block of Yamunanagar district. The area of village is 311 hectares and the number of households are 232. In 1991, total population of the village was 1289. Dalit population in Rasulpur is 455, i.e., 35 percent of total population. Dalits are divided into three sub-caste groups – Chamars, Ramdasias and Balmikis. Chamars are 40 percent of total dalit population, Ramdasias form 30 percent of total population. The rest of

dalit population is constituted by Balmikis. The percentage proportions of other caste groups are as follows: Gujjars (15 percent), Jats (5 percent), Sainis (5 percent), Brahmins (5 percent) and Arora, Punjabis<sup>2</sup> and Sikhs (10 percent each). In Rasulpur, the agricultural land is possessed by Gujjars, Sainis, Jats, Sikhs and Ramdasia dalits. A number of small shops have come up inside the village and near the bus stop. These are owned by Jats, Aroras and dalits. In Rasulpur, many, including some dalits have joined the government services particularly armed forces. There is one government school upto matriculation level and, is meant both for boys and girls.

It is important to note that in all the four villages, dalit settlements were located on the peripheries. However, a good number of people belonging to upper caste had also constructed their houses on the peripheries. In Chuli Khurd, Ismaila 9-B and Rasulpur, dalit settlements were developed under the housing scheme. It is important to note that most of the housing schemes are located at a distance from the village and since the houses under these schemes are allotted exclusively to dalits, it reinforces their segregation from the main village.<sup>3</sup>

## **(2) Profile of Respondents in the Sample Villages**

A sample of 50 dalit respondents was taken in each of the four study villages. In all, 200 respondents were interviewed. Information about their sub-caste, age-groups, class or economic status, education and occupation is discussed below.

### *(i) Sub-Caste, Gender and Age Group;*

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<sup>2</sup> Punjabis are the refugees who migrated to India after Partition. They are called Punjabi refugees in the village.

<sup>3</sup> Jodhka, S. (2002) 'Caste and Untouchability in Rural Punjab' in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXXVII, No.19, May 11, p.1815.

**Table 3.2**  
**Distribution of the Sample Population According to Sub-Caste**

	Chamar	Dhanak	Balmiki	Ramdasia	Total
Chuli Khurd	28	22	0	0	50
Ismaila	34	16	0	0	50
Ledi	36	-	14	-	50
Rasulpur	29	-	11	10	50
Total	127	38	25	10	200

Table 3.2 shows distribution of the sample population according to sub – caste of the respondents. Out of 200 respondents, 127 (63.5 percent of the sample population) belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 38 (19 percent) were Dhanaks 25 (12.5 percent) belonged to Balmiki sub –caste and 10 (5 percent) were Ramdasia. In Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B, dalit population was divided into two sub-caste groups, viz; Chamars and Dhanaks. In Chuli Khurd, sample population contained 28 respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste and 22 were from Dhanak sub caste. In Ismaila 9-B 34 respondents belonged to Chamars sub-caste and 16 respondents belonged to Dhanak sub-caste. In Ledi, there were two sub-caste groups of dalits, viz., Chamars and Balmikis. In our sample, 36 respondents belonged to Chamar sub-caste and 14 belonged to Balmikis sub caste. In Rasulpur, the sample population contained 29 respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste whereas 11 belonged to Balmiki sub-caste. 10 were from Ramdasia sub-caste.

**Table 3.3**  
**Distribution of the Sample Population According to Gender**

	Female	Male	Total
Chuli Khurd	19	31	50
Ismaila	10	40	50
Ledi	10	40	50
Rasulpur	10	40	50
Total	49	151	200

**Table 3.4**  
**Distribution of the Sample Population**  
**According to Age of the Respondents**

	18-30	31-49	50 and above	Total
Chuli Khurd	17	24	09	50
Ismaila	11	28	11	50
Ledi	17	25	08	50
Rasulpur	18	24	08	50
Total	63	101	36	200

Table 3.3 shows gender-wise distribution of the sample population. In Chuli-Khurd, the number of female respondents was 19 whereas in each of the rest three villages, the respective figure was 10. In all, 151 male respondents and 49 female respondents were interviewed. Table 3.4 shows distribution of the sample population according to the age of the respondents. 63 respondents (31.5 percent) in the sample population belonged to the age-group 18-30. There are 101 respondents (30.5 percent) who belonged to the age group 31-49. The number of respondents belonging to the age group 50 and above was 36 (18 percent).

*(ii) Education*

The educational status of the respondents is shown in the Table 3.5. 96 respondents out of 200 (48 percent) were illiterates or literate with no formal education, 36 (18 percent) had studied up to primary level. Another 26 (13 percent) had education upto middle standard; the number of those who had studied up to matriculation was 25 (12.5 percent) where as the respective figure for those who were intermediate was 10 (5 percent). Only 7 out of 200 respondents (3.5 percent) were studied upto graduation.



**Table 3.5**  
**Distribution of the Sample Population According to Education**

Educational Level	Educational Categories	Chuli Khurd	Ismaila	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
Low	N. Lt and Lt. With no formal education	36	16	22	22	96 (48%)
	Below Primary and Primary	05	09	10	12	36 (18%)
	Middle	02	08	07	09	26 (13%)
	Total (i)	43 (86.0%)	33 (66%)	39 (78%)	43 (86%)	158 (79%)
Middle	Matric	03	11	08	03	25(12.5%)
	Intermediate/ College Degree	02	03	02	03	10 (5.0%)
	Total (ii)	05(10%)	14(28%)	10(20%)	06 (12%)	35(17.5%)
High	Equivalent to Graduate/ Graduate (iii)	02 (4%)	03 (6%)	01(02 %)	01 (2%)	07(3.5%)
Total	(i)+(ii)+(iii)	50	50	50	50	200 (100%)

In fact, we have divided the sample population into three education categories, viz; low, middle and high. The respondents who did not go to school beyond the middle standard have been included in the educational category of 'low'. The respondents who had studied above the middle standard but did not go beyond the intermediate level have been included in the educational category of 'middle'. The respondents who had completed the graduation are included into the educational category of 'high'. Statistics indicate that where as proportion of the respondents belonging to the educational category of 'low' was 79 percent, 17.5 percent belonged to the educational category of 'middle'. The proportion of those whose educational status was high, was 3.5 percent. It is clear that the educational level of a large majority of dalits in the study-villages is low. Yet, a thin layer of relatively better educated dalits has emerged in the study villages.

We have mentioned earlier that each of the study villages has the government school upto higher secondary level. The normative understanding among dalits that children ought to go to schools is growing. Therefore, they

send their children to the village school. However, for higher studies, students have to go to nearby towns which may not be economical for many among them. This might be one of the reasons for less inclination among the respondents for higher studies.

*(iii) Class Category/ Economic Status*

We have divided the sample population into three class categories, viz., low, middle and high based upon an assessment of the monthly income and the conditions of houses of the respondents. In the class category of 'low', we have included those who earned less than Rs. 2000 per month and who lived in a 'Kutchha' accommodation. In the class category of middle, we have included those who earned between Rs. 2000 to Rs. 5000 per month and who lived in 'Kutchha-Pucca' accommodation. The category of 'high class' included those who earned more than Rs. 5000 per month and who lived in 'Pucca' houses.

**Table 3.6**  
**Distribution of the Sample Population According to Class**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
Low*	30	27	27	25	109 (59.5%)
Middle**	12	08	13	14	47 (23.5%)
High***	08	15	10	11	44 (22.0%)
Total <sup>ψ</sup>	50	50	50	50	200

- \* Includes people whose income was less than Rs. 2000 per month and who lived in Kutchha accommodation.
- \*\* Includes people whose income was between Rs.2000 to Rs. 5000 per month and who lived in Kutchha-Pucca accommodation.
- \*\*\* Includes people whose income was more than 500 Rs. per month and who lived in pucca accommodation.
- <sup>ψ</sup> As for house wives index is calculated with reference to their husbands class.

Table 3.6 shows the class categories or economic status of the sample population. Out of 200 respondents, 109 (59.5 percent) belonged to the class category of 'low', 47 (23.5 percent) belonged to the class category of middle

and 44 (22 percent) belonged to the class category of 'high'. Statistics reveal that a small section among dalits in the sample villages has been able to uplift their economic status. Yet, the economic conditions of a large majority of dalits continue to be miserable.

*(iv) Occupation*

Table 3.7 provides detail about the occupations of the respondents. Out of 200 respondents, 60 (30 percent) were the agricultural labourers, 30 (15 percent) were engaged in the lowly paid manual unskilled jobs like soil digging, construction work etc. And 12 (6 percent) were involved in the occupations like white washing, tailoring etc.

**Table 3.7  
Distribution of the Sample Population According to Occupation**

Sr. No.	Occupational Categories	Chuli Khurd	Ismaila 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
1.	Govt. Jobs	02	12	03	07	24(12%)
2.	Cultivators	05	0	03	03	11 (5.5%)
3.	Agricultural Labourers	20	10	17	13	60 (30.0%)
4.	Lowly Paid Manual unskilled Jobs*	05	08	09	08	30 (15.0%)
5.	Lowly Paid Skilled jobs**	02	04	03	03	12 (6.0%)
6.	Businessmen/Shopkeepers/ Self-employed***	05	07	05	06	23 (11.5%)
7.	House wives	11	09	10	10	40 (20.0%)
	Total	50	50	50	50	200 (100%)

\* Includes respondents engaged in occupations like soil digging, construction work etc.

\*\* Includes respondents engaged in occupations like white washing, tailoring etc.

\*\*\* Includes vendors, anganwadi workers, private tutors, petty-shopkeepers and the respondents engaged in self-help occupations.

Thus, more than half of the sample population was engaged in the low income occupations. 23 (11.5 percent) were vendors, petty shopkeepers or were employed in the private sector. 24 (12 percent) were in the government

jobs, 11 (5.5 percent) were cultivators and own some land. Most of the female respondents were housewives. However, their job also included fodder cutting, cattle rearing, selling milk and milk products.

Statistics indicate that some occupational diversification has taken place among dalits in the study villages. Yet, a large number of them are still employed in the agricultural sector. It is important to mention here that many dalits take up more than one kind of work. An agricultural labourer takes up non-agricultural labour when work is not available in the agricultural sector. They also rear cattle to increase their earnings. Some particularly Balmikis supply pigs to the slaughter houses in the neighbouring towns.

It is clear from the above account that dalits in the study villages are differentiated on the basis of socio-economic attributes like caste-identities, educational status, occupational diversification and class/economic status. Some sub-caste groups, and some individual within these groups, have been able to improve their economic conditions. A large majority, however, continues to live in the miserable conditions. It is important to note that differences in the socio-economic conditions may affect the social relations and identity formation of dalits. In the following sections, we shall analyse social relations and identity formation among dalits using sub-caste, class, education and occupation as the dependent variables.

## II

### **Social Relations of Dalits : Discrimination, Dependence and Protest**

Discrimination and dependence have been the hallmark of social relations of dalits with the rest of society. These two factors have led to creation of negative self-image among dalits. However, in the recent years, dalits have started to protest against their humiliation and subordination them. This shows that urge to have a positive self-image among dalits is growing. Thus, the issues of discrimination, dependence and protest are related to identity formation among dalits. In the followings sections we shall analyse whether dalits in the study-villages are discriminated against, whether they

are economically dependent and whether they protest against their humiliation.

### (1) Forms of Discrimination

In the traditional set-up, dalits were considered untouchable and they were segregated to the peripheries of the villages and towns. Though in the post-colonial period, untouchability in any form has been abolished by the Constitution and the evidences suggest that discrimination against dalits particularly in the public domain has been declined considerably, the recent studies show that it persists in the private domain.<sup>4</sup> We asked the respondents few questions on caste based discrimination. The question were whether they were denied free access to temple, chaupal or common sources of drinking water, whether they were discriminated against in sitting arrangements or in any other form when they visit upper caste home.

**Table 3.8**  
**Perception on Discrimination in the Sample Villages**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila 9-B		Ledi		Rasulpur		Total
	All Do	Some Do	All do	Some Do	All do	Some Do	All do	Some Do	
Practised	-	(30.92%) 30 (60%)	-	(41.23%) 40 (80%)	-	(18.55%) 18 (36%)	-	(9.27%) 09 (18%)	97 (48.5%)
Not	-	(19.4%) 20 (40%)	-	(9.70%) 10 (20%)	-	(31.06%) 32 (64%)	-	(39.8%) 41 (82%)	103 (51.5%)
Total	-	50 (100%)	-	50 (100%)	-	50 (100%)	-	50 (100%)	100 (100%)

Table 3.8 shows perception among the respondents on discrimination. Out of 200 respondents, 97 (48.5 percent of total sample population) said that

<sup>4</sup> Ghanshyam Shah finds that untouchability or discrimination seems to have declined considerably in the public domain but continues in private domain. See. Shah, Ghanshyam (2000). 'Hope and Despair: A Study of Untouchability and Atrocities in Gujarat' in Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Vol. XII, Nos. 304, pp. 459-72. Same observations have been made by Surinder Jodhka in context of Punjab. See Jodhka, Surinder (2002) 'Caste and Untouchability in Rural Punjab' in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXXVII, No. 19, May 11, pp.1813-1823.

they were discriminated against by some among the upper castes in one or another way. 103 (51.5 percent), however, said that they were not discriminated against. Thus, though a majority of the respondents said that caste discrimination against them did not exist, a large section said that they were discriminated against. However, they said that only some among the upper castes discriminate against them. Moreover, the perception on caste-based discrimination varied among the study-villages.

In Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B, a large majority of dalits said that one or other forms of discrimination against them existed. In Chuli Khurd, 30 out of 50 respondents (60 percent) responded positively to the query, "Do you think discrimination against dalits exist in this village?" The respective figure in Ismaila 9-B was 80 percent. It is important to note that these are the villages where Jats form the dominant caste group. Though Jats do not behave like Brahmins, yet they tend to maintain distance from the lower castes. In Ledi, 18 respondents (36 percent) had the perception that discrimination against dalits existed in the village. In Rasulpur only 9 (18 percent) believed that they were discriminated against. Thus, the number of respondents who said that dalits were discriminated against was less in Rasulpur and Ledi than that of Ismaila 9-B and Chuli Khurd.

It is important to note that Rasulpur and Ledi are located in the region where dalits constitute the largest group at tehsil and district levels. Infact, dalit also form the largest group in these two villages. The less discrimination against dalits in these villages may be due to their large number. Infact some forms of discrimination seem to be more frequent. Table 3.9 throws a light on it. It seems that discrimination against dalits in the public domain has declined considerably. Statistics show that no one in the sample population said that they were denied access to village chaupal or streets. Only 2 out of 200 ( 1 percent) said that they were denied access to the common source of water. Infact, these two respondents, were from Ismaila 9-B. As discussed earlier, this village had separate wells for dalits and the upper-castes. In the remaining three villages, no respondent said that they were denied access to common source of water.

**Table 3.9**  
**Perception on Forms of Discrimination in the Simple Villages**

Types/Forms of Discrimination	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila 9-B		Ledi		Rasulpur		Total		Grand Total
	Some Do	No-One Does	Some Do	No-One Does	Some Do	No-One Does	Some Do	No-One Does	I	II	I+II
									Some Do	No-One Does	
1. Use of Different utensils	30	20	40	10	18	32	9	41	97 (48.5%)	103	200
2. Discrimination in Sitting Arrangement	30	20	38	12	04	46	7	43	79 (39.5%)	121	200
3. Entry to Temples	05	45	32	18	02	48	0	50	39 (19.5%)	161	200
4. Access to Common Source of Water	0	50	02	48	0	50	0	50	02 (1.0%)	198	200
5. Access to village Chaupals/Street	0	50	0	50	0	50	0	50	0	200	200
6. Discrimination in Arrangement During Marriages / Functions	13	37	08	42	0	50	02	48	23 (11.5%)	177	200

In fact, in these villages wells lie unused and water is supplied through taps which have been put into place in separate localities. Some respondents in these villages said that they could fetch water from the taps located in the upper caste localities. However, the percentage proportion of those who said that they were discriminated against either during marriage feasts or in access to temples or in sitting arrangement and use of utensils when they visit upper-caste home was relatively higher. 23 (11.5 percent) said that they were discriminated against during marriage feasts. According to the respondents, some among upper castes put separate "shamiyanas" for dalits and serve them different dishes. The proportion of such respondents was higher in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B.

39 (19.5 percent) said that they were denied free access to the temples. The perception is higher in Ismaila 9-B (64 percent) as compared to other villages. In response to the question whether they were discriminated against when they visited upper caste home, 79 (39.5 percent) said that they were discriminated against in sitting arrangement and 97 (48.5 percent) said that they were discriminated against in use of utensils. The respondents said that they were not allowed to sit on same charpai which was being used by the upper caste people. Dalits have to sit on a separate chair or 'Mudhdha' (cane sattee). They are offered tea or milk or water in utensils which are not used by upper castes. Statistics show that perception on such discrimination is also higher among the respondents in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B.

*(i) Discrimination According to Sub-Caste*

It is important to note that within dalits some sub-caste groups are more vulnerable to caste discrimination. Table 3.10 shows perception on discrimination according to sub-caste of the respondents. Out of 97 respondents who said that some kind of discrimination was practised against them, 40 (41.23 percent) belonged to Chamars sub-caste, 34 (35.05 percent) were Dhanak by sub-caste, 23 (23.7 percent) belonged to Balmiki sub caste. Thus respondents belonging to Chamar and Dhanak sub-castes form a large section of those who believed that they were discriminated against on the basis of caste.



**Table 3.10**  
**Perception on Discrimination According to Sub-Caste of the Respondents**

	Chamar		Dhanak		Balmiki		Radasia		Total	
	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not
1. Chuli Khurd	10	18	20	02	-	-	-	-	30	20
2. Ismaila 9-B	26	08	14	02	-	-	-	-	40	10
3. Ledi	04	32	-	-	14	0	-	-	18	22
4. Rasulpur	-	29	-	-	09	02	-	10	09	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Total Population in Sample</b>	<b>127</b>		<b>38</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>200</b>	

However, 31.49 percent of total respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste said that they were discriminated against whereas this proportion was 89.47 percent among Dhanaks and 92 percent among Balmikis. Interestingly no one from Ramdasias reported that they were discriminated against. It is clear that Balmikis and Dhanaks are more vulnerable to discrimination. These sub-caste groups are considered lower in the social hierarchy even by dalit sub-caste groups like Chamars and Ramdasias.

*(ii) Discrimination According to Class*

Table 3.11 indicates perception on discrimination according to the class category of the respondents. Out of 97 respondents who said that they were discriminated against, 78 (80.41 percent) belonged to the low class category, 10 (10.30 percent) belonged to the middle class category and 9 (9.27 percent) to the high class category.

**Table 3.11  
Perception on Discrimination According to Class of the Respondents**

	Low		Middle		High		Total	
	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not
1. Chuli Khurd	28	02	02	10	0	8	30	20
2. Ismaila 9-B	27	0	04	04	09	06	40	20
3. Ledi	14	13	04	9	0	10	18	32
4. Rasulpur	09	16	0	14	0	11	09	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Total Population in Sample</b>	<b>109</b>		<b>47</b>		<b>44</b>		<b>200</b>	

In fact, out of total low class population in the sample, 71.55 percent said that they were discriminated against. Among the middle class respondents, 21.3 percent said that they were discriminated. The respective figure among the high class respondent was 20.45 percent. Statistics, point out that dalits belonging to low class category are more vulnerable to the caste discrimination. Yet, dalits belonging to other class categories may also be discriminated against.

*(iii) Discrimination According to Education*

Table 3.12 shows perception on discrimination according to education of the respondents. Out of 97 respondents who said they are discriminated against, 85.56 percent were those whose educational level was low. The respondents whose educational status was middle and high formed 12.37 percent and 2.06 percent respectively of those who believed that they were discriminated against.

**Table 3.12**  
**Perception on Discrimination According to Education of the Respondents**

	Low		Middle		High		Total	
	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not
1. Chuli Khurd	26	17	03	02	01	01	30	20
2. Ismaila 9-B	31	02	08	06	01	02	40	10
3. Ledi	17	22	04	09	00	01	18	32
4. Rasulpur	09	34	0	06	00	01	09	41
Total	83	75	12	23	02	05	97	103
Total Population in Sample	158		35		07		200	

In fact, 83 out of 158 respondents (52.53 percent) whose educational level was low, said that they were discriminated against. The respective figure was 34.28 percent and 28.57 percent respectively among the respondents belonging to the educational category of middle and high. Statistics indicate that less educated among dalits are more vulnerable to the caste discrimination.

*(iv) Discrimination According to Occupation*

Another dependent variable that may affect perception on discrimination is the occupation of respondents.

Table 3.13 shows perception on discrimination according to the occupation of the respondents. Out of 24 respondents who were in the government jobs, only 5 (20.83 percent) believed that discrimination against dalits existed. Among the agricultural labourers, this proportion was 55 percent. 22 out of 30 unskilled manual labourers (73 percent) said that some

**Table 3.13**

**Perception on Discrimination According to Occupation of Respondents**

	Govt. Jobs		Cultivators		Agri. Labourer		Unskilled labourers		Skilled manual labourer		Businessmen		Housewives		Total	
	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not	Practiced	Not
1. Chuli Khurd	0	02	0	05	18	02	5	0	2	0	2	3	3	8	30	20
2. Ismaila 9-B	5	7	0	0	10	0	8	0	4	0	6	1	7	2	40	10
3. Ledi	0	03	0	03	4	13	4	5	2	1	1	4	7	3	18	32
4. Rasulpur	0	7	0	03	01	12	05	03	01	02	0	6	02	08	09	41
Total	5	19	0	11	33	27	22	8	9	3	9	14	19	21	97	103
Total Population in Sample	24		11		60		30		12		23		40		200	

among upper castes discriminated against them. Among the skilled manual labourers, this proportion was 75 percent. Among the respondents who were in the self employed occupations like vendors, private tutors, businessmen and shopkeepers, 39 percent said that they were discriminated against. 47.5 percent of housewives said that they were discriminated against. Interestingly, no one from the cultivators said that they were discriminated against. Thus, the agricultural labourers, unskilled and skilled manual labourers as well as housewives are more vulnerable to discrimination. In fact, they constitute the most subordinated groups among dalits. For the upper castes it is relatively easy to discriminate against them than against dalit landowning cultivators or dalits in the government jobs. Many respondents recognized that their economic status, educational status or the occupational status had helped them in lessening their social disabilities.<sup>5</sup> In fact, differences in socio-economic attributes among dalits also affect their dependence upon the upper castes. The following section shows that a good number of dalits depend upon farmers particularly for borrowing. This puts dalits under several obligations and thus limits their mobility.

## **(2) Forms of Dependence: Borrowing**

Dalits have been subjected not merely to the ritual discrimination. They are also subordinated economically. They depend upon the upper castes for employment, cattle fodder and loan. It is important to note that majority of dalits are employed in the low-income occupations. Moreover they have to sit idle for a long period as jobs are not available throughout the year. Therefore, they are unable to save money. So whenever their expenditure increases due to some wedding in home or due to someone falling seriously ill, they are compelled to borrow money.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For example. Kehar Singh of Ismaila 9-B, a retired school teacher acknowledged that he won respect from the villagers because of his teaching occupation. Mehar Singh in the same village, how was employed in a bank, said that he could be able to establish family relations with few Jat families in the village because of better educational, occupational and economic status. Both interviewed on 11-10-2001.

<sup>6</sup> Jodhka, Surinder (1995) *Debt, Dependence and Agrarian Change*. Jaipur and New Delhi : Rawat Publications, pp.171-176.

It is important to note that though institutional credit is available to dalits in the post colonial period, a large number of them have to borrow money from the landowners or farmers due to hurdles involved in the institutional loaning. There is no doubt that credit relations between landowners or farmers and the agricultural labours have been formalised. Yet the recent studies show that farmers or landowners do not lend money merely for earning interest. Money lending for them is a method with which they reinforce their overall domination in the village society.<sup>7</sup>

In this section, we shall find out from where the respondents borrow money. Our aim is to ascertain if they still depend upon the farmers or landowners. Table 3.14 shows sources of borrowing among dalits in the sample villages. Out of 200 respondents, 42 (21 percent) said that they did not need loan. 70 (35 percent) said that they borrowed money from the farmers or landowner. 19 (9.5 percent) said that their source of borrowing was shopkeepers or banias. The number of those who said that they borrowed money from friends or relatives was 41 (20.5 percent). 28 (14 percent) said that they borrowed money from the banks.

**Table 3.14**  
**Perception on Borrowings among the Sample Population**

Source of Borrowings	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
No need of Loan	10	12	08	12	42 (21.0%)
Farmer/Landowner/ employment	20	16	19	15	70 (35.0%)
Businessmen/ shopkeeper	06	05	03	05	19(9.5%)
Relative/Friends	8	9	16	8	41 (20.5%)
Bank	6	8	4	10	28 (14.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>200(100%)</b>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp 182-187

Statistics suggest that though a great majority of dalits intends to borrow from obligation free sources, a good number of them continue to depend upon the farmers or landowners. It may be because, in the agrarian set-up, loan is provided on the basis of personal security (Haisiyat) of the borrower. Many of dalits who work in the fields of landowners/farmers can hope to borrow from them only. Yet many seem to be searching for alternative sources of borrowing. The following section attempts to analyse borrowing among the respondents according to their sub-caste, class, education and occupation.

*(i) Borrowing According to Sub-Caste*

Table 3.15 shows borrowing among the respondents according to their sub-castes. Statistics show that dependence upon the farmers for borrowings is more among Dhanaks than others. Where as 60.52 percent of Dhanak population borrow from the landowner or farmer, the proportions of Chamars, Balmikis and Ramdasias populations who depend upon the landowners are 29.13 percent, 36 percent and 10 percent respectively. Where as 50 percent of Ramdasia population and 25.2 percent of Chamar population said that they did not need money. Only 7.89 percent among Dhanaks and 8 percent among Balmikis admitted that they did not need loan.

In fact, Chamars and Ramdasias are relatively better placed in terms of socio-economic attributes. Statistics show that besides Chamars and Ramdasias, Balmikis seem to be coming out of relations of dependence. A large section among them tends to borrow from sources other than farmers. It is important to note that dependence of a sub-caste group may be high because of low economic status of the group as a whole. So the variable of sub-caste may not determining borrowing patterns among dalits. The class seems to be an important variable.

**Table 3.15**  
**Perception on Borrowings According to Sub-Caste of the Respondents**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Balmiki	Chamar	Ramdasia <sup>s</sup>	Balmikis	I. Chamar	II. Dhanak	III. Balmiki	IV Ramdasias	
No need of loan	9	1	10	2	7	1	6	5	1	32	3	2	5	42
Farmer/Land owner/ employer	5	15	8	8	14	5	10	1	4	37	23	9	1	70
Businessmen/ Shopkeeper	5	1	3	2	1	2	1	3	1	10	3	3	3	19
Relatives/ Friends	5	3	7	2	12	4	5	0	3	29	5	7	0	41
Bank	4	2	6	2	2	2	7	1	2	19	4	4	1	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>200</b>



*(ii) Borrowing According to Class*

Table 3.16 shows borrowing according to class status of the respondents. 75 percent of the respondents belonging to high class category said that they did not need loan. It may be due to the reason that they have higher income and it is easy for them to save money. The respective proportions among low class and middle class respondents is 0.9 percent and 17 percent respectively. In fact, a large majority of low class respondents depend upon farmers or landowners for loan. 59.6 percent of them tend to borrow money from the farmers. On the other hand only 8 percent among middle class respondents and 2.2 percent among high class respondents depend upon the farmers. Significant proportion of the middle class respondents tend to borrow money from the other sources. Statistics, thus, indicate that dependence upon the landowners/farmers is greater among the low class respondents.

**Table 3.16**  
**Perception on Borrowings According to class of the Respondents**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
No need of loan	0	3	7	0	0	12	0	3	5	1	2	9	1	8	33	42
Farmer/Land owner/employee	19	1	0	16	0	0	15	3	1	15	0	0	65	4	1	70
Businessmen/Shopkeeper	3	3	0	3	2	0	2	1	0	2	3	0	10	9	0	19
Relative Friends	6	2	0	6	1	2	9	4	3	3	4	1	24	11	6	41
Bank	2	3	1	2	5	1	1	2	1	4	5	1	9	15	4	28
Total	30	12	8	27	8	15	27	13	10	25	14	11	109	47	44	200

*(iii) Borrowing According to Education*

Table 3.17 shows borrowing according to the education of respondents. 85.7 percent of the respondents who belong to the educational category of high said that they did not borrow money.

**Table 3.17**

**Perception on Borrowings According to Education of the Respondents**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
No need of loan	07	02	01	02	07	03	02	05	01	07	04	01	18	18	06	42
Farmer/Land owner/ employee	19	01	0	11	05	0	18	01	0	15	0	0	63	07	0	70
Businessmen/ Shopkeeper	05	01	0	04	01	0	2	01	0	04	01	0	15	04	0	19
Relative Friends	08	0	0	09	0	0	14	02	0	08	0	0	39	02	0	47
Bank	04	01	01	07	01	0	3	01	0	09	01	0	23	04	01	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>200</b>

The respective figure among the respondents whose educational status was middle, was 51.42 percent. Only 11.39 percent of those who had low educational level said that they did not need loan. Statistics show that 39.8 percent of the respondents belonging to the category of 'low' tend to borrow from farmers. This proportion was 20 percent among the respondents whose educational status was middle. No respondent whose educational status was preferred to borrow money from the farmers. It is also clear that a good number of respondents belonging to the educational categories of 'low' and 'middle' also tend to borrow money from the alternative sources. Thus, respondents with high educational background tend to keep out of relations of dependence. But a good number of respondents belonging to the low educational category tend to borrow from the farmers.

*(iv) Borrowing According to Occupation*

Table 3.18 shows borrowing among the respondents according to the occupation of the respondents. Out of 24 respondents in the government jobs, 21 (87.5 percent) said that they did not need loan, 2 (8.3 percent) said that they borrowed money from relatives or friends and 1 (4.6 percent) intended to borrow from bank. 72.7 percent among the cultivators did not need loan where as the remaining tend to borrow from the petty shopkeepers or bania. 75 percent of total population of the agricultural labours depend upon the farmers for borrowing. Yet a small section among them tends to keep out of relations of dependence. Therefore they tend to borrow money from the alternative sources. Among the unskilled labourers, 16.7 percent borrow money from the landowners or farmers where as 33.3 percent of skilled labourers depend upon the farmers. 40 percent among housewives said that their husband tended to borrow money from the farmers. The remaining population in all of these occupational categories borrowed from the other sources. It is clear that a large majority of the agricultural labourers depend upon the farmers for borrowing. However, the proportion of population depending upon farmers is relatively lower in other occupational categories.

**Table No. 3.18**  
**Perception on Borrowing According to Occupation of the Respondents**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I to VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
No need of loan	2	4	0	0	0	2	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	2	05	03	0	0	0	3	1	21	8	0	0	0	8	5	42
Farmer/Land owner/employee	0	0	17	0	0	0	3	0	0	8	0	1	0	7	0	0	12	3	1	0	3	0	0	8	2	2	0	3	0	0	45	5	4	0	16	70
Businessmen/Shopkeeper	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	1	2	10	2	0	4	19
Relative Friends	0	0	2	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	1	5	0	1	1	04	3	1	2	4	1	0	3	1	0	1	2	2	1	9	10	2	9	8	41
Bank	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	4	5	4	6	7	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>200</b>

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

Statistics on borrowing suggest two things. One, a significant number among dalits particularly poor and engaged in low income occupations depend upon the farmers for borrowing. Perhaps, they do not have an immediate access to other source of borrowing. Second, a large number of dalits have tended to look for alternative sources of borrowing. At this juncture it can be asked whether this search for alternative sources of borrowing is an attempt by them to keep out of relation of dependence. We may ask how dalits react to their humiliation. Are dalits passive spectator to the caste discrimination and the economic dependence ? The following section deals with these issues.

### **(3) Forms of Protest**

The account given by the respondents suggest that dalits are not mute spectator to the discrimination against them. They seem to be resisting attempts by the upper castes to humiliate them. However forms of resistance and protest vary from avoidance and verbal objection to a more organised protests. Many respondents said that if they were offered tea or other eatables in different utensils or if they were discriminated against in the marriages or in sitting arrangement, they expressed a verbal objection. Where discrimination is done more regularly, dalits take the route of avoidance. One respondent observed:

'Har koi pahle se janta hai koi ghar kaisa hai. Mein wahan jaata hi nahin jahan be-izzati ki jati ho'.<sup>8</sup>

[We know in advance whose behaviours towards us is disgusting. I do not go there where some one may hurt my self respect.]

Most of dalits in the sample population had very less interactions with the rest of population in the villages. They restricted their meetings with the upper castes to public domain. One respondent said – 'In the fields Jats even

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<sup>8</sup> Kalu Ram, respondent in Ismaila 9-B. Interviewed on 12-10-2001

share 'bidis' with us. But in home, they offer us tea in different utensils.'<sup>9</sup> As the discrimination against dalit was more frequent in the private domain, dalits did not make frequent visits to the upper caste home. They did it consciously so that their self respect is not hurt. Many respondents, however, tended to react assertively and angrily. One respondent said that once he was invited by one upper caste friend for lunch. His friend started to eat with him in same utensils. At this, his mother began to make objection. According to the respondent- "I felt offended by her remarks. I left food saying if I was called to be insulted. When I began to move out of home, my friend reprimanded his mother and send her to other room. He apologized many time."<sup>10</sup> Many respondents said that if some one humiliated them, they would respond in a violent manner.<sup>11</sup> Responding to question related to discrimination in marriages, many respondents said that they did not attend such marriages where separate shamiyans were put up for dalits.

On the issue of temple entry, two incidents one in Churi Khurd and another in Ledi, were narrated whereby 'pujaris' of temples objected at the entry of dalits. In Chuli Khurd, the respondent started to argue with him and dared him to stop. He visited temple continuously for one week to assert his right to temple entry.<sup>12</sup> In Ledi, when pujari objected to entry of a dalit respondent's entry to temple, he went to sarpanch of the village and apprised him of pujaris misbehaviour. Sarpanch promised him that this would not happen in future.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that dalits in the study villages had also started to invest in accumulating symbolic dignity. In Ledi and Rasulpur, dalits had constructed their own temples. In Both villages, dalits called these temples as 'Guru Ravidas Kutia'. The respondents in these villages informed that they celebrated Ravidas Jayanti. On that day, they would gather for

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<sup>9</sup> Satbir, respondent in Chuli Khurd. Interviewed on 27-08-2001

<sup>10</sup> Jaswant, respondent in Ledi. Interviewed on 28-10-2001

<sup>11</sup> Rajbir, a respondent in Ledi said, "Kanoon Ki Najar Mei Bhedav Khatam Ho Gaya Hai, Agar Koi Aisa Karega to maza bhi Chakhna Parega"

<sup>12</sup> Atma Ram, respondent in Churi Khurd. Interviewed on 25-08-2001

<sup>13</sup> Jai Chand, respondent in Ledi, interviewed on 27-1-2001

'kirtan'. They would also give 'bhandara' (village-feast). To manage the cost of function everyone from dalit community would give contributions. However, such activities were not visible in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B. Yet, in Ismaila 9-B, some incidents were narrated by the respondents which suggest that dalits had attempted to organize to resist domination. The incident were about their conflict with some among the upper castes particularly Jats regarding two pieces of land and an election booth. Infact, the government allotted some pieces of land to dalits under housing schemes. One 'baba' (saint like figure) also got a piece of land under this scheme. However, after his death this land was occupied by a Jat. Dalits wanted to convert this land into baba's samadhi. They raised this issue several times in the panchayat meetings.

Another incident was regarding a plot allotted for construction of well for dalits. This plot was also grabbed by an influential Jat. Dalits gave dharna in front of the office of Block Development Officer in Sampala. However, efforts by dalits to assert their right over two pieces of land did not bring any fruits. Yet, these incidents provided dalits opportunities to organise. Dalits in Ismaila 9-B also organized for shifting an election booth. In fact, there were two election booths in the village. Both of these were located in upper caste localities. During elections, dalits were threatened when they used to go to cast their votes. Dalits complained incessantly to the concerned authorities about this. Finally, one election booth was relocated in a locality where dalits felt safer.

Dalits in the study villages also offered evidences that inform about their urge to come out of relations of dependence. As we have seen in the earlier section, a large number of dalits tend to borrow from the sources like bank or relatives or friends that do not put them under any obligation. In Ismaila 9-Band Rasulpur, dalits were trying to minimize their dependence in an organized way. In Ismaila 9-B, many dalit respondents had formed a committee. Every month they would pool their savings. Any member who

needed money might take this money. He would pay a small interest to the remaining members. He had to return this money in installments. One of the members of this committee said, "This system solves our burden of borrowing money. We need not go to the farmers or shopkeepers where we always find ourselves under obligations and pay high interests."<sup>14</sup> In Rasulpur, dalits have an organisation called Ambedkar Samaj Kalyan Samiti (Ambedkar Welfare Society). Though it does not provide any loan, yet it provides monetary help to the needy among dalits during the daughter's marriage or for their children's studies.

Thus, dalits in the sample villages seem not only to protest or resist the discrimination against them, they also attempt to redress their economic and cultural dependence. These various forms of protest employed by dalits inform us of identity formation among them. They are no longer ready to accept that they are untouchable and lesser human beings. The sense that they are equal to other human beings is growing among them. However, the change in the outlook of dalits is not total. There were many respondents who tend to tolerate discrimination against them. In fact, tendency to resist domination and discrimination varied according to location and socio-economic position of the respondents.

In the following section, we shall examine self-identification among dalits as well as their orientation towards Ambedkar. Our objective is to find out whether dalits identify themselves with Ambedkar and whether there is any radical shift in self identification by them.

### III

#### **(1) Self-Identification Among the Respondents**

The terms of self identification informs us of the subjects' sense of self. It provides an insight into identity consciousness among them. To assess

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<sup>14</sup> Navratan, respondent in Ismaila 9-B, Interview on 13-10-2001



identity consciousness, we asked question, “How will you identify yourself?” Table 3.19 shows self – identification among the sample population. Out of 200 respondents, 80 identified themselves as Harijan.

**Table 3.19**  
**Self Identification Among the Sample Population**

Nomenclatural Categories	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
SC	05	08	02	04	19
Harijan	24	15	23	18	80
Dalit	00	01	02	04	07
Sub-Caste Names*	18	14	18	15	65
Ravidasi/Julah-Kabir panthi/Jatavs/Siddhartha	00	07	01	02	10
Others**	03	05	04	07	19
Total	50	50	50	50	200

\* Like 'Chamar', 'Balmikis' etc.

\*\* Like 'Kumar', 'Madan', 'Kataria' etc.

They constitute 40 percent of the sample population. 65 identified themselves as ‘Chamars’, ‘Dhanaks’, ‘Balmikis’ and ‘Ramdasian’. Their percentage proportion in the sample population is 32.5 percent. 19 (8.5 percent of the sample population) used ‘SC’ to identify themselves. Only 7 (3.5 percent) identified themselves as ‘dalit’. There were some respondents who identified themselves as ‘Ravidasi’ or ‘Kabirpanthi Julaha’ or ‘Jatavs’ or ‘Siddhartha’. The term ‘Siddhartha’ is after the name of Lord Buddha. Jatav is a sub-caste among dalits. The number of such respondents were 10 (5 percent). 19 respondents (8.5 percent) used their name or sir-name like ‘Chauhan’, ‘Kumar’, ‘Kataria’ as their identity. Statistics show that the terms like ‘Harijan’ or ‘caste names’ are more popular among dalits of the sample villages. This will become more clear if we examine self – identification among the sample population according to the caste, class, education and occupation of the respondents.

*(i) Self-Identification According to Sub-Caste*

Table 3.20 shows self identification among dalits in the study villages according to caste. Out of 80 respondents who gave ‘Harijan’ as their identity,

63 (78.7 percent) belonged to Chamar sub-caste where as 13 (16.25 percent) and 4 (5 percent) belonged to Dhanak and Balmiki sub-castes respectively. Infact, respondents belonging to Chamar sub-castes had a higher tendency to identify themselves as 'Harijan.' Out of total respondents belonging to Chamar sub-castes 49.6 percent identified themselves as 'Harijan' whereas the respective figures for Dhanak and Balmikis were 34.2 percent and 16 percent respectively.

**Table 3.20**  
**Self-Identification According to Sub-Caste**

Nominal Categories	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila 9-B		Ledi		Rasulpur			I.	II.	Total III. IV	
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Balmiki	Chamar	Balmiki	Ramdasia	Chamar	Dhanak	Balmiki	Ramdasia
SC	05	-	06	02	02	-	02	-	02	15	02	-	02
Harijan	14	10	12	03	23	-	14	04	-	63	13	04	-
Dalit	-	-	01	-	02	-	02	01	01	05	-	01	01
Sub-Caste Names*	07	11	09	05	06	12	04	06	05	26	16	18	05
Ravidasi/Julah-Kabir panthi/Jatavs/Siddhartha	-	-	03	04	01	-	02	-	-	06	04	-	-
Others**	02	01	03	02	2	2	05	-	02	12	03	02	02
Total	28	22	16	36	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10
Grand Total	50		50		50		50			200			

\* Like 'Chamar', 'Balmikis' etc.

\*\* Like 'Kumar', 'Madan', 'Kataria' etc.

Among the respondents identifying themselves as SC, 15 (78.9 percent) belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 2 (10.52 percent) belonged to Dhanak and Ramdasia each. However, 11.8 percent out of total population belonging to Chamar sub-caste identified themselves as SC. The respective figures for other sub castes are as follows: Dhanak (5.26 percent), Ramdasias (20 percent). Among the respondents who gave their sub caste names as their identity, 26 (40 percent) belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 16 (24.61 percent) were Dhanak by sub-caste, 18 (27.6 percent) were Balmikis and 5 (7 percent)

were Ramdasias. Tendency to identify themselves by their sub-caste name was relatively high in Dhanaks, Balmikis and Ramdasias. 42 percent of total sample population belonging to Dhanaks identified themselves by caste identity. The respective figure for Balmikis was 72 percent. Ramdasias identifying themselves by their caste identity formed 50 percent of total Ramdasia population in the sample population. This figure for chamars was 20.4 percent. It seems that sub caste identifies are deep rooted among dalits of the sample villages. Many of these respondents who identified themselves as 'Harijan' or 'SC' were quick to add their caste names to these terms. In the words of one respondent :<sup>15</sup>

"The term SC is not derogatory. But there are 36 biradaries (groups) of SCs. It is necessary to specify who you are among SCs." Statistics in Table 3.20 shows that out of 7 respondents identifying themselves as 'Dalit', 5 (71.42 percent) belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 1 each (14.28 percent each) belonged Balmikis and Ramdasia. In fact, term 'Dalit' has not become much popular among dalits of any caste group. Only 3.93 percent of total Chamar population in the sample used 'Dalit' as their identity. The respective figures for Balmikis and Ramdasia were 4 percent and 10 percent. No one from 'Dhanaks' used the term 'Dalit' for self identification. Few among the sample population used the terms like 'Ravidasi', 'Julah Kabirpanthi', 'Jatavs' and 'Siddhartha' as terms of self identification. Table 3.20 indicates that this tendency is higher among Chamars. They use the terms 'Ravidasi' and 'Jatavs' were as 'Kabipanthi' is used by Dhanaks. One respondent belonging to Chamar caste called himself 'Siddhartha'.<sup>16</sup>

Among the respondents who used their name or sir-name like 'Chauhan', 'Kataria', 'Madan', 'Kumar' as their identity, 12 (63.5 percent) belonged to Chamar sub caste, 3 (15.78 percent) to Dhanak sub caste and 2

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<sup>15</sup> Rajpal, respondent from Ismaila 9-B, interviewed on 13-10-2001

<sup>16</sup> Rampat, respondent from Ismaila 9-B interviewed on 14-10-2001. Rampat was secretary of RPI's Punjab Unit during 1950s. He was Buddhist convert, lonely non-Hindu dalit in the sample population. He converted to Buddhism on Dr. Ambedkar's call.

each (10.52 percent each) to Balmikis and Ramdasias. In fact 9.44 percent Chamar Respondents identified themselves by these identifies. The respective figures for Dhanaks, balmiks and Ramdasias were 7.89 percent, 8 percent, 20 percent respectively. In fact, use of these terms of self identification reflected the tendency among a section of dalits to hide their caste identities.

*(ii) Self-Identification According to Class*

Table 3.21 gives detail of self identification among dalits according to class. 52.63 percent of those who identified themselves as SCs belonged to 'high' class, 31.5 percent belonged to the 'middle' class and 15.7 percent belonged to 'low' class. The percentage proportions of these respondents to their respective total population were 22.72 percent, 12.76 percent and 2.75 percent respectively. Clearly, the respondents belonging to middle and high class categories had comparatively higher tendencies to identify themselves as SC.

In fact, they had less tendency to use 'Harijan' or 'Caste-name' as their identity as is clear from statistics. Out of 80 respondents who identify themselves as 'Harijan', 52 (65 percent) belonged to 'low' class, 14 each (17.5 percent) to 'middle' and 'high' class categories. The percentage proportion of these respondents to total population of their respective class categories were 47.7 percent, 29.78 percent and 31.81 percent respectively. Similarly, out of 65 respondents identifying themselves by their caste names, 44 (67.6 percent) belonged to 'low' class, 17 (26.15 percent) to 'middle' class and 4 (6.15 percent) to 'high' class.

The percentage proportion of these respondents to the total population of their respective class categories were 40.3 percent, 36.17 percent and 9.09 percent respectively. The term 'Dalit' seems to be popular among the respondents belonging to 'low' and middle class more than that of high class category. Out 7 who identified themselves as 'Dalit', 3 each (42.8 percent each) belonged to 'low' and 'middle' class categories. The respective figure

**Table 3.21**  
**Self-Identification According to Class of the respondents**

Categories of Identification	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I Low	II Middle	III High	
SC	2	1	2	1	2	5	-	1	1	0	2	2	3	6	10	19
Harjan	16	4	4	8	2	5	15	5	3	13	3	2	52	14	14	80
Dalit	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	0	2	1	1	3	3	1	7
Sub-Caste Names*	11	7	-	13	0	1	11	5	2	9	5	1	44	17	04	65
Ravidasi/Julah-Kabir panthi/Jatavs/Siddhartha	-	-	-	4	2	1	-	1	-	0	2	0	4	5	1	1
Others **	1	0	2	1	1	3	-	-	4	1	1	5	3	2	4	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>200</b>

\* Like 'Chamar', 'Balmikis' etc.

\*\* Like 'Kumar', 'Madan', 'Kataria' etc.

for 'high' class respondents was 14.28 percent. The percentage proportion of high class respondents identifying themselves as 'Dalit' to total population belonging to high class category was 2.27 percent, little lower than the respective figures of 2.75 percent and 4.25 percent among 'low' class and 'middle' class respondents respectively. The proportion of the respondent using terms 'Ravidasi' , 'Jatav', 'Kabirpanthi' etc. comparatively higher among the respondents belonging to low class and the middle class categories. 4 out of 10 such respondents belonged to low class, 5 belonged to middle and 1 belonged to high class.

Interestingly tendency to use terms like 'Madan', 'Kataria', Chauhan was visible more in high class respondents. 14 out of 19 respondents using such terms of identification belonged to high class. They constituted 73.6 percent of total respondents using these terms of identification and 31.81 percent of total population of high class respondents. The respective figure for 'low class' and 'middle class' respondents were 10.5 percent and 4.25 percent, and 15.78 percent and 2.75 percent respectively.

### *(iii) Identification According to Education*

Education plays a great role in the transformation of one's self perception which may reflect in one's choice of terms of self identification. Table 3.22 shows the self identification among the sample population according to education. Statistics point out that relatively better educated tended to identify themselves as 'SC'. Out of 19 who identified themselves as SC, only 1 (5.26 percent) belonged to educational category of 'low'. Compared to this, the numbers of respondents in the category of 'middle' and 'high' education who identified themselves as SC were 13 (68.4 percent) and 5 (26.3 percent) respectively. In fact, out of total respondents having 'high' level education 71.4 percent was formed by those who used SC to identify themselves.

**Table 3.22**  
**Self-Identification According to Education of the Respondents**

Categories of Identification	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
SC	-	3	2	-	7	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	1	13	5	19
Harijan	24	-	-	14	1	-	20	3	-	18	-	-	76	04	-	80
Dalit	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	02	02	-	03	04	-	07
Sub-Caste Names*	18	-	-	12	2	-	17	1	-	15	-	-	62	03	-	65
Ravidasi/Julah-Kabir panthi/Jatavs/Siddhartha	-	-	-	5	1	1	-	1	-	01	1	-	06	03	1	10
Others**	1	2	-	2	2	1	1	3	-	06	1	-	10	8	1	19
Total	43	5	2	33	14	3	39	10	1	43	06	01	158	35	7	200

\* Like 'Chamar', 'Balmikis' etc.

\*\* Like 'Kumar', 'Madan', 'Kataria' etc.

The respective figures for respondents in the middle and 'low' educational categories were 37.14 percent and 0.63 percent respectively. Interestingly no one having 'high' education identified themselves as 'Harijan' or by caste names. The 'Harijan' and 'Caste-names' were more popular among relatively less educated respondents. Out of 80 respondents identifying themselves as Harijan, 76 (95 percent) belonged to the educational category of 'low'. Infact, they formed 48.10 percent of total population of respondents having 'low' educational status. Similarly, out of 65 respondents who used caste names to identify themselves, 62 belonged to 'low' educational category. They formed 39.24 percent of total population of respondents having 'low' educational status. The respondents who called themselves 'Dalit' were divided as follows. Out of 7, who identified themselves as 'Dalit' 3 had low educational background whereas 4 had middle educational background. The proportion of the respondents with 'middle' educational level to the total population in the sample was 11.42 percent, much higher than that of 1.89 percent of those having low educational background. Though 60 percent of respondents who identified themselves as Ravidasi or Kabirpanthi or Jatavs or Siddhartha belonged to educational category of low, they constituted only 3.79 percent of total respondents with low educational background. Similarly, 30 percent of the respondents who identified themselves as 'Kabirpanthi' or 'Siddhartha' belonged to the educational category of 'middle'. However, they formed only 8.57 percent of total population belonging to the educational category of 'middle'. Only 1 respondent having high educational status identified himself by these terms. Similarly, proportion of the respondents identifying themselves by names on sir-names was relatively high among moderately educated. Out of total 19 respondents giving such self identification. 10 (52.65 percent) belonged to 'low' educational category, 8 (42.10 percent) to 'middle' educational category and 1 (10 percent) to that of 'high' educational



category. However, their percentage proportions to total population of the respondents in the respective educational categories was 22.8 percent for those with middle level of education, 6.32 percent and 14.28 percent for those with low educational and high educational background respectively.

*(iv) Identification According to Occupation*

Table 3.23 and 3.24 show self identification among the sample population according to occupation. Statistics point out that the agricultural labourers, housewives and the manual unskilled labourers have comparatively higher tendency to identify themselves as Harijan or by the caste names. Out of 80 respondents who identified themselves as Harijan, the number of the agricultural labourers is 31 (38.7 percent). The respective figures for housewives and lowly paid manual unskilled labours were 18 (22.5 percent) and 15 (18.7 percent) respectively. The proportion of the agricultural labours identifying themselves as Harijan to the total population agricultural labourers was 51.6 percent as compared to 50 percent and 45 percent of the manual unskilled labourers and housewives respectively.

**Table 3.23  
Self-Identification Among Dalits According to  
Occupation of the Respondents**

	Govt. Jobs	Cultivators	Agri. Labourers	Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour	Lowly paid Manual skilled labour	Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees	Housewives	Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
SC	7	1	2	0	2	7	0	19
Harijan	4	6	31	15	3	3	18	80
Dalit	1	2	0	1	0	3	0	07
Sub-Caste Names*	4	0	22	10	4	3	22	65
Ravidasi/Julah-Kabir panthi/Jatavs/Siddhartha	0	2	4	1	1	2	0	10
Others	8	0	1	3	2	5	0	19
Total	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

**Table No. 3.24**  
**Self-Identification Among Dalits According to Occupation of the Respondents**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
SC	2	-	-	-	1	2	-	4	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	7	1	2	0	2	7	0	19
Harijan	-	5	10	3	-	1	5	3	0	3	4	1	1	3	0	1	12	4	1	1	4	1	0	6	4	1	0	6	4	6	31	15	3	3	18	80
Dalit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	3	0	7
Sub-Caste Name	-	-	10	1	-	1	6	2	0	2	2	1	1	6	0	0	5	5	2	-	6	2	0	5	2	1	1	4	4	0	22	10	4	3	22	65
Ravidasi / Julah - Kabir panthi/ Jatav Siddhartha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	3	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	1	2	0	10
Others	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	8	0	1	3	2	5	0	19
Total	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

Only 4 (5 percent) among the government employees identified themselves as Harijan. In terms of proportion to total population of the government employees, it formed 16.67 percent. Those who were business men or shopkeepers showed less liking for the term 'Harijan'. Infact, the terms like SC, or 'Kataria', 'Kumar', 'Madan' were more popular among them. Statistics also show that sub-caste names were more popular among the agricultural labourers, unskilled and skilled labourers and housewives. The term 'Dalit' was comparatively more popular among the cultivators and the self employed. Out of 7 respondents who identified themselves as dalits, 2 (28.5 percent) were cultivators, 3 (42.8 percent) were self employee i.e. businessman, shopkeepers etc., 1 was unskilled labourer (14.28 percent) and 1 was in the government jobs (14.28 percent). The percentage proportions of all these to their respective total population was 18.18 percent, 13.04 percent, 3.34 percent and 4.16 percent respectively. It is important to note that housewives in the sample population identified themselves either as Harijan or by sub-caste identities. In fact, they constitute the most subordinated among dalits, as they were deprived of education and other facilities. Therefore, they were rarely aware of terms like SC or Dalit. They lacked the tendency to hide the caste identities by euphemistic terms like 'Kataria', 'Madan' etc. Identities like 'Harijan' and 'Caste names' therefore, were more known to them.

Statistics on self identification by the respondents point out that the terms like 'Harijan' and 'Caste names' were more popular. Ironically, the term Harijan is considered as pejorative and patronizing by radical dalits. However, such radicalism was not visible among dalits in the sample villages. Most of them considered the term Harijan without prejudice. Many even did not hesitate in using their caste identities. In the words of one respondent.<sup>17</sup> "I am Chamar by caste. If some one says me Chamar, what is wrong in that?"

<sup>17</sup> Rajbir, Ledi Village, interviewed on 10-11-2001, "Main Chamar Hoon. Koi Mujhe Chamar Kah De To Kya Itraj Hai. Chamar Meri Jat Hai, Main Sharam Kyon Karoon. Naam Badal Jaane Se Jat Nahin Badalegi."

Even if I change my caste name, I shall remain Chamar. One should not be ashamed of it.” Yet many believed that the term can be pejoratively used by the upper castes. A host of terms like “Ravidasi”, “Kabirpanthi”, “Siddhartha” were preferred by some dalits. Some even avoid to reveal their caste identities. They used casteconcealing terms like ‘Chauhan’, ‘Kumar’, ‘Madan’ and ‘Kataria’. However their number seems to be small.

Statistics on identification indicate changes as well as continuities among dalits. The respondents wanted to identify them in a way that instills a sense of pride among them. Therefore, they used the terms like ‘SC’, ‘Harijan’, ‘Kabirpanthi’, ‘Sidhartha’ and even the ‘caste names’. However, the term ‘Dalit’ had not taken any ground among them. It is important to note that Haryana is one of these regions where legacy of Ambedkarism was very weak. However today, Ambedkar seems to have become God for dalits in every part of the country. Identification with Ambedkar informs us of identification among dalits. Therefore, in the following section we shall analyse identification with Ambedkar among the sample population

## **(2) Identification with Ambedkar**

The image of Ambedkar carries a significant meaning for dalits in the contemporary period. It is considered as a statement of their self-respect, sense of freedom, courage and an instrument of translation of a new identity.<sup>18</sup>

Ambedkar is a symbol of crystallization of new identity among dalits. In the sample villages, the respondents were asked questions on identification with Ambedkar. We asked them whether they had heard Ambedkar’s name, whether they had Ambedkar’s photograph in home, whether they celebrated his birthday and whom did they find close to among Ambedkar, Gandhi etc.

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<sup>18</sup> Zelliot, Eleanor (2001) “The Meaning of Ambedkar” in Ghanshyam Shah (eds.) *Dalit Identity and Politics*. New Delhi: Sage Publication p. 138.

**Table 3.25**  
**Orientation Towards Ambedkar Among the Sample Population**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
Heard Ambedkar's Name	40	48	45	49	182 (91%)
Keep His Photograph in Home	06	18	13	07	44 (22%)
Feel Close to Him	23	39	36	30	128 (64%)
Celebrate His Birthday	03	15	11	09	38 (19%)

Table 3.25 shows orientation among the sample population towards Ambedkar. Out of 200 respondents, 182 (91 percent) had heard the name of Ambedkar, 44 (22 percent of sample population) kept Ambedkar's photograph in their home, 128 (64 percent) said that they found Ambedkar closer than any other and, 38 (19 percent) said that they had participated in Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. It is clear that for majority of dalits in the sample population Ambedkar is more close. Infact, they believe that whatever they have gained is because of him. One respondent in Rasulpur commented – "Aaj jo bhi kutch sudhar mahari biradari main hai, wo dactor Ambedkar ke Karan Hi Hai."<sup>19</sup> (Whatever improvement in the conditions of dalits is visible, is because of Dr. Ambedkar).

Interestingly, most of them know that Ambedkar gained education in abroad. Though very few had some idea of Gandhi-Ambedhar debate, many of them observed that Gandhi betrayed Ambedkar. One respondent in Ledi said 'Ambedkar shayed harmane liye kutch aur bhi karta, par Ganhi ne use agey nahin ane diya'.<sup>20</sup> (Ambedkar could have done more for us. But Gandhi created hurdles.)

<sup>19</sup> Amrjit, respondent in Rasulpur, interviewed 20-11-2001.

<sup>20</sup> Maya Ram, respondent in Ledi, interviewed on 28-10-2001

It is important to note that we didn't find any statue of Ambedkar in the sample villages. Many said that dalits feared least the upper caste should destroy it.<sup>21</sup> However a significant number of them had kept Ambedkar's photograph in their home.<sup>22</sup> In the sample-villages no function was organised on Ambekar Jayanti. But, as we have seen, many go to near by towns to participate in Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. However, this tendency was more in Ismaila 9-B, Rasulpur and Ledi. In Chuli Khurd, only 3 respondents said that they had participated in Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. It may be because Chuli Khurd is relatively interior village and neighboring towns Hisar and Fatehabad where such celebrations are organized, are far away. It is important to note that identification with Ambedkar may vary according to the sub-caste.

*(i) Identification with Ambedkar According to Sub-Castes*

Table 3.26 shows identification among the respondents with Ambedkar according to sub caste. 96.8 percent of respondents belonging to Chamar sub caste said that they had heard the name of Ambedkar. The respective percentage among the respondents belonging Dhanak and Balmiki sub-castes were 76.3 percent and 80 percent respectively. All of the respondents belonging to Ramdasia sub-caste had heard Ambedkar's name. Thus, Chamars and Ramdasias seemed to be more aware about Ambedkar than other. It may be because of the fact that upward mobility was more visible among these two sub caste groups.

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<sup>21</sup> For example Omprakash of Ismaila 9-B remarked – “Why new statue in the village? They ransacked Ambedkar's statue in Rohtak (referring to the period when anti reservation orgy stirred the state). Do you think, they will leave it in the village?” Interviewed on 13-10-2001

<sup>22</sup> Whenever we asked question whether they possess Ambedkar's photo many of respondent used to take to use where they installed it

**Table 3.26**  
**Orientation Towards Ambedkar According to Sub-Caste**

Nominational Categories	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total			
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Balmiki	Chamar	Balmikis	Ramdasia	I.	II.	III.	IV
Heard Ambedkar's Name	25	15	34	14	35	10	29	10	10	123	29	20	10
Keep His Photograph in Home	6	0	15	3	12	01	2	0	05	35	3	01	05
Feel Close to Him	18	05	28	11	30	06	23	02	05	99	16	08	05
Celebrate His Birthday	3	0	12	3	11	0	4	0	5	30	03	0	05

Similarly. Ramdasia and Chamars find Ambedkar more close to them. 77.9 percent of the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste said that Ambedkar was more close to them. The respective figure for the respondents belonging to Ramdasia, Dhanak and Balmikis were 50 percent, 42 percent and 32 percent. Infact, many respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste believed that Ambedkar was Chamar by caste. Tendency to keep Ambedkar's photograph and participate in his birthday celebration was visible more among Chamars and Ramdasias. No respondent by Balmiki sub caste was found to be participating in Ambedkar's birthday whereas 3 among Dhanaks (7.8 percent of Dhanak population in the sample) said that they participated in Ambedkar's birthday celebrations, Compared to this, 50 percent of Ramdasias population and 23.6 percent of Chamar population in the sample had participated in Ambedkar's birthday celebrations. Whereas only 7.8 percent among Dhanaks and 4 percent among Balmikis kept his photograph, among Ramdasia and Chamars the proportion was 50 percent and 47.5 percent respectively.

*(ii) Identification with Ambedkar According to Class*

Table 3.27 shows identification with Ambedkar among the sample population according to class. It is clear that where as awareness about Ambedkar is very high among respondents belonging to all class categories, it is little lower among the respondents belonging to 'low' class category. 84.4 percent of low class respondents had heard Ambedkar's name. The respective figure for 'middle' and 'high' class respondents is cent percent. The proportion of the respondents who kept Ambedkar's photograph was less among low class respondents (6.42 percent of their total population in the sample) than that of middle class respondents (29.58 percent) and high class (54.54 percent).



**Table 3.27**  
**Orientation Towards Ambedkar According To Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I Low	II Middle	III High	
Heard Ambedkar's Name	20	12	08	25	8	15	23	12	10	24	14	11	92	46	44	182
Keep His Photograph in Home	1	1	4	3	6	9	2	3	8	1	3	3	07	13	24	44
Feel Close to Him	8	9	6	21	7	11	18	10	8	12	12	6	59	38	31	128
Celebrate His Birthday	0	0	3	2	4	9	2	3	6	1	4	4	5	11	22	38

Though more than half of the population in each class category named Ambedkar as the political figure close to them, the proportion of high and middle class respondents was high than that of the lower class. Whereas 54.12 percent of respondents belonging to 'low' class felt that Ambedkar was close to them, the respective figure for respondents belonging to 'middle' and 'high' class was 80.8 percent and 70.4 percent respectively. More dalits belonging to high and middle class were found to be participating in Ambedkar's Jayanti 50 percent of high class respondents said that they went to near by town to celebrate Ambedkar's birthday-celebration. The respective figure among the respondents belonging to the 'middle' and 'low' class was 23.4 percent and 4.58 percent respectively.

*(iii) Identification with Ambedkar According to Education*

Table 3.28 indicates identification with Ambedkar among the sample population according to education. Statistics indicate that the respondents having low level of education were relatively less aware than the respondents with 'middle' and 'high' level of education. 88.6 percent population of respondents in low educational category had heard Ambedkar's name as against cent percent of the population belonging to the 'middle' and 'high' educational categories. Similarly, the proportion of respondents were feeling close to Ambedkar, keeping his photograph and participating in the celebrations of his birthday was higher among the respondents belonging to middle and high educational categories. Whereas 71.4 percent of population in high educational categories found Ambedkar close to them, 57.14 percent keep his photograph and 57.1 percent celebrate his birthday.

**Table 3.28**

**Orientation Towards Ambedkar According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	I	II	III	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Heard Ambedkar's Name	33	5	2	31	14	3	34	10	1	42	6	1	140	35	07	182
Keep His Photograph in Home	3	2	1	10	6	2	8	5	0	3	3	1	24	16	04	44
Feel Close to Him	18	4	1	27	10	2	26	9	1	23	6	1	94	29	05	128
Celebrate His Birthday	0	2	1	8	5	2	8	3	0	5	3	1	21	13	04	38

The respective figures for respondents in middle educational category were 82.8 percent 45.7 percent and 37.14 percent respectively. Among the respondents belonging to the educational category of 'low' whereas 59.4 percent said that Ambedkar was more close to them, the percentage proportions of those who kept his photograph and participated in birthday celebrations were 15.18 percent and 13.29 percent respectively.

*(iv) Identification with Ambedkar According to Occupation*

Table 3.29 shows identification with Ambedkar among the sample population according to occupation. It is clear that among housewives and agricultural labourers, awareness about Ambedkar was relatively less. 75 percent of housewives said that they had heard Ambedkar's name, whereas among the agricultural labourers 88.3 percent knew about him. The percentage of respondents knowing Ambedkar's name was not less than 96 percent in any of remaining occupational categories. The proportion of respondents who kept Ambedkar's photograph was high among the government employee (33.5 percent) and shopkeepers etc (39.9 percent). It was lowest among the cultivators (3.63 percent). Though the percentage of those who felt close to Ambedkar was high among the respondents belonging to all occupational categories, it was relatively lower among housewives (47.5 percent). However, it was the government employees and shopkeepers/businessman who were ahead of others in terms of their participation in Ambedkar's birthday celebrations. The lowest percentage in this regard was among the agricultural labourers and housewives. It may be because the agricultural labourers and housewives remained busy in their jobs. They might not have enough time to go to town to participate in the function. Statistics on identification with Ambedkar among the sample population indicate that a good number of dalits in the sample villages feel strong affiliation with Ambedkar.

**Table No. 3.29**  
**Orientation Towards Ambedkar According to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Isnaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
Heard Ambedkar's Name	2	5	14	4	2	5	0	12	0	9	8	4	7	8	3	3	17	9	3	5	5	7	3	13	8	3	6	9	24	11	53	29	12	23	30	182
Keep this photograph in Home	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	5	0	4	4	1	2	2	1	1	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	8	4	10	6	2	9	5	44
Feel close to Him	1	4	8	2	2	2	4	10	0	9	4	4	6	6	3	2	15	5	2	3	6	4	2	11	6	2	2	3	18	8	43	17	10	13	19	128
Celebrate this Birthday	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	7	0	2	2	2	2	0	3	1	1	2	0	4	0	4	1	0	0	2	1	1	15	2	3	5	5	7	1	38

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- VIII. Govt. Jobs
- IX. Cultivators
- X. Agri. Labourers
- XI. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- XII. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- XIII. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- XIV. Housewives

## **Conclusion**

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that dalits in the sample villages offer evidences which suggest that an urge to have positive identity is growing among them. Statistics on discrimination and borrowings suggest that upper castes particularly landowning castes tend to subordinate them economically as well as culturally. Dalits in the sample villages are discriminated against in various ways. Some have been denied entry to temples. Respondents' account suggest that they do not tolerate humiliation passively. They object to discriminatory behaviour of the dominant castes. Some react angrily and are more assertive. Others, however, prefer to avoid visiting the upper caste home to escape from humiliation.

A large number of dalits in the study-villages depend upon farmers for borrowings. They have to borrow money whenever their expenditure increases. Some have realized that they have to come out of the relations of dependence. They have formed collective committee to accumulate money on monthly basis so that any one among them who needs money can borrow from the committee. All these attempts of dalits in the study villages inform us that dalits are becoming conscious. Interestingly, dalits in the study-villages have been attempting to create an independent cultural space also. They have founded Ravidas temples and celebrate Ravidas Jayanti or Balmiki Jayanti. Their affiliation with Ambedkar is growing. Many of them keep his photograph in their homes some would go to nearby towns to participate in Ambedkar's birthday celebrations. However, they do not feel need to construct Ambedkar's statue in the villages. It may be because they feel discouraged due to atmosphere of domination in the study-villages, particularly in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B.

Many dalits identify themselves as SCs. They do not want to call themselves by the sub caste names. However, majority of dalits call themselves Harijan. They do not think that the term Harijan is pejorative.

Interestingly they think that the term Harijan gives some respect to them. Infact, the term 'dalit' has not taken ground among them. This shows that transformation of identity among dalits coexists with the continuities.

It is also clear that the process of identity formation has not attained same level of consolidation in all the four study villages. For instance, in Chuli Khurd, dalits did not offer any evidence that suggest that they intend to carve out a separate cultural space for themselves. Similarly, the process of identity formation varies among dalits differentiated by the socio-economic attributes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND PARTY PREFERENCES AMONG DALITS IN THE SAMPLE VILLAGES

In the previous chapter we have seen that awareness about the socio-cultural symbols of dalit identity is growing in the study villages. However awareness among dalits is not restricted to the socio-cultural realm only. The existing literature shows that political consciousness is also growing among dalits.<sup>1</sup> It is visible in their higher voter turnout, improvement in their participation in political meetings and improvement in number of those who take up party membership. Dalits seem to have realised that politics is an effective means for upward mobility and for staking claims as a large collectivity for a share in political power. They are no longer captive vote-bank of any political party. They are shifting their loyalties in favour of parties that serve their interest most.

In certain regions of India this consciousness has also led to crystallisation of a distinct political identity among dalits. Political parties have emerged which aim at organising dalit into a distinct political collectivity. It is important to note that dalits of Haryana, as elsewhere, have traditionally voted for INC. However, in 1990s, competition among political parties for dalit votes increased. During this period, the number of major political parties increased as HVP, represented by Bansi Lal who defected from INC, BJP and BSP emerged as the significant political parties. BSP entered into the electoral fray in Haryana in 1989 parliamentary elections. However, BSP's predecessor D-S4 (Dalit Soshit Samaj Sangharash Samiti) contested 1982 assembly elections in Haryana. It fielded 46 candidates.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Yadav Yogendra (2000) 'Understanding Second Democratic Upsurge: Trends of Bahujan Participation in Electoral Politics in 1990s' in Francine R Frankel et al (eds.) *Transforming India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.120-145. Also Pushpendra (1999) 'Dalit Assertion through Electoral Politics' in *Economic and Political Weekly*. Volume XXXIV. No.37, September 4, pp.2609-2618. The forgoing discussion is mainly based upon arguments made by the authors.



However, all of them lost their deposits. BSP's performance in the parliamentary as well as assembly constituencies is shown in Appendix-A.

It seems that dalits of Haryana still vote for INC in large number. CSDS data (see Appendix) show that 46.6 percent of dalits voted for INC in the last assembly election. Statistics shown in Appendix also reveal that in certain pockets BSP's support base has improved. It is important to note that though BSP claims to be 'Bahujan Party' (i.e. party of majority, which include SCs, STs, OBCs, and Muslims), it has been considered as a symbol of dalit identity. It is with this background that the present chapter aims at understanding political consciousness among dalits in the study villages. It also aims at analysing their party preferences to understand identity formation among them. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with political consciousness and participation among dalits in the sample villages. The second part analyses their party preferences to understand identity formation among them.

## I

### **Political Participation and Political Consciousness**

Political participation, in the simplest and limited sense, may be understood in terms of voter turn-outs in the elections. Scholars, however, have extended the meaning of political participation to include other behavioural indicators such as attendance at election-meetings and taking up membership of a political party.<sup>2</sup> It is also related with the subjective assessment of participants. Thus, the objective behavioural indicators such

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Yogendra Yadav observes, "(V)oting is not the only act of political participation . . . (A) very simple behavioural indicator of participation in electoral parties other than voting... (is).. attendance at election meetings... A much higher level of activity on this continuum of political participation would be taking up membership of a political party. Yadav Yogendra, op.cit., pp.134-135.

as act of voting, attendance at political meetings and taking up membership of a political party inform us of level of political consciousness among the participants. To assess political consciousness and political participation among the sample population, we asked the respondents questions like: Do they cast vote in the last assembly election? Are they member of any political party? Have they attended any election meetings in the recent time? Have they heard name of Bahujan Samaj Party? And finally, do they think that their vote carries any significance? An analysis of the respondents' responses is given below.

### (1) Reported turn out among the sample population

Table 4.1 gives the reported turnout among the sample-population. It is clear that reported turnout among the sample population is very high.<sup>3</sup> Out of 200 respondents, 184 (92 percent of the sample population) reported that they cast their vote in the last assembly election. Only 16 (8 percent) responded negatively when asked if they had voted in the last assembly election.

**Table 4.1**  
**Report Turnout Among the Sample Population**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur		Total		Grand Total
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I	II	II+II
									Yes	No	
Did you Vote in the last election	47	03	44	06	45	05	48	02	184 (19%)	16 (8%)	200 (100%)

The main reasons cited for not being able to poll their vote were disappearance of name from the electoral roll, vote being polled already by

<sup>3</sup> By reported turnout means the number of respondents who responded positively to the query, 'Did you caste your vote in the last election?' in a post-poll survey. Yadav, Yogendra, op.cit., p.143.

someone else or inability to get leave from the job. No one said that they disliked voting or someone had physically prevented them from voting. At village level, in Chuli Khurd 94 percent of the sample population reported that they had voted in the last election. This figure in Ismaila 9-B, Ledi and Rasulpur was 88 percent, 90 percent and 96 percent respectively. The comparatively low reported turnout in Ismaila 9-B was due to inability of some respondents (12 percent) to participate in voting. In Ledi also, 5 respondents (10 percent) could not cast their vote. However, in Chuli Khurd and Rasulpur, their number was small.

It is important to note that voting provides the most important opportunity to the common electorate to exercise its choice over the kind of government it wants to install in the state or at the center. Earlier dalits were denied this opportunity by the upper caste men or they did not participate in elections due to fear. However conditions have begun to change now. The high voter turnout is proof of the fact that dalits are gaining confidence. The high voter turns-out<sup>4</sup> among dalits in the sample population indicates towards strong political aspiration on part of dalits. It also suggests that dalits are endeavouring to assert in a democratic polity utilising their voting rights. It is important to note that dependent variables like caste, class, education and occupation may affect voter turnout. In the following sections, we shall analyse voter turnout according to these variables.

*(i) Voter turnout according to sub-caste*

Table 4.2 gives reported turnout among the sample population according to sub-caste. Statistics show that voter-turnout is quite high among

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that reported turn-out is always higher than the actual turnout due to misreporting, availability bias and inaccuracy in the official electoral roll. Yet none of these factors affects the utility of reported voting figures. See *ibid.*, p.143-144. (methodology appendix).

respondents belonging to all sub-castes. Out of 127 respondents who belonged to Chamar sub-castes, 117 (92 percent) reported that they voted in the last election. Infact they formed 63.5 percent of total sample population who had cast their vote in the last election. Among the respondents belonging to Dhanak sub-caste, the percentage turn out was 92 percent. The respective figure among Balmikis in the sample population was 96 percent. The percentage voter turn out among the respondents belonging to Ramdasia sub-caste was 80 percent which was relatively lower than that of respondents belonging to other sub-castes. This, however, does not suggest that Ramdasias tend to vote less than others. As already mentioned respondents in the sample failed to vote due to exogenous factors and not because of behavioural factors.

*(ii) Voter turnout according to class*

Table 4.3 provides reported turn out among the sample population according to class. Reported turn-out is higher among the low class respondents. 96.3 percent of respondents belonging to the low class category said that they had cast their vote in the previous election. This figure in case of respondents belonging to 'middle' and 'high' class categories was 89.3 percent and 84 percent respectively. The relatively low voter turn out among middle class and high class dalits is mainly due to the fact that more respondents belonging to these two class categories failed to cast their vote. Statistics on voter turn out of low class respondents belie the opinion that poor among dalits tend not to participate in the electoral exercise.

**Table 4.2**  
**Reported Turnout Among the Sample Population According to Sub-Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Balmiki	Chamar	Balmiki	Ramdasia	I.	II.	III.	IV	
Those who cast vote in last election	26	21	30	14	32	13	29	11	08	(63.5%) 117 (92%)	(19.0%) 35 (92%)	(13%) 24 (96%)	(4.3%) 08 (80%)	(100%) 184 (92%)
Total No. of Respondents	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10	200

**Table 4.3**  
**Reported Turnout Among the Sample Population According to Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Those who cast vote in last election	29	10	8	27	06	12	24	11	9	25	14	09	(57%) 105 (96.3)	(22.8%) 42 (89.3%)	(20.1%) 374 (84%)	(100%) 184 (92%)
Total No. of Respondents	30	12	8	27	8	15	27	13	10	25	14	11	109	47	44	200

*(iii) Voter turnout according to education*

Table 4.4 shows turnout among the sample population by education. Out of 158 respondents whose educational level was 'low', 155 (98.1 percent) said that they had voted in the previous election. The respective figure for respondents belonging to the educational categories of 'middle' and 'high' was 74.2 percent and 42.8 percent respectively. High percentage of vote turn out among less educated dalits points out that education need not be an essential condition for higher voter turnout.

*(iv) Voter turnout according to occupation*

Occupational obligations may affect the voter turnout. Table 4.5 gives turnout among the sample population by occupation. The voter turn out is 75 percent among those who was employed in the government jobs. The figures for voter turnout among the cultivators was 100 percent. It was above 90 per cent in case of the respondents belonging to the agricultural labourers and non-agricultural labourers. Among the respondents belonging to the occupational category of businessmen/shopkeepers/vendors etc., the reported voter turn out was 82.6 percent. Interestingly, 97.5 percent of female respondents in the sample reported that they cast their vote in the last election. Relatively low voter turnout among the government employees may be explained in terms of their job obligations.

**Table 4.4**

**Reported Turnout Among the Sample Population According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Those who cast vote in last election	42	04	01	32	11	01	38	06	01	43	05	0	(84.2%) 155	(14.1%) 26	(1.63%) 03	184
													(98.1%)	(74.2%)	(42.8%)	(92%)
Total No. of Respondents	43	05	02	33	14	03	39	10	01	43	06	01	158	35	07	200

**Table No. 4.5**  
**Reported Turn-out Among the Sample Population According to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
Those who cast vote in the last election	1	5	18	5	2	5	11	9	0	10	8	3	5	9	2	3	16	8	3	4	9	6	3	13	8	3	5	10	18	11	57	29	11	19	39	184
Total Number of Respondents	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives



Higher statistics on voter-turn out among the agricultural and non-agricultural labourers suggest that even the most deprived among dalits seems to be participating in the voting. Above discussion shows that dalits in the sample village are participating overwhelmingly in the elections irrespective of their caste, class, educational background and occupational involvement. Yet, statistics suggest that within dalits relatively poor, respondents engaged in the low-income occupations, having poor education have shown greater inclination towards electoral participation. At this juncture one may question whether higher voter turn out indicates their active involvement in the electoral process. It may be argued that higher voter turn out may be due to habit. However voting is not the only act of political participation as has been pointed out earlier. To understand how dalits consider the act of voting we asked them question, "Do you feel your vote has any importance?" We also explored about their party membership and attendance at the electoral meetings. The responses of the respondents are analysed below. This will help us understand the extent of participation of dalits and their political consciousness.

## **(2) Perception Among Dalits on Importance of Vote**

Table 4.6 shows perception among dalits on importance of the vote. Out of 200 respondents, 199 (59.5 percent) said that vote was an important weapon in their hand. 81 respondents (40.5 percent), however, felt that it did not have any importance. If we compare the figure of perception on vote with the figure of dalit participation, it shows that many dalits cast their vote even if they do not feel that it has any importance.

**Table 4.6**  
**Perception Among the Sample Population on Importance of Vote**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
It carries Importance	28	35	27	29	119(59.5%)
It does not/No Idea	22	15	23	21	81 (40.5%)
Total	50	50	50	50	200

However, it is also significant that a majority of them felt that vote was important. The importance of vote, as said by many dalit respondents, lies in enhancing their social and political value. One respondent observed:

“Only possession of poor is a vote. Leaders have to travel to the fields to ask for our vote. Whatever little hearing we get, is due to vote.”<sup>5</sup>

However, those who felt otherwise felt so because the right to vote had not paid them much dividends. They observed that leaders make promises but after winning they hardly bring any improvement in the socio-economic condition of their constituencies.

*(i) Importance of Vote According to Caste*

Perception among the sample population on importance of vote according to caste is shown in Table 4.7. Out of 127 respondents who belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 82 (64.56 percent) observed that vote was important for them. The number of respondents by Chamar sub-caste who felt otherwise was 45 (35.43 percent).

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<sup>5</sup> Lal Singh, Respondent in Ledi Village, Interviewed on 28-10-2001

**Table 4.7**  
**Perception on importance of Vote According to Sub-Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Bahniki	Chamar	Bahniki	Randasia	I. Chamar	II. Dhanak	III. Bahniki	IV Randasia	
It carries Importance	16	12	26	09	23	04	17	05	07	82	21	09	07	119
It does not/No Idea	12	10	08	07	13	10	12	06	03	45	17	16	03	81
Total	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10	200

Among respondents belonging to Dhanak sub-caste, 21 out of 38 (55.26 percent) felt that vote was important for them and 17 (44.7 percent) opined that it did not have any importance. Out of 25 Balmikis, 9 (36 percent) were of opinion that vote carried an importance where as 16 (64 percent) had impression that vote did not carry any significance for them. Among Ramdasia respondents 7 out of 10 (70 percent) said that vote was an important device in their hands. Thus, Ramdasias and Chamars are ahead in believing that vote is an important political weapon.

It is important to mention that as a group among dalits, Chamars and Ramdasias have benefited more from the reservation policy and other affirmative actions of the state. Higher percentage of perception on importance of vote among these groups may be due to feeling that their vote-power has brought them these benefits. In fact many respondents belonging to Chamar sub-castes cited some of above mentioned benefits when asked about benefits of voting. On the other hand, Balmikis and Dhanaks occupy a 'lower' socio-economic position. In comparison to Chamars and Ramdasias they also lag behind in cornering benefits from the State sponsored affirmative actions. Therefore, they believe that political participation has not paid them much dividends.

#### *(ii) Importance of Vote According to Class*

Perception on importance of vote according to class is recorded in Table 4.8. Statistics show that respondents belonging to the 'middle' and 'high' class categories are more inclined to say that vote carries an importance for them. Out of 44 respondents belonging to 'high' class category, 33 (75 percent) had this impression. This figure was 76.5 percent among the respondents belonging to middle class category. Among respondents belonging to the low class category, only 45.8 percent responded positively when asked if they felt that their vote carried an importance for them.

**Table 4.8**

**Perception on importance of Vote According to Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
It carries Importance	13	09	06	16	7	12	9	11	7	12	9	8	50	36	33	119
It does not/No Idea	17	03	02	11	01	03	18	02	3	13	5	3	59	11	11	81
Total	30	12	08	27	8	15	27	13	10	25	14	11	109	47	44	200

**Table 4.9**

**Perception on importance of Vote According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
It carries Importance	22	04	02	25	08	02	19	7	01	24	05	0	90	24	05	119
It does not/No Idea	21	01	0	08	06	01	20	3	0	19	01	01	68	11	02	81
Total	43	05	02	33	14	03	39	10	01	43	06	01	158	35	07	200

This may be due to high expectation and higher sense of relative deprivation among dalits belonging to low class. They expect a lot from the authorities and political system. However, they believe that they remain deprived in comparison to some of their fellow villagers as the government does not listen to them. This might have created an impression among them that their votes are no more significant.

*(iii) Importance of Vote According to Education*

Table 4.9 shows perception among the sample population on importance of vote according to education. Among respondents who belonged to the educational category of low, 56.96 percent responded positively to the query on their perception on importance of vote. However, remaining 43.03 percent seemed to have an impression that their vote did not have any importance. Out of 35 respondents who belonged to the educational category of 'middle', 24 (68.5) said that their vote created significant impact. Created significant impact. However, 11 (31.4 percent) had negative perception on importance of vote. The number of respondents belonging to 'high' educational category who responded positively when asked if they thought that their vote carried any importance was 5 (71.4 percent). Only 2 (28.5 percent) respondents belonging to high educational category responded negatively when asked what their perception on the importance of their vote was. Statistics show that though the respondents who are better educated tend to respond positively when asked about their perception on importance of vote, majority of dalits in all educational categories feel that vote is an important weapon in their hands.

*(iv) Importance of Vote According to Occupation*

Perception on importance of vote according to occupation is recorded in Table 4.10 Statistics show that except housewives, majority of the respondents belonging all occupational categories have responded positively

**Table No. 4.10**  
**Perception on importance of Vote According to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I-II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
It carries Importance	2	4	9	4	2	4	3	11	0	8	5	4	5	2	3	2	8	5	3	5	01	6	2	7	6	3	4	1	22	8	32	20	12	18	7	119
It does not/No Idea	0	1	11	1	0	1	8	01	0	2	3	0	2	7	0	1	9	4	0	0	9	01	01	6	2	0	2	9	02	03	28	10	0	05	33	81
Total	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	08	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

to the question on their perception on importance of vote. However, the percentage proportion of those who had responded positively was relatively higher among the respondents belonging to the occupational categories of skilled manual labour and the government jobs.

All of 12 (100 percent) respondents engaged in the skilled manual believed that vote was very important weapon in their hands. Among the government employees, the respective percentage was 91.6 percent. Among the cultivators and shopkeepers, businessmen, vendors etc., the percent proportions of those who believed that vote carried an importance were 72.7 percent and 78.2 percent respectively. 53.3 percent of the agricultural labourers believed that voting created an impact and was meaningful exercise. The respective percentage was 56.6 percent among the unskilled manual labourers. A large majority of housewives (82.5 percent) responded negatively when asked if they believed that voting was a meaningful exercise.

From the above discussion, it is clear that dalits in the sample village are not only participating in large number, but a large majority of them also regards that vote is an important weapon. It is obvious now that a majority among dalits go for voting not because of habit but because they think that this can create an impact upon their socio-economic conditions. Infact, it is argued that voting is an matter of social status and socio-political importance among dalits.<sup>6</sup> In the following section, we shall analyse participation of dalits in the election meetings.

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<sup>6</sup> Pushpendra, op.cit., p.2611.



### (3) Participation of Dalits in Election Meetings

Table 4.11 throws light on participation of dalits in election-meetings. Out of 200 respondents, 89 (44.5 percent) said that they had attended at least one election meeting in the recent past. In Chuli Khurd the number of those who attended at least one election-meeting in the recent past was 14 (28 percent of the sample population in the village). In Ismailia 9-B, this number was 24 (48 percent). The number of those who attended at least one election-meeting in the recent past in Ledi Village was 29 (58 percent). This respective figure in Rasulpur was 22 (44 percent).

**Table No. 4.11**  
**Respondent who Attended any Election Meetings in the Recent Past**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
Respondent who attended election meeting	(15.7%) 14 (28%)	(26.96%) 24 (48%)	(32.58%) 29 (58%)	(24.7%) 22 (44%)	(100%) 89 44.5%
Total Respondents	50	50	50	50	200

It is important to note that all the sample villages are near the small towns. Though the local leaders go to the villages for election campaigning, state-level and national-level leadership tend to hold meetings in the cities and towns. Some political parties or their representatives at the village level arrange for conveyance to take people from the village to the meeting site. Many respondents said that they were taken to the election-meeting in this fashion. However, there were many who said that they went to attend election-meeting by bus or other means on their own. Dalits attend election meetings to know the views of leaders of political parties. They also attend

election meetings to see and listen to particular leaders as one respondent informed:

“I had not seen Vajpayee (Atal Bihari Vajpayee). I went to attend his election-meeting to see him. I liked his speech.”<sup>7</sup> Some, however, go to express their solidarity with their favourite leaders. One respondent said - 'Kanshi Ram Mahara Admi hai. Uski Railee mein hum nahin jaavange, to aur kon jawaga.'<sup>8</sup> (Kanshi Ram is our man. If we would not attend his meeting, who will do then?)

*(i) Attendance at Election Meeting according to Caste*

Table 4.12 gives participation among dalits in the election meeting according to sub-caste. Out of 127 respondents who belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 58 (45.6 percent) reported to have attended election meetings. Among the respondents belonging to Dhanak sub-caste 39.4 percent said that they had attended election meetings. The respective figure for Balmikis was 52 percent. Only 30 percent among Ramdasias admitted that they had attended election-meeting in the recent past.

*(ii) Attendance at Election Meeting According to Class*

Table 4.13 shows participation among dalits in the election meetings according to class. Statistics show that the percentage of those who attended election meeting is higher in case of higher respondents belonging to the 'low' class and 'middle' class. 52.29 percent of respondents belonging to low-class category said to have attended election meeting. The respective figure for middle class respondents was 40.42 percent. Only 29.54 percent of the respondents belonging to high class said that they had attended election meetings.

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<sup>7</sup> Sultan, respondent in Chuli Khurd, interviewed on 26-08-2001.

<sup>8</sup> Amarjeet, respondent in Rasulpur, interviewed on 18-11-2001.

**Table 4.12**

**Respondent who Attended any Election Meetings in the Recent Past According to Sub-Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismalla		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Bahniki	Chamar	Bahniki	Ramdasia	I.	II.	III.	IV	
Who Attended Metting	8	6	15	9	21	8	14	5	3	(65.1%) 58 (45.6%)	(16.8%) 15 (39.4)	(14.6%) 13 (52%)	(3.37%) 03 (30%)	89
Total Respondents	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10	200

**Table 4.13**

**Respondent who Attended any Election Meetings in the Recent Past According to Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
Who attended meeting	7	4	3	20	2	2	18	7	4	12	6	4	57	19	13	89
Total respondents	30	12	8	27	8	15	27	13	10	25	14	11	109	47	44	200

*(iii) Attendance at Election Meetings According to Education*

The data indicating participation in the election meetings according to education are shown in Table 4.14. Statistics reveal that highly educated among dalits tend to attend public meetings less than that of poorly and moderately educated dalits. Out of 89 respondents who attended election meetings, 63 (70.7 percent) belonged to the educational category of low, 24 (26.9 percent) belonged to the educational category of middle and only 2 belonged to educational category of high. Thus proportion of lowly educated dalits was highest among those who attended election meetings. However, it may be due to fact that proportion of lowly educated respondents in the sample population was higher. Infact, 39.8 percent of lowly educated respondents attended election meetings. The respective figure for the respondents belonging to the educational category of 'middle' was 68.8 percent. Only 28.5 percent among highly educated respondents attended election meeting.

*(iv) Attendance at Election Meetings According to Occupation*

Participation of dalits in the sample population in the election meeting according to the occupation is recorded in Table 4.15. Data clearly show that except housewives and the government employees, respondents belonging to all other occupational categories attended election meetings in significant numbers. 72.2 percent of total cultivators in the sample population said that they had attended the election meeting. Among the agricultural labourers this percentage was 56.6.

**Table 4.14**

**Respondent who attended any election meeting in recent past according education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Who attended meeting	11	03	0	14	09	01	19	10	0	19	02	01	63	24	02	89
Total respondents	43	05	02	33	14	03	39	10	01	43	06	01	158	35	07	200

**Table No. 4.15**  
**Respondents who attended any election meeting in recent past according to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
Who attended any election meeting	0	2	6	1	2	3	0	3	0	7	6	2	4	2	1	3	12	5	1	4	03	0	3	09	03	03	04	0	4	8	34	15	8	15	05	89
Total No. of Respondents	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

Whereas 50 percent of the unskilled manual labourers reported to have attended the election meetings, the percentage of participation in the election meeting among dalits was 66.6. Among the category of businessmen/ shopkeepers/ vendors etc., the respective figures was 65.2 percent.

It is clear from the above discussion that a large number of dalits attend election meetings, another significant yardstick to measure their political participation and consciousness. However as the statistics show, dalits' participation in the election meetings tends to vary according to their location, their position in the caste and class hierarchies as well as their educational and occupational status. We shall now analyse party membership among dalits in the sample population.

#### **(4) Party Membership Among Dalits in the Sample Villages**

Taking up membership of a political party is considered as a higher level of activity on the continuum of political participation.<sup>9</sup> Dalits are not only participating in voting and attending election meetings in large number, they are taking up membership of political parties also. Table 4.16 shows party membership among the sample population.

**Table 4.16**  
**Party Membership Among the Sample Population**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
INC	03	4	3	2	12
BSP	-	-	3	5	8
BJP	-	-	-	4	4
INLD	02	2	1	0	5
LJS	-	1	-	-	01
HVP	-	-	-	-	0
Total	05	07	07	11	30

Note: INC - Indian National Congress, BSP - Bahujan Samaj Party, BJP - Bhartiya Janata Party, INLD - Indian National Lokdal, LJS - Lok Jan Shakti HVP - Haryana Vikas Party

<sup>9</sup> Yadav Yogendra, op.cit., p.135.



Out of 200 respondents, 30 (15 percent of total sample population) said that they were members of one or another party. Though the figure of 15 percent looks small, yet it is a significant number. Above all, it has to be recognised that party membership is more demanding form of political participation. Out of these 30 respondents, 5 (16.66 percent) were from Chuli Khurd, 7 each (23.33 percent each) were from Ismailia 9-B and Ledi, and 11 (36.66 percent) were from Rasulpur. Party-wise breakup shows that 12 (40 percent) are members of Indian National Congress, 8 (26.6 percent) are members of Bahujan Samaj Party, 4 (13.33 percent) are members of Bhartiya Janata Party, 5 (16.66 percent) have taken up membership of Indian National Lok Dal, 1 (3.33 percent) has joined Lok Jan Shakti.

It is important to note that in Chuli-Khurd and Ismailia 9-B, respondents who admitted that they were members of political parties were mainly divided into two parties INC and INLD. In these villages, as we shall see in the later sections, BSP did not have much hold. On the other hand, in Ledi and Rasulpur the number of those respondents who had joined parties other than Congress was more than those who are members of INC. Interestingly, all 8 members of BSP in the sample population were drawn from these two villages. Infact these villages lie in those constituencies where BSP has been able to create a significant support-base over the years.<sup>10</sup>

*(i) Party Membership According to Sub-Caste*

Party membership among the sample population according to sub-caste is shown in Table 4.17. Out of 30 respondents who said that they were member of a political party, 17 (56.6 percent) belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 5 (16.66 percent) belonged to Dhanak sub-caste, 3 (10 percent) were Balmiki by sub-caste and 5 (16.66 percent) were Ramdasias.

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<sup>10</sup> Ledi lies in Chhachhrauli assembly constituency and Rasulpur in Sadhuara assembly constituency. BSP's vote share over the years in these two constituencies are shown in Appendix-A.

**Table 4.17**

**Party Membership Among the Sample Population According to Sub- Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Channar	Dhanak	Channar	Dhanak	Channar	Balmiki	Channar	Balmiki	Randasia	I	II	III	IV	
INC	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	-	7	2	3	-	12
BSP	-	-	-	-	3	-	4	-	1	7	-	-	1	8
BJP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	4
INLD	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	5
LJS	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
HVP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Total	4	1	3	4	5	2	5	1	5	17	05	3	05	30
Total Number of Respondents	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10	200

The higher proportion of respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste among those who had taken up party membership is due to higher proportion of Chamar population in the sample population. If we see the percentage proportion of respondents belonging to a particular sub-caste who had joined political parties to the total population of the respective caste groups, Ramdasias stand ahead of others. 50 percent of the respondents belonging to Ramdasias sub-caste had taken up membership of political parties. Among the respondents belonging to Chamar, Balmiki and Dhanak sub-castes, proportion of those who had taken-up party membership was roughly equal. 13.38 percent of the respondents by Chamar sub-caste had taken up membership of political parties. The respective figure for Dhanak respondents was 13.5 percent. For Balmikis it was 12 percent. If we see party-wise break-up, respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste were divided among INC, BSP and INLD. 7 (41.1 percent of those among Chamar respondents who had taken up party membership.) were members of INC, 7 (41.1 percent) had joined BSP and 3 (17.6 percent) were INLD members. Infact, 58.3 percent of INC membership, 87.5 percent of BSP's membership and 60 percent of INLD membership was constituted by the respondent belonging to Chamar sub-caste. Among Dhanak population, the respondents who had taken party-membership was divided among INC, INLD and LJS. Out of 5 respondents belonging to Dhanak sub-caste who were party members, 2 (40 percent) were members of INC and another 2 (40 percent) had joined INLD where as 1 (20 percent) said to have taken up membership of LJS. Infact, 16.6 percent of INC membership was formed by the respondents belonging Dhanak sub-caste, 40 percent of INLD membership was formed by the respondents of this sub-caste. All the three respondents

belonging to Balmikis sub-castes were members of INC. They formed 25 percent of INC membership in the sample population. Majority of Ramdasias had taken up membership of BJP. Out of 5 Ramdasias who had taken up party membership, 4 (80 percent) were BJP members. 1 among them (20 percent) was BSP member. Above account suggests that a small yet significant number among dalits of each sub caste group in the sample population has taken up party membership. Whereas respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste tend to take membership of INC and BSP, Balmikis tend to take membership of INC. Interestingly Ramdasias seem to be inclined towards BJP.

*(ii) Party Membership According to Class*

Table 4.18 shows party membership among the sample population according to class. Out of 30 respondents who had taken party membership, 11 (36.66 percent) belonged to low class category, 12 (40 percent) belonged to middle class category and 7 (23.3 percent) were from high class category. However, if we compare percentage proportions of those who had taken party membership in each category to the total number of respondents in the respective class category, respondents belonging to the middle class category were ahead. 25.5 percent of the respondents belonging to the middle class category said that they had taken up party membership. The respective figure among the respondents belonging to high class and low class categories was 15.9 percent and 10.09 percent respectively. Thus, the respondents belonging to low class and high class categories have comparatively low tendency to take up party membership.

**Table 4.18**  
**Party Membership According to Class**

Categories of Identification	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
INC	2	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	4	5	3	12
BSP	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	2	0	5	3	-	8
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	-	1	3	4
INLD	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	5
LJS	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	1
HVP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>

In terms of party-wise distribution, the respondents of each category are distributed in almost all parties. For instance, among membership of INC, 4 were from low class category, 5 were from 'middle' class and 3 from 'high' class category. In case of BSP, though no respondents belonging to high class took party's membership, among low class and the middle class number of the party's members was 5 and 3 respectively. BJP membership was consisted of 3 respondents belonging to high class category whereas, 1 was from the middle class. INLD membership was drawn from all the class categories, 1 each from low class and high class and 3 from the middle class. Only member of LJS belonged to low class category. Thus, statistics point out that those who are economically well off among dalits tend not to take membership of BSP whereas who are economically poor show less tendency to join BJP. Data also show that though the percentage of those who take party membership in 'low' class category is low compared to respondents belonging to other two class categories, yet, there is tendency even among the poorest of dalits to take membership of political parties.

### *(iii) Party Membership According to Education*

Party membership among the sample population according to education is recorded in Table 4.19. Out of 30 respondents who took party membership, 16 (53.3 percent) belonged to the educational category of 'low', 12 (43.3 percent) belonged to the educational category of middle and only 2 (6.66 percent) belonged to the educational category of 'high'. Infact, 8.2 percent respondents belonging to the educational category of 'low' took membership of political parties. However, the proportion of the respondents belonging to middle educational category who took party membership was 45.7 percent.

**Table 4.19**  
**Party Membership According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	I	II	III	
INC	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	6	5	1	12
BSP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	2	0	4	4	0	08
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	01	2	1	01	04
INLD	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	05
LJS	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	01
HVP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	2	0	4	2	1	3	4	0	6	4	01	16	12	02	30

The respective figure was 14.2 percent among respondents belonging to high educational category. Party-wise break-up shows that respondents who took party membership in the educational categories of 'low' and 'high' are divided in all major parties. Out of 16 respondents in 'low' educational category 6 were INC members, 4 were BSP members, 2 were BJP members, 3 had taken INLD membership and 1 was LJS member. Among the respondents belonging to the educational category of 'middle', 5 were INC member, 4 were BSP member, 1 was in BJP, 2 had joined INLD. One of the respondent belonging to high class was INC member and one was BJP member.

*(iv) Party Membership According to Occupation*

Table 4.20 shows party membership among the sample population according to the occupation. Out of 30 respondents who took party membership, 7 were cultivators, 6 were agricultural labourers, 5 were unskilled manual labourers, 1 was skilled manual labourer and 11 were shopkeepers/businessmen/vendors etc. If we see their proportion to the total population in their respective categories, cultivators and shopkeepers/businessmen/vendors etc. stand out ahead of others in seeking party membership 63.6 percent of the respondents who were in the occupation of self cultivation had taken up party membership. The respective figure for shopkeepers/businessmen/vendors etc. was 47.8 percent. Relatively higher tendency to join political parties among the respondents belonging to these two categories may be due to the fact that a large member of respondents in these two categories are relatively well off. Joining a political party is a matter of raising their stature in the eyes of fellow dalits. However, statistics show that taking up party membership is also catching up among the agricultural labourers, skilled and unskilled labourers.



**Table No. 4.20  
Party Membership According to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I-II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
INC	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	01	05	03	0	03	0	12	
BSP	0	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	03	0	01	0	04	0	08	
BJP	0	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	02	0	0	0	02	0	04		
INLD	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	01	0	01	02	0	05		
LJS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	01		
HVP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Total	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	3	2	1	0	5	0	0	7	6	5	1	11	0	30
Total Population in Sample	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	08	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

Whereas 10 percent of the total population of the agricultural labourers had taken up party membership, the relative figure for the skilled and unskilled labourers was 8.33 percent and 16.6 percent respectively. No respondent belonging to the category of the government employees and housewives took up party membership.

It is clear from the above discussion that dalits are taking interest even in the more demanding activity of political participation like taking up party membership. Though tendency to take up party membership and choice of party vary according to caste, class, education, occupation and location. Statistics point out that this form of political participation is gaining ground among all sections of dalits.

#### **(5) Awareness About BSP in the Sample Population**

BSP is becoming very popular among dalits particularly in the northern India. Infact, it is regarded as a dalit party and has become symbol of dalit assertion. We asked the respondents in the sample population whether they had heard BSP's name.<sup>11</sup> Our purpose was to assess awareness of the respondents. Table 4.21 records the statistics on the awareness about BSP among the sample population. Statistics show that a record majority of dalits in the sample population were aware about BSP. Out of 200 respondents, 192 (96 percent) were aware of party's name or its symbol or name of its leaders like Mayawati. Interestingly, in Ledi and Rasulpur everyone in the sample population had heard about the BSP.

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<sup>11</sup> When we put this question to the respondents, many of them used to enquire if we were asking about Mayawati's party or party whose symbol was 'haathi' (elephant). Therefore, in case a respondent seemed to be perplexed or confused, we used to supply these informations to him/her.

**Table 4.21**  
**Awareness about BSP among the Sample Population**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
Have Heard name/symbol	44	48	50	50	192 (96%)
Have No Idea	06	02	0	0	08 (4 percent)
Total	50	50	50	50	200

Infact these two villages lie in the regions where BSP has relatively better support base. In Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B which fall in regions where BSP's electoral performance has been very low, few respondents mainly women responded negatively when asked if they had heard BPS's name. Yet, in Chuli Khurd 88 percent of total sample population in the village had heard the party's name. The respective figure was 96 percent in Ismaila 9-B.

*(i) Awareness According to Caste*

Table 4.22 shows awareness about BSP according to caste. Among the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste, the percentage of those who were aware of BSP's name was 99.2. Only one respondent belonging the Chamar sub-caste said that she did not have any idea of BSP. Among Dhanaks, 85.5 percent were aware of BSP. Interestingly, all the respondents belonging to Balmikis and Ramdasias had heard BSP's name.

**Table 4.22**  
**Awareness about BSP among the Sample Population**  
**According to Sub-Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Balniki	Chamar	Balniki	Ramdasia	I Chamar	II Dhanak	III Balniki	IV Ramdasia	
Have Heard name/ symbol	27	17	34	14	36	14	29	11	10	126	31	25	10	192
Have No Idea	01	05	0	02	0	0	0	0	0	01	07	0	0	08
Total	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10	200

Infact, if we look at location of respondents along with their castes, it's clear that in Ledi and Rasulpur all respondents irrespective of their castes had heard BSP's name. It may be because of the reason that BSP have apparently focused its activities in the regions where these villages were located. Many respondents in the villages said that BSP organised small assemblies in the villages particularly when elections were near. However, in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B BSP's activities were not much visible. Some respondents told that party workers did not visit villages even during election time. This may be a reason that some among respondents in these villages are not aware even about the party's name.

*(ii) Awareness According to Class*

Awareness about BSP among the sample population according to class is shown in Table 4.23. Out of 109 respondents belonging to low class, 102 (93.5 percent) were aware of BSP's name. Among the respondents belonging to middle and high class categories, the respective figures were 97.8 percent and 100 percent respectively.

**Table 4.23**

**Awareness about BSP among the Sample Population According to Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Have Heard name/ symbol	25	11	8	25	8	15	27	13	10	25	14	11	102	46	44	192
Have No Idea	5	1	0	02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	07	01	0	08
Total	30	12	8	27	8	15	27	13	10	25	14	11	109	47	44	200

**Table 4.24**

**Awareness about BSP among the Sample Population According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Have Heard name/ symbol	37	05	2	31	14	3	39	10	01	43	6	1	150	35	07	192
Have No Idea	06	0	0	02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	08	0	0	08
Total	43	05	02	33	14	03	39	10	01	43	06	01	158	35	07	200

At the village level, in Chuli Khurd, among the respondents who did not know BSP's name 5 belonged to the low class category and 1 belonged to the middle class category. Remaining respondents said that they had heard BSP's name. In Ismaila 9-B, 2 respondents were not aware of party's name. In Ledi and Rasulpur all respondents were aware of party's name.

*(iii) Awareness According to Education*

Table 4.24 shows awareness about BSP among the sample population according to education. Whereas all of respondents belonging to the educational category of middle and high had heard of BSP's name, the respective figure among respondents whose educational status was 'low' was 94.9 percent. Out of 8 respondents who had not heard BSP's name, 6 were from Chuli Khurd and 2 were from Ismaila 9-B.

*(iv) Awareness According to Occupation*

Table 4.25 shows awareness about BSP among the sample population according to occupation. Statistics show that except the agricultural labourers and housewives, all of respondents belonging to remaining occupational categories had heard the name of BSP. However among housewives, 82.9 percent had heard party's name. The respective figures among the agricultural labourers was 98.3 percent. Out of 7 housewives who responded negatively to the question whether they had heard BSP's name, 2 were from Ismaila 9-B and 5 were from Chuli Khurd. 1 among agricultural labourer was from Chuli Khurd. Relatively low level of awareness among housewives about even a party's name may be explained by their little exposure to the politics, very poor literacy and unavailability of access to direct information. Many dalit women said that they came to know about political happenings from their husband. Which information has to be passed to their wives depend upon husband's interest, mood etc.

**Table No. 4.25**  
**Awareness About BSP Among the Sample Population According to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
Have Heard name/symbol	2	5	19	5	2	5	06	12	0	10	8	4	7	7	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	11	59	30	12	23	33	192
Have No Idea	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	07	08
Total	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

Thus, above discussion on political participation and political consciousness reveals that dalits of the sample villages are not only participating in voting and election meetings, they also take up membership of political parties. Statistics on their awareness about BSP show that a large majority of them are aware of party's name or its symbol or its leaders name. This is indicative of growing aspiration and interest of dalits in the politics. In fact, many of them regard politics as a means through which they can hope to win over their socio-economic disabilities. Political participation of dalits is not restricted to the objective behaviour of voting and attending meetings, it has subjective dimension also. Statistics on their perception on importance of vote suggests that dalits show interest in politics because they are conscious of its strategic importance for them. It is mainly this realisation that has led them to participate in elections in significant number. At this juncture, we may raise the question whether growing political participation among dalits is leading to growth of aspiration for district political space for themselves.. To find an answer to this question, we shall analyse party preference of the sample population and their identification with political parties in the following sections.

## II

### **Party Preferences among the Sample Population**

The respondents were asked about which party they preferred in the last election. Their responses are recorded in Table 4.26. It is important to note that the last election, that was an assembly election, was held in February 2000 and major political parties that contested election were INC, INLD, BJP, BSP and HVP. Out of 200 respondents 90 (45 percent) voted for INC, 22 (11 percent) cast their vote in favour of INLD. 19 (9.5 percent) voted for BJP, 40 respondents (20 percent) said that they voted for BSP, 4 (2 percent) voted for HVP. 1 (0.5 percent) had cast their vote in favour of



Samajwadi Party. 6 respondents preferred to vote for independent candidate. There were 19 respondents (9.5 percent) who did not respond to the question or could not cast their vote. Statistics show that party preferences of dalits in the sample population is diversifying. Yet, a good number of them still vote for Congress.

**Table 4.26**  
**Party Preferences of the Sample Population In Last Assembly Election**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
INC	25	32	17	16	90
INLD	18	04	0	0	22
BJP	0	00	06	13	19
BSP	0	01	20	19	40
HVP	04	0	0	0	04
SP	0	01	0	0	01
Independent candidates	0	05	0	0	05
Not disclosed/ could not vote	03	07	07	02	19
Total	50	50	50	50	200

Infact dalits in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila tend to vote more in favour of Congress than dalits of Ledi and Rasulpur. In Chuli Khurd, 25 (50 percent of the sample population in the village) said to have voted for Congress. The respective figure was 32 (64 percent of the sample in the village) in Ismaila. In Ledi, the proportion of those who said to have voted for Congress was 34 percent whereas this figure was 32 percent in Rasulpur. Infact, in these two villages, BSP seems to be pulling dalit vote in significant numbers. In Ledi 20 respondents (40 percent of the sample population in the village) voted in favour of BSP whereas the respective figure was 38 percent in Rasulpur village. However no one in Chuli Khurd was found to be voting for BSP and in Ismaila 9-B only one respondent voted for party.

*(i) Party Preferences According to Sub-Caste*

Table 4.27 shows party preferences among the respondents according to their sub caste. Out of 90 respondents who voted for Congress 54 (60 percent) belonged to Chamar sub-caste, 17 (18.8 percent) were Balmikis and 19 (21.1 percent) were Dhanak by sub-caste. BSP's votes seem to have drawn mainly from Chamars. 87.5 percent of BSP's votes come from the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste. Only 7.5 percent of its support comes from Balmikis. Rest of 5 percent comes from Ramdasias.

Infact, among the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste 42.5 percent voted for INC whereas 27.5 percent voted for BSP. In Ledi and Rasulpur, the number of respondents voting for BSP was more than those who voted for INC. In Ledi, out of 36 respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste, 18 (50 percent) voted for BSP and 19.44 percent voted for INC. In Rasulpur, the respective figures were 55.17 percent and 31.03 percent. Other parties to which the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste tend to Vote are INLD, BJP, HVP and SP. INLD got 5.51 percent of total votes of the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste, BJP got 7.08 percent of total votes polled by respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste, HVP got 3.14 percent of votes polled by respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste and 0.7 percent of their votes were polled in favour of Samajwadi Party. 3.9 percent of the respondents belonging to Chamars sub-caste voted for independent candidates. Infact in Ledi and Rasulpur, vote polled by the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste are shared by BSP, BJP and INC. But in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila, some among them tend to vote in favour of parties other than these also.

**Table 4.27**

**Party Preferences of the Sample Population In Last Assembly Election According to Sub-Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Bahniki	Chamar	Bahniki	Randasis	I. Chamar	II. Bahniki	III. Dhanak	IV. Randasia	
INC	17	8	21	11	7	10	9	7	0	54	17	19	0	90
INLD	05	13	02	02	0	0	0	0	0	07	0	15	0	22
BJP	0	0	0	0	5	1	4	3	6	09	04	0	6	19
BSP	0	0	01	0	18	2	16	1	2	35	03	0	2	40
HVP	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	04	0	0	0	04
SP	0	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	01
Independent candidates	0	0	05	0	0	0	0	0	0	05	0	0	0	05
Not disclosed/ could not vote	2	1	04	03	6	1	0	0	0	12	01	04	2	19
Total	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	25	38	10	200

Among Balmikis, a large majority tends to vote for the Congress. 68 percent of the respondents belonging to Balmiki sub-caste voted for INC in the last assembly elections, 16 percent of them voted for BJP and only 12 percent polled their votes in favour of BSP. The votes polled by respondents belonging to Dhanak sub-caste are shared by INC and INLD. 50 percent of them voted for INC and 39.4 percent polled their votes in favour of INLD. Among the respondents belonging to Ramdasia sub-caste 60 percent said to have polled their vote for BJP and 20 percent voted in favour of BSP. Infact, 31.5 percent of BJP's votes are polled by the respondents belonging to Ramdasia sub-caste.

*(ii) Party Preferences According to Class*

Table 4.28 shows party preferences among the sample population according to class categories of the respondents. Out of 109 respondents belonging to 'low' class category. 55.4 percent voted for INC and 20.18 percent polled their vote in favour of BSP. 4.5 percent voted for BJP and 11 percent voted for INLD. A small section among them said to have voted for HVP (0.9 percent), SP (0.9 percent) and independent candidates (2.75 percent). It is clear that though a good number of the respondents belonging to low class category tend to vote for parties other than Congress, a majority of them vote for it. Among respondents belonging to the middle class category, 29.18 percent said to have voted for INC, 27.65 voted for BSP and 14.8 percent polled their vote in favour of BJP 6.38 percent among them voted for INLD, 4.2 percent polled their vote for HVP and another 4.2 percent voted in favour of independent candidates.

**Table 4.28**

**Party preferences of the Sample population in the last Assembly selection According to Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
INC	18	06	01	19	3	10	11	2	4	12	3	1	60	14	16	90
INLD	10	02	06	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	03	07	22
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	01	3	4	6	05	07	07	19
BSP	0	0	0	01	0	0	11	6	3	10	7	2	22	13	05	40
HVP	01	02	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	02	01	04
SP	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0	0	1
Independent candidates	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	5
Not disclosed/ could not vote	01	02	0	1	2	4	3	2	2	0	0	2	5	6	8	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>200</b>

It is clear that among the respondents belonging to the middle class, a majority voted for parties other than Congress. Out of 44 respondents belonging to high class, 36.46 percent voted for the Congress, 15.9 percent for BJP, 15.9 percent for INLD, 11.36 percent voted in favour of BSP and 2.26 percent polled for HVP. Thus, among the respondents belonging to high class category also a large section voted for parties other than Congress. Statistics also reveal that the proportion of those who vote for BSP is relatively higher among the respondents belonging to the 'middle' and 'low' class categories than the respondents belonging to 'high' class.

*(iii) Party Preferences According to Education*

Table 4.29 gives party preferences among the sample population according to the educational status of the respondents. Among the respondents whose educational status was 'low', 51.2 percent voted for INC, 21.8 percent polled their vote in favour of BSP, 10.12 percent voted for INLD, 9.49 percent voted for BJP. A small number of votes were polled in favour of HVP, SP and independent candidates. Among the respondents whose educational status was 'middle', 22.80 percent voted for INC 14.2 percent voted for INLD, 8.5 percent polled for BJP and 17.1 percent polled in favour of BSP. Interestingly 22.8 percent among the respondents with middle level of educational voted for independent candidates.

Among the respondents whose educational status was 'high', 14.3 percent voted for INC. The respective figure for those who voted for INLD and BJP were 14.3 percent and 14.3 percent respectively. Interestingly, no one having 'high' educational status voted for BSP. Statistics reveal that though a majority of respondents whose educational status was 'high' and 'middle' voted for parties other than Congress, among the lowly educated respondents INC seems to be more popular. It is also clear that BSP is also popular among the respondents where educational status is 'low' and 'middle'.

**Table 4.29**

**Party preferences of the Sample population in the last Assembly selection According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
INC	24	01	0	27	04	01	15	2	0	15	1	0	81	08	01	90
INLD	15	02	01	01	03	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	05	01	22
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	01	01	11	02	0	15	03	01	19
BSP	0	0	0	0	01	0	17	3	0	17	2	0	34	06	0	40
HVP	03	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	03	01	0	04
SP	0	0	0	01	08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	08	0	09
Independent candidates	0	0	0	02	03	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	03	0	05
Not disclosed/ could not vote	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	4	0	0	01	01	6	9	4	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table No. 4.30**  
**Party preferences of the Sample population in the last Assembly selection According to Occupation**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I-II-III-IV-V-VI-VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
INC	0	01	15	1	0	3	05	08	0	09	7	0	1	07	0	0	4	6	2	2	03	0	01	7	3	0	1	04	8	2	35	17	2	7	19	90
INLD	01	03	03	2	02	01	06	1	0	0	0	0	01	02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	2	2	2	8	22	
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0	03	0	0	0	02	04	01	04	0	01	1	2	5	1	7	0	1	1	4	19
BSP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	01	1	9	2	1	02	04	02	01	2	5	2	3	4	3	2	11	8	3	5	8	40
HVP	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	04
SP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Indep dent candidat es	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	5
Not disclose d/ could not vote	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	2	01	1	0	01	01	01	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	2	3	1	1	4	1	19
Total	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	1	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives



*(iv) Party Preferences According to Occupation*

Table 4.30 gives the party preference among the sample population according to occupation. Statistics show that INC is relatively more preferred among the agricultural labourers, unskilled manual labourers, housewives and the government employee. 58.3 percent of the agricultural labourers voted for Congress whereas the respective figure among the unskilled labourers, housewives and the government employees was 56.6 percent, 47.5 percent and 33.4 percent respectively. Among the cultivators only 18.1 percent voted for INC. 16.7 percent of the skilled manual labourers voted for INC. The respective figures among businessmen/shopkeepers /vendors etc. was 30.4 percent. INLD is more popular among the cultivators, 27.2 percent of whose population voted for it. BSP is preferred more by unskilled labourers, skilled labourers and businessmen/ vendors/ shopkeeper etc.

Among unskilled labourers 26.6 percent voted for BSP. The respective figures was 25 percent among skilled labourers. 21.7 percent of businessmen / vendors/shopkeepers etc. voted for the party whereas this proportion was 18.1 percent among the cultivators. BJP was preferred more by the government employees. 20.8 percent of them voted for BJP whereas those who voted for BSP among them were 12.5 percent of total population of government employees in the sample population. It is important to note that except in the occupational categories of the agricultural labourers and unskilled manual labourers, in all others occupational categories, proportion of those respondents who voted for party other than Congress was more than those who voted for Congress.

Above discussion suggests that a majority of dalits preferred INC in the last assembly elections. However, the pattern of their preference varies according to their location, class category, sub-caste, education and occupation. In Ledi and Rasulpur, the proportion of those who vote for INC is relatively lower than those who vote for other parties. In Chuli Khurd and Ismaila, however, the vote share of INC is higher than that of the other parties. Yet statistics reveal that a small but significant proportion of dalits has voted for the regional parties like INLD and HVP and identity based party like BSP. It is important to note that party preferences of voters may be determined by their material interests. Voters may feel close to another party, yet they may be compelled to vote for any other party. Therefore, party preferences may not inform which party the voters feel close to. In the following section we shall analyse the respondents' responses to the query, 'Which party do you feel close to?'

## **(2) Closeness to Political Parties**

Table 4.31 shows identification with political parties in the sample villages. Out of 200 respondents, 85 (42.5 percent) said that they felt close to INC, 8 (4 percent) named BJP, 35 (17.5 percent) said that BSP was the party to which they felt close and 16 (8 percent) named INLD as the party to which they felt close. 1 respondent felt close to Lok Jan Shakti and 4 (2 percent) named HVP.

**Table 4.31**  
**Identification with Political Parties in the Sample Village**

	Chuli-Khurd	Ismalia 9-B	Ledi	Rasulpur	Total
INC	20	31	16	18	85
BJP	0	0	0	08	08
BSP	0	05	19	11	35
INLD	12	03	01	0	16
LJS	0	01	0	0	01
HVP	04	0	0	0	04
No one is close	11	08	10	09	38
No idea	03	02	04	04	13
Total	50	50	50	50	200

A large number of respondents said that they did not feel close to any party. Their proportion was 19 percent. Statistics reveal two things. One, dalits not only vote for a particular party, they also feel close to it. Second, there are many who vote for a party but they do not feel close to it. For example, 45 percent among the sample population preferred to vote for INC in the last assembly election. But 42.5 percent feel close to it. Similarly 20 percent among the sample population voted for BSP but 17.5 percent named it as a party to which they feel close. At the village level, this gap between voting and identification is more wide in some cases. For example 50 percent of population in Chuli Khurd preferred to vote INC but 40 percent felt close to it. Similarly in Rasulpur, the proportion of these who voted for BSP was 38 percent, but 22 percent said that they felt close to it.

*(i) Closeness to Party According to Sub-Caste*

Table 4.32 shows closeness to party among the sample population according to the caste of respondents. Among the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste, 41.7 percent felt close to INC, 1.5 percent felt close to BJP, 25.9 percent felt close to BSP, 7.8 percent named INLD as the party to which they felt close.

**Table 4.32**

**Identification with Political Parties in the Sample Village According to Sub-Caste**

	Chuli Khurd		Ismaila		Ledi		Rasulpur			Total				Grand total I+II+III+IV
	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Dhanak	Chamar	Balmiki	Chamar	Ramdasias	Balmikis	I.	II.	III.	IV	
INC	10	10	26	05	08	08	09	08	01	53	15	16	01	85
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	0	06	02	0	0	06	08
BSP	0	0	05	0	19	0	09	01	01	33	0	01	01	35
INLD	08	04	01	02	01	0	0	0	0	10	06	0	0	16
LJS	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	01
HVP	04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	04	0	0	0	04
No one is close	05	06	02	06	06	04	08	0	01	21	12	04	01	38
No idea	01	02	0	02	02	02	01	02	01	04	04	04	01	13
Total	28	22	34	16	36	14	29	11	10	127	38	25	10	200

The proportion of those who did not feel close to any party was 16.5 percent. Among Balmikis 64 percent felt close to INC and only 4 percent named BSP as the party to which they felt close. Among the respondents belonging to Dhanak sub-caste, the proportion of those who found INC close to them was 39.5 percent where as 15.8 percent named INLD as the party to which they felt close. Among Ramdasia, 60 percent felt close to BJP and 10 percent named BSP as party to which they feel close to. Statistics show that identification with Congress is higher among Balmikis. It is also very significant among Chamars and Dhanaks.

Identification with BSP is higher among the respondents belonging to Chamar sub-caste. Infact these sub-caste groups also tend to vote in significant numbers for these political parties. However, a comparison between party preferences of different caste groups and their party-identification shows that there are respondents who do not identify with a political party but vote for it. For example, 42.5 percent of Chamar respondents voted for INC but 41.7 said that they felt close to the party. Similarly, 68 percent of Balmikis voted for INC but 64 percent said that they felt close to it.

#### *(ii) Closeness to Party According to Class*

Table 4.33 shows closeness to party among the sample population according to class of respondents. Out of 109 respondents who belonged to low class, 49 (49 percent) named INC as the party to which they felt close, 2 (1.8 percent) felt close to BJP, 19 (17.4 percent) said that BSP was the party to which they felt close. 6 (5.5 percent) felt close to INLD, 1 (0.9 percent) felt close to LJS, 2 (1.8 percent) named HVP as the party to which they felt close. 22 (20.18 percent) said that they did not feel close to any party. Among the respondents belonging to the middle class, 36.17 percent felt close to INC, 19.25 percent felt close to BSP, 10.6 percent named INLD as the party to which they felt close and 4.2 percent said that BJP was the party to which they felt close. 19.25 percent did not feel close to any party.

**Table 4.33**

**Identification with Political Parties in the Sample Village According to Class**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
INC	12	05	3	18	04	09	10	02	04	09	06	03	49	17	19	85
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	02	04	02	02	04	08
BSP	0	0	0	01	02	02	12	05	02	06	02	03	19	09	07	35
INLD	05	03	4	01	01	01	0	01	0	0	0	0	06	05	05	16
LJS	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0	0	01
HVP	02	01	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	01	01	04
No one is close	09	02	0	05	01	02	02	04	04	06	02	01	22	09	07	38
No idea	02	01	0	01	0	01	3	1	0	02	02	0	08	04	01	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>

Among the respondents belonging to the class category of 'high', 43.1 percent felt close to INC, 9.09 percent felt close to BJP, 15.9 percent to BSP and 11.36 percent to INLD. 15.9 percent said that they did not feel close to any party. Statistics show that identification with INC is higher among the respondents belonging to low and high class category. Identification with BSP is relatively higher in the class category of middle. Among those who identified with BJP proportion of the respondents belonging to the class category 'high' was relatively better.

However, a comparison between party preferences among different class categories and party identification among them show that there are many respondents who do not feel that the party to which they are voting is close to them. For instance 55.04 percent of respondents belonging to low class category voted for INC in the last assembly election but 45 percent among them identified with the party. Similarly 20.18 percent among low class category voted for BSP but 17.4 percent said that they felt close to it.

### *(iii) Closeness to Party According to Education*

Table 4.33 shows closeness to party among the sample population according to the educational status of respondents. Statistics reveal that 55 percent of those whose educational status was 'low' felt close to INC. 6.96 percent among them named INLD as the party to which they felt close 14.5 percent felt close to BSP and 3.16 percent felt close to BJP. A small section among them felt close to parties like HVP (1.26 percent) LJS (0.63 percent) and 21.5 percent did not find any party close to them.

**Table 4.34**

**Identification with Political Parties in the Sample Village According to Education**

	Chuli Khurd			Ismaila - 9B			Ledi			Rasulpur			Total			Grand total (I+II+III+)
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
INC	20	0	0	21	07	03	14	02	0	17	01	0	72	10	03	85
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	05	02	01	05	02	01	08
BSP	0	0	0	02	03	0	13	06	0	08	03	0	23	12	0	35
INLD	08	02	02	02	01	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	11	03	02	16
LJS	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0	0	01
HVP	02	02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	02	0	04
No one is close	10	01	0	07	01	0	08	01	01	09	0	0	34	03	01	38
No idea	3	0	0	0	02	0	3	01	0	04	0	0	10	03	0	13
Total	43	05	02	33	14	03	39	10	01	43	06	01	158	35	07	200



Among the respondents whose educational status was middle, 28.6 percent named INC as the party to which they felt close, 5.7 percent named BJP, 34.3 percent named BSP and 8.6 percent named INLD as the party to which they felt close. 5.7 percent said that they felt close to HVP. 8.6 percent did not find close to any party. Among the respondents whose educational status was high, 42.8 felt close to INC, 14.3 percent felt close to BJP and 28.6 felt close to INLD.

The statistics show that identification with INC is relatively higher among the respondents whose educational status is low and among those whose educational status is high. Identification with BSP is higher among the respondents whose educational status is middle. BJP and INLD seems to be close to those whose educational status is high. It is important to note that gap between party preferences and party identification is relatively wide in case of the educational categories. For instance, 51.2 percent of respondents having low educational status vote for INC where 45.5 percent tend to identify with the party. Similarly, 34.3 percent of the respondents belonging to the educational category of middle identify with BSP but 17.14 percent in this category vote for the party.

*(iv) Closeness to Party According to Occupation*

Table 4.35 gives closeness to party according to the occupation of respondents. Among the government employees, 50 percent said that they felt close to INC, 25 percent to BSP, 8.3 percent to BJP, 12.5 percent to INLD. 4.1 percent said that they did not feel close to any political. 27.2 percent of the cultivators felt close to INC, 18.1 percent to BJP, 27.2 percent to BSP, 18.1 percent to INLD and 9.09 percent to HVP. Majority of the agricultural labourers (61.7 percent) and unskilled labourers (60 percent) named INC as the party to which they felt close. Among these two occupational categories the proportions of those who named BSP were 18.3 percent and 20 percent.

**Table No. 4.35**  
**Identification with Political Parties among Sample Village According to the Occupation of Respondents**

	Chuli Khurd							Ismaila-9B							Ledi							Rasulpur							Total							Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
INC	0	02	12	03	01	01	01	8	0	9	7	01	2	4	2	01	07	3	2	01	0	2	0	9	5	0	0	2	12	03	37	18	4	4	7	85
BJP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	08
BSP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	7	5	1	3	0	3	1	3	1	0	3	0	6	3	11	06	01	8	0	35
INLD	2	2	4	01	01	02	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	05	01	02	3	0	16	
LJS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	00	0	0	01	0	0	0	1	
HVP	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	4	
No one is close	0	0	2	1	0	1	7	1	0	0	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	1	1	8	0	0	0	1	1	1	6	1	1	0	2	3	2	4	26	38
No idea	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	1	1	7	13
Total	2	5	20	5	2	5	11	12	0	10	8	4	7	9	3	3	17	9	3	5	10	7	3	13	8	3	6	10	24	11	60	30	12	23	40	200

\* I to VII in each column represents various occupational categories

- I. Govt. Jobs
- II. Cultivators
- III. Agri. Labourers
- IV. Lowly paid Manual Unskilled Labour
- V. Lowly paid Manual skilled labour
- VI. Businessmen/ shopkeepers/ self-employees
- VII. Housewives

Among unskilled labourers the proportions of different political parties that were identified as close are as follows: 33.3 percent INC, 16.6 percent - BJP, 8.33 percent - BSP, 16.6 percent – INLD and 16.6 percent did not feel close to any party. Among the businessmen/shopkeepers/vendors etc., 34.8 percent find BSP close to them, 17.4 percent name INC as the party close to them, BJP and INLD are named by 8.7 percent and 13 percent respectively. Among housewives 17.5 percent named INC as party to which they feel close. Remaining did not find any party close to them.

Statistics show that BSP is more popular among the businessmen / vendors/ shopkeepers, the cultivators and the government employees. BJP is popular among the cultivators. INC is more popular among the government employees, the agricultural labourers and the unskilled labourers. A comparison between party preferences among different occupational categories and party identification reveal that there are many respondents who vote for a party to which they do not feel close. There are many respondents who do not vote for party to which they feel close. For instance. 61.7 percent of the agricultural labourer reported that they felt close to INC, but 58.3 percent of them voted to INC in the last election.

Above discussion suggests that dalits not only vote for party but they also feel close to the party. However, there are some who vote to a party to which they do not feel close. It may be because of the fact that party preferences of dalits may be determined, some time, by his/her material interests rather than factor like affinity with the party. Infact many

respondents said that they vote by observing the atmosphere and chance of winning of candidates or party.<sup>12</sup>

### **(3) Identity Politics, BSP, Congress and Dalits in the Sample Villages:**

BSP is considered as a party that makes overt appeals to the ethnic identity<sup>13</sup> and is recognised as a symbol of identity assertion by dalits through electoral politics. We have seen in above discussion that though a small proportion of dalits seem to be voting as well as identifying with the party, a majority of them still vote as well as identify with INC. Infact, in Ledi and Rasulpur BSP's vote-share is higher than that of INC. In Ledi more dalits identify with BSP than with INC. But in Ismaila and Chuli, BSP seems to have very less influence. Infact in these villages, we found some respondents who were not even aware about party's name. As already mentioned the aggregate data of the election commission and the CSDS findings (see appendix), show that BSP's electoral performance has not been impressive in Haryana. CSDS survey shows that a large majority of dalits still vote for Congress. This corroborates our findings that a large number of dalits still vote for Congress. The respondents account suggests that some dalits in the study villages do not like identity-politics of BSP. One respondent said:

"BSP jaati-wad ko badhava deti hai. Party ke leader bhadkau bhashan dete hain. Isse gaon mein khar paida ho sakta hai."<sup>14</sup> (BSP foments casteism.

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<sup>12</sup> As Rambir, respondent in Chuli Khurd said, "Hawa dekhte hain. Jis ka palra bhari dikhta hai, use vote dete hain." (We see whose wave is there. We vote to one whose chances are highest) interviewed on 27-08-2001

<sup>13</sup> Chandra, Kanchan (2000) 'The Transformation of Ethnic Politics in India: The Decline of Congress and Rise of BSP in Hoshiarpur', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 59, No.1 February, p.27.

<sup>14</sup> Ruli Ram, respondent in Chuli Khurd, interviewed on 31-08-2001

Party's leaders make inflammable speeches. This may enhance disunity in the village).

A large number of the respondents, however, said that BSP is a weak party and its candidates are not strong and influential. They hardly have any potential to win. In Ledi and Rasulpur where BSP seems to have strong support base, many respondents said that they will not vote for the party in future because its candidates were not winning over the year. One respondents observed - "We are poor people. Our interest is in supporting the strong party."<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that BSP is a party which asks for votes by invoking the discourse of symbolism and recognition. It does not offer any socio-economic programme of action to its voters. Infact, party leaders believe that what dalits need for their emancipation is not the material benefits but political empowerment. However, this ideology of the party seems to be attracting small section among dalits in the study-villages.

Infact, Congress seems to be still a very popular among dalits. Some respondents said, they vote for Congress most of time because party has done important things for them. In Chuli Khurd, the respondents said that they had received land under housing scheme under the congress government. Many, however vote for congress due to habit. According to one respondent:

"Congress is the party of my forefathers. Since they always voted for it, I too, vote for it."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Taman Chand, Respondent in Ledi village, interviewed on 29-10-2001.

<sup>16</sup> Dharambir, Respondent in Chuli Khurd, interviewed on 28-8-2001.

However, the respondents who vote for BSP said that BSP was their own party. In the words of one respondent - "They (party leaders belonging to BSP) are our own people. They know us better. Only they can understand what our need is."<sup>17</sup> Yet many among them said that party had not been able to consolidate its position because dalit of Haryana were not organised.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we aimed at exploring the political consciousness and identity formation among dalits in the study-village, It is clear from the above discussion that political consciousness is growing among dalits in the sample population. They participated in the last assembly elections in significant number. Their participation in the election meeting is also relatively better. Though party-membership is regarded as more demanding activity of political participation yet a small but significant number of dalits have taken party-membership. Statistics also reveal that a good number of dalits believe that their vote is valuable and important. This shows that realisation that politics is an effective means to achieve social mobility is growing among them.

Interesting, dalits in the study village seem to be voting for BSP also. They believe that BSP is party of their own people. This indicates that their urge for district political identity is also growing. However, number of such respondents is not very large in the sample population. In fact, the support base of BSP tend to vary according to sub-caste, class, education, occupation and location. In Chuli Khurd and Ismaila, there were few respondents who were not even aware about the party's name. Thus, party's support-base has not consolidated in all parts of Haryana. Infact, INC is still a very strong party

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<sup>17</sup> Janeshwar, respondent in Rasulpur, interviewed on 20.11.2001.

in Haryana. Statistics show that a large section of dalits vote for the party as they think their interest is served better by INC.

Thus, though some dalits in the sample villages are endeavouring to create a distinct political space; the identity formation in realm of politics has not consolidated among them. Yet, their increased political participation indicates that political consciousness is growing among them.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to understand identity formation and political consciousness among dalits of Haryana. Based on a locale specific empirical work in the four villages, viz, Chuli Khurd, Ismaila 9-B, Ledi and Rasulpur as well as a survey of primary and secondary sources, this work sought to find out whether there has been any socio-cultural assertion by dalits in Haryana. The present work has also endeavoured to explore their political preferences in order to ascertain if they are politically conscious and, if it leads them to assert politically. The work has also intended to explore whether there has been any genealogy of dalit assertion in Haryana and to what extent the general economic prosperity of the state has improved their socio-economic conditions.

Using sub-caste, class, education and occupations of the respondents as dependent variables, the present study has attempted to understand dynamics of identity formation and politics among different strata of dalits. It has been argued that conditions which help in the growth of consciousness among dalits have been put into place in the last few decades only. The study shows that the region of Haryana does not have any genealogy of dalit assertion. The existing literature shows that the earlier attempts by groups like Mahars, Nadars and Ezhavas to attain upward mobility were triggered by the conditions created by the Britishers. However, in Haryana region the special interest of Britishers in Jats and other agriculturist castes prevented them to create conditions that would have helped growth of consciousness among dalits of Haryana region.

This study shows that the socio-cultural movements like Ad-Dharm movement, Christianity, Arya Samaj or Sikhism failed to mobilise dalits of this region. Infact their activities were mainly concentrated in Punjabi speaking areas. The general backwardness of Haryana region, dominance of



the agriculturist castes like Jats, Yadavas and Rajputs and the economic dependence affected dalits adversely. They constituted the poorest and the most illiterate section of society. The miserable socio-economic conditions of dalits continued for a long time even in the post-colonial period. The green revolution catapulted Haryana state to the position of one of the most prosperous regions of India. This prosperity seems to have promises as well as disadvantages for dalits.

The study shows that in initial years, the green revolution led to an increase in the demand for the agricultural labourers. It also led to increase in their wages. However, this did not lead to prosperity among dalits. Infact, with the green revolution their expenditure also increased. Many dalits who were cultivators and owned small land holding found that cultivation on small land holding was uneconomical. They had to sell their land holdings and switch over to the occupation of the agricultural labour. It is demonstrated in this study that proportion of cultivators among dalits has reduced since the inception of green revolution. Yet, introduction of new technology has help dalits in two ways. A large number of dalits have left the traditional occupations as the work is available in the agricultural sector.

Secondly, with the introduction of new technology the agrarian social relations between agricultural labourers and the farmers have been formalized. This has freed the labourers albeit relatively from the obligations and pressures that were hallmark of the traditional agrarian set-up. Above all, various affirmative actions by the state, despite their tardy implementation, have led to the emergence of a thin layer of economically independent ,relatively better educated and socially upward mobile dalits who are, no larger, prepared to accept a derogatory status in the society. Further, permeation of democratic ethos and consolidation of democratic institutions have contributed in instilling a sense of confidence among dalits. These factors have led to growth of consciousness among dalits in Haryana. The study reveals that dalits in the study-villages offer evidences which suggest

that dignity and self respect is becoming dear to them. They resist attempts by the upper castes to humiliate them. They protest against the discriminatory practices like use of separate utensils, making separate sitting arrangements, discriminatory treatment during marriage feasts. Their styles of protest vary from a verbal objection and avoidance to violent reactions. They adopt various strategies to minimise their dependence upon the landowners and farmers. These include search for alternative source of borrowing. Some make an organised effort to minimise their dependence on the landowners. They come together to pool their monthly savings so that they can create alternative source of borrowing.

This study postulates that identity formation is visible in the strategies adopted by dalits to resist their humiliation and dependence. It is also reflected in their socio - cultural activities. Dalits in the study-villages have constructed their own temples. They celebrate Ravidas Jayanti and Balmiki Jayanti. On such occasions, they get together for 'kirtan'. They also give 'bhandara'(village-feast). Funds for these celebrations are collected from every dalit home. Though they do not celebrate Ambedkar's birthday in the village, it has been found that some among them go to the nearby towns to participate in Ambedkar's birthday celebrations. Though the study villages do not have Ambedkar's statue, it was found that many respondents had kept his photograph in their home. The study shows that a great majority of dalits feel more close to Ambedkar than that of Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh. Infact, Ambedkar seems to have become a cultural symbol for them.

Thus dalits are endeavouring to accumulate an alternative cultural resource that has been denied to them in Hinduism. However identity consciousness has not crystalised uniformly among the respondents. It tends to vary according to their location, sub-caste, education, class and occupation. This work shows that it is relatively better educated and relatively well-off

who are more inclined to assert. Among the sub-caste groups, Chamars and Ramdasias seem to be more enthusiastic about a positive identity than others.

Location wise, the socio-cultural activities among dalits are more organised in Ledi and Rasulpur. These are the villages where dalits form the largest group and there is no single dominant caste. Moreover, these villages are in the regions where BSP has been able to create some support base among dalits. On the other hand, in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B, dalits are less inclined towards socio-cultural activities. They do not celebrate Ravidas Jayanti or Balmiki Jayanti. Above all, dalits in the study-villages seem to be adapting to the new conditions selectively. They identify with few symbols which dalits have constructed to assert their identity. For instance, in regards to self-identification, except few dalits who identified themselves as SCs or by terms like 'Siddhartha', 'Jatavs' etc, a great majority identified themselves by the term 'Harijan' or by their caste identities. The term 'Dalit' has not made any ground among dalits. Many among them do not consider terms like Harijan or Chamar as derogatory or patronizing. It indicates that change in outlook of dalits is not total. Dalits in the study-villages are in transition and therefore they offer contradictory evidences of changes as well continuities. It is important to note that there is no mass movement or mobilisation among dalits for construction of a positive identity. In absence of such movement, identity formation among dalits has not consolidated in Haryana.

In the realm of politics also, dalits have not been able to consolidate a distinct political identity. The study shows that in Ledi and Rasulpur, large number of dalits tend to vote for and identify with identity based parties. However, in Chuli Khurd and Ismaila 9-B, dalits have not offered evidences which suggest that urge for carving out a distinct political space exist among dalits. Infact a large number of them still vote for and identify with Indian National Congress. It seems that dalits believe that their interests are best served by Indian National Congress. It is important to note that Indian National Congress is a very strong in Haryana. Unlike UP, it has not de-

institutionalized . Therefore a significant portion among dalits support and vote INC. The study, however, shows that political consciousness among dalits of Haryana has been growing. They come to participate in elections in large number. They also attend political meetings as well as take party memberships. A large number of them consider that their vote is important. All this suggests that dalits in the study-villages are becoming politically aware. A small number of them has also deserted the traditional party affiliations. However, their endeavours have not led to consolidation of political identity.

Thus, the study makes a modest attempt to show that identity formation among dalits in the study villages have started in socio-cultural as well as political realm .However, it has not consolidated yet. It makes a humble submission that in absence of any mass mobilisation for identity formation, change in their outlook, aspirations and orientation co-exist along with continuities. However, we recognize limitations of our expertise as well as experience. Perhaps, a more rigorous and wide study is needed to understand many aspects of identity formation among dalits which have not been touched upon in the present study.

## Appendix-A

Table - 1

### List of Scheduled Castes in Haryana As Adopted in 1991 Census

1. Ad-Dharmi
2. Balmiki, Chura, Bhangi
3. Bangali
4. Barar, Burar, Berar
5. Batwal
6. Bauria, Bawaria
7. Bazigar
8. Banjara
9. Chamar, Jatia, Chambhar, Raigar, Rehgar, Ramdasi, Ravidasi
10. Chanal
11. Dagi
12. Darain
13. Deha, Dhaya, Dhea
14. Dhanak
15. Khatik
16. Kori, Koli
17. Marija, Marecha
18. Mazhabi
19. Megh
20. Nat
21. Od
22. Pasi
23. Perna
24. Pherera

25. Sanhai
26. Sanhal
27. Sansi, Bhedkut, Manesh
28. Sansoi
29. Dhogri, Dhangri, Siggri
30. Dumna, Mahasha, Doom
31. Gagra
32. Gandhila, Gandil, Gondola
33. Kabirpanthi, Julaha
34. Sapela
35. Sarera
36. Sikligar
37. Sirkiband

Source: Census of India 1991, Special Tables on SCs Haryana, Series 8, Part VIII  
(1). Directorate of Census Operations, Haryana, p.4.

**Table - 2**  
**Performance of Bahujan Samaj Party in Parliamentary Elections in Haryana**

Sr. No.		1989	1991	1996	1998	1999
1.	Contested	9	1	6	3	3
2.	Won		0	0	1	0
3.	Vote Share in Percentage	1.62	1.79	6.59	7.68	1.96

Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India

**Table-3**  
**Performance of Bahujan Samaj Party in Assembly Elections in Haryana**

	Contested	Won	Vote Share in Percentage
1991	26	01	2.32
1996	67	0	5.11
2000	83	01	6.54

Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India, Data on Assembly Election 2000 have been gathered from the website of Election Commission, <http://www.eci.gov.in/se2000/index.htm>

**Table - 4**  
**Vote Share of BSP in Some Parliamentary Constituencies in Haryana**

	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999
Ambala (SC)	7.94	17.59	20.58	36.97	12.08
Mahendragarh	-----	-----	17.23	23.75	3.74

Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India.

**Table - 5**  
**Vote Share of BSP in Some Assembly Constituencies in Haryana**

	1991	1996	2000
Naraingarh	22.44	17.42	8.02
Chhachhrauli	23.29	24.73	21.7
Jagadhari	21.24	22.09	29.03
Mullana (SC)	17.08	20.72	10.52
Sadhuara (SC)	14.32	22.25	20.0
Palwal	-----	17.45	19.05

Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India, Data on Assembly Election 2000 have been gathered from the website of Election Commission, <http://www.eci.gov.in/se2000/index.htm>

**Table - 6**  
**Support Base of Bahujan Samaj Party Among Various Groups**

Upper Castes	Jats	Other Peasant Castes	BC's	SC's	Muslims	Jat Sikh/Punjabi Khatri	Others
10.7	7.1	-	10.7	58.9	10.7	1.8	-

Note: CSDS conducted post poll survey in 2000,  
Source: CSDS Data Unit

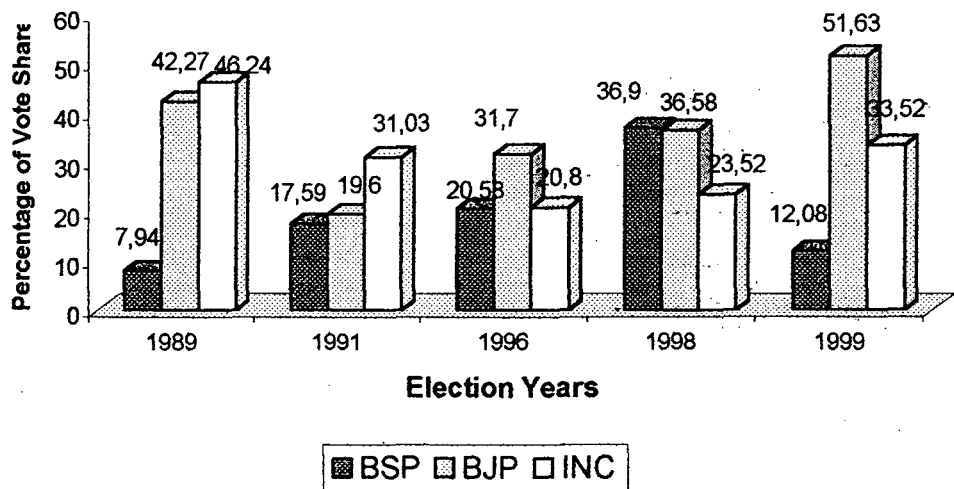


**Table-7**  
**Party Preference of Dalits in Haryana**

INC	BJP	HVP	INLD	BSP	Others
46.6	4.9	3.6	16.6	14.8	13.5

Source: CSDS Data Unit

**Graphical Representation of BSP's Performance in Relation to Other Parties in Ambala Constituency**



**Appendix - B**  
**Interview Schedule:**

**A. Identity Consciousness/Group Activities/Social Relations**

1. How do you identify yourself?

- a. That I am an SC.
- b. That I am a Harijan
- c. That I am a Dalit
- d. Any other

2. Do you have any organisation compared of people of your caste or subcaste group in your village

3. Which is applicable to you?

- a. Have heard only the name of Ambedkar.
- b. Have seen his photograph also
- c. Neither of the above

4. Whom do you find close to you?

- a. Ambedkar
- b. Gandhi
- c. Subhash Chandra Bose
- d. Bhagat Singh
- e. Any other

5. Why do you feel so?

6. Do you celebrate Ambedkar's Birthday? If yes, Where?

7. Do you celebrate any festival along with people of your caste community?
8. Do you think dalits are discriminated against in this village?
9. Which of the following happens in your village?
- Dalits are not allowed to fetch water from the common source of water.
  - Dalits do not have free access to the village chaupal, 'hathai' etc.
  - Dalits are denied free access to temple.
  - Dalits are discriminated in any other any (mention).....
10. If you need money. Where do you borrow it from?
- Farmers/Landowners
  - Shopkeepers/Bania
  - Relatives/Friends
  - Bank
  - Do not need loan.
11. Where do you get cattle fodder from?
- From fields of your own caste people
  - From fields of upper caste people
  - Any other source
12. Is there any social pressure upon dalits in your village?

**B. Electoral Participation, Mobilisation**

- Did you attend any election meeting in the recent past?
- Are you member of any political party?
- Do you think your vote has any value/importance?
- Have you heard name of Bahujan Samaj Party?
- Did you cast vote in the last assembly election?

6. Which party did you vote for in the last election?

- a. INC
- b. BSP
- c. INLD
- d. Any other...

7.. If you did not vote for BSP, why?

8. Which party do you feel close to?

- a. INC
- b. INLD
- c. BSP
- d. BJP
- e. Any other..

### **Back Ground Data**

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Income
5. Level of Education:
  - (a) Illiterate
  - (b) Literate But no Formal Education
  - (c) Primary
  - (d) Middle School
  - (e) High School
  - (f) College but no Degree
  - (g) College Degree and above
6. Occupation

7. Main Occupation of Husband/Wife/Father/Mother
8. Total land owned
  - (a) No land
  - (b) ----- Acres
9. Own a house or not
10. Type of Residential Accommodation
  - (a) Pucca
  - (b) Pucca-Kutchha
  - (c) Kutchha
  - (d) Hut-type
11. Own Cattles or not
12. Religion
13. Caste/Sub-Caste

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