

Dalit Environmentalism in India: An Analysis of Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh (1870-1980)

THESIS

Submitted to
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University
(A Central University)
Lucknow

BABASAHEB
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AMBEDKAR
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Submitted By:

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ENROLLMENT NO: 1467/15

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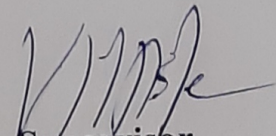
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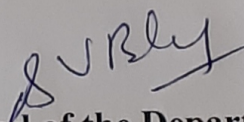
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**Dalit Environmentalism in India: An Analysis of Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh (1870-1980)**” submitted by Mr. **Arvind Swaroop** is an original research work and has not been previously submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree or diploma to this or any other university.

The thesis submitted to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lucknow satisfies all the requirements as stipulated in the *Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) regulations - 1999 as amended in 2008/2010/2013* and it is fit for submission and evaluation for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University.

Date: 22-12-2020


Supervisor


Head of the Department
22.12.2020

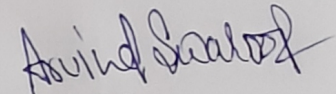
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis titled “**Dalit Environmentalism in India: An Analysis of Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh (1870-1980)**” submitted for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is an authentic record of original research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of **Dr. V. M. Ravi Kumar**, Assistant Professor, Department of History, School for Ambedkar Studies, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University) Lucknow.

This is also declared that the thesis is essentially free from all kind of plagiarism. I further declare that this research work has not been submitted before for the award of any other degree or diploma to any University or Institution. In keeping with the ethical practice in reporting research information, due acknowledgements have been made wherever the findings of others have been cited.

Place: Lucknow

Date: 22-12-2020



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Arvind Swaroop

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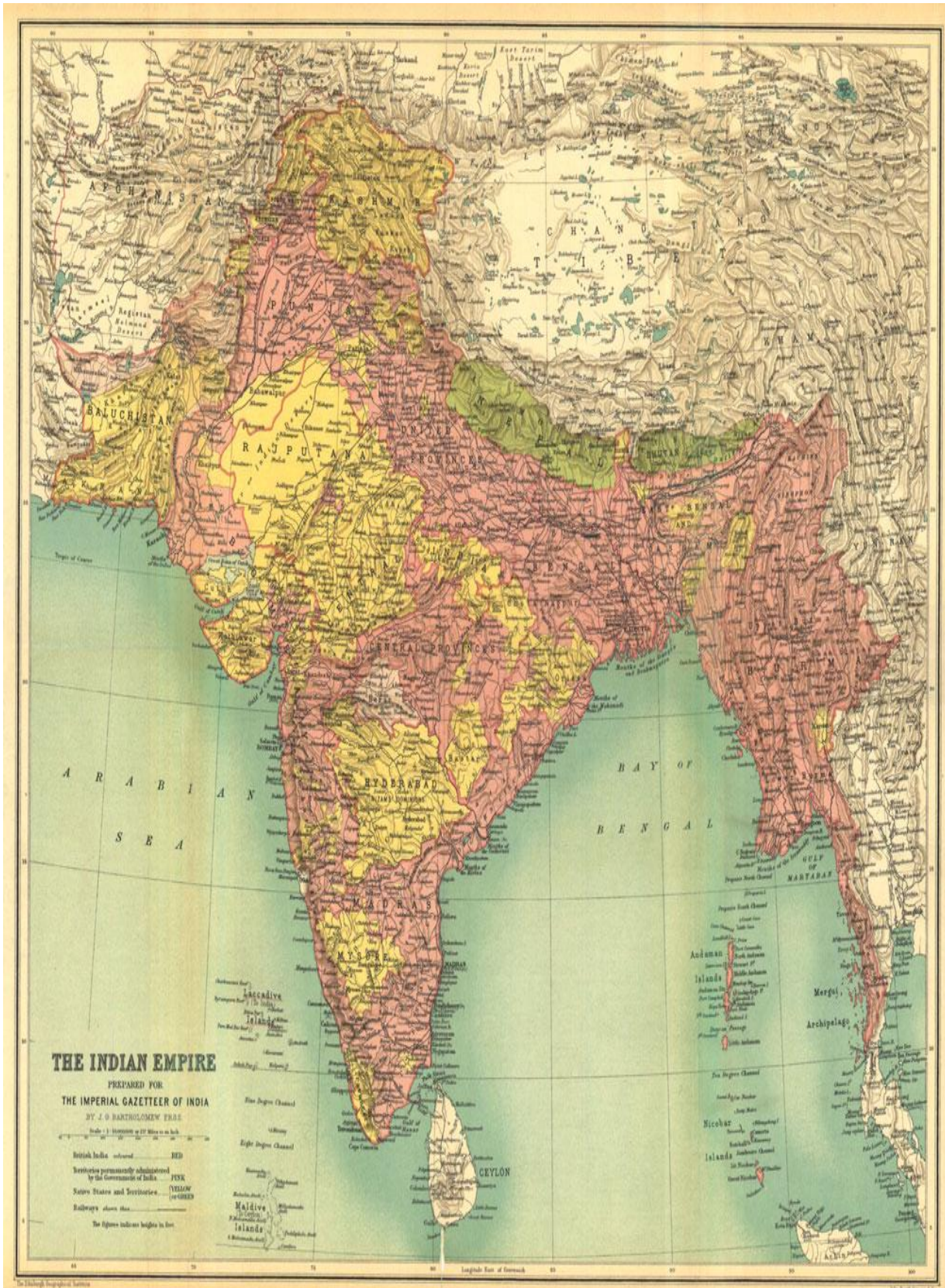
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ABBREVIATIONS

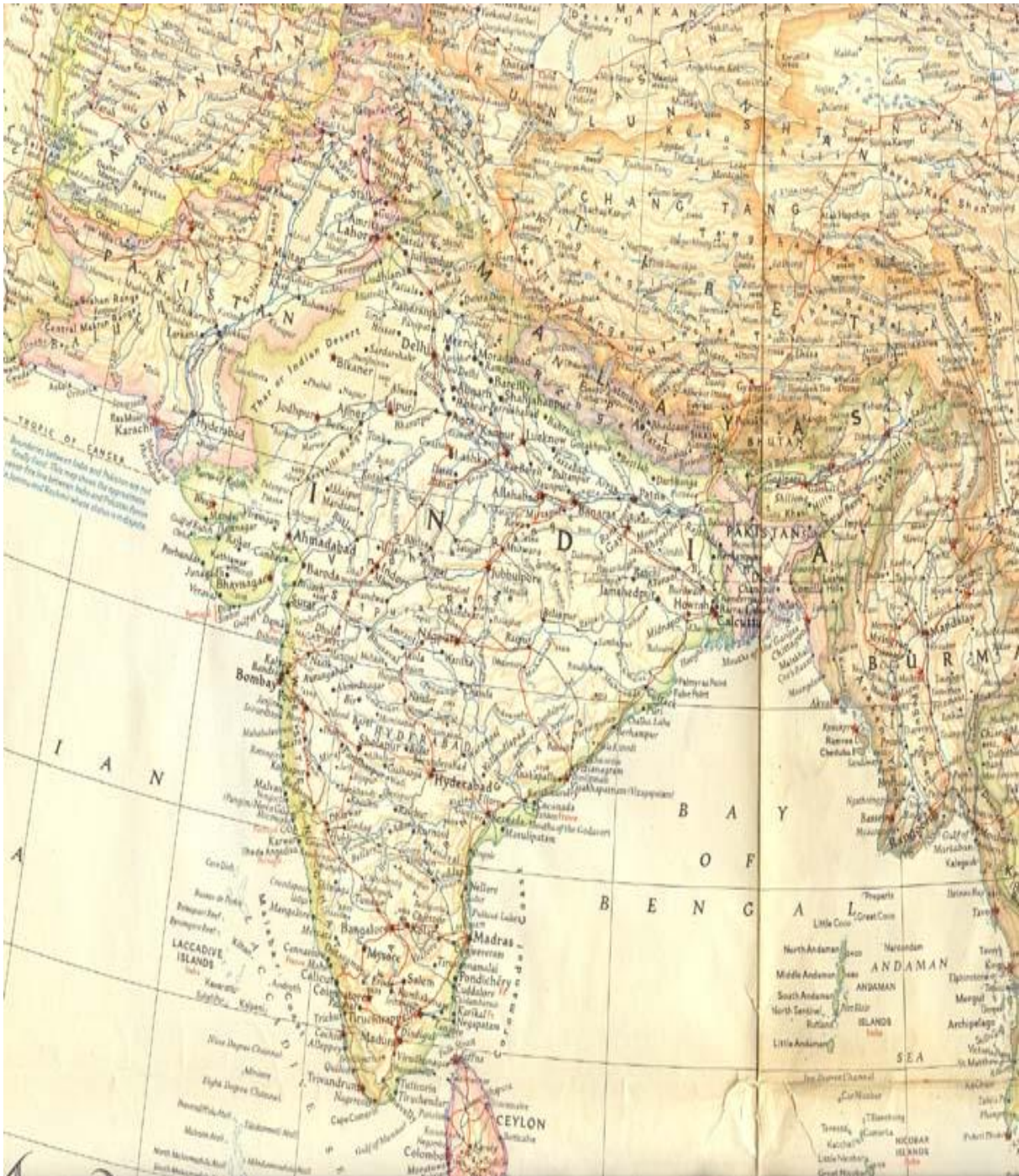
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Class
DPM	Dalit Panther Movement
RPI	Republican Party of India
SCF	Scheduled Caste Federation
UP	United Provinces
UP	Uttar Pradesh
NWP	North Western Provinces
BAMCEF	Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation
UPSA	Uttar Pradesh State Archive
AIDCA	All India Depressed Classes Association
SNDP	Shri Naryan Dharm Paripalna
SSS	Satya Shodhak Samaj
DS-4	Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party

LIST OF MAPS

- 1. Map of India During British Rule**
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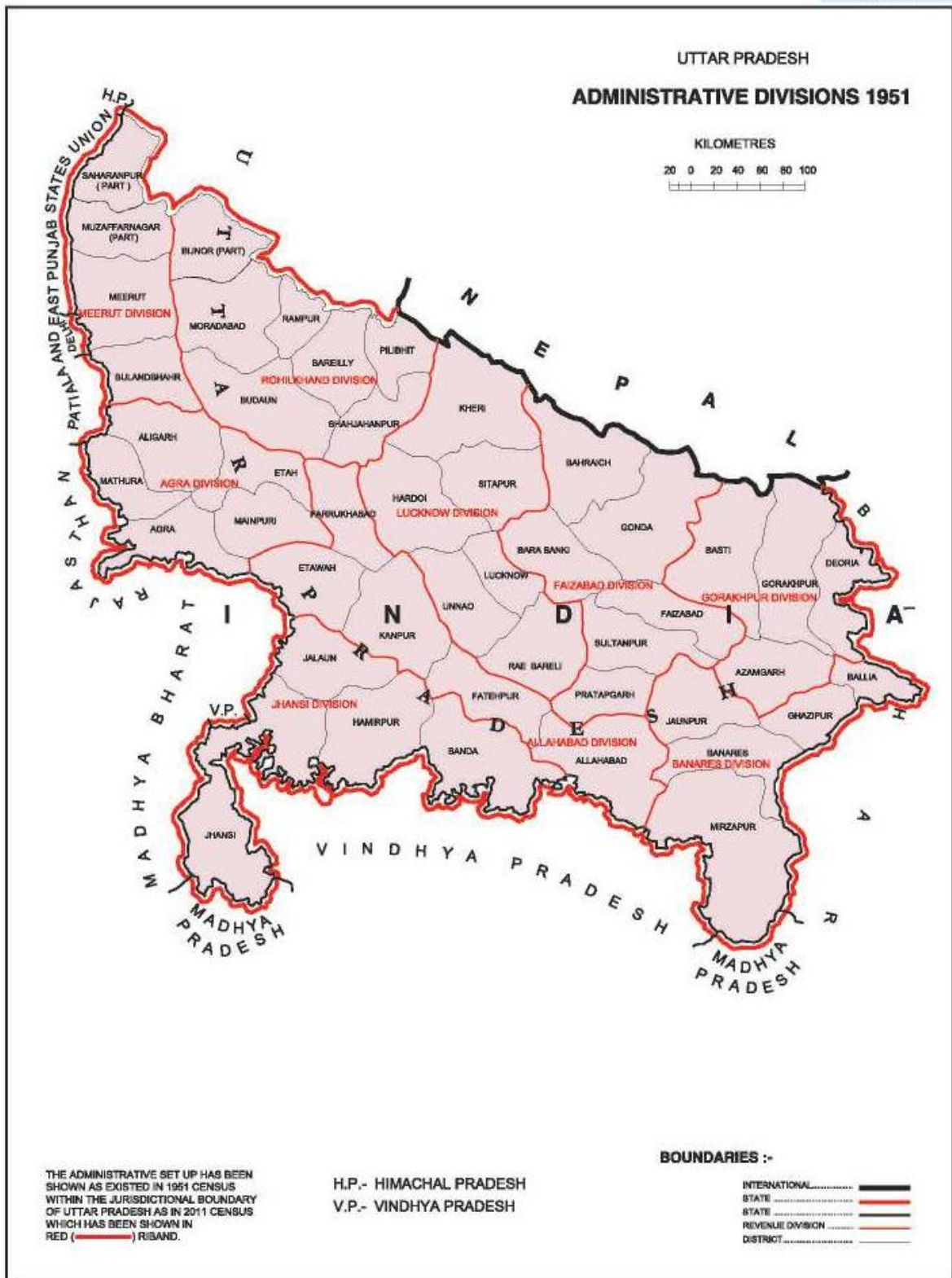
Map of India During British Rule



Map of India After Independence



Map of United Provinces



Map of Uttar Pradesh

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CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT OF CHAPTER

This chapter mentions the organisational and thematic structure of the proposed study. Along with research statement and design, the broad outline of the study has been proposed. This chapter, entitled introduction, has been designed to narrate the components of introduction to the research statement, delimiting the scope of the study, explaining the context of the study, narrating the objective of study, hypothesis of study, methodology of the study, review of literature and brief explanation on chapters of study. The prime purpose of this chapter is to explain the conceptual scheme that is employed to organise and execute this study.

CHAPTER-1**INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of environment acquired significant popularity and relevance in the contemporary times. It was mainly due to the ecological crises that are mainly being generated by human action. It is in this context that environmental history emerged as an academic discipline that to explores the human interaction with natural world in the past. In the last three decades, environmental history established itself as one of the sought after historical inquires world over. Similar process could also be seen in India. The proposed study is a part of the quest of environmental historians to explore the relationship between human beings and ecology in the past in India from several dimensions and perspectives. This study essentially focuses on the relationship between human beings and natural world with a particular reference to Dalits during the period of 1870-1980. The significance of this period is that it starts with penetration and consolidation of the British colonial rule, its ecological implication and its continued presence in independent India in different forms. This study is thus an attempt to construct a historical documentation of the way Dalits interacted with natural world in the context of colonial and post colonial periods with particular reference to the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. In nutshell, this study explores the social ecology of Dalits in modern Indian history.

Environmental history as a part of academic discipline had a humble beginning in the early 1980s. Thereafter, it staidly expanded in terms of scope, content and nature. Initially, the United State of America was the epicenter of this inquiry. Gradually it spared to different parts of the world. At the start, it was a quest to know how human beings interacted with natural world and shaped it in their

attempt to tap the resources of nature and physical ecology. Gradually, it became a comprehensive story of human action and interaction in transforming eco-system of the planet Earth. In the context of ecological crises and quest of historians to find solutions to such crisis resulted in emergence of environmental history as one of the rapidly developing academic inquiries.¹

Undoubtedly, India had emerged as one of the hotspots of environmental history and spokes person of southern environmentalism or environmentalism of the third world. Focused mainly on history of forest policies initially, it had begun to spread to different areas of human interaction with natural world. As rightly pointed by noted environmental historian Ranjan Chakraborty, environmental history is capable of having a fascinating interaction with other branches of history in general and social history in particular.² This strength was not seriously realized by environmental historians until recently. The need for recognition of social background to environmental history underscored by historians recently.³ The apparent fact however is that social context of environmental history of colonial India remained relatively a less explored arena in the field of environmental history. It is in this context that offers a fascinating scope for an interaction between environmental histories with Dalit history. This study is thus an ambitious attempt to provide a conceptual platform for a serious linkage between environmental and Dalit histories. This is done by focusing on ecological dimension to Dalit movement and its history at all India level in general and Uttar Pradesh in particular. The main objective of this

¹ R. Guha, 'Writing environmental history in India'. *Studies in History*, 9(1), 1993, pp. 119–129; Alfred Crosby, 'The Past and Present of Environmental History', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No.7, October 1995, pp. 1177-1189.

² Ranjan Chakrabarti, eds, *Does Environmental History Matter? Shikar, Substances, Sustenance and the Science*, Readers Services, Kolkata, 2014; *Critical Themes of Environmental History*, Sage, New Delhi, 2020; *Situating Environmental History*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2007.

³ Ramachandra Guha, eds, *Social Ecology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi., 1994.

study is to evolve a historical and conceptual trajectory of environmental history for exploring Dalit history of modern India. It is in this way that social dimension to environmental history can be evolved in a country like India which has the most complicated social structure.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Ecological thought and activism at global level has graduated from alarmist discourse of scientific community initially to intellectual discourse in the due course of time. Ecology became a paradigm of conceptualizing and visualizing all aspects of human life. It obviously means that the scope and nature of environmental studies expanded phenomenally in the last fifty years. As a part of this process, disproportionate impact of ecological crisis on different social groups emerged as one of the important narratives within environmentalism.⁴ This trend could be seen in environmental history of Africa⁵ and history of colored people's environmental activism in America.⁶ Unlike the ecological activism of colored people of America, ecological activism of Dalits is a late entrant into the ecological movement. Consequently, in spite of consisting more than 15% of Indian population, and dangerously exposed to ecological hazards, Dalits became invisible entities and mute spectators in environment movement and politics in India. Ecological stakes of Dalits however had begun to be realized in the context of climate change and several associated problems brought about by it. It has been recognized and articulated by several organizations and intellectuals engaged in Dalit empowerment that Dalits are the most vulnerable sections in the context of global climate change and require different framework and

⁴ K. Matteson, *Forests in Revolutionary France, Conservation, Community and Conflict, 169-1848*, Cambridge University Press, London, 2015.

⁵ Nancy A Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History*, Cambridge University Press, London, 2003.

⁶ Samuel P. Hayes, *Beauty, Health and Permanence: Environmental Politics in United States, 1995-1985*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1987.

approach to safeguard their stakes in environmental process. It is this context that brought about a conceptual category of Dalit environmentalism which aims to spell out the relationship between Dalits and natural world and several factors that determine such process.

India being a country of social complexity and cultural multiplicity, it is important to pay a careful attention to the social dynamics that play a crucial role in deterring the interaction of communities with natural world which includes natural and ecologically important resources. It has been proposed by Dalit movement and its leaders that Dalits are generally being economically backward, socially marginalized, and culturally excluded required adequate space into the ecological studies to safeguard their livelihood systems which are critically dependent upon resources of nature. This perspective is useful on account of their higher degree of dependency on natural resources at one level and extreme vulnerability to the climate changes at another level. In view of these factors ecological background to Dalit movement is very much useful in creating a space for Dalits into the ecological studies as it is need in the contemporary times for better policy making and strategies for handling impact of ecological crisis on wide spectrum of Indian society.

Undoubtedly, social dimension to ecological history of India is still a less explored domain. This is critically needed in India as its social structure is hierarchically organized with higher degree of rigidity. The access of individual/communities to natural world is significantly controlled by social structure, practices and values. Hence, the linkages between Dalit and environmental histories provide an exciting opportunity to evolve socio-ecological history model which would enable us to have better understanding on the relationship between human beings and nature of India. This study is an attempt to place social dimension into the theoretical

structure of environmental history. In other words, this study proposes that environmental history of India needs to move away from biographies of colonial policies to peoples' history.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The proposed study essentially aims to document the ecological dimension of Dalit history during the period of 1870-1980 in India with particular reference to United Provinces. While so doing, it revolves around the interaction of Dalits with natural resources and ecologically important factors such as forests, water, health, hygiene etc. The fact however is that this study mainly confines to certain aspects of ecological background to Dalit movement and history. It mainly focuses on how Dalit movements and its leaders who besides their demand for socio-economic justice also engaged with greater access to the resources of nature such as cultivable land, village commons, access to water, access to grasslands, access to irrigation, hygienic conditions, etc.

The proposed study investigates the aforementioned factors at three levels: firstly it attempts to capture and document the attempts being made by socio-religious reform movement, Dalit emancipation movement and Dalit leaders' attempt for access of Dalits to natural and ecologically important reassures and secondly it makes a case study of Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh and its ecological background such as demand for access to natural resources such as land, water, forests etc and finally, attempt is being made to capture the intellectual/activist engagement of Dalit leaders and intellectuals in demanding access of Dalits to natural resources for better life. This study thus attempts to capture the thought and activity of Dalit movement and its leaders on the ecological stakes of Dalits.

The limitations of the proposed study as follows: it mainly focuses on the rural segment of Dalits population and their ecological engagement, it does not focus much on urban sphere of Dalit environmental movement and it does not give focus heavily on activist dimension of ecological dimension to Dalit movement. These limitations are self imposed on account of lack of availability of source material and lack of expertise from our part.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

While analyzing and documenting the ecological background to Dalit movement in India in general and Uttar Pradesh in particular, the proposed study has been organized based upon the following objectives into consideration. These objectives guide our research structure and content which as follows:

- To explore, analyze and document the ecological dimension to Dalit movement in India.
- To explore the ecological dimension of Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh in the colonial an post colonial periods.
- To capture the ecological dimension of Dalit intellectual thought with particular reference to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Jotiba Phule.
- To narrate the ecological angle of Dalit movement in different parts of India.
- To capture the role of caste in shaping the access of Dalits to resources of nature.
- To analyze the role of socio-religious reform movement by Dalits from ecological perspective.
- To study of socio-economic conditions of Dalit in United Provinces.

- To analyses poverty and ecological problems for Dalits in Post-Colonial period.
- To narrate the role of political parties and associations in demanding access of Dalits to resources of nature in different parts of India in general and Uttar Pradesh in particular.
- To explore the nature of Dalit socio-economic conditions from the perspective of ecology in independent India.
- To evolve a historical model for ecological dimension to Dalit history.

HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

Ecological dimension to Dalit thought, practice and vision is the centrality of this proposed study. While exploring this dimension and outlook, this study proposes the following broad hypotheses which are expected to provided basic instincts to our inquiry and guide this work:

- The existing literature in environmental history and Dalit history did not give adequate attention to the ecological dimension of Dalit assertion or struggle. This study is of the opinion that a fascinating dimension of ecological assertion exists in the Dalit movement for socio-economic justice.
- Dalit demand for justice embedded a strong ecological narrative in the form of consistent articulation ecological resources such as land, water, forests, village commons etc.
- The Dalit philosophy evolved by several intellectuals in general and Ambedkar and Phule in particular exhibits a remarkable ecological thought which is different than that of Hindu nationalist thought.

- This study proposes that ecological dimension to Dalit movement provides an Indian model of social ecology wherein social status plays a crucial role in determining the access of individual/communities to ecologically important resources.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The proposed study is organized using standard methods of historical research. Proper care has been taken in collecting source material, validating its authenticity, analyzing its content and evolving a standard method for its interpretation. Both primary and secondary sources are being collected and used in this study. So far as secondary sources are concern, sources such as published books, articles in journals, reports of committees, organizations, websites etc have been used. In case of primary sources, sources from regional archives of Uttar Pradesh are being consulted. Sources such as provincial gazetteers, district gazetteers, population census, and proceedings of Harijan Welfare Department, Public Department, Irrigation Department, Forest Department, Public Works Department, Accreditation Department, and General Administrative Department etc have been used. Besides this, original writing of Dalit intellectuals, journals, magazine and literature available in the Hindi language are being used to capture the narratives of Dalits on their experience with natural world and which is mediated with social world.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The proposed study attempts to evolve linkages between Dalit and environmental histories in India and thereby wished to propose a model of socio-ecological history of India or ecological history of India from below. The main objective of the study is to explore the ecological dimension of Dalit history of colonial and post colonial

periods. The main proposition this study advances is that social world plays a critical role in interaction of human beings with natural world. In other words, social world and natural world are intimately interact in a complex way. Impact of social relations in determining the access of human beings to natural world is restively a less explored domain in India except some rare interventions.⁷ In fact, such approach is critical to a county like India which has rigid social hierarchy wherein communities are being assigned social ranking and regulated such ranking with institutionalized socio-cultural practice known as caste system.⁸ This study attempts to capture the way Dalits voiced for access to resources of nature during colonial and post colonial period.

Inspired by Murry Bookchin's notion of social ecology,⁹ attempt has been made by pioneers of environmental history of India to locate social structure into the domain of interaction of human beings with resource of nature.¹⁰ However, the strong gravity of nationalist thought in constructing Indian socio-cultural values as ecologically sensitive downplayed the role of social dynamics in shaping the attitude of communities towards natural world.¹¹ Consequently, we do not have a well defined model for conceptualizing the relationship between socially marginalized communities in general and Dalits in particular and natural word. This study attempts to evolve such a model which is useful in understanding the role of social hierarchy in conditioning the use of resources of nature by different groups in social structure.

⁷ M. Gadgil & R. Guha, *This Fissured Land An Ecological History of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.

⁸ Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implication*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1980. G. S. Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1950. J.H. Hutton, *Caste in India: Its Nature, Function and Origin*, Oxford University Press, 1946, Bombay.

⁹ Murray Bookchin, *Social Ecology and Communalism*, AK Press, UK, 2006.

¹⁰ Roger Jeffery, Eds, *Social Construction of Indian Forests*, Monohar, New Delhi, 1998.

¹¹ R. Guha, *Writing environmental history in India*

Until recently, studies did not give adequate attention to the fact that inequalities produced by social process play a major role in shaping the attitude of people towards natural world. Inspired by colored people's ecological justice movement in America, several marginalized sections begun to articulate their stakes in the environmental conservation process.¹² It has been proposed that social domination reinforce ecological domination as well.¹³ Therefore we need to understand human interaction with the prism of power relations which are embedded in social relations of society. This study aims at capturing the concept of distributive justice in the domain of ecology and voices that are consistently demand for proper distribution of ecologically import resources as a means to achieve progress. This proposition is done by examining the character multiple of voices of Dalit movement and its leaders on the aspect of misdistribution of resources of nature due to social dynamics at one level and the demand for proper distribution of ecologically important resources at another level.

In order to narrate the ecological dimension of Dalit history, we used the framework of political ecology which perceives human engagement with nature as a manifestation of power relations.¹⁴ It has been proposed by studies related to social ecology that access to resources has always been mediated by social structure. In this process while some are able to get better access and some may be prevented by the social dynamics.¹⁵ It is this process that was predominantly voiced by the Dalit movement in India. To notion of Environmentalism of the poor coupled with the political ecology enable us to capture the different layers of struggle over access to

¹² Robert D. Bullard, eds, *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*, Boston: South End Press, 1993.

¹³ Andrew Dobson, *Justice and the Environment: Conceptions of Environmental Sustainability and Dimensions of Social Justice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

¹⁴ Paul Robbins, *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, Wiley, 2004.

¹⁵ R. Guha, *Social Ecology*,

resources of nature. At present, ecological theory in India is not exclusively but mainly subscribes to the essentialist categories of the Indians, British, dominant class, marginalized class, subaltern class etc. The fact is that the competing claims over resources were deeply layered and fought among communities. History of Dalit movement shows us how Dalits consistently articulated for better access to natural resources as a means to improve their socio-economic status.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Environmental issues as an academic and public discourse acquired prominence world over after 1960s. Various academic disciplines in social science and humanities have been able to evolve separate sub-disciplines having making environment as central theme. This trend acquired higher degree after 1970s and 80s due to vibrant environmental protection movement world over.¹⁶ Historians have begun to evolve analytical concepts and tools to capture the relationship between human beings and nature in the past. Environmental history as a separate genre of history emerged in the United States of America initially.¹⁷ Several studies here attempted to create a model of environmental history which proposes a binary of eco-sensitive and conservation oriented native culture and destructive colonial rule. It is this model that gradually became an import model of environmental history world over including India.¹⁸ Environmental history thus emerged as one of the important fields of historical

¹⁶ Subhash Sharma, *Why People Protest: An Analysis of Ecological Movements*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 2009.

¹⁷ Louis S. Warren, *American Environmental History*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2003.

¹⁸ Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: The Roots of Ecology*, California: Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1977.

inquiry in the United States of America. It has gradually spread to different parts of world including Europe,¹⁹ Australia,²⁰ and South Asia including India.²¹

Undoubtedly, India emerged as one of the important regions wherein environmental history has gradually acquired wider popularity and begun to be thought in several universities. The factors that are given importance in the historical analysis as follows: importance of colonial impact of on ecosystems of India, policy histories of forests, water, wildlife, botanical gardens etc and contribution of ecological thinkers consisting of both colonial and nationalist thinkers are being given importance.

Undoubtedly, environmental history has been able to document and ecological dimension of the British colonial rule and displacement of multiple communities from their traditional resource use practices in India. In terms of historiography, environmental history has broadly been organized into three bodies of historical narratives. The first approach is advanced by nationalist liberal Marxist approach. This approach mainly focus on exploitive nature of British colonial and its impact on Indian ecological fabric, and response to such an impact by different sections of people.²² The second approach articulated by historians mainly from the Euro-American world. This approach proposes that colonial environmental history is not all about colonial exploitation; rather it does have dimension of conserving ecological systems of tropical world including India.²³ The third approach is that regional level

¹⁹ Peter Brimblecombe, Christian Pfister, eds., *The Silent Countdown: Essays in European Environmental History*, Springer-1990. Verlag Berlin Heidelberg. Tamara L. Whited, *Northern Europe: An Environmental History*, ABC-CLIO, California, 2005.

²⁰ Stephen Dovers, eds *Australian Environmental History: Essays and Cases*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994.

²¹ Christopher Hill, *South Asia: an Environmental History*, ABC,CLIO, 2008.

²² Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History*, Longman, New York, 2000..

²³ Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

environmental histories of India. The approach uses the both aforementioned approaches and blended them to capture the penetrating picture in the context of regional diversity in India.²⁴

Along with ecological history of India, Dalit history in India also acquired prominence. The following issues are give focus by studies on various aspects of Dalit history: emergence of Dalit as a class, movements initiated by Dalit to fight against oppression, social exclusion, social justice etc, political activism of Dalit leaders for empowerment of Dalits, social reform process among Dalits and ideological shades of Dalit movement.²⁵ The focal theme of the Dalit studies has been that of language of oppressed and its manifestation into the form of activities of Dalits in different parts of India.²⁶ We however also has vibrant literature on biographies of Dalit intellectual which were expected to inspire the younger generation of Dalits.²⁷ The fact however that is these studies did not give adequate attention to the ecological dimension of Dalit life and experience. These studies assume that the trajectories of oppression and emancipation are purely anthropocentric concepts. This assumption has been challenged by some of the studies which deal with environmental problems of colored people in America,²⁸ and in ecological problems of Dalit communities in South Asia

²⁴ Sumit Guha, *Ecology and Ethnicity in India, c. 1200-1991*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999; Ajay Skaria, *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers, and Wildness in Western India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1999; K. Shivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests: State Making Environmental Change in South West Bengal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999; V. Sabrwal, *Pastoral Politics Shepherds Bureaucrats and Conservation in the Western Himalaya*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1999.

²⁵ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and Its Leaders (1857-1956)*, Prints Publications, New Delhi, 1994. Eleanor Zelliot, *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, Manohar Publisher, New Delhi, 1992. Gail Omvedt, *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, sage, New Delh, 1994.

²⁶ Ramnarayan S. Rawat, K. Satyanarayana, *Dalit Studies*, Duke University Press, 2016; S. M. Michael, *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values*, Sage, New Delhi, 2007.

²⁷ Vsant Moon and Gail Omvedt, *Growing Up Untouchable in India: A Dalit Autobiography*, Rowman Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2000; Bhagawan Das, eds. *Spoke Ambedkar: Selected Speeches*, Vol. No. II, Jullundur: Bheem Patrika Publication, vol- xxiv, 1969; Bijender Singh, *Dalit Men's Autobiographies: A Critical Appraisal*, Kalpaz Publications, 2017.

²⁸ Carolyn Merchant, *American Environmental History: An Introduction*, Columbia University Press, 2007.

as well.²⁹ An increasing realization has begun to be emerged in Indian academia that the voice, action and vision of Dalit community have a strong ecological background. It is this ecological background that this study is interested to explore, analyze and document in order to evolve a coherent perspective on Dalit stakes in Indian ecological thought, action and vision.

As already mentioned we do have some studies which attempted to locate the role of social hierarchy in influencing the interaction of people with natural ecosystem in India. An attempt has been made in these studies to conceptualize the ecological background to caste based discrimination at one level and ecological dimension of Dalit assertion at another level. The review of literature in this study done at two levels: at first level the studies that are directly dealing with Dalits and environmental issues has been reviewed and at second level, studies that are implicitly dealing with the connection with Dalits and environmental are being reviewed. The following section deals with some of the important studies that are available on social dimension of ecological issues:

Madhav Gadgil & Ramchandra Guha, (1993), *This Fissured Land: an Ecological History of India* presents comprehensive ecological history of the Indian subcontinent. The focus is on the use and abuse of forest resources, a sector to which the authors present a general theory of ecological history. The part two of the book provides a fresh interpretation of the caste system. In the part three, the authors draw upon a huge wealth of source material in their social-ecological analysis of the modes of resource use introduced in India by the British. This book did mention about the role

²⁹ Mukul Sharma, *Caste & Nature: Dalits and Indian Environmental Politics*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019

of caste system in shaping the resource use pattern in Indian subcontinent. But the perspective it advances is that caste system played a positive role in promotion of ecological conservation ethics. This study thus did not explore the role of caste system in alienating millions of Dalits from access to natural and ecological resources.

Mukul Sharma, (2013) *Dalits and Indian Environmental Politics*, provides us knowledge of Indian Environment from Dalit perspective. He argues that Indian environmental issues and aspects are perceived from the imaginary golden age believed to have existed in ancient period which neglects the role of caste system in excluding from access to vital resources of life such as water, land etc. He also proposes that intellectuals and leaders belong to Dalit community articulated a distinctive perspective of environmentalism which offers a critique of Brahmanical environmentalism. He mentions that Dalit movement and its leaders had fascinating ecological dimension which not only questions the dominant forms of environmentalisms but also offers fresh inclusive environmentalism in India. He also proposes in contemporary environmental activism mention and consideration about Dalits stake is a missing link. It is due to this lacuna, for Sharma Dalits did not figure in the environmental discourse of India.

V. M. RAVI Kumar (2013) *Inclusive Environmentalism: A Study of Jotiba Phule's Ideas from Ecological Perspective*, this paper provides us a clear outline attempts to document the ecological dimension of Jotiba Phule and its relevance to the contemporary world, particularly environmental governance in the contemporary Indian society requires the ideas and suggestions of Jotiba Phule who advocated evolved fascinating ideas on sustainable use of rural agro ecological resources.

V.M. Ravi Kumar (2016), *History of Indian Environmental Movement*, documents the conceptual link of Ambedkar's ideas and activism with that of ecological movement in India and his engagement with the concept of access to water to Dalits. This study proposes the fact that Ambedkar was deeply aware of social dimension of ecological exclusion by social exclusion of Dalits from access to vital ecological resources, in other words untouchability in and around access to water.

Mukul Sharma, (2012) *Green and Saffron Hindu Nationalism and Indian Environmental Politics*, this book examines the relations between environmentalism and faith-based traditions on one hand, and between environmentalism and party politics on the other hand. It does so with immense subtlety and sensitivity. This book marries the field orientation of the investigative reporter that author once was with the analytical sharpness. Author shows how religion and belief system influenced by it shapes and structures social action, how it motivates people to act in certain ways and inhibits other paths of action. Sharma highlights the way right wing nationalism set a narrative of green golden age in ancient wisdom and promotes strategies for the revival of the same in the contemporary times. It is this process for Sharma which is responsible for alienation of Dalits from ecological discourse in India

Sukhadeo Thorat & Aryama, (2007) *Ambedkar in Retrospect Essays on Economics, Politics and Society*,” mentions about Ambedkar's view on agricultural land and water distribution management; like nature of the Damoder valley Corporation. Attempt has been in this book to locate and highlights the green dimension of Ambedkar activities and strategies.

Ramnarayan S. Rawat, (2012) *Reconsidering Untouchability* focus on the study of the Chamars of the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, who the beginning of the

twentieth century have been the best educated, most politically articulate, and most prosperous Dalits in the state. He proposes that the occupational stereotypes of dalit castes have provided justification for the continued exploitation, oppression, and abuse of Chamars and other untouchable castes. Dalit perspectives on Indian history have little respect for the framework of colonialism versus nationalism mapped by Hindu-dominated mainstream Indian historiography. This book to point out that Dalits rarely appears as actors in Indian history and historiography.

Raj Kumar, (2011) *Dalit Personal Narratives Reading Caste, Nation and Identity* attempts to evaluate Indian autobiographies in general by examining the specific dimensions of gender and caste with particular emphasis on the autobiographies of Dalits. While doing so, author focus has been more on autobiographies as a narrative rather than autobiographies as a historical document, because all personal narratives are shaped by certain unspoken priorities of the 'self' in its negotiation with the society. This book also mentions about the way Dalit intellectuals and activists represent their association with nature and its resources being members of castes which were traditionally treated as untouchables.

P. Abraham, (2002) *Ambedkar's Contribution for Economic Planning and Development* documents Ambedkar's contribution in the areas of principles governing government's expenditure, agriculture, industrialization, public finance, status of poor and labour in economic planning, which held the key for amelioration of millions of our poverty-stricken countrymen. During this tenure as Member, Irrigation, and Electric Power in the Executive Council of the Viceroy, Dr. Ambedkar's pioneering thoughts acumen and vision led to the formulation of our country's water resource management strategies. The author also mentions that Ambedkar's engagement with electric power policies resulted in the creation of the Central Water Commission and

Central Electricity Authority, which, contributed substantially for ushering in the 'Green Revolution' and 'Food Security' and creation of substantial generation and distribution capacity in the country.

R. Guha, (1994) *Social Ecology*, brings together a selection of pioneering essay on a subject of increasing interest to sociologists and social anthropologist. With the growing awareness of the cause and consequences of environmental degradation, the once neglected field of social ecology has assumed enormous theoretical and practical importance. As the first such anthology of its kind, it provides a compact and analytically sophisticated overview of environment and society in contemporary India. This book provides conceptual tools for understanding the impact of social structure on the use and abuse of natural resources.

Gail Omvedt, (2006) *Dalit Vision: The Anti Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity*, explores and critiques the sensibility which equates Indian tradition with Hinduism, and Hinduism with Brahmanism which considers the Vedas as the foundational text of Indian culture. It shows that even secular minds remain imprisoned within this Brahmanical vision and language of secular discourse is often steeped in a Hindu ethics. The track looks at alternative traditions, vested within the Dalit movement, which has questioned this way of looking at Indian society and its history.

Subhash Sharma, (2009) *Why People Protest: An Analysis of Ecological Movements*” this book endeavors to present a sustainable paradigm of ecology and development and explores how Ecology and development go hand to hand in a sustainable society. However, in many areas, industrial and commercial interests are infringing upon the environment and people’s way of living. It has engendered protest

movements in various parts of the world. This book also attempts to see prominent environmental movement in India and other countries.

Farhat Naz, (2014) *The Socio-Cultural Context of Water Study of a Gujarat Village*, this book mainly focuses on the community water management system of Gujarat Government. This book analyses various aspects of water management projects in the villages of Gujarat region, which are noted for its aridity. It further illustrates local power dynamics in terms of wealth, land ownership, and access to water, i.e. those in positions of power try to exploit the situation for their vested interests. However, a significant finding is that the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe farmers too own bore wells and are able to participate in user-group committees, thus gaining social mobility.

S. Ravi Rajan, (2006) *Modernizing Nature: Forestry and Imperial Eco-Development 1800-1950*, is an revisionist historic examination of two eras in the field of forestry of British colonial history has been examined, with the focus on science as well as the decline of a back of European environmental traditions. During the nineteenth century describes the development of the concept of forest conservation in the British Empire. It has been tried to explain what is the European Forestry tradition influenced by the agenda formation in the European empire.

Anand Teltumbde, (2008) *The Persistence of Caste*, attempts to understand the meaning of modernism in India. Moreover, discusses one of the most important issues of contemporary India. In this, analyzing context and crime, an attempt has been made to develop the event in the political economy. By intrusting many myths and asking new questions, it hopes to develop an understanding of the contemporary reality of the caste.

Anupma Rao, (2010) *Caste Question*, in her book discussed about cultural exclusions and social inclusion in modern India. This book focuses on the crucial role of Dalit subalterns in redefining organizing terms of colonial liberalism such as community, religion, equality and rights and interrogates the multiple and often contradictory outcomes of Dalit emancipation. According to her “The term of dalits is used across India in recognition of dalits claims to a history of suffering and resistance against cast Inequality.”

Sekhar Bandhyopadhyay, (1997) *Caste, Protest and Identity in Colonial India* gives a brief sketch of a socio-economic profile of the Namasudras and also tries to trace how through a protest movement , a loosely organized group of people in Bengal who began to call themselves Namasudras since the late nineteenth century. According to him Namasudras movement witnessed the first organized social protest of the Namasudras against their degraded social status, including thereby the significance of endogenous factors, other than colonial inducements, in stimulating lower caste protest in India.

Mukul Sharma, (2019) *Caste & Nature: Dalits and Indian Environmental Politics*, this book discussed about relationship between Indian Caste and nature. According this book most regional, national, and local environmental narratives have often missed Dalit voices. While analysis of our past is important for environmental research, we need to beyond these. The generation of new environmental question needs to respond to the new environmentalism, especially in term of ethnicity, caste identity, democracy, Dalit identity, minority, and development. India’s environmental history has vividly described how colonial circuits entered natural resources and people live and established a centralized, bureaucratic, scientific and modern system of management, which also created a current for various discontents and struggles.

This book reveals it also has much to say on our relationship with nature. The entanglements between Dalits and nature have never been fixed; they have shifted over space and time, and in the context of natural and social conditions.

Rajendra Singh, (2001) *Social Movements, Old and New: A Post-Modernist Critique*, in his book he gives a framework of social movements and collective actions, and prevailing concepts of Indian society. He maintains that it is these movements which truly represent the contemporary nature of Indian society. He also presents a conceptual critique of various studies on social movements including the neo-classical model, historical approaches and Marxist paradigms. He writes about Dalit, caste and conversion movements, he says the Dalit movement constitutes another search for identity and social justice.

S.N. Pawar, & R.B. Patil, & S.A. Salunkhe, (2005). *Environmental Movement in India: Strategies and Practices*, this book mainly mentions about People's Movement for Natural Resources. It describe these types movements were not started by people as environmental movement but were basically about their rights over natural resources, which they have been using for centuries or more and which were rightfully theirs. All over the world, the people at local levels, who have been directly victimized by depletion of natural resources like water, fuel, fodder, etc., are organizing themselves to raise voice against this menace. In this book, have instances of people's movement in all parts of the world for articulation of their demand for restoration of status quo and total abandonment of capricious ways of modernization.

R. Guha, & J.M. Alier, (1998) *Varieties of Environmentalism* deals with the perceptions and valuations of nature among subordinated social groups, such as peasant and fisher folk. In this book argues is the environmentalism of the poor,

means originate in social conflicts over access to and control over natural resources: conflicts between peasants and industry over forest produce, like as between rural and urban populations over water and energy.

M.S.A. Rao, (1979) *Social Movements and Social Transformation: A study of two Backward Classes Movements in India*, in his book provide a brief sketch of social movement in the context of collective mobilization, specific social relations, and event structure and behavior of persons. Through this understanding the structural basis of ideology formation and the way in which ideology guides the action of people involved in the movement at different levels and stages. Deprived classes movements seen in the context of imitative processes of social mobility of westernization and sanskritization leads to distorted view of social reality. He mentions Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Movement in Kerala and other backward classes' movement in different part of India. Through this he pointed the presented crisis of reservation issue for the backward classes.

M.S.A. Rao, (2008) in his book *Social Movements in India: Studies in Peasant, Backward Classes, Sectarian, Tribal and Women's Movements*, has pointed out that the social movements highlighting conflict and contradiction as the basis of protest, reform, transformation and revolution. Many social movements among the Other Backward classes and Scheduled Castes emerged in nineteenth and early twentieth century's. They utilized both secular and religious themes of ideology oriented toward reform, emancipation and transformation of the established order of social relationships and values.

Ghanshyam Shah, *Social Movement in India*, proposes that the main issue with which major part of Dalit struggle in the past and present aimed at was the issue of

untouchability and its crippling effect on the lives of Dalits. He focuses on the collective action of Dalits for achieving their demands. There have also been sustained agitations to maintain the policy of affirmative action enshrined in the Constitution of India for employment and education could also be seen. At the same time he proposes that the Dalit reform movement strived to address the caste based inequalities that affected the lives of Dalits. The movement for alternative way of life related to conversion to another religion or to the attempt to create an alternative socio-cultural structure by acquiring economic conditions, education and political power. Their movements have certainly succeeded in reaching out and making their mark in political places.

Gail Omvedt, *Dalit and Democratic Revolution*, proposes that is important to know the history of the Dalit movement in the 20th century. It attempts to do a historical analysis of the origin of the caste system. It is mainly focuses on the Dalit movements in Hyderabad, Bombay, Andhra Pradesh, and Mysore. It analyzes Dalit movements through Ambedkar, Gandhi and Marxist ideas. It also mentions Jyotiba Phule, the main ideological and political scholar and mentor of anti-caste movements in India. It emphasizes the role of Dr. Ambedkar in understanding the Dalit movements. According to Omvedt, Dalit movements need to pave the way for economic diplomacy. A new political structure and cultural analysis is also necessary and the manner in which these movements were understood needs to be reconsidered. She has argued that Dalit movements, especially caste movements should be viewed as value-related or anti-system movements in general.

Ghanshyam Shah, *Dalits and the State*, proposes that Dalits, socially and economically oppressed sections of Indian society look upon the State not only to provide equal opportunities but also to create positive condition for improving their

socio-economic condition. Various chapters in this book examine educational and economic condition of the Dalits, the nature and extent of untouchability in urban and rural areas, atrocities against the Dalits and condition of scavengers and reservation system. In particular a chapter on “Access to land by scheduled castes and scheduled tribe in India”, based on primary data to examine the pattern of land ownership evolved down the ages so as to provide a historical backdrop for this study.

Ghanshyam Shah, H. Mander, S. Thorat, S. Desshpande, A. Bhaskar, *Untouchability in Rural India*, documents forms and practices of untouchability in rural India. According to him Dalits have struggled to shed the stigma of untouchability and to realize their rights as equal citizens of India. The book also proposes that Dalits constitute the largest category among landless agricultural labourers and urban informal workers; they are the majority among the people living below the poverty line. The segregation of Dalits into separate localities also means that they are less likely to receive state services and social infrastructure such as drinking water electricity and roads. This study shows that in several villages, Dalits are assigned a separate place on the river bank or on the edge of the pond meant for the only untouchables. Dalits have no access to the burial/cremation ground maintained from public funds. The authors of this book highlight that while untouchability is practiced in all the 11 states surveyed, its extent varies. In Kerala and Punjab, its incidence is lowest and confined to only a few spheres largely related to private life. In Madhya Pradesh and Orissa as well as in states with higher rates of economic growth such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, untouchability still prevails to a large extent in the public and economic spheres as well as the private domain. The reduction in poverty and inequality that seems to be related to reduced

untouchability and perhaps both are the result of greater collective mobilization and assertion by Dalits.

Kancha Ilaiah, *Why I am not a Hindu*, uses the word ‘Dalitbahujan’ which means ‘people and castes who from the exploited and suppressed majority’. He proposes that the concept of Dalitbahujans turn to the base of the material culture to emerge as a united force. Over a period of time the Brahminical castes will become casteless and classless and then we will establish an egalitarian India. This proposes the critique of caste based society at two levels. In the first level this book proposes that the Dalit and Bahujan people constitute core of production system in India but do not have access to knowledge production. Consequently, the author proposes that low graded identity was given by Brahminical culture. In the second level he proposes that Dalit and Bahujan did not follow the Brahminical Hindu religion. On account of these processes, the author proposes that Dalit/bahujan needs an alternative epistemology for socio-economic and ecological problems.

Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*, explains what is the attitude of looking at the caste system in Indian Subcontinent. Various studies have been done by various historians and sociologists to understand the caste system, which is commendable to know the caste system. This book sheds light on the taxes affecting the daily life and values of the caste system in colonial India and independent India. This book sheds light on the taxes affecting the daily life and values of the caste system in colonial India and independent India. Along with the relevance of Gandhian ideas in caste debate, it presents a broader view of explaining nationalism.

Anand Teltumbde, “*Mahad the Making of the the First Dalit Revolt*”, proposes that Dalits have been deprived of their rights in India for centuries, in which they should have education, health, land rights, property rights, pure water and political opportunities. Mahad Satyagraha (20 March 1927) was also a historic movement for Dalits to get water from public ponds and build an inclusive society and awaken self-respect among Dalits. In this book, Teltumbde has given a graphical description of Mahad Satyagraha. It details the Ambedkar's significant contribution and a successful movement under his leadership. This book is based on books and letters written by Dr. Ambedkar and autobiographies written in Marathi language by other colleagues and government documents. There is also a description of those people included in Mahad Satyagraha, who are rarely read in any other books. The Mahad Satyagraha mentions the plan of the Chavdar tank Satyagraha and the programs to burn Manusmriti in a systematic way.

C. Joe Arun, *Constructing Dalit Identity*, this book focuses on the aspect of Dalit assertion and describes the process by which Paraiyars, one of the Dalit groups of Pappanallur village, Tamil Nadu, South India, attempts to make its mark by reversing the symbols of pollution, which is defined, them as low and polluted, in the analogies of their culture and positive identity. This book focuses on myths, and the symbols, which were used by upper castes to define the identity of the Paraiyars as impure and segregated, and it explains also how the Paraiyars are now using these similar symbols and myths to improvement their uniqueness. It is also explore the view of elites belonging to upper caste, who are resisting the rise and mobility of the Paraiyars, and who maintain to construct new forms of supremacy. With these processes of identity formation are conflict, symbolic reversal and identification. According to him “A struggle in which a group of people completes with one or more

groups with a vision to achieving objectives either by violent or non-violent or by both". This book explores the cultural resources by which peoples are defined, for illustration, the symbolic resources that are used to define different castes.

V.M. Ravi Kumar, *Green Democracy: Relevance of Ambedkar's Idea for Indian Environmentalism*, this paper explores identify and reference Ambedkar's ideas for the broad framework of Indian environmentalism. This paper proposes that Ambedkar's eco-philosophy attempted to evolve inclusive environmentalism which means access of nature and its resources to all sections of people. This paper also highlights the way Ambedkar envisioned the need of Dalits for access to ecologically important resources. By using the ideas of the Buddha, Ambedkar also constructed the ideas of compensate environmentalism which means respecting the rights of all species over nature and ecology. This paper thus attempts to explore the ecological dimension to Ambedkar's thought and practice.

P.S. Ramakrishnan, *Ecology and Sustainable Development*, this book proposes that ecology and progress in their proper sense imply designing strategies for natural resource management by connecting up ecological with social processes. This book discusses the basic concepts governing the emerging paradigm shift in ecology and evolution in the context of traditional ecological knowledge associated with biodiversity as we understand it today. In this book, there are main focused constructional relationships between ecology, economics and ethics. Issues related to global change, sustainable natural resource management from agro-ecosystems, and the development of sustainable approaches are also discussed.

Vivek Kumar, *Dalit Leadership in India* proposes that generally major factors that determine the ultimate success or failure of a movement are the nature and dynamics

of its leadership. The strategy formulated by the leaders determines the direction, scope and nature of the movement. History shows the fact that most socio-political movements in India and elsewhere saw strong leadership for their relationship. He proposes that the Dalit leadership gave these movements a vision, direction and modalities. But time and again, it has been observed that a Dalit movement emerges in it, flourishing to an extent and stabilizing after a point, although with some achievements. His assertion against the atrocities at which the Dalit movements Dalit upwards, or his rise from bondage, or his claim to gain social mobility and respectable social identity, inspired Ambedkar's ideology, the strategy and philosophy of the movements for the upliftment of Dalits are obtained. He also points out that to reach the present stage, Dalit leaders after Ambedkar had to adopt a long way of protest and struggle, which is still going on. This book thus tries to examine the nature and dynamics of Dalit leadership in Uttar Pradesh and their impact on socio-political mobilization and empowerment, and also traced socio-historical profile of Indian Dalit leaders and Contribution of Ambedkar.

H. M. Singh, K.C. Kaushik, S.R. Sharma, *History and Development of Dalit Leadership in India, Vol-8, B. R. Ambedkar on the Removal of Untouchability*, this book proposes that there have been great men in India who worked hard to overcome the backwardness of Hindu society for untouchability. It focuses on fifteen social, religious and political leaders and humanists. In this volume focuses on Dr. Ambedkar views on Origin of Caste in India, Untouchability, Reservation and regeneration, annihilation of caste, and establishment of egalitarian society for weaker section.

G.P. Deshpande, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*, this book include major texts of Jotiba Phuley. This book is mainly compiled of Ghulamgiri, Whipcards of the cultivators, Satsar, Memorandum letters to the Education Department, etc. Some

books have also been translated from the Marathi to English language. The famous Ghulamgiri has written on untouchability in India. It has been dedicated to the Black Panther movement of Phule America. The problem of farmers is mentioned in the whipcord for the cultivators. In this, farmers were encouraged to do organic farming, so that the balance of the environment is maintained. He laid special emphasis on women's education and also made schools for them, in which special efforts were made for Dalit women.

Yagati Chinna Rao, *Writing Dalit History and Other Eassays*, attempts to reconstruct Dalit history, particularly Telugu speaking people, which usually come from source sources such as the census, commissions and committees and gazetteers reports. It deals with Dalit education and identity formation as well as the issue of untouchability. It also attempts to understand the political consciousness and their ideologies among the Dalits and to understand their diverse forms of culture.

Gopal Guru, *Experience, Caste, and the Everyday Social*, argues that the Dalit movement as a necessary outcome of an obscurantist Hindu tradition with its deep-rooted prejudice against the Dalits. Hence he propose the Dalit movement seriously attempted to bring about phenomenological changes in the mind sent and attitude among Dalits for more assertive public life.

Hindi Books-

Angle Lal & Rahul Raj, 2011, *Uttar Pradesh Me Dalit Aandolan*, this book, brief descriptions of respected conflicts and movements, known from the present age of Uttar Pradesh 100-200 years, have been presented. It has also been attempted that the struggle of the district of each administrative board is achieved simultaneously. Also, the character of the life of Saint men of related districts has also been described. A

brief chapter of contribution has been presented in respect of the women's respected Suresh agitation.

Mata Prasad, 2010, *Bharat me Dalit Jagaran Aur Osake Agradoot*. this book offers a comprehensive history of Dalit movements and its leaders in different parts of India. In this, the background of the Dalit movement and the situation of the Dalits of different states and the organization also has been stated to be announced to Haryana, Punjab to Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh to Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand to Bihar, Bengal to West Bengal, Goa to Maharashtra Information is provided by adding, as well as several agitations for the rights and interests of the Dalits by Dr. Ambedkar, Achhutanand etc. This book is also rich in terms of factual details.

Subhash Chandra, 2010, *Dalit Mukti Aandolan Simaye Aur Shambhawanaye*, this book depicts Dr. Ambedkar as a leader of the Dalits, moderate democratist, anti-Communist, reformist. Due to the contradiction of history in this book, Dalits have been shown to be the most prejudiced for the loss of material possession and natural resources. Dr. Ambedkar was redefined, in which due to historical circumstances, Dr. Ambedkar forced himself to be in a special kind of circumstances.

Vivek Kumar, 2007, *Purani Samasyaye Nyi Aakanchhaye*, this book is a good effort to break the myths associated with the Dalit society. It has presented an objective assessment of the implications of the Dalit society, its movement, social reforms, and its events. Taking cognizance of the social change in the Dalits, this book assesses the new culture that is being developed in Dalits. There is a new view in this book that problems in the Dalit society are of old age, but new aspirations are being born in the Dalit society.

Ramvilash Bharteey, 2014, *Bishawi Sadi Me Dalit Samaj*, In this book traced Condition of Dalits in 20th Century onward till 1925, and also analysis of reform for Dalits condition.

Badri Narayan (Yugank Dheer) *Dalit Virangnaye avem Mukti ki chah*, this book explores the process of identifying Dalits in Uttar Pradesh and achieving political success through them. In Uttar Pradesh, Buddha, Ambedkar, Phule, Periyar, Ravidas, Kabir and Eklavya are shown as important cultural symbols of the Dalits. The memory of Dalits has been instrumental in establishing their identity. Dalit Veeranganao has played an important role in creating this identity, which includes, e.g., Devi, Jhalkari Bai, Avantibai, Mahaviri Bhangi and Panna Dhaya etc.

Devendra Kumar Besentari, *Bharat ke Samajik Krantikari*, this book is written mainly on social reformers, in which the works, compositions, movements, and philosophical ideas of thinkers from ancient to modern era have been documented. It details Buddha, Ambedkar, Gandhi, Kabir, Periyar, Phule, Narayan Guru etc.

The aforementioned studies on the relationship between Dalits and ecological aspects attempted to evolve a framework which is expected to capture the Dalit concerns into the domain of ecology. Having been enriched by these studies the proposed study attempts to carry forward this framework further with the following aspects and questions: capturing the ecological dimension to Dalit movement in different part of India with particular reference to Uttar Pradesh: the ideas, action and vision of Dalit intellectuals in general and Phule and Ambedkar in particular in articulating the concerns of Dalits into the ecological domain: capturing the ecological dimension to the Dalit assertion in post colonial period with particular reference to

Uttar Pradesh and finally to create a conceptual platform for interaction between Dalit and environmental histories.

CHAPTERISATION OF STUDY

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

The first chapter presents thematic information of the study in the form of introduction to the topic, the context of the topic, objectives of the topic, the methodology of the topic, the hypothesis of the topic, a detailed description of review of the literature and brief chapterisation have to dwell.

CHAPTER 2 –Dalit Movement and Resources of Nature

The second chapter of the study explores the characteristic features of Dalit Movement, origin and progress of Dalit movement, reasons for emergence of Dalit movement, Dalit movement different parts of India and particularly in U.P., and the demands of Dalit movement, the demands of Dalits for access to natural and ecological resources directly and indirectly, The nature and forms of demands for access to resources by Dalits.

CHAPTER 3- Intellectual Environmental History of India from Dalit perspective

In the third chapter, it mainly focuses on the relationship between human beings and nature in the past. Intellectual environmental history documents the idea of serious intellectuals from an ecological perspective in the Indian context, To explore the history and profile of Dalit intellectuals, the visions of dalit intellectuals for development of Dalits from the perspective of Ecology and access to nature and its resources. In this chapter mainly confined to the analysis of the important Dalit and subaltern thinkers and their views on the exclusion of marginalized sections from

access to nature and ecology. Attempt would be made in this chapter to explore the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, and also discuss in this chapter the main intellectual are Phuley, Periyar, Narayan Guru, Acchutanand, Iyotee Thass and Savitri Phuley and other important intellectuals who demanded for access of natural resources of Dalits etc.

CHAPTER 4 - Dalit Movement and resources of nature in United Provinces

The fourth chapter starts with giving the detail about the profile of Dalits in United Provinces and Socio-economic conditions of Dalits in United Provinces and the emergence of movement by and for dalits. The chapter also throws light on the evolution of Dalit movement and demands for access to resources of nature like as land, water, and hygiene. In the end of the chapter, detail are been provide about the introduction of Grassroots level demands for resources by Dalits in United Provinces.

CHAPTER 5 - Dalit Environmentalism in Post Colonial Uttar Pradesh

In the fifth chapter describe to progress of the Dalit movement in post-colonial Uttar Pradesh. This chapter deals with the socio-economic condition of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. It attempts to understand the poverty and ecological problems of Dalits. The programs and objectives of the Republican Party of India, the Left movement, the Dalit Panther movement, Bhoodan Movement, BAMCEF, Ds-4, and BSP etc. have been analyzed to understand the nature of the Dalit movement and the demand for their resources. In addition, it also mentions the emergence of Dalit social organizations, which have been mainly illuminating ecological problems. It has also seen the major ecological problems faced by Dalits and the role of caste in growing ecological problems. The Human Rights Commission data, NSS data and other

government and private data have been analyzed to understand the ecological problems of Dalits.

CHAPTER 6 – Conclusion

Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion of the study and proposes certain findings of the study. This chapter attempts to highlights the broad observations, findings and further potentialities of research in this area.

This chapter essentially narrates the schematic plan of the study and attempt to propose the analytical and conceptual tools for organizing this study. Having done so, the next chapter attempts to deal with the emergence of Dalit movement from ecological perspective.

CHAPTER-II

DALIT MOVEMENT AND RESOURCES OF NATURE

ABSTRACT OF CHAPTER:

This chapter proposes that the Dalit movement in colonial India has a fascinating ecological dimension. Existing literature on Dalit movement mainly focus on the social justice, civil rights, and movements against caste based discrimination. On account of this, the ecological dimension of Dalit movement remained to be a less explored domain which this chapter attempts to explore. The main objective of this chapter is to identify and analyse the Dalit struggle from ecological perspective.

CHAPTER- II**INTRODUCTION**

Struggle for access to resources with collective action has been one of the important futures of social movements all over the world. Ecology and Dalit movements are not an exception to this trend. The existing literature on Dalit movement gives overwhelming attention to struggle for social justice in the realm of politics and economic exploitation of Dalits. Consequently the stakes of Dalits over resources of nature and ecology remained outside of Dalit discourse. At the same time, literature on environmental history did not give adequate focus on social dynamics in shaping the resource use practices in India. As result of this predicament, neither Dalit studies nor environmental history attempted to capture the ecological dimension to Dalit movement in modern India in an adequate manner. This chapter attempts to capture the evolutionary trajectory of Dalit movement from ecological perspective.

For narration of evolutionary trajectory of Dalit movement from ecological perspective, this chapter is divided into five sections. The first section mentions about the phenomena of social movement and its connection with Dalit movement, the second section defines what is Dalit is movement, the third section proposes the factors for emergence of Dalit movement, fourth section proposes a brief discussion on organizational efforts of Dalits social and political reform initiatives and final section locates ecological dimension into the process of Dalit movements. All these sections are designed and explained to capture the way Dalit movement evolved, factors that influenced the process and ecological dimension of such movement.

I

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND DALIT ISSUES

This section mentions about the importance of broader framework of social movement and its connection with Dalit movement in India. The general perception is that social movements in fact are fissures of the social stress and dissent voices on the way society functions. Such movements could be seen mainly from the 1960s in India. Dalit movement is also a part of this larger process wherein an active and vibrant movement by Dalits surfaced after 1970s. It is this context that inspired scholars to explore and document history of Dalit movement in India in other words Dalit collectivity for justice.

Generally, social movements are reflections of dissent voices on the way socio-economic and political conditions are managed by modern society. Various scholars have defined social movement in a different ways. These definitions highlight the following features: as a collective behavior, a process of social and political insurgency, isolated social fact, epiphenomenal expression of deeper structural pull in the social system, mobilizing for political purposes, social action conditioned by the actors own frames of reference in consonant communication with the social environment or context and several others. In normative way social movement defined in the following words: “A social movement is not a union of a special interest group. It is like a cognitive field, a new conceptual space filled with dynamic relationships connecting different groups and organizations. It is through the tension between various organizations to define and act on the ideological space that becomes the hallmark of a social movement”.¹ The features and definition of social

¹Subhash Sharma, *Why People Protest: An Analysis of Ecological Movements*, Publication Division, New Delhi, 2009, p.13.

movement reflect the trend that social collectivity and its convergence at a point to launch a fight to achieve its objective.

Soon after independence, the literature on social movements emerged as an important genre of social sciences and humanities disciplines. M.S.A. Rao has contributed a lot for conceptual and theoretical framework of social movements. A string of social protest movements by women, students, tribes, Dalits etc received the attention of scholars. The broad feature of social movements received attention of first generation of scholars. Firstly, the notion of collective mobilization is perceived as the essential component of social movements. Secondly, it has been proposed that a social movement is objectively oriented towards bringing about change, either partial or total, in the existing system of social relationships, values and norms in favor of oppressed and marginalized sections. The change-oriented nature of social movements, with an ideology, can be differentiated from organized efforts resisting change and opting for maintaining a status quo. A social movement thus based on an ideology with collective effort, to bring about changes in socio-economic and political aspects of society. Attempt has been made to classify social movement on the basis of one or the criterion. On the basis of focus, social may be classified into linguistic, religious, sectarian, caste, peasant, worker, tribal, racial, ethnic, student and women. Taking the nature of social change as the criterion, movements may be classified into reformative, transformative and revolutionary.² The academic foundations of social movements were thus laid down in India.

The general trend in social process is that a collective action in the form of movement arises when some kind of tension, conflict, or contradiction exists between

² M.S.A. Rao, *Social Movement and Social Transformation: a Study of two Backward Class Movements in India*, McMillan, 1979, pp. 12-13.

two groups, sub-systems or groups and sub-systems in a society. It has often been said that a social movement emerges and acquires prominence due to the structural incompatibility of perceptions, visions and values between two sections of society. Demonstrators and activists seek to challenge the existing mode of life either in totality or in part, and wish to replace it with their new mode of reality. On account of these factors, social movements are neither accidents nor factors of change; they are collective actions at the highest level of great cultural orientation.³

To further the discussion on discourse of human collective action, it can be observed that a social movement is a deliberate collective effort in any direction and in any way, to abjure violence, illegality, revolution or to promote a return to the utopian world to which a community wished to retreat. Social movements are thus differ markedly from historical movements, trends or tendencies, and may have significance in shedding a light on the problems of interpreting and interpreting social movement, the effects of unconscious or irrational factors in human behavior.⁴

Ghanshyam Shah has presented an exhaustive review on social movements in India and attempted to further the frontiers of academic research on social movements. Movements by peasants, tribes, women, Dalits etc are analyzed. For him, social movement must essentially have well defined organization, to achieve its goals. Shah has pointed out that much of the literature of social movements is concerned with positivist or factual aspects of social movements ignoring the phenomenological aspects.⁵

³ Ibid, pp. 13-14.

⁴ Ghanshyam Shah, *Social Movement in India: A Review of Literature*, Sage, New Delhi, 2004, p.19.

⁵ Ibid.

The Marxist scholarship has worked intensely on social movements and introduced several new analytical tools for exploring the documenting movements by oppressed sections of Indian society. This trend is pioneered by A.R. Desai,⁶ Dhanagare⁷, Sumit Sarkar,⁸ and several other scholars. This approach emerged as prominent framework in 1980s and documented social movements from class perspective. The point this approach highlights is that the collectivity of marginalized sections is a natural outcome of capitalistic forms of exploitation and such movement could not achieve solid success due to middle class leadership which eventually compromise with capitalist lobby.

Theoretical and methodological innovations into the literature on social movements brought about by postcolonial approach to social sciences. This approach acquired prominence from the mid 1990s onwards. Subscribing to this approach, Rajendra Singh proposes that the social movements and collective actions as phenomenology of consciousness. In a larger perspective, it has been proposed that social movements safeguard the society from concentration of power in some groups. The social representation of contemporary Indian society, they sketched and explained earlier, reflect the play of multiple conflicting social development concerning various groups and communities. Social movement thus signifies the dense bunches and clusters of conflicting actions of a collectivity against an adversary for certain goals and objectives. The social dissent in India can be observed from the emergence of different forms of collective actions: tribal and ecology, Dalits, human rights, issue of autonomy, agrarian questions, sub-nationalism, patriarchy, etc.⁹

⁶ A. R. Desai, *Peasant Struggles in India Bombay*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1979.

⁷ D. N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India 1920-1950*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983.

⁸ Sumit Sarkar, *Popular Movements and 'Middle Class' Leadership in Late Colonial India: Perspectives and Problems of a "History from Below"*, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1983.

⁹ Rajendra Singh, *Social Movement Old and New: A Post-Modernist Critique*, SAGE Publications, 2011, pp. 304-305.

The will of society to change is understood and defined by its collective actions and expressions of social movements. Movements for social change are conceived as manifestation of a dynamic process that strives to bring change in social process. The literature dealing with new social movements proposes that marginalized and exploited people evolve a conscience of collectivities which fight for environment and ecology, against the upliftment and displacement of rural-tribal populations by the state. It also fights for gender equality, civil liberties, etc., and grassroots level social work in rural and tribal areas. Social movements generally related to the value system of societies which, by nature, seek freedom, equality and social justice. Social movements thus carry over historical agency and express this agency in social actions to change in favor of the new value framework of society.¹⁰

The concept of social movement enable us to see society not as a stable entity which theological and traditional outlook upholds, rather as a constantly contested space among various sections of society for maximizing their stakes. The degree of social dissent and its expression in the public sphere became unprecedented in colonial pried and subsequently in post colonial India. This is the way democratic India as a nation and society begun to emerge and the process is still going on. The movement by Dalits is a part of this process and reflects both revolutionary and transformative elements aimed dismantling the traditional social disabilities imposed by diriment sections. Dalit movement shows a consistent quest of Dalits for change in their livelihoods which are disabled and crippled by socio-economic and cultural process that are prevailed in India. The assertion of Dalits for better life is thus a structural having wide spectrum of demands in which demand for access to natural resources and ecological resources and conditions is a part.

¹⁰Ibid.

DALIT MOVEMENT AND ITS VOICE

At the outset, the issue of who is a Dalit needs to be explored. It has still been a contested academic question and debated public discourse in India. Generally, the term Dalits is used for those groups who have been considered untouchable for centuries and most of them are still suffering from social exclusion due to their ethnic and professions.¹¹ Large portion of Dalit population are subjected to marginalization from the mainstream and is struggling to acquire basic natural and civic rights. Studies on caste system convincingly prove that Dalit community has been a victim of a hierarchical social system which placed them at the bottom of social structure and thereby undermined their socio-economic mobility.¹² The use of the word Dalit also shows the unifying class-consciousness and the movement of the direction and equality of the unified class-consciousness and its human rights.¹³ Undoubtedly, neither the identity of Dalit is a homogenous society nor is there any single definite ideologue of the Dalit movement.¹⁴ It has many forms, structures and visions often aim at struggle to attain human dignity and freedom from exploitation. Historically, Dalit movement is one of the significant counter hegemonic voices which fought against socio-economic and cultural hegemony of dominant sections of Indian society. Inspired by Phule's notion of sons of the soil which claims that shudras and atishudras are original ethnic groups of India and their greatness should be resorted with struggle at one level and Ambedkar's call of educate, agitate and organize which

¹¹ Lella Karunyakara, *From Dalit to Pavitra Dalit-History of Dalit Identity*, Dalwis Publishers, 2018.

¹² Dipankar Gupta, *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991; Andre Bettle, (1965), *Caste, Class and Power, Changing Patterns of Stratification in Tanjore Village*, University of California Press, California.

¹³ A. Swaroop, 'Local Roots of Dalit Politics in Uttar Pradesh: A Study from Historical Perspective', *The research journal of social sciences*, May 2019, volume 10 number 5, pp. 547-553.

¹⁴ S.M. Michael, eds, *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values*, Sage, New Delhi, 1999.

created a sense of assertion Dalit movement took birth in colonial period and still going on.¹⁵

It would be useful to define the notion and concept of Dalit movement at first. Gail Omvedt is one of the pioneers of study on Dalit movement in India. She defines Dalit movement as a struggle for democratic rights of Dalits in the context of British colonial rule.¹⁶ Elinor Jelleot defines Dalit movement as a quest of Dalits to acquire better life with diversified strategies which includes struggle, conflict and other forms of dissent.¹⁷ Christofar Jefforlot perceives Dalit movement as salient revolution which aimed at transforming the lives of Dalits from oppression to liberation.¹⁸ Rosalind who worked on Phule, defines Dalit movement as a cultural assertion of marginalized section to gain respectable status in the emerging modern society during the British colonial rule.¹⁹ Gopal Guru offers an elastic definition to Dalit movement by the way of terming it a movement for liberation from oppression by using both physical struggle and epistemological tools.²⁰ Aloysius proposes that Dalit movement is an attempt being made by Dalit society to situate them into the process of nation making in the context of colonial rule being dominated by upper caste hegemony.²¹ According to Kshirsagar Dalit movement means an a continuous attempt and struggle being made by Dalit thinkers, activists and common people to achieve resources and respect

¹⁵ R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and Its Leaders (1857-1956)*, Print Publication, New Delhi, 1994.

¹⁶ Gail Omvedt, *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, Sage, New Delhi, 1994.

¹⁷ Eleanor Zelliot, *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1992.

¹⁸ Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Caste in North India*, Hurst & company, London, 2003.

¹⁹ Rosalind O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth-Century Western India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.

²⁰ Gopal Guru, *The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012.

²¹ G. Aloysius, *Nationalism without a Nation in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997.

which are denied for several centuries by traditional Indian society.²² The meaning of Dalit movement thus means a transformative movement by the collective action of Dalits for better life.

The Dalit-view of Indian society mainly challenges the values of the dominant class inherent in them. Traditionally, Brahmanism had kept the Shudra-Dalits away from knowledge and wealth.²³ Generally, the caste situated in the upper ladder of social hierarchy used the power of religion on the one side and the princely power of governance on the other to exploit the majority population of society. The Dalit critique of Brahmanism simply means not accepting the Varna and caste system and breaking the caste structure. From the very beginning, the biggest challenge before the Dalit movement is to fight against the ideology of Brahmanism which was perceived as main ideological base to social exclusion.²⁴

The basic nature of the Dalit movement is undoubtedly a social protest for many things and aimed at achieving dignified and comfortable life. It was the lower social status that determines their everyday life and existence was the target of the movement. So the movement was essentially aimed at carving out a respectable social space by the way of struggle with oppressive elements in mainstream society. Dalit movement perceives egalitarian social order as pre-condition for inclusive economic and political order based upon which India as nation to be built.²⁵ The reason for such standpoint adopted by Dalit movement was due to the fact that the intelligentsia in British India mainly dominated by the upper castes and did not represent the concerns

²² R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.5.

²³ R.S. Sharma, *Shudras in Ancient India: A Social History of the Lower Order Down to Circa A.D. 600*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1990.

²⁴ G.P. Deshpande, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*, Left Word, New Delhi, 2002.

²⁵ V.M. Ravi Kumar, 'Inclusive Environmentalism: A Study of Jotiba Phule's Ideas from Ecological Perspective', *Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies*, Vol-1, July-Dec2013.

and anxieties of Dalits into public sphere. That is the reason why the Dalit society started to feel that it is impossible to get positive changes without struggle. The Dalit movement thus belongs to the underprivileged, deprived and exploited and socially low-ranked communities who have been kept away from basic human and natural rights for centuries. These are communities that have been engaged in serving the elite for centuries, but have still failed to get a better life for them. This movement belongs to the section which works for the production of food or belongs to the peasant and working class.²⁶

The traditional socio-cultural status of Dalits castes were low and they were excluded from mainstream society in all walks of life. This condition begun to change if not drastically but in a gradual way in British India in which for the first time Indian society interacted with vibrant western society. This interaction brought about several changes in the way traditional Indian society functions. Socio-religion reform movement is a product of this interaction. However social reform enterprise needless to say that mainly confined to reform in upper castes Brahmanical society.²⁷ It was this hiatus between upper caste reformist framework and lower castes needs resulted in emergence of protest movements by marginalized sections of Indian society.

In the absence of space in the reformist initiatives, marginalized sections too begun to speak out the problems that they were subjected in the form of collective voice. Movements of women, tribes, workers and Dalits are a product of this new

²⁶ Subhash Sharma, *Why People Protest: An Analysis of Ecological Movements*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 2009.

²⁷ Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

dynamism in Indian society.²⁸ Movement by Dalit needs to be seen in this perspective. The point to be noted here is that Dalit movement and its struggle aimed at gaining access to better life which includes distribution of material benefits such as natural resources and psychological dignity which means respectable socio-cultural status. It is in this process in which demand for natural and ecological resources constitutes an important component. While much of literature on Dalit history of modern India concentrates on intellectual efforts to create unity among Dalit masses and their socio-political importance, the questions of how Dalit as a class emerged, what are the contributory factors for such process remained less explored? The fact is that it is this process that enables us to locate the stakes of Dalits in the ecological history of Modern India.

II

REASONS FOR EMERGENCE OF DALIT MOVEMENT

Having defined the concept of Dalit movement in the preceding section, this section concentrates on the process of emergence of untouchable or Dalits as a class at all India level. In other words, attempt has been made in this section to document the ways in which diversified castes were traditionally treated as untouchables became a class and came to be known as depressed castes. It is this class that emerged as articulate spokesperson for rights and demand of Dalits. The struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed classes had thus begun to take shape in colonial period. This movement was a combination of material and ideological factors. It is natural that no community/section would be opting to live in inhuman subjugation forever,

²⁸ Mukul Sharma, *Caste & Nature: Dalits and Indian Environmental Politics*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2017.

and obviously no society would sustain the shock of disunity and inequality for a long period of time. The voice of Dalits emerged on account of new changes introduced by the British and importantly new economic opportunities made them mobile and the access to western education ignited the minds of Dalits and prepared them to question the existing exploitative system.²⁹

Why we begun to hear the voice of Dalit communities in colonial India? It is this question that locates the genesis of Dalit movement in India. Before British colonial rule we did have protest of Dalits against untouchability and exclusion. It was in the form of Bhakti movement and saints who raised their voice against discriminatory practices of upper caste Hindus.³⁰ But in colonial India, the method of protest and struggle of Dalit expanded from the domain of religion to wider public sphere. The important question is that how British rule helped or created a congenial atmosphere for Dalits to raise voice against domination of the upper creed of Indian society.

The fundamental question and in fact of centrality Dalit movement is the issue of untouchability and fight to mitigate it. It is a distinct Indian social institution that legitimizes and enforces practices of discrimination against people born into particular castes. Although comparative forms of discrimination are found all over the world, the system of untouchability is indeed a unique practice that is bedrock of the institution of caste system in India.³¹ It is a remarkable phenomenon that is universally practiced social norm in Indian subcontinent with different degree of variation.³² The caste system divides society into closed, hereditary and endogamous groups organized

²⁹ R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders*, p.1.

³⁰ Eleanor Zelliot, *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1992.

³¹ M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1972.

³² G. Shah, *Untouchability: In Rural India*, Sage, New Delhi, 2006.

based upon their ritual status. In the classical version, castes derive their meaning and status from their relative position in a hierarchical ranking based on traditional-religious conceptions of purity and pollution.³³ Historically, the caste system classified people based on their occupation and status. Each caste was associated with an occupation, which meant that those who born in a particular caste were born into an occupation associated with their caste, they had no choice except to follow what is assigned to them. Furthermore and perhaps more important, each caste held a specific position in the hierarchy of social status, therefore, broadly, not only occupational status was ranked by social status, but another ranking within each broad occupational category. In classical terms, social and economic status should have been sharply separated in the well crafted social segregation for several centuries.³⁴

What is the essential disadvantage of casts system to Dalits? At practical level, economic property and access to wealth and social status have a strong correlation in all human societies including India. Thus there was a close relationship between social and economic status particularly in the context of caste based social order in India. It is evident with the general trend that the upper castes were if not completely but mostly have higher economic status, whereas the lower castes were almost always of lower economic status except rare exceptions. The economic backwardness often reinforces social and ecological disabilities. The untouchable castes, on account of their low economic status, placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. They are considered to be so impure that their mere touch perceived as reason for pollution by upper castes and often bringing terrible punishment for the former and forcing the latter to perform elaborate purification rituals to get out the pollution. In fact, notions

³³ Louis Dumout, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1980.

³⁴ G. Shah, *Untouchability in Rural India*, Sage, New Delhi, 2006, pp.19-20.

of distance pollution existed in many regions of India such that even the mere presence or the shadow of an untouchable person is considered polluting.³⁵ This form of severe exclusion of Dalits in India may not be universal, but exists in different forms. Alienation from economic resources thus perpetuates the social and ecological exclusion of Dalits in India.

Apparently, untouchability is an intense and mainly inhuman aspect of the caste system that sets severe social sanctions against members of castes situated at the bottom of the purity and pollution scale. Dalits are subjected to different forms of isolation that cripple their livelihood. Traditionally they are prohibited from sharing drinking water sources or participating in group religious worship, social ceremonies and festivals, sharing public roads, schools and other resources available to non Dalits. At the same time, untouchability may also include forced inclusion in a subordinate role, such as being forced to play the drums on religious programs as well. Performing publicly visible acts of humiliation and subjugation is an important part of the practice of untouchability. Common examples include the use of gestures for everyday abuse and humiliation. In addition, untouchability is also always associated with various types of economic exploitation, usually through forced, unpaid labour, or confiscation of property. Thus, untouchability is an all-India phenomenon, although its specific form and intensity vary greatly across regions and socio-historical contexts.³⁶

Indian history witnesses the evolution of this inhuman system for several centuries. What logic it has in preventing large section of people from mainstream society? Ethnologist Stanley Rice believes that untouchables were tribes who were

³⁵ Ibid. p.20.

³⁶ Ibid, p.21.

won and subjugated by the Aryans. According to Prabhati Mukherjee, the practice of untouchability was preceded by a long history of social and cultural enmity on the part of the Vedic Aryans towards certain groups among the indigenous population, which were perceived as their way of life, their pastoral wealth and their religious practices.³⁷ According to this view, until 800 BCE, the Aryans had cordial relations with local communities that recognized them politically and culturally. Such communities were allowed to function within the periphery of the Arya Samaj. But the natives who did not submit to the invaders — such as *dasa/dasyu*, *raksha*, *asura*, *paani*, etc. were identified as enemies. It was in the later Shudra period that the *Vis-e-Vis* of the Aryans recognized the isolation and cultural-religious prejudice perpetrated by certain groups as hostile and of identity which turned into untouchability. The Aryans could not bring all the indigenous groups under their control. Some groups revolted against the suzerainty of the Aryans in the economic and cultural fields. This process was perceived as one of the important reasons for evolution of untouchability.³⁸

Having both academic and personal experience on Indian society, Ambedkar strongly rejected the racial theory. He argued that there is no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of India by the Arya race and that they considered *Dasas* and *Dasyus*, native to India. According to him there was no racial distinction between Aryans and slaves. As far as the physical characteristics are concerned, there was no difference between the Brahmins and the untouchables in the same area. Ambedkar claimed that

³⁷ Ibid, p.23.

³⁸ Ibid, p.24

there was no separate Shudra Varna during the Vedic period. The Shudras ranked as part of the Kshatriya Varna in Indo-Aryan society.³⁹

According to Marxist scholars, untouchability lies in the process of the mode of production. Otherwise, there were socio-economic categories. The Chaturvarna division of society was a class division, a social division of labour. It became hereditary over time, which distorted and modified class formation and class relations.⁴⁰ However, there is still controversy among scholars on the question of whether the Shudras were slaves in ancient India.⁴¹ Morton Klass hypothesized that egalitarian social groups developed a stratified social system due to the increase in population and the origin of surpluses.⁴² For Marxist academicians, origin of Dalits took shape in the mode of production and division of labour in Indian conditions.

According to Mohinder Singh, the depressed castes are essentially consists of small tenants, agricultural serfs and labourers, as rural artisans, servants and sweepers- all economically and socially depressed for centuries. As small tenants they occupy the most unfertile of the rural land and the smallest sized holdings but pay the highest rents and are subjected to harassing abwabs and illegal extraction. As agricultural labourers they earn very small amount of money and hence do not have access to material assets and compelled to life as bond-slaves for generations.⁴³ The crux of this discussion is that as a social category, Dalits are subjected to low graded occupations and subjected with the social practice of caste and untouchability for several centuries. The logic of traditional castes system according to Jotiba Phule is to

³⁹ B.R. Ambedkar, *Who are Shudras?* Thackers Publisher, Bombay, 1949, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁰ D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 1975.

⁴¹ S.G. Sardesai, *Progress and Conservatism in Ancient India*, People's Publishing House, 1986, p.22.

⁴² Morton Klass, *Caste: The Emergence of the South Asian Social System*, Philadelphia: Institute for Study of Human Issue 1980.

⁴³ Mohinder Singh, *The Depressed Classes: Their Economic and Social condition*, 1947.

perpetuate the domination of upper castes over lower castes in order to extract their labour for their advancement. Caste system and untouchability are thus socio-cultural institutions that evolved to cater to the needs of upper strata of Indian society by the way exploiting lower sections. In pre-colonial period Dalits are basically engaged as landless labour, leather crafts man, village servants and other occupations that are treated as impure by Hindu society.

The advent of the British rule created a different condition in Indian and opened some new avenues to marginalized section. We do not suggest that British rule has emancipated Dalits. What this study proposes is that British rule certainly created new avenues and opportunities for Dalits to get in new profession and other facilities which were not accessible in pre-colonial period. The Depressed caste was mainly dependent on agriculture⁴⁴ and small handloom industries. Most of the Dalit castes did not have their own land; they often used to take a small part of the land of other landlords on rent. According to Mohinder Singh, the proportion of depressed class people who have acquired occupancy or statutory rights is small. The holdings of these tenants are also very small. About 80 percent of their holdings lie between $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1.5 bighas.⁴⁵ Thus they can be eaten by agricultural labourers. With this type of farming, he was known to have grains only for life. Along with this, they were also associated with the daily work of leather, the work of removing dirt from villages, washing clothes, etc.⁴⁶ Changes begun to appear in the social mobility of Dalits in British India on account of rapid economic changes it had initiated.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.23.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.28.

⁴⁶ W. Crooke, *The Tribe and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. 1, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1896.

URBANIZATION AND DALITS IN COLONIAL PERIOD

Spatial history of Dalits in colonial period has several fascinating facts about the journey of Dalits from rural to urban sphere and the impact of such process on emergence of Dalit collectivity. This historical trend is under researched domain of Dalit history with rare exception. Nandini Guptoo explored urbanization and Dalit politics in colonial north India.⁴⁷ The regional level dimensions of this process have fascinating scope for further investigation. The undisputed fact is that advent and consolidation of the British rule has kicked off rapid urbanization process in India. The East India Company being a commercial company, promoted market relations in India. It was in this context the process of urbanization gained momentum. This process initially took place in the presidency cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Subsequently, several small and medium urban centers which are places of administrative, market and trade centers have emerged. These cities expanded rapidly and emerged as economic and administrative pillars of the British raj.⁴⁸

There are many factors that influenced the process of urbanization. Some of the important factors as follow: commercial towns, military cantonments, administrative units, etc. These towns require large number of sanitary workers, sweepers, maid servants and labour in factories. It was this process that had created new opportunities for Dalits to migrate from rural areas to urban areas. Even though the professions offered to them are not dignified, but moving out of rural areas was considered as an important step towards escaping from oppression in rural areas.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Nandini Guptoo, *Politics of Urban Poor in the early 19th century India*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2001.

⁴⁸ Tirthankar Roy, *Economic History of India, 1857-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006.

⁴⁹ Sasha Riser-Kositsky, *The Political Intensification of Caste: India Under the Raj*, *Penn History Review*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, 2009, pp. 31-53.

The Dalit community which was essentially belong land less agricultural laborer was happy to get away from agricultural work in search of wages came to the industrial factories. Thus, the rural population began to shift towards industrial settlements. Colonies for British government employees were built near these industrial settlements, as well as markets developed to meet their daily needs nearby. These colonies gradually began to take the form of towns and cities. In this way, new cities emerged in different regions of India, and then the same old cities also developed. It was in this context that the people of the Dalit community in the villages actively migrated to emerging urban towns. Nandani Gooptu has focused on the history of development of urbanization in Uttar Pradesh. According to her, “the politics of the urban working classes have not, of course, been entirely ignored in Indian historiography.”⁵⁰ From the mid-nineteenth century, the nature of the state changed again with the consolidation of colonial rule after the uprising of 1857. The process of urbanization gradually regained its dynamism, reaping the harvest of a number of interconnected developments under the Pax Britannica. The Government expenditure was stepped up considerably for the construction of canals and railway and for the reconstitution of centers of civil military administration. Agrarian production and internal trade along the new railway routes, especially in grain, grew, albeit at an uneven pace and with regional variations. Consumption, too, expanded again as the population slowly rose and as urban culture gradually altered to generate new lifestyles and social mores.⁵¹

Large scale migration of Dalits to urban centers to be employed in sanitary works was one of the important features of economic history of modern India. This

⁵⁰ Nandini Gooptu, p.1.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.28.

trend unfortunately has not been explored by existing scholarship adequately. Most of the Dalits are absorbed as sanitary workers, maids in the house of European officers, sweepers other professions which the upper castes are entire reluctant or refused to work. Apparently urbanization brought some relief from the oppression of rural land lords, but even in urban sphere certain degree of untouchability continued. Dalits are allowed to live in separate quarters and not allowed to mix with caste Hindu population. Unfortunately, the migration of Dalits to urban towns did not receive the attention of historians. In fact at present we do not have regional level studies on the pattern of migration wherein Dalits moved from village to town. We are sure it would be a promising area of research to be undertaken in the field of economic history of British India. The fact however is that large scale migration of Dalits from villages to town took place in the early part of 18th century and continued in the 19th century.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DALITS IN COLONIAL PERIOD

Initially, export and import oriented factory system and subsequently establishment of heavy industries nearby presidency towns resulted in rapid industrialization in India. These industries required massive labour force consisting of both technical and non-technical in nature. It was this process that attracted large number of Dalits who wanted to escape from the exploitation of rural land owners. Naturally those who have land in villages were not interested to move to towns in search of employment.⁵² Dalits on account of landlessness on the one hand and stigmatization on the other hand were happy to move out of villages. So the migrant labour to industrial towns is mainly happened to be marginalized section in general and Dalits in particular.

⁵² Arthur Niehoff, 'Caste and Industrial Organization in North India', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol.3, No.4, March 1959, pp. 494-508.

The point to be noted here is that large scale migration of Dalits took place to industrial towns such as Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Surat, Ahamabad, Agra, Kanpur etc. The industries where Dalits were being employed are cotton textile, jute, plantation, railways, and particularly leather industries which employed large number of Dalits in United Province, Madras Presidency. The demographic change from rural to urban thus could be seen in case of Dalits in British India. It this population gradually able to improve their material wealth and articulated the concerns of Dalits. Migration from rural to migration sphere enabled Dalits to acquire consciousness of being a human and begun to develop a critical outlook towards sources of oppression.

When we talk of recruitment of labour force for the modern factory system in India, the first issue to consider is the character of the population who migrate from rural areas in search of industrial employment. It is generally believed that rural migrants in urban areas are mainly economically depressed and socially marginalized. In other words, it is believed that there has been a disproportionately large rural outflow of low-caste people, especially of various untouchable groups. It is sometimes said that untouchable caste groups first moved to industrialization centers and later the upper castes moved. It is however not desirable to suggest that majority of urban migrant are from Dalit background. But fact is that substantial section of Dalit population moved from village to urban centers.⁵³

There is a general and popular perception is that industry is caste-blind to host causes, some or all of which are relevant to any industrial condition of consequence. This may be due to an inadequate supply of labor from any one caste, due to an inability to determine the specific caste's affiliation in an industrial situation, and also

⁵³ M. D. Morris, 'Caste ant the Evolution of the Industrial Workforce in India', *Proceeding of American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 104, No. 2, 19 April 1960, pp.124-133.

due to a lack of concern with the occurrence of the employer, or because of the desire of all castes at all things to do. It is generally suggested that given such caste blindness and the resulting mix of industrial workers in factories, the caste system will eventually be underestimated. An extreme version of the subject has been advanced by Kingsley Davis: "If industrialism moves rapidly in India, the caste system would have essentially disappeared by the end of this century."⁵⁴

COTTON TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Cotton and textile industry was one of the important industry which created massive employment opportunities in colonial period. Large scale migration of rural population to urban towns to find employment was one of the important socio-economic and geographic features. One of the most significant effects of British rule was the decline and destruction of urban and rural handicraft industries, India not only lost the overseas market in Asia and Europe, but also lost its own domestic market. It is well established theoretical proposition that the Indian market was filled with cheap, machine-made goods from England. It was this process that contributed for growth of mobile labour and industry in urban areas.⁵⁵ The British textile industry employed 2,50,000 workers in the 1810–20s. Sixty years later, labour employment was almost the same, but by then everyone had left the house loam for factory labour. The first Indian cotton textile mill was opened in early 1838 at Forst Gluster near Calcutta. Although Bengal was home to textiles for a long time, it could not provide a congenial climate for the mechanized production of textile end yarns until the beginning of the present century. The city of Mumbai and its magnificent harbour

⁵⁴ Davis Kingsley, *The Population of India and Pakistan*, Princeton University Press, 1951, p.176.

⁵⁵ B.R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India: From 1860 to the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

started the first cotton textile mills there in 1851 and from 1854 pioneered the establishment of a large number of cotton textile mills in rapid succession.⁵⁶

The cotton and textile industry rapidly developed in Western India. The first power driven mills in Ahmadabad were started in 1861 and a several entrepreneur traders engaged in this process. This process resulted in phenomenon expansion of the industry which is evident by expansion of number of cotton mills to 27 by 1900. Comparatively, the proportion of the population when compared to the total industrial population of all India figures fell from 62% in 1801-13 to 15% in 1901. Further small scale producers, manufacturing cotton, silk and woolen textiles, declined from 2.4 million in 1911 to 2.2 million in 1951. However as machine spun yarn supplanted handspun yarn and as the fly shuttle replaced the throw shuttle in parts of India, output per worker in handloom production must have risen. The all India handloom production rose from 965 million yards in 1902-03 and 1912-13 to 1068 million yards in 1930-31 and 1937-38, proving that this major traditional activity was marked by rising output per worker. But taking the entire manufacturing sector into account, its share in total employment did not decline if we rely on the figures for males. But if estimated in total, i.e., along with females and males, figures show a decline from 9.6% in 1911 to 8.7% in 1951.⁵⁷

The impact of cotton and textile industry had exercised significant impact upon the labour force of India. It opened a new window for Dalits to migrate from village society to urban sphere. Such a migration was perceived as means to move out of the oppressive conditions in which most of Dalits are forced to live. This trend is

⁵⁶ Malik Shawal, *History of Cotton Textile Industry in India* (<https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/industries/cotton/history-of-cotton-textile-industry-in-india/69162>)

⁵⁷ Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency During the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 644-45.

evident in employment of Dalits in cotton textile mills in Nagpur, Ahmadabad, Bombay and other industrial towns located in western India. It was this migratory population that sowed the seeds of Dalit consciousness as they were exposed to better conditions.

PLANTATION INDUSTRIES AND DALITS

British brought about revolutionary changes in terms of land use pattern in India. It has altered the per-colonial land using pattern by the way of introducing commercial agriculture at one level and plantation of tea, coffee etc at another level. Plantation economy required massive labor force. Both tribes and Dalits were drawn into the brigade of plantation labour not only in India but also across the British Empire. It initiated massive spatial and demographic movement of labour and made it more mobile force than it was in the pre-colonial period. Dalit on account of their degraded position in village were naturally became an active force in this dynamic movement. Large number of Dalits moved out of village to work in plantation in different parts of India and some of them even went to outside of India. Large scale migration of Dalits on account of plantation economy did not improve their status significantly. But it made them move out of traditional oppressive social system prevailed in villages and exposed them to different social eco-system in which they begun to imagine an utopia of liberation from oppression and poverty. While the engagement of tribes in plantation brought out some studies, the history of tribes in plantation economy remained a less explored areas which needs to be paid attention by the Dalit scholarship in future research.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ K R & T C Das Sharma, *Globalization and Plantation Workers In North-East India*, Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2009.

LEATHER INDUSTRIES

Leather industry in India got a big boom during the British colonial rule and in fact continued as one of the prosperous industries which were not severely affected by the process of de-industrialization. As it depends upon the raw leather, untouchable communities engaged in this leather related profession got massive demand. It created an active and mobile labor force to be employed in trade and factors engaged in leather business. This industry mainly concentrated in United Provinces and Madras Presidency. Chamars in north India and Madigas in South India gradually moved from villages to towns and got employment in leather factories and other leather related professions. Besides this, at rural level, raw hides also got massive demands and encouraged more Dalits to engage into leather related trade.

In United Provinces, towns such as Cawnpore, Agra and Meerut became centers of leather manufactures. The British encouraged export oriented leather business at one level and domestic demand created by army needs at another level.⁵⁹ This prosperous leather business provided employment to large number of Chamar who gradually acquired upward mobility. It was because of this demand that, almost coincident with the occupation of Cawnpore in 1801, the Chamars settled down in the city and took up their hereditary trade of tanning and manufacturing leather articles. It is seen that leather work has been adopted as the chief occupation of Chamars from time immemorial. It is also clear that the use of leather has been very common in India from ancient times. This is not surprising in view of the fact that not only in India but also in the whole of the world, leather Industry has had a long history of its own. The establishment of a number of large factories in Cawnpore, which included

⁵⁹ Monica Sharma, *The Emergence Of Leather Industry In Cawnpore (1861-1947)*, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 59, 1998 pp. 539-547.

the Army Boot Factory (1880), the North West Tannery Company (1904), the United Provinces Tannery Co. (1904), the Cawnpore Tannery (1896), etc created a massive demand for leather artisans and tanners.⁶⁰

The twentieth century marked a new period in the trade history of the Indian leather industry. During 1900-1914, the export scene was dominated by Calcutta and Madras with the former exporting raw goods and the latter tanned ones. In 1912-13, the total export of hides/skins amounted to Rs. 8 crores as against Rs. 4 crores from Madras. This was because 17 of the 22 organized tanneries were in Madras and the rest remained scattered in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Bombay. The outbreak of World War II gave an impetus to the development of leather and leather goods industry in India. While in 1913-14 only 25 large units, employing 2,753 workers, were established, by 1941, the number of units had increased to 114 and the workers to 26,056. Before 1947, though the British had shown considerable interest in leather manufacturing in India and had even established some chrome tanning units in Bengal, India mainly exported raw hides and skins.⁶¹

Even though leather industry provided some mobility to Dalits in terms of occupation and life in urban centers, it also crystallized their stigmatized, impure and untouchable identity in urban sphere. It has created a regimented impure identity to the communities engaged in leather related works. This trend is amplified in the context of emergence of cow worship trend promoted by the Arya Samaj as a form of Hindu religious identity and assertion. Migration from village to towns thus did not defuse the stigmatized identity of Dalits, rather the Hindu revival movement made the

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25914/1/1111_chapter2.pdf

Dalit identity more regimented and gradually caste based discrimination of Dalits consolidated in the urban sphere.

INDIAN RAILWAYS AND DALITS

Introduction of railways was one of the significant measures that exercised observable impact on socio-economic conditions of India. The British bourgeoisie used their capital as a base for the construction of railways in India. Rail enthusiasts in Britain dreamed of covering the earth with cast-iron rails. In some parts of the world, there was a dire need for new inventions; most of it was needed by the colony of India and Britain. The political situation and economic trend of 19th century India inspired the British. It was believed that building railways across India would help financially. At the same time, it was also intended that Rail would provide both the development of India and a market for British goods and a source of raw materials.⁶²

The use of railways as the first traffic in India during the British era was launched between Bombay and Thane on 14 April 1853. The railways had an important function in India as the British government brought raw materials for its industrial factory and transported the manufactured goods to the market. But later it gradually spread to different regions of India and with this the railway started being used as a means of life transport.⁶³

For the development of railways, native officers and other labourers were needed to lay railway tracks and for other works. A letter dated 1 August 1872 shows that in the British period, the process of joining the laborer class in India started and gradually came to the union by being gagman, foreman, and Head clerk. After this,

⁶² https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/12705/9/09_chapter%201.pdf

⁶³ H.E. Hennessy, *Administrative History of British India 1757-1925*, Delhi, 1986, p.84.

the number was the political consciousness developed by the collectivity, which resulted in the freedom movement in the coming years.⁶⁴

The British government gradually introduced uniforms system in the railways throughout the department. Whatever the reason may have been the British, but discipline was maintained. There were many types of workers, labourers and subordinates working in the railway department. Similarly, Jamadars were appointed for cleaning. In Indian society, the untouchables, who were considered to be lower castes, often used to do cleaning work; this practice is also seen in the railway department in the British era. They were also identified by giving a special uniform to the Jamadars. With this a special type of cap was arranged for them. A proposal was made to supply this special cap for the depositors in the Railway Board office. Kulha Salt caps along with uniforms were also made necessary for entry to the first class Jamadars of the railway. Gradually the Indian Railways started recruiting high-class Indians. It is different that their number is less.⁶⁵

The railways used to place Indians in several categories; one of them was the State Railway Service. According to the Home Department's letter U.O.I. No. F: 103/37 dated January 9, 1936; the list was forwarded by some signatories on behalf of the Secretary of State for India, in which higher state railway service was provided to Indians as per the posts reserved under Schedule D. There were a total of 323 names, of which only 29 were Indians.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ National Archive, Regional Centre, Bhopal, Govt. of India, Proceedings of the Madras Government, P.W.D., 18 November, 1872.

⁶⁵ National Archive, New Delhi, Government of India, Home Department, Public Branch File No. 14/11/193.

⁶⁶ National Archive, New Delhi, Government of India, Home Department, Establishment Branch File No. 63/2/38.

The social composition of railway work force presents an interesting case study. Most of the labour engaged in railways tract construction, supply of wood to engine, sweepers to clean the platform and railways offices, gangman who supervise railway tract, and other manual labour mainly drawn from hardworking Dalit castes. Railway thus created a space for Dalits to gain employment and moved out of villages to relatively less rigid space of urban towns. It is this class that acquired consciousness of oppression and vision for emancipation.

The aforementioned section charts out the way a new Dalit class emerged in the context of the British colonial rule. It was not the primary objective of the British to improve the condition of Dalits. As their main objective was to extract resources and revenue, they did not discriminate between Dalits and non Dalits in throwing opportunities. Consequent upon this policy large number of Dalits moved out of villages and gained employment in factories, army, plantation, government employment, municipalities, railways, public works department, forest department and several other activities. We do not have any systematic studies on the way Dalits acquired the momentum of mobility in British. This can be a potential future study in the field of Dalit history of modern India. This section shows the trend that a small section of Dalits were able to move out of villages and gain employment. In this process they acquired relatively secure life, stable income and respectable life due to newly elevated material status. It is this situation that prepared the Dalit community to evolve their own ideology. It was supplied by western education initiated by the British in India.

MUNICIPALITY SYSTEM AND DALITS

The municipal government in India was born out of needs of the British for managing local areas effectively. The financial exigencies faced by the British in the mid-nineteenth century necessitated for creation of municipal government system in India. The municipalities provided relief to the district officers. The construction of new roads, bridges, streets offices medical and educational institutions and establishment of markets contributed to the urban growth in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Works connected with water supply, drainage, sanitation and collection of taxes supplemented its urban development. Municipal and local government Acts contributed to the emergence of a town in the modern sense. It has been observed that the co-ordination between the government and municipality served as the backbone of urban development.⁶⁷

A beginning of local government may be said to have been made in 1687 when, for the first time, a local governing body – a municipal corporation was set up for the city of Madras. Local government is thus slightly less than three centuries old in India. Its history since 1687 is rather chequered and even exotic. Broadly it may be divided into the following five periods, each period characterized by a definite aim and purpose.

- I. Period - 1687 to 1881 - Establishing of Municipal Government for imperial needs.
- II. Period - 1882 to 1918 - Lord Ripon's Resolution – Laying down foundations of Modern local-government.
- III. Period - 1919 to 1934 - Local Government under Provincial governments.
- IV. Period - 1935 to 1949 - Period of reconstruction.

⁶⁷ Report of the Indian statutory commission, Vol. I., London, 1930, p. 298.

- V. Period - 1950 to Present day - Post-Independence – Local Government under constitution set-up.⁶⁸

The municipal governance required large number of sanitary workers to carry on different works required for maintenance of cities and towns. Particularly sanitary works including sweeping roads, maintenance of drainage, latrines etc are the areas large numbers of Dalits are employed in newly emerged towns and cities during the British rule. It is this process resulted in large scale migration of Dalits from rural areas to urban and settling down of the former in the newly emerged space which does not give much importance to caste identities. This public sphere to some extent gave assertive capacity of Dalits on the injustice that they are subjected.

ARMY AND DALITS: THE MAHAR REGIMENT

One of the important arenas that were thrown open to Dalits was placements in army service which were not available in the pre-colonial times. The British recruited Dalits in different army operations and employees in cantonments. The field servants were always drawn from one particular untouchable caste which was then the largest one in a particular region; such castes included the Mahars in Maharashtra. These field servant castes were not considered by the general fluidal ideology to have any rights at all to the land. Yet their own traditions often described them as ancient 'sons of the soil' subjugated by invaders, and very frequently their caste duties included a power of decision-making on boundary disputes that implied some sort of primordial connection with the land. It was the castes of untouchable field servants who were and continue to be the most rebellious of all the untouchable castes.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ S.R. Maheshwari, *Local Government in India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1976, p. 14.

⁶⁹ Eleanor Zelliott, *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*, Manohar Publisher, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 33-47.

Dalits, particularly the field servant castes, such as the Mahars of Maharashtra, also provided labour for such dangerous and low-paid jobs as military service (where this was open to them), the mines, and unskilled laborer (gangmen) on the railways. In contrast, the more skilled positions in the new jute and textile factories were filled by middle-caste peasants and tenants (Marathas and Kunbis in the textile mills of Bombay, north Bihar peasants in Calcutta jute mills) as were more skilled positions and more organ issued positions (even coolies) on the railroads and elsewhere. Placing of Dalits in army resulted in emergence of self respect in emerging middle Dalit class society which begun to articulate their rights. In fact Dr. Ambedkar was a product of presence of Dalits in army.

Colonial rule and the economic conditions it had instituted had significant impact on social structure of India. The vibrancy of economic activity has opened up little unintended opportunities to marginalized sections to move from oppressive conditions to better places. It never means to say that colonial rule created conditions for emancipation of Dalits and other marginalized sections. In fact large number of tribal population was displaced due to forest policies of the British. But what can be observed in case of Dalits is that the traditional agrarian conditions are so oppressive for them that they were looking for any avenue to escape from such exploitation. Colonial economy thus created a new avenue to Dalits to seascape from traditional exploitive relations in village. It was this factors that resulted in large scale migration of Dalits from village to towns. It was this factor that was responsible for creation of new kind of awareness among Dalit population. As their migration did not alter their social status significantly, Dalits had begun to assert for new identity and several other demands for better life. The general impact of move from village to towns is that of exposing themselves to new outlook of life and new yardstick to the way

human life is all about. The improvement in material conditions in urban sphere is shaped by access to education to Dalits.

III

MODERN EDUCATION AND DALITS

Education is a key to better cognition and source for better livelihoods. Traditionally Dalits were deprived of education in India. It was due to lack of education that Dalits were unable to be part of knowledge production in spite of being backbone of agrarian economy.⁷⁰ Kancha Illiah points out that Dalit and subaltern class are the generators of life supporting skills that made civilization possible in India. But such a contribution neither preserved nor recognized due to lack of access to knowledge creation which was monopolized by Brahmans. It is this process that kept Dalits outside of mainstream society.⁷¹ Lack of access to education and knowledge production and economic marginalization has a strong correlation.

Access to education, even in lesser degree to Dalits was provided by British rule. According to Chinna Rao, education was the patronage of only a small number of privileged classes until the nineteenth century when Western education began take shape in India. By then, education was essentially directed at preparing the new generation to replace the previous generation. Such education models applied only cultural values and interests to upper castes or privileged classes. The reproduction of culture through education is known to play an important role in the reproduction of the entire social system and its domination over lower sections of Indian society. It serves as an influential means of social and political control. That is why traditional

⁷⁰ R. K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit movement in India and its Leaders*, p.45.

⁷¹ Kancha Illaiah, *Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Shudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy*, Samya, Calcutta, 1996.

Indian education was restricted to certain privileged castes. The modern education introduced by the British was theoretically if not practically open to all and its contents were mainly of secular in nature.⁷²

The British education policy had begun to take shape in the early part of the 19th century. The charter Act of 1813 permitted the missionaries to work in the Indian territories of the Company with a view to educate and proselytize the masses. In 1837, English was made the language of administration and a Government Resolution of 1844 threw subordinate positions open to Indians. The famous Wood's Dispatch of 1854, realized the need to educate the masses not only through English but through the Vernacular. The Wood Dispatch had plans to provide 'grant-in-aid' to encourage private efforts in the field of education. It targeted to open primary schools through Indigenous languages. During the period of Lord Ripon, a commission was formed under the chairmanship of W. W. Hunter, whose aim after 1857 was to evaluate the progress made in the field of education.⁷³

The Raleigh Commission was formed in 1902 under the tenure of Viceroy Curzon, in which the University Commission was established under the chairmanship of Thomas Raley for higher education. In 1914, the British Government constituted a committee under the leadership of Michael Sedler to deal with the problem of Calcutta University. On the suggestion of this commission, the Board of Secondary Education was established in U.P. Universities were established in Mysore, Patna, Banaras, Aligarh, Dhaka, Lucknow and Hyderabad on the report of Sandler Commission. Through this, education now became a provincial subject.⁷⁴

⁷² Yagati Chinna Rao, *Writing Dalit History and Other Essays*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 2007, pp.23-24.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.26-27.

⁷⁴ http://www.crnaidu.in/u/white_paper/The%20History%20and%20Evolution%20Of%20The%20Indian%20Education%20System

In 1929, the emphasis was laid on primary education through the Hartog Committee and at the same time provision was made for providing female education and vocational education. Under the Wardha Scheme, a basic education scheme was recommended, in which the provision of free and compulsory education for all children between 6 and 14 years old was put in place and it was recommended to make mother language as the medium of education.

In this respect the contributions made by the following persons and institutions are creditable. Mahatma Phule properly realizes the importance of education in improving the lot of the untouchables and backward castes. He stated very categorically that, "For want of education intellect deteriorated. For want of intellect morality decayed. For want of morality progress stopped. For want of progress wealth vanished. For want of wealth the Shudra perished. All the sorrows sprang from illiteracy. Thus inspired with the objective of uplift of untouchables he started one school exclusively for girls in 1848 in their locality itself in Pune. He continued his ceaseless efforts with all missionary zeal for the education development of the poor masses. Thus from 1848-1852, he could establish altogether 18 schools in the vicinity of Pune. His wife Savitribai Phule 1831-1897, worked as an equal partner in his mission of uplifting the poor and oppressed people. Though previously illiterate, she was inspired by Mahatma Phule, her husband and joined school only to teach in the institutions founded by Mahatma Phule as no lady teachers were available in those days to teach girl students."⁷⁵

Kshirsagar proposes that the Christian missionaries were also engaged in educating the Indian society which includes the untouchables. Obviously one cannot

⁷⁵ R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit movement in India and its Leaders*, p.46.

ignore their contribution to the spread of education and the progress of knowledge in India. To increase their activity, they identified the importance of establishing schools.⁷⁶ It is necessary to know why missionaries focused on educational activities in India as an integral part of their work. Undoubtedly the most important purpose of missionaries was to convert people to Christianity. In fact, in the early missionary history top missionaries in England refused to support educational institutions and argued that priests' duty is not to establish schools. However, the practical experience of early missionaries convinced them that they need to establish educational institutions such as schools as a means to spread the gospel of the Christ. The prime motto of missionaries in the domain of education is to educate the minds of the people so that they may be more capable of understanding and appreciating facts and evidence and knowledge of the Christian scriptures and doctrines. Another reason perhaps was that the missionaries did everything they could to increase their influence through education, health facilities, orphanages, philanthropic activities etc., which was intended to tell people that Christianity is caring religion of people. There could be another reason for this type of education is attracting people to Christen values. One of the difficulties that missionaries often experience is in gaining access to those circumstances in which Christianity can be made the subject of communication or conversation. Schools become very important in such circumstances as a medium of communication and intercourse with people from different classes, with children and parents with men and women. In the period before 1833, primary schools teaching through modern Indian languages formed a missionary educational enterprise. But between 1833 and 1853, missionaries insisted on secondary schools and colleges teaching through English.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 47.

⁷⁷ Oscar Lewis, 'Group Dynamics in a North-Indian Village A Study in Factions III—Inter-Faction Relations', April 24, 1954, *The Economic Weekly*, pp. 477-484.

Among these missionaries, mainly the Baptist missionaries, the American Missionary Society the Church of Scotlanzd Mission, the Schleswig-Holstein Evangelical Lutheran Mission (1882), The Hermannsburg Mission (1867), and the American Lutheran Mission (1869), the Roman Catholic mission, German Mission, Wesleyan Mission and the Scottish Presbyterian Missionaries, etc. Missionaries made significant efforts in educational improvement by reaching far off forests, farmers, labourers, Dalits, backward, in various areas of India.⁷⁸ The focus of missionaries in education brought about unintended consequences for Dalits for they were allowed to access modern education even though in limited sense.

The Arya Samaj, a Hindu religious reform movement, seriously and sincerely engaged in imparting education to untouchable communities. In 1933 at an Arya Samaj conference held at Rampur the practice of untouchability was attacked. The Chamars were told that unpaid beggar service had no legal basis and they should refuse to perform it. As a result they stopped rendering beggar. This also resulted in ushering in a new sense of self-respect among the Chamars which began to be contested by the aggressive higher, caste groups, particularly the Jats, living in the area.⁷⁹

Lewis has depicted in his study, how the strength of the Chamars increased as a result of the impetus given by the Arya Samaj to it. The Chamars began challenging the customary dominance of the jats residing in the village. The dispute was centered basically on economic issues. In 1926 the Chamars had decided to refrain from the payment of lease levies. As Lewis writes "In 1926 the Chamars refused to pay the

⁷⁸ G. Vennila, 'Role of missionaries in Indian education', *International Journal of Advance Research and Development*, Vol. 3, Issue4, 2018, pp.313-318.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

traditional house tax (Kudhi - tariff) of 2 rupees per year to the Jats. The Chamars of the few surrounding villages raised 450 rupees - tremendous sum at the time and took the case to the court. However the other non-Jats of the village, still dependent upon the Jats as their Kamins, did not support the Chamars. But all the Jat factions united in opposing the Chamars. The case dragged on for two years and the Jats finally won." However the Chamars still refused to pay the tax and a court decree was obtained by the Jats for the auction of the Chamars property.⁸⁰

The western education did not propose any radical social transformation in India. But what it did was essentially created a thought rooted in enlightenment discourse took place in Europe. Liberal western thought which emphasize on enhancement of human capacity by the way of braking traditional shackles. This spirit was appropriated by the first generation of Dalit educated and created a consciousness and discourse of Dalit emancipation. It is the bedrock of Dalit movement and its various strategies for emancipation of Dalit masses.

IV

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORM MOVEMENTS BY DALITS

The concept of socio-religious reform movement in modern India is a significant factor that attempted to reconstruct Indian society based upon the new intellectual currants brought about by the British. This movement attempted to re-create the tradition in the light of modern. The modern socio-cultural conditions are perceived as necessary for emergence of India as strong nation.⁸¹ But such a reform movement did not give importance to the problems of lower sections of India society. Consequently,

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ghanshyam Shah, (2004), *Social Movements in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Dalit issues were left out if not completely but significantly by upper castes sympathizers to represent their grievances. But due to access to education and better material conditions in urban sphere, reformist trends emerged within Dalit society.

The basic nature of the Dalit movement is social transformation and its link to life of Dalits. Achieving political change through radical social change is considered as the main objective of the Dalit movement.⁸² In modern India, the Dalit movement started under the leadership of Jyotiba Phule. He belonged to the Mali sub-caste of the backward caste. His caste was victims of social inequalities and exclusions. Due to which they considered lack of education and religious fanatics. They organized social movements for the deprived, the exploited and the lowest placed in the social system. Prior to this, there were many social movements in which the people of the upper castes started, whose main purpose was to make the religious tradition more powerful. In which Ram Mohan Rai founded the Brahmo Samaj and opposed the practice of Sati and with this effort, Governor General William Bantick passed the Act, XVII on December 8, 1829 and declared it illegal. Some such movements took place in which the Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Theosophical Society etc. were established.⁸³ These movements were done to prevent child marriage, widow marriage, slavery and Hindu religion from being destroyed. These movements took place after the arrival of the British because the establishment of British colonies and the contribution of Christian missionaries in the field of education and health brought awareness to the ancient orthodox system in Indian society.

Along with socio-religious reforms movement initiated by the activists and intellectuals mainly belong to upper sections of Indian society, several attempt for

⁸² Shubhash Chandra, (2010), *Dalit Mukti Andolan Simaye Aur Sambhavnaye*, Aadhar Prakashan, Panchkula, p.11.

⁸³ Bipan Chandra, *Modern India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2009.

social reforms were being made Dalit and subaltern leaders and intellectual. Jyotiba Phule, Narayana Guru, Ramaswamy Naicker, Achuthanand, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, and several others were prominent figures in this attempt. Dalit intellectuals aimed at creations to the liberation struggle of the depressed, exploited, and oppressed Dalit population and their liberation from oppression. The development of Dalit consciousness in India was also done through the movements in various parts, in which one can see the nature, development and development of Dalit movements.⁸⁴

These reforms and movements gave rise to an important desire within the exploited people. For the upliftment of backward and Dalit communities, Jyotiba Phule emphasized on the development of education and on women's education, especially for Dalit women. He opened about 18 schools for the development of education during the period 1848-1852, 6 in Pune city, 6 in Pune district, 3 in Satara district and 3 in other places. They used to impart free education for all in their schools. He educated his wife Savitri Bai Phule and appointed her as a teacher in his school for the struggle of women education. For the self-respect of the Dalit, exploited masses and their freedom, Phule wrote the book *Ghulamgiri* which was inspired by the Black Panther movement of America. This book proposes a bitter critique of Brahminical value and ideology in India. In his second book '*Shetkaryaka Asud*', which describes the oppression on the cultivators, Phule put many creative suggestions and works. A book, '*Sarvajnik Satya Dharm*', in which an attempt was made to give a new outline of the theistic and egalitarian religion.⁸⁵

Phule had established 'Satyashodhak Samaj' in 1875 for creation of an alternative culture for the happy life of the downtrodden and the right less and poor

⁸⁴ Narandra Kumar, 'Dalits and Shudra Politics and Anit-Brahman movement', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vo.35, no. 45, Nov. 2-10, 2000, pp. 3977-3979.

⁸⁵ Gail Ombedt, *Dalit Vision*, p.28.

people, whose goal was to spread the search for truth to the masses. Its main objective was to talk about unity among the people, to eliminate superstition and idol worship and to educate the whole society. This movement exercised significant impact upon the awareness level of Dalit and subaltern masses in Maharashtra.⁸⁶

Another important initiative towards liberation of marginalized sections in British India was Self Respect Movement initiated by Periyar Rama Swami Nicker South India. His movement was aimed at establishing a society that is free from exploitation and oppression and where everyone has the opportunity for the development of justice, equality and personality. In Tamil Nadu at that time all kinds of rights were concentrated among the Brahmins who were sitting on the summit under the Varna system, the remaining 93% of the people were untouchables and Shudras were denied all kinds of rights.⁸⁷

The main objective of the Atma Samman Andolan movement was to create opposition among the people against Brahmin religion, to awaken self-respect in Tamil language, literature and culture, and to end the exploitation of priests in the name of God. The main objective of this movement was to create an alternative culture and language field. Prof Arunn K. Nambi has written in his book "Renaissance and Dravidian Nationalism" that the goal of "Self-respect movement" is casteless society, And to achieve this, it is to criticize the caste and its related institutions i.e. religion, customs and traditions. Anita Dahal in her book "E V Ramaswami" states that the main attack of Periyar is on the Aryan influence from three institutions -

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.28.

⁸⁷ Ramvilas Bhartee, *Biswi Sadi Me Dalit Samaj*, Anamika Publisher, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 59-67.

religion, caste and the north. Periyar considers religion to be the root of evil and injustice. He wanted to replace Brahmanism and replace it with Buddhism.⁸⁸

Pariyar undertook famous movement known Vaikom Satyagraha for liberation of Dalits in the field of spirituality. It was located on the western edge of Kottayam district in the state of Kerala in India. According to the caste system prevalent in Kerala, Ijhwa and low-caste Hindus were not allowed to enter temples and were not even allowed to walk on roads that ran through temples to Dalit settlements. At the Kakinada meeting of the Congress Party in 1923, T.K. Madhavan drew attention to this by presenting a report citing discrimination against people belonging to the oppressed castes in Kerala. It was after this session that movements against untouchability need to be promoted. It was an important Satyagraha against untouchability in Indian history, in which both Mahatma Gandhi and Ramaswamy Periyar participated. In 1924, they decided to lunch a Kerala Paryatanam in order to get temple access and also the right to use public roads for every Hindu irrespective of caste or dogma. Significance of this movement is that it become the first movement for human rights in India and instilled rationality among the masses. This Satyagraha ended in fractional victory in November 1925 three out of four streets was thrown open and final success comes after 11 year with the Travancore temple admission announcement of 1936. For the contribution of this movement of Periyar, he was given the title of "Vaikum Veer".⁸⁹

Social reform movement lunched by Dalit intellectuals mainly aimed at igniting the rational and assertive spirit among Dalits and prepare them to enter into modern society. Besides these attempts, we do have several gross root level initiatives

⁸⁸ Devendra K. Besantri, *Bharat ke Samajik Krantikari*, Dalit Sahitya Prakashan Sanstha, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 169-170.

⁸⁹ M.S. Vidrohi, *Dalit Dastavej*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2004, p. 123.

in different parts of India which focused on social and ecological reforms of Dalit society. In this regard Maharashtra emerged a pioneer of this trend. Several reformist initiatives by Dalits were undertaken. Shri Gopalbaba Walangkar founded Anarya Dosh Parihar Mandali at Dapoli, Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra in 1886. Another initiative was Shri Shankar Prasadik Somavansniya Hitchintak Mitra Samaj. It was founded by Shivaram Janaba Kamble in 1904 at Poona. This association undertook several activities to mobilize and reform Dalit society in Poona region.⁹⁰ The Sanmarg Bodhak Nirashrit Samaj was founded by Shri Kisan Fagu Bansode in 1903 at Nagpur to propagate social reform movement among Dalits. The observable fact is that these reform movements focused upliftment of Dalits in terms of socio-cultural status. Good habits such as leaving degraded occupations such as scavenging, skinning etc were advocated. Besides this focus was devoted to leaving the habit of leaving eating beef, maintain good dress, keeping hour and surroundings neat and clean were advocated. These initiatives thus inculcated moral and ecological changes as means to achieve respectable social status for Dalits.⁹¹

In case of Madhya Pradesh several reformist initiatives were introduced, the pioneering one was the Satnamai movement which reflects Buddhist tradition of believing and reforming individual self to acquire good character. The All India Ramnami Maha Sabha introduced strong reformist against the superstitions which reflects a bit of radical ecological character. This movement proposes that its followers should not believe in any magic and not to believe in the holiness of Ganga-water for purification of the sins and should not go to Hindu temples for worship. These reformist associations promote good hygiene conditions, good ecological

⁹⁰ R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and Its Leaders (1857-1956)*, Print Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, p.110.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

conditions and acceptable behavior for Dalits. These social and cultural reforms trends created a sense of class unity among multiple castes in different parts of India which are traditionally treated as untouchables. This social and cultural unity is further cemented by political associations their activism, demands for betterment of Dalit society.⁹²

THE ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASS

In the year 1928 Babu Jagjivan Ram formed Ravidas Maha Sabha at Calcutta with a view to uniting the Dalits under one banner and introduction social reforms among them. Later, he joined the Congress. In 1934 in the annual conference of the Ravidas Maha Sabha held at Calcutta, it was decided to establish the Depressed Classes League. Accordingly a conference of the Dalits was organized had been formed with Rasiklal Biswas as its President and Babu Jagjivan Ram and P.N. Rajbhoj as its Secretaries. This organization was pro-Congress and spread in almost all the States. It is still in existence.⁹³

SHRI NARYAN DHARM PARIPALNA MOVEMENT

This movement was started by the Ezhavas of Kerala. It was leaded by Sri Narayana Guru. It was formed in 1902-1973, which started mainly with temple entry. By the end of the 19th century, people like Narayana Guru, N Kumaran and TK Madhavan in Kerala raised their voice against untouchability. Narayana was the Naira of the Guru - a religion, a caste, a God for human beings. One of his disciples corrected it and wrote - For the sake of human beings there is no religion, no caste and no God.⁹⁴

⁹² R.K. Kshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and Its Leaders (1857-1956)*, Print Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, p. 78.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁹⁴ Devendra K. Besantri, *Bharat ke Samajik Krantikari*, Dalit Sahitya Prakashan Sanstha, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 136-140.

THE MAHAD MOVEMENT

The Mahad Satyagraha is one of the significant milestones in the history of Dalit movement. The public response to the Satyagraha was an authentic testimony of emergence of Dalit consciousness and its critique of ecological exclusion of Dalits by the custom and tradition. An untouchable conference was organized in Mahad in which 10000 delegates participated. Dr. Ambedkar believed that the feeling of nobility and inferiority should be eliminated. Untouchables want that they raise high on the strength of self-respect, self-respect and discretion. A resolution was passed in the conference and appealed to the Government and upper-caste Hindus to implement the "Bole proposal". After the conference, 10000 delegates did something towards the Chavdar pond to get their right to drink and fill water. As the debates over civic rights heated up and the ire of orthodox Hindus grew, the Mahad municipality quietly resolved, on August 4, 1927 to reverse their earlier decision opening the tank to all castes.⁹⁵ This movement is an explicit example of Dalits' engagement with access to ecological resources which were forbidden to them by customary law and tradition practiced by non Dalit population in India. It also shows that Dalit movement did engage with ecological resources and their access to them.

KALARAM TEMPLE MOVEMENT

While the untouchables were considered as an integral part of Hindu religion at one level and at another level they were banned to enter in the temple of Hindus. Before Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, various social reformers advocated the root of the untouchables. He mobilized the untouchables to struggle their own battles and they used the weapon of 'Satyagraha', for receiving justice to the untouchable group. A committee was

⁹⁵ Anand Teltumbde, *Mahad: The Making of the First Dalit Revolt*, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2016.

appointed for the Kalaram temple entrance Satyagraha, the secretary of this committee gave a notice to the temple priest before the Satyagraha in which it was told that "we untouchables enter the Kalaram temple to see Lord Ram and if people of the upper caste oppose our entry, then we will do Satyagraha". Dr. Ambedkar, in his address on 2 March 1930, asked for help to keep the people united and support this movement. The movement of the Kalaram temple in Nasik was a struggle for the untouchables to attain human rights through temple entry. The second phase of this movement began in March 1931, but the temple doors remained closed. At the same time, the government stopped entry into the temple by imposing Article 144. For this reason, Ram's chariot Jullush was banned on 30 March 1931, due to which this Satyagraha was suspended till 01 April 1931. This movement continued till 1934.⁹⁶

ADI-HINDU MOVEMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH

The beginning of the Dalit liberation movement in North India can be said to have started with the efforts of Swami Achhutanand in the last phase of the nineteenth century. While living in the Arya Samaj, he had studied Hindu scriptures, he believed that untouchables are Adi Hindus of India and Aryans are later Hindus from outside. Through this movement, schools and Adi Hindu libraries were established in the cities. At the All India Untouchable Conference in 1917, he unanimously became the representative of North India and carried forward the Dalit movement.⁹⁷

The main principles of the Adi Hindu movement are as follows: This movement belongs to the untouchables and backward classes, faith, national unity and equal opportunity in the Nirguna Sant tradition, the need for continuous struggle for

⁹⁶ Mandar Anant Thakur, 'People's Role and Contribution in Nasik Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 69 (2008), pp. 833-838.

⁹⁷ Agne Lal & Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh me Dalit Andolan*, Gautam Book Center, Delhi, 2011, pp.22-23.

progress, adherence to and acceptance of its fundamental culture, Revolution against inequality, truth is the means of divinity, belief in success only through self-effort, promotion of companionship, indigenous people of untouchable and backward India, etc.⁹⁸ At an untouchable conference in Tofapur Meerut in 1924, Achhutanand made an announcement that "We are neither Muslims nor Christians, we are residents of India. So we are all Hindus."⁹⁹

ADI –ANDHRA MOVEMENT

The region of costal Andhra emerged as hub of Dalit activism in South India. Its first provincial conference was organized in 1917. On the very first day of the Conference in his presidential address, after mentioning the atrocities on untouchables and their miserable plight being meted out by the caste Hindus, Bhagya Reddi Verma stressed that the so-called untouchables were the original inhabitants of India and should assert and fight for their share in power and resources. This movement initiated the discourse of "Adi-Andhras" to all untouchable communities in the Andhra region.¹⁰⁰

Major themes focused on by the Adi-Andhra Movement between 1917 to 1947 were related to socio-economic uplift of dalits as well as the issues of land, employment, education and representation in decision-making bodies and so on. The Dalit movement in Andhra during this period can be broadly divided into two parts: the first part lasting from 1917-1932 and the second part from 1932-1946. The first part, essentially represented self-mobilization of Dalits outside the organizational and ideological framework of the Congress and the Communists, although at the initial

⁹⁸ Rampal Singh Raj, *Adi Hindu andolan ke Parvartak Swami Acchutanand Harihar Vykitiva aur krititva*, Sidharth Books, Delhi, 2009, pp.25-26.

⁹⁹ Agne Lal & Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh me Dalit Andolan*, p.25.

¹⁰⁰ Yagati Chinna Rao, *Writing Dalit History and Other Essays*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 85-87.

stages positive response and sympathy was forthcoming from liberal caste Hindu individuals. The second part was characterized by interaction between the Dalit movement and the nationalist and left movements. It also manifested an earnest desire on the part of Dalits to be consciousness of their rights and condemn untouchability, and discrimination demanded political and minimum level of basic human rights.¹⁰¹ This movement demanded for access to land, water and other natural and public resources to Dalits as a means for their development.

NAMSHUDRA MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

The Namashudra Association was mainly instrumental in bringing awareness among the untouchables in Bengal. All Bengal Namshudra Association was founded by Jananayak Shri Mukund Behari Mullick in the year 1912 at Calcutta. He submitted a memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission in 1929. He advocated that the reservation for the Depressed Classes should be 17 percent of the total seats of the legislature.¹⁰² This movement consistently advocated for distribution of waste lands to landless Dalits and often voiced for access to drinking water to Dalits.

ADI-DHARMA MOVEMENT IN PANJAB

The Dalit assertion in Punjab can be traced back to the Adi-Dharma movement of the 1920s, which origin along with numerous similar movements in a several regions in India. The movement meant at carving out a distinct uniqueness for the untouchables, self-governing of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. What made this movement mainly important was its consistent struggle against social hegemony. The Adi Dharma attempted to secure a part and highly regarded liberty for the Scheduled Castes

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *The Namashudras Movement*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2005.

throughout cultural conversion, religious rejuvenation and political assertion, rather than looking for impartiality within the Hindu fold. Remarkably, this movement, which laid the basics of Dalit awareness in Punjab, has failed to achieve serious scholarly concentration; Mark Juergensmeyer's pioneering work being the only exception.¹⁰³

DALIT MOVEMENTS AND ITS DEMANDS

This section of the chapter attempts to construct a trajectory of the core demands of Dalit movements and ecological dimension of such demands. Essentially being a transformative, emancipative movement Dalit movement articulates the following demands and advocacy for improvement of socio-economic, cultural and political status of Dalits:

1. Provision of employment to Dalit mass in both private sector consisting of industries, trade etc and government sector including army, railways and other government department.
2. Consistent advocacy for abstaining from certain occupation that are assigned to Dalits by mainstream society. Those as follows: skinning bovine, scavenging, guarding village burial ground etc. Dalit movement proposes that such occupation were responsible for perpetuation of untouchability and degradation of social status of Dalits.
3. Advocacy for abstaining from certain lifestyle habits which are source of undermining the social status of Dalits. These as follows: eating dead beef,

¹⁰³ Ronki Ram, 'Untouchability: Dalit consciousness, and the Adi Dharma movement in Punjab', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. 38(3): 2004, pp.323-349.

carrying dead animal, drinking liquor, etc. Dalit movement and its leaders pleaded fellow Dalits to leave such occupation and lead a dignified life.

4. Advocacy for spiritual equality has been the core demand of Dalit movement. We have several examples of struggle over access of Hindu temples and deities by Dalit movement. The main objective of such demand and movement is to expose the shallowness of mainstream socio-religious reform movement which advocates for spiritual equality to all citizens of India and politics of national movement which advances the discourse of equality of all Indians.
5. Political representation in emerging representation politics. Dalit movement consistently proposes that Dalits need a separate representation in decision making process at different levels. This demand was justified with the argument that upper caste Hindu leaders did not seriously concern about the requirements of Dalits.
6. Conversions to Non-Hindu religion were one of the strategies of Dalit movement as assertion in the domain of culture and religion. The need for change of religion was advocated with the argument that the traditional Hinduism does not have favorable disposition of towards in terms of spirit and essence. Hence, it was argued that expecting dignified treatment from orthodox Hindus is like expecting non-violent behavior from a hungry tiger. It was in this context the movements for conversion from Hindu to other religion could be seen in different parts of India. Such conversion took place from Hindu to Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Kabir panthi, etc.
7. Carving out a separate space within the structure of Hindu religion is yet another important trend in Dalit movement. This trend did not subscribe to the model of conversion as a means to emancipation, rather advocates for creation

of separate space for Dalits within Hinduism. In fact such attempt tried to create alternative position of Dalits within Hinduism. It was proposed that Dalits are original Hindus of India. This trend could be seen in Adi dharma movement in Punjab, Dai Hindu movement in Uttar Pradesh, Namshudra movement in Bengal, Adi Dravida movement in Tamil Nadu and Adi Andhra movement in Andhra Pradesh. This movement articulates dignified position of Dalits within Hinduism.

8. Demand for access to modern education was a consistent demand of Dalit movement. They did not demand for traditional education rooted in Hindu texts, rather demand was made for modern western education which was perceived as means to gain access to better and dignified life. The demand for education thus was one of the core demands of Dalit movement and its leaders in modern India.

The aforementioned are some of the core demands of Dalit movement and its leaders in British India. Besides these demands the demands of Dalits also has a strong ecological dimension. We do not propose that Dalit were engaged with ecological process with modern ecological consciousness rather their ecological demands are rooted in their vision for transformation and emancipation of their miserable life to progressive life. It is this question that could be seen in the demands of Dalits for resources of nature and ecological resources. The demands of Dalits for ecological and natural resources as follows:

V

ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF DALIT MOVEMENT

The ecological dimension to Dalit movement is neglected field of research in modern India. In fact the burgeoning literature on environmental history and Dalit history did not provide adequate space to the ecological dimension of Dalit movement. This study proposes that the discourse evolved by intellectual, activist and political voices did have a vibrant ecological discourse and strategies. It consists of a conscious awareness on the concept of alienation of Dalits from access to nature and resources with a systematic effort and hence attempt should be made to gain access to nature. This line of thinking could be seen concisely in the narrative and activities of Dalits. We of course have some studies on ecological dimension to Dalit issues¹⁰⁴ such studies mainly confine to analysis of contemporary issues of Dalit movement and did not give serious attention to historical dimension of ecological concerns of Dalits. The following demands of Dalit movement and its leaders has implicit and explicit ecological dimension:

1. Demand for distribution of land to landless Dalits was a consistent demand of Dalit movement. The access and control over land in rural areas is an automatic means to get dignified and secure life. Lack of access to land was perceived by Dalits as the root cause for socioeconomic and cultural marginalization of Dalits. On account of this, the demand for cultivable land was the most vocal and consistent demand of Dalit movement from Phule to Ambedkar at intellectual level and several grassroots level Dalit associations took up this issue. Hence the struggle of Dalits in rural areas is essentially a

¹⁰⁴ Mukul Sharma, *Caste & Nature: Dalits and Indian Environmental Politics*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019.

struggle for access to land. The demand for land by Dalits was articulated with different methods such as petitions, representations to authorities by associations, occasional satyagrahs and struggle for land distribution.

2. Demand for access to forests products was one of the important demands of Dalits in colonial India. Dalits depended upon forests for several products such as firewood, grazing, barks required for tanning process, collection of food in forests etc. But after establishment of forests department this traditional access was restricted by the British. It was in this context Dalits demanded access to forests, grasslands and village commons.
3. Demand for access to drinking water was the core feature of Dalit movement and its leaders. Access to village drinking water from common sources was traditionally prohibited to Dalits. Their presence was treated a cause of pollution to water bodies such as ponds, springs, tanks and even rivers. Access to water was of the important visible forms of in which the practice of untouchability was practiced. Hence, Dalit movements and its leaders constantly demanded for provision of drinking water in villages.
4. Dalit movement demanded for change of eco-system in which Dalits life in both rural and urban areas. Change in food habits, clothing pattern, housing pattern, creation of roads in Dalit colonies, and creation of basic amenities were demanded by Dalits.
5. Protection from pollution in industry, particularly leather industry was one of the important demands of Dalits. The labor employed in leather industries were exposed to chemical toxins. Hence demand partially in Uttar Pradesh was made to provide protection mechanism against the chemical pollution caused by leather industry.

6. Dalit movement and its leaders are explicitly aware of the fact that exclusion of Dalits from access to natural and ecological resources by caste based social exclusion as main reason for their marginalization economic and political marginalization. The discourse of sons of soil is a strategy to propagate the demand of share in nation building and resources as well. It is this discourse that proposes that substantial distribution of economic and ecological resources need to be distributed to Dalits as a means to retrieve their human dignity and better life. This son of soil discourse could be seen in several regions of India. Started by Jotirao Phule and gradually furthered by political movements initiated by Dalits subsequently. Adi Dharma movement in Punjab, Adi Hindu movement in United Province, Adi-Dravida movement in Tamil Nadu, Adi-Andhra movement in Andhra region and Adi-Karnataka movement in Karnataka are some of the notable movements. These movements consistently demanded for distribution of lands, access to water, forest products, live stock etc. This is explicit evidence on the ecological dimension to Dalit struggle in India which this study identifies and elaborates.
7. A realization of untouchability being product of lack of access to resources of nature could be seen from Jotirao Phule onwards. This realization if not as a frontal issue but as a important demand exists in the movements of Dalits in different parts of India. Gaining access to natural resources such as land, water etc are perceived as one of the important means for achieving better life.

CONCLUSION

This chapter attempts to trace the origin, growth and expansion of Dalit movement and factors responsible for emergence of movement. Attempt has been made to map

out the essential demands of both urban and rural raised by Dalits. This chapter also highlights the ecological dimension of the Dalit movement and its leaders. The main points this chapter attempts to prove as follows: Dalit movement was a product of the changes brought about by British colonial rule and engagement of Dalits with economic changes of the British rule, having acquired a lesser degree of material wealth a conscious Dalit middle class emerged in urban areas and created assertive language which represent issues of the whole Dalit class. It was this class emerged as spokesperson of Dalit problems. This chapter also shows the fact that the demands of Dalits have an explicit and implicit ecological dimension which is an integral part of their struggle for better life in modern India. The main objective of this chapter is locate the origin of Dalit environmentalism which is a part of their struggle for escaping from oppressive conditions and built a platform for better life.

CHAPTER-III

INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE OF DALIT AND SUBALTERNS FROM ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT OF CHAPTER:

This chapter proposes that ecological thought of Dalits evolved British Indian and continued in independent India. It was evolved by Dalit intelligentsia to pursue empowerment of Dalits in the domain of ecology. The emancipatory and transformative discourse of Dalit intellectuals and leaders essentially aimed at liberation of Dalits from oppression of dominant sections of Indian society. This chapter proposes that the Dalit thought has fascinating ecological dimension influenced by socio-economic justice from the perspective of green democracy. This chapter has been organised into three sections: the section analyse the intellectual environmental as a separate filed of environmental history in India, the second section documents the ideological structure of Dalit thought and the section three narrates the ecological dimension of Dalit thought.

CHAPTER-III

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter maps out process of emergence of Dalit movement and its nascent ecological dimension. This chapter proposes that Dalits and subaltern intellectuals were able to evolve a distinctive thought on the relationship between human beings and nature to expand their theory of socio-economic marginality. This chapter attempts to capture structure of Dalit/subaltern environmentalism as a process of articulation of their stakes and demands in the domain of ecology. This is done with the help of two sources: firstly, the writings of Dalit intellectuals and activism of Dalit socio-political organizations. The main objective of this paper is to demonstrate the fact that Indian environmental is much broader than the existing studies on Indian environmentalism depicts. Effort is made to highlights the distinctiveness of Dalit/subaltern environmentalism which is apparently differ from the existing dominant and so called Indian environmentalism. The category of Dalit/subaltern environmental is a potential conceptual phenomenon which pushes the theoretical and conceptual frontiers of Indian environmentalism by the way of proposing inclusive environmentalism. The reason why we use the expression of Dalit/subaltern environmentalism due to the fact that some of the intellectuals such as Jotiraj Phule, Ramaswami Nicker are not ethnic Dalits but immensely contributed for Dalit centric ideology which aimed at progress of Dalits and all other marginalized sections of Indian society.

I

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY; GREENING INDIAN HISTORY

The section one of this chapter deals with the process of emergence of environmental history as a separate field of historical inquiry with particular reference to intellectual environmental history. This exercise is required to locate the environmental thought of Dalit/subaltern intellectuals and movement that follow their thought. It also provides a conceptual trajectory in which the stakes of Dalits in the realm thought can be located.

What is the nature of the relationship between Dalits and natural world in India? In what way the Dalit environmentalism is different from the mainstream Indian environmentalism? These two questions are analyzed with the help of conceptual terrain of intellectual environmental history which is an emerging field of environmental history in India. Writings on environmental history in India highlighted the relationship between human beings and nature in the past of India. It has been defined as follows: ‘an interdisciplinary study of human relationships with the natural world over time. It seeks to understand how nature is capable and sets boundaries for human actions; how do people modify the ecosystem in which they live; and how different cultural conceptions of the non-human world profoundly shape beliefs, values, economies, politics and cultures’.¹ Environmental history thus evolved a method of exploring the way human beings engaged with different forms of nature in the past. It deals with the following questions: how human action hanged the physical nature as it exists? How nature shaped the way society and culture evolved? And how human thought evolved strategies to survive without hampering the natural forms of

¹ Fiona Watson, ‘Environmental History’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 82, No. 214, Part 2 (Oct., 2003), pp. 285-294.

eco-system? ² According to Ravi Kumar, environmental history emerged as a separated branch of history in South Asia with the main objective of documentation of the interaction of communities with nature in India.³

Environmental historians are concerned with two aspects of the engagement of human begins with nature: firstly, focus was devoted to the physical engagement of human beings with material forms of nature and secondly, ideas evolved by human beings on abstract forms of nature and its impact upon the way they interact with nature. According to Richard Grove, the consciousness of scientific preservation of ecology was actually developed by the colonial scientific community which considers it as the moral duty of rulers to protect the ruled. He highlighted the contribution of scientists to the conservation of forests to protect the water sources that feed river systems in British India. Grove thus highlighted the humanist part of colonial scientific community.⁴

According to Nadakarni, Environmental history emerged in the context of historians' quest to provide historical dimension to ecological problems. Studies focuses on common pool resource management systems did provide some space to historical background to forest.⁵ Two factors are generally considered to have created context for responsible for the emergence of environmental history in India: the contemporary environmental movement and the writings of historians on American environmental.⁶ Particularly, environmental activism acted as a catalyst for academics

² James Atkinson, *Environmental History*, *Environmental History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Special Curriculum Issue (Spring, 1992), pp. 5-8

³ V.M. Ravi Kumar, 'History of Environmental History: Review of Historiography', *Universal Review*, Vol.10, No. 2, February, 2019, pp. 248-258.

⁴ Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and Origin of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

⁵ M. V. Nadakarni, *Political Economy of the Forest and Management*, Sage, New Delhi, 1989

⁶ Ramachandra Guha, 'Writing environmental history in India', *Studies in History*, Vol, 9, issue, 1, 1983, pp.119-129.

in the India and Euro-American world to evolve a conceptual approach to understanding human-environment relationship.⁷ In the process, the writings of American historians on the ecological history of America inspired historians around the world to explore the ecological background in the past. It is in this context that environmental history has emerged as distinctive genre of history. In the due course of time, environmental history has been divided into several fields having their respective focus and emphasis.⁸ The main quest however is to document how human beings constantly engaged with nature for survival while transforming its resource base.

INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Intellectual environmental history deals with the ideas and activities of thinkers, intellectuals and other ecologically informed individuals who attempted to evolve human-environmental alliances in the form of a conceptual thought. It focuses on the explicit or implicit reflections of intellectuals on environmental aspects. Existing studies on intellectual environmental history either document the contribution of European techno-administrator or Indian thinkers who mainly scribe to Brahmanical outlook to ecology and nature. In view of this, the thought of intellectuals who belong to non-Brahman tradition in terms of thought did not receive adequate attention. Some studies however, begun to explore this uncharted academic terrain recently.⁹ Intellectual environmental history has immense potential in India as the ecological

⁷ R.Carson, *Salient Spring*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1962.

⁸ J.R. McNeill, 'Observations on nature and culture of environmental history', *History and Theory*, vol, 42, No. 4, 2003, pp.5-44.

⁹ V.M. Ravi Kumar, 'History of Indian Environmental Movement: A Study of Dr B.R. Ambedkar from the Perspective of Access to Water', *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, Vol, **8**, Issue, **2**, 2016, pp, **239-24**: 'Non-Brahmanism and Nature: An Intellectual Environmental History of Jyotirao Phule', *Indian Journal of Basic and Applied Research*, 2018, Vo. 8 Issue, 10, 2018, pp.520-536: V.M. Ravi Kumar and Arivind Swroop, 'Ambedkar and Ecology: A Study of Buddha and his Dharma', *North Asian Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issue 12,2017, pp. 224-227.

thought and ecological dimension of intellectuals and activists did not receive adequate attention in the existing literature.

With the risk of over simplification, intellectual environmental history in India has been can categorize into three segments. The first segment is that of the techno-bureaucratic model of environmental history which focuses on the ideas and contributions of technocrats consisting of foresters, botanists, planters and administrators working during the British rule. Particular attention has been paid to the contributions of foresters H. Cleghorn, D. Brandies, J.S. Gamble etc.¹⁰ The second segment of intellectual environmental history deals with contributions of colonial ethnographers who explored and documented adivasi societies in British India.¹¹ It has been proposed that colonial ethnographers did a commendable work by the way of documenting life and conditions of tribes and their life systems.¹² Third segment of intellectual environmental history explains ecological nationalist thought from ecological dimension.¹³ Particularly M.K. Gandhi and his disciples such as Kumarappa and Meerabai and their ecological contribution has been a focal point. The philosophy of Gandhi and ecological philosophy is treated as an specimen of traditional Indian ecological thought.¹⁴ In independent India, the intellectual environmental history has mainly been written focusing on the activists and intellectuals leaning towards cultural nationalist or Brahmanical perception of nature. Life histories of Sunderlal Bahuguna, Baba Ampte, Anna Hazare, Brindaswal Pathak, etc are propagated as thought of India. Consequently, often Indian environmental

¹⁰ Richard H. Grove, *Ecology, Climate and Empire*, white Horse, London, 1997.

¹¹ Kavita Phillip, *Civilising Nature: Race, Resource and modernity in colonial south India*, Manohar, 2001.

¹² Ramachandra Guha, *The Ramachandra Guha Omnibus*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005.

¹³ Ramchandra Guha, 'An Early Environment Debate: Making of the 1878 Forest Act', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol.27, No. 1, 1993, pp.65-84.

¹⁴ Ramachandra Guh and R. Alier, J.M, *Verities of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998.

thought mistakenly equated with Brahmanical thought. This study attempts to bring out the non-Brahmanical perception of thought that reflect the relationship between human being and nature in India.

The existing literature on Indian environmentalism or intellectual environmental history confine to narrow segments of few individuals. Even liberal Marxist environmental historian did not touch up the non-Brahmanical green thought adequately. This narrowly constructed model of ecological history suggests that Brahmanical culture and social practices are intrinsically eco-sensitive in nature and such practices need to be revived to protect the nature and ecology from the path of destruction. This advocacy resulted in introduction of public policies for management of natural resources such forest, water, grass land management etc. The execution pattern of these reforms exposed the limitation of such thinking in the form of capture of benefits by dominant sections of village, marginalization of weaker sections and underperformance of schemes.¹⁵ Social hierarchy exists in the form of caste based divisions identified as one of the important reasons for underperformance of community centric ecological management policies. In view of this, it is useful for Indian ecological management policies to include the ideas of Dalit/subaltern intellectuals who pitched for egalitarian principle as guiding factors policies and governance including environmental management policies.¹⁶

Environmental thought in India mainly remained to be a right wing lenient narrative of civilisational environmental history of India. This narrative proposes that

¹⁵ B. Adhikari, and S.D. Faloo, *Social Inequalities and Collective Action: An Empirical Study of Forest Commons*, Working Paper, International Forestry Resources and Institutions Program, School for Natural Resource Management, University of Michigan, 2008.

¹⁶ M. Sharma, 'Dalit and Indian Environmental Politics', *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 9, 2012, vol. xlvi, no. 23. pp. 46-52.

the Indian cultural values organically promote ecological conservation.¹⁷ Especially Mahatma Gandhi and his ideas are treated promotes of sustainable management of ecological resources by the way of following Indian centric culture and morality.¹⁸ Cultural environmental history of India represented with narrative of Indian culture being epicenter of sustainable use of living resources.¹⁹ But according to the argument of Dalit intellectual the cultural greatness of India is a self styled discourse of intellectuals belong to the upper strata of Indian society which does not represent the diversity of social spectrum of Indian society. In case of cultural ecology of India, the text based Brahmanical cultural-religious formations are invoked as ecologically sensitive ideas.²⁰ It is this construction that excludes the voices of marginalized sections in the environmentalism of India. In spite of having penetrating reflections on the relationship between human beings and nature, the view of Dalit and subaltern intellectuals' views did not find space into the ecological thought of India. The next section of this chapter proposes that intellectuals from Dalit-subaltern background evolved a distinctive genre of environmentalism which is deeply rooted in the interaction of lower sections of Indian society with nature.

II

DALIT THOUGHT AS DISCOURSE FOR CHANGE

Having narrated the conceptual contours of environmental history, this section analyzes the intellectual history of Dalits from the perspective of ecology. The main purpose of advancing environmentalism of Dalits is to problematize the existing

¹⁷ Geti Sen, *Ingenious Vision: People of India attitudes towards Environment*, Sage, New Delhi, 1992,

¹⁸ Ramachandra Guha, *Omnibus*,

¹⁹ M.Gadgil, 'Adoptive Significance of Indian Caste System: An Ecological Perspective', *Annals of Human Biology*, vol, 10, issue, 5, 1983, pp. 565-77

²⁰ V. Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*, Kali for women, New Delhi, 1988.

theoretical assumptions that ecological thought of India can mainly be understood with Gandhian deep cultural ecology of India at one level and populist orthodox or Brahmanical Hindu cultural symbolism at another level. The proposition of this section is that Indian society from below too had a vibrant and distinctive view and vision on the relationship between human beings and nature which is stirringly different from the environmentalism from the above.

VOICE OF DALIT INTELLEGENTISA

Colonial modernity has a unique feature of providing opportunity to all voices to articulate their claims. Access to knowledge production and its dissemination no longer monopoly of few privileged sections like the way it existed before colonial rule. To what extent such dissent voices had an impact on British rule and society is a debatable issue. The fact is that the voices of marginalized began to surface and audible in the discourse of modern India. As mentioned in the chapter two, on account of new avenues to improve their material conditions, Dalits were able to become part of colonial economy, even though in insignificant degree. It had given access to education and rational thought to a small minority of educated Dalits and subaltern groups. It is this class begun to configure the status of Dalit/subaltern masses and their future in India.

What are the fundamental questions that are raised by the Dalit and subaltern intelligentsia? What is the ideological background to such questions? These two questions are crucial to understand the structure and content of Dalit ideology and its ecological dimension. Two processes appeared to have shaped the ideological contours of Dalit discourse in modern India. Firstly, the enlightenment discourse and its practices imported to India by the British and native traditions of Dalits and

subaltern groups who always questions the hegemony of Brahmanical practices with their culture and social values. So far as the first factor is concern, most of the non-Brahman and Dalit intellectuals are significantly influenced by the humanist values brought about by enlightenment discourse disseminated by agencies controlled by Europeans. The new yardstick to perceive the human existence inspired them to question the oppressive practices perpetuated by traditional socio-cultural values and practices in India. Second factor is that Dalit subaltern intellectuals perceives text based Brahmanical Hinduism as bedrock of value system which sustain the oppressive consciousness of high castes Hindus. The Dalit and subaltern ideology thus emanated from the quest to further humanist outlook within the framework of liberal Hindu, non-Hindu and secular.²¹ It is this ideological structure from which the ideas, demands and strategies of Dalit/subaltern begun to appear in the newly emerged public sphere of British India.

While the non Dalit intelligentsia participated in socio-religious reform movement attempted the preserve the traditional values with modern outlook, the Dalit intelligentsia craved for alternative formations different from that of oppressive socio-cultural formations rooted in tradition. Instated of preserving traditional socio-cultural values, the Dalit discourse articulates abolitionist, transformative, and emancipatory genre for social change in India it not entirely but mainly. It was not radical but certainly a foundationalist argument which questions the prevailing oppressive paradigm of thought and practice and visualize liberative path by the way of creating alternative ideology, practices, mobilization and struggle as a means to achieve it. The Dalit intelligentsia saw an opportunity in the British India, which was a journey of making modern India to situate themselves in a comfortable position into

²¹ Jangam Chinnian, *Dalits and Making of Modern India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2017.

socio-economic and cultural domains.²² The alternative formations of Dalit ideology has two broad domains i.e., access to material entities such as land, house, assets, and non material sources such as dignity, justice and equality.

The quest of Dalit intelligentsia for making Dalit society more mobile, progressive, and assertive extends to the domain of nature and ecology. Exclusion from access to resources of nature and ecology was identified as one of the important reasons for socio-economic and cultural marginalization of Dalits. Nature and ecology thus became important domains in which Dalit thought navigates and conceptualizes marginalization and formulates the vision for emancipation. It is this phenomenon can be termed as Dalit environmentalism. The next section of this chapter explains the concept of Dalit environmentalism.

III

DALIT ENVIRONMENTALISM A CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN

The idea of modern India is dominated if not exclusively but to a greater extent by the discourse of intellectuals/activists and thinkers belong to upper class/caste sections. Their socio-cultural values, ethos eventually emerged as universal Indian values. The voices of non privileged remained at margins and obviously did not exercise significant impact on the politics of nation. However, the voices of marginalized begun to be heard forcefully from late 1980s in the context of emergence of neo-liberal model of economic formation wherein production and markets are dominated by market forces in the context of globalization.²³ This process provided significant space to Dalit and subaltern voices. It is this context that brought the ideas of Phule and Ambedkar to limelight. At present sizable literature exists on various aspects of

²² S.M. Channa, *Life as Dalit: Views from Bottom on caste in India*, Sage, New Delhi, 2013.

²³ Bankan Chandra Mandal, 'Globalization and its Impact on Dalits', *Contemporary Voice of Dalits*, Vol. 7, Issue,2, 2014, pp.147-162.

Dalit and subaltern issues from historical perspective.²⁴ But such literature if not ignored but provides less space to the ecological dimension of Dalit/subaltern discourse. Due to this reason, the voice of Dalit did not figure in the environmentalism of India. This study proposes that existing conceptual frames are not adequate enough to capture the exclusion of Dalits from access to nature and ecology. On account of this, we do require an alternative framework for capturing the stakes of Dalits in Indian environmentalism.

Studies on Indian environmentalism did not provide adequate space to ecological issues of socially marginalized sections.²⁵ Consequently, the question of how caste based inequalities impact the poor and vulnerable sections of India remained a less explored issue. Recently, attempt has been made to comment upon Dalit stakes in Indian environmental discourse. These studies rightly pointed out that socio-economic and cultural status of Dalits create peculiar conditions and make them more vulnerable to ecological changes and degradation. On account of this, such studies propose that we need to explore the stakes of Dalits in ecological discourse of India.²⁶ This argument undoubtedly raised significant issue that has neglected in Indian environmental politics and academia. The limitation of this framework is that it confines to mapping the interaction between human beings and nature from the perspective of Dalits society. It did not focus on the transformative vision the Dalit discourse articulates for making livelihoods of Dalits better in the domain of ecology. This section focuses on the Dalit discourse on alternative environmentalism by focusing on intellectual history of Dalit history and movement.

²⁴ Ramnaryan Rawat & K. Satyanarayana, *Dalit Studies*, Duke University, 2017.

²⁵ Ramachandra Guha, *Social Ecology*,

²⁶ Mukul Sharma, *Caste and Nature: Dalits and Indian Environmental Politics*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019.

DALIT/SUBALTERN GREEN DISCOURSE

The changing material conditions brought about by the British rule created a small class of intellectuals within Dalit and subaltern community. These intellectuals gave a serious thought on the sources of marginalization and formulated a vision for their emancipation.²⁷ The voice of marginalized into the discourse of modern India was introduced by Jotirao Phule from Maharashtra. Begun his writings in Marathi initially and gradually switch over to English, reflect the voice of underprivileged class in British India and their stakes in making of modern India. Phule created an imagination of India as a nation having equity as guiding principle which replaces the ethnic privileges of dominant sections and provide space to all sections for dignified and happy life.²⁸

Jotirao Phule and his ideas gained tremendous relevance in independent India. Particularly, Dalit/subaltern sections were attracted towards his socially revolutionary ideas. Existing writings on Phule are broadly as follows: attempt to document biographical details of Phule,²⁹ his engagement with non-Brahmin movement both in terms of ideological and activist domains, and cultural revolutionary and egalitarian society.³⁰ The fact is that in all these writings, the main focus was on attention to Phule's ideas on non-Brahmin aspects. Another dimension of his ideas is that the alternative way of organizing Indian society. The ideas of Phule on Indian agriculture and ecology did not receive adequate attention in the existing literature on Phule.³¹ This study proposes that he has fascinating vision for holistic development of agrarian

²⁷ Paul Ghuman, *British Untouchables: A Study of Dalit Identity and Education*, Rutledge, London, 2011.

²⁸ Pawan Bharadwaj, *The Legend of Jotiba Phule*, Punit, New Delhi, 2019.

²⁹ Dhananjay Keer, *Mahmatma Jotiba Phule*, Popular Prakshan, Bombay, 2012.

³⁰ Gail Omvedt, *Jotirao Phule and Ideology of Social Revolution in India*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2004.

³¹ V.M. Ravi Kumar, *Non-Brahman nature*

society along with sustainable use and management of rural agro ecological resources. Phule is not only father of social revolution, but also pioneer of human centric ecology in India.

Phule was perhaps the first person who attempts to understand and reflects upon the importance of conserving natural resources for betterment of agrarian economy and agrarian society of India. His main ideological standpoint is that the shudras and Dalits are the original inhabitants of India, enslaved and marginalized by invading Aryans who invented caste system to control the sons of soil and such marginalization can be mitigated by reviving the pre-Aryan glory of India.³² The ecological dimension of this argument is that Shudras and Dalits are the original owners of the resources of India; such an ownership was snatched by invading Aryans with the help of creating caste system which enslaved the marginalized sections. In view of this, Phule believes that the lost control over resources, dignity needed to be retrieved back with the collective action of Shudras/ati-shudras. The son of soil discourse of Phule has a strong ecological dimension. He has proposed that revival of glory of sons of soil is possible with rejection of the exiting forms of socio-cultural and economic domination and creation of alternative cultural consciences which is different from that of the one created by upper caste sections in India.³³

The project of Phule on alternative India has wide range of features and prescriptions. The suggestions such as western education to marginalized sections, education to women, and promotion of rational and scientific thought, socio-religious reforms etc given by him to reconstruct India nation from below. This project of Phule also has fascinating ecological dimension. He suggests that villages and their

³² G.P. Desphande, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*, Left word, New Delhi, 2012.

³³ Ibid

ecology need to be protected and conserved in order to promote agricultural progress along with promotion of inclusive society. Strikingly different from Gandhi minimalist ecology, Phule proposes the aspect of managerial ecology which means the human labour and creativity to be used to conserve the resources of nature for the benefit of both nature and human beings. For Phule both human beings and nature are enslaved by upper castes/class of India and hence liberation of nature and human need to go parallel.³⁴ This liberation ecology is thus the foundation for Dalit ecology which was further carried by several Dalits and subaltern intellectuals.

Surprisingly, writings on environmental history and Dalits studies did not focus on ecological vision of Phule. Much before Gandhi, it was Phule who talked about empowering villages and village people. The village empowerment scheme of Phule not rooted in spiritual mysticism and cultural fetishism like Gandhi. For Gandhi, village is an emblematic specimen of authentic Hindu culture which is often personified as Indian culture. Gandhian village reconstruction programme did not give much focus on social divisions in village system. In fact village reconstruction scheme of Gandhi, re-impose the traditional domination of village elite over landless and powerless masses. The vision of Phule is not reconstruction of village, rather empowerment of villages by the way of using human potential for betterment of subaltern mass. Thus, while the village development vision of Phule was from below, Gandhi's vision of village development was from above.

Both Gandhi and Phule did recognize the importance of village resources and their management as essential measure for development of villages. Both recognized the agro ecology measures to be adopted for progress of villages. If we see the

³⁴ V.M. Ravi Kumar, 'Inclusive Environmentalism: A study of Jotirao Phule's ideas from Ecological perspective', *Indian Journal Dalit and Tribal Studies*, vol. 1, Issue, 1, 2013, pp. 83-91.

measures proposed by Gandhi for village reconstruction, he proposes the following: cooperative dairy, streets, schools, vocational training center, space of workshop, panchayats. He did not engage directly with ecological reconstruction of village and distribution of village to those sections which do not have access to them. But Phule shows remarkable sensitivity towards village ecological resource management.

Interestingly, Phule demonstrates deep vision on ecological dimension to marginalization of the poor in British India. He was not only aware of the evils of the British rule but also penetrating understanding on the ecological transformation initiated by the British and impact such transformation exercised on the rural poor. His engagement on this issue can be captured from the following reflection:

In the past, those farmers who had very little land and could not survive on its products, would go into nearby forests and would gather wood, fruits and leaves from trees like palash and mahua. By selling these things they managed to collect money for their basic needs, and depending on the town pastures for cattle-feed, could maintain a cow or two and a few sheep, manage on their produce and live happily in their own town. But now the cunning European employees of our honorable government have spent all their foreign and multi-faceted intelligence to establish a massive Forest Department; including all mountains and hills and valleys. This culminates in the inclusion of unused lands and the pastures as well. Now our poor and handicapped farmers' sheep and goats have no place to feed even on the air in the forests.³⁵

It was this process according to Phule which resulted in perpetuation of poverty among Shudras and Ati-shudras in India. Contrary to the views of nationalist intelligentsia which obsessed with urban affairs of the British rule, Phule ideas

³⁵ G.P. Deshpande, p 133.

explicitly demonstrate dynamics of rural areas. Phule keenly followed the impact of the British ecological policies on the rural folks and village agro ecology from subaltern perspective. While at one level, Phule identify the impact of the British rule on Indian ecology and communities depended upon ecologically sensitive resources at another level, Phule was deeply aware of the Indian elements which prevent the village poor from getting access to village resources. In his writings he mentions several instances of Shudras and Dalits denied access to waste lands and other village resources. Even case of urban areas, Phule mentions that while the areas dwelled by Brahmans had continuous and good quality water supply, the mohallas of Dalits and poor did not receive adequate water supply. In this way Phule highlighted the social dimension of allocation of ecological resources which Mukul Sharma aptly terms as 'castised nature'.³⁶

Besides aforementioned critique, Jotirao Phule also advanced practical suggestions on management of ecological resources of India. Phule was explicitly aware of soil conservation and preservation of soil nutrients. He recognized the importance of conserving soil which is base for agriculture and often fragile due the practices of agriculture. Phule was aware of commercial agriculture introduced by the British and its impact on the Indian soil. Unlike traditional agriculture, the commercial agriculture does not allow soil nutrients to replenish naturally due to lack of proper rest to the soil. This fact was well known to Phule as he himself an agriculturist. In fact, debate on impact of capitalist farming on soil conditions was at peak in Europe. Emergence of soil science was response to this debate. Karl Marx was too seriously engaged in the debate on soil conservation. He terms it as 'metabolic rift' which for him intense exploitation of soil and without allowing its

³⁶ Mukul Sharma, *Caste and Nature*

natural replenishment of nutrients to replace.³⁷ We do not have any details on how Phule got information on soil conservation as of now. But available evidence shows that he was aware of soil degradation and mechanism to restore it. He proposed an interesting suggestion to British government to conserve soils in natural way. He proposed that: ‘The essence of leaf, grass, flower, dead insects and animals is washed away by summer rain, therefore our industrious government should, as and when convenient, use the white and black soldiers and the extra manpower in the police department to construct small dams and bunds in such a way that water would seep into the ground and only later go and meet streams and rivers. This would make the land very fertile’.³⁸ These lines shows the way Phule was ecologically informed thinker.

The ecological vision of Phule went further and with suggestion that in most of the hills government should construct small dams to preserve water for improvement of hill based cultivation. He also proposed that a detailed survey should be conducted on the availability of water resources for their efficient management. He demanded deregulation of government control over forests and pasture lands to enable poor cultivators to lead a meaningful life.

Environmentalism of Phule is part of his vision for emancipation of shudras, Dalits, women and other marginalized sections of India society. For him both nature and marginalized human beings are subjected to similar grievances. While marginalized human beings are exploited by the dominant sections of Indian society, nature was exploited and destroyed by both the British rule and dominant sections of Indian society. For Phule both nature and human beings required liberation from

³⁷ J.B. Froster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*, NYU Press, New York, 2000.

³⁸ G.P. Deshpande, p. 181.

exploitation. His vision for liberation was not rooted in either religious mysticism or social radicalism. It was a transformative vision based upon the pragmatic response from both society and the state to achieve good for not only elite but also marginalized sections. This task for Phule can be achieved when balance of power among social groups to be achieved. It is the balance of the power among social class Phule believed is the way to unleash inclusive development and sustainable ecological management. The legacy of Phule for marginalized centric human ecology further carried out by his disciples who embraced his spirits and mission for progress of subaltern masses.

EGALITARIAN ENVIRONMENTLAISM; AMEBDKAR

The social revolutionary and liberative ecological legacy of Phule was further carried forwarded by Dalit movement and leaders belong to non-Brahman tradition. In the due course of time, Dalit voices had begun to appear and demanded better life from both the British and Indian elites. Even though such voices are mainly aimed at demanding socio-economic, political rights and dignified cultural status, demand for natural and ecological resources continued to be articulated. As part of this process, Dr. Ambedkar carries forward the legacy of Phule to wider national level space. His commitment for social change in India made him icon of marginalized sections of Indian society. The point this study emphasis is that the ideas and practice Ambedkar has a fascinating ecological dimension which needs to be retrieved for making Indian environmentalism more inclusive.

Dr. Ambedkar (1891-1956) happens to be one of the original thinkers of India. Contrary to majority of intellectuals of modern India, he upholds the critical perspective to assess Indian society. His intellectual vibrancy and dynamic activism

created a critical discourse and practice in India. His was of the view that traditional Indian socio-cultural values cannot fit into the modernist framework. On account of this, he proposes that a sweeping reforms process of Indian society is critically needed to make India to fit into modernist framework.³⁹ This chapter explores the ideas of Ambedkar on the role the ecology and natural resources in shaping the social process in India and his vision for democratization of nature in India.

The contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to understand the complexities of Indian society has acquired greater prominence in contemporary times. Particularly, his discourse on inclusiveness and equity has made his ideas imperative and critical in the unraveling of realities hitherto invisible to larger populace. This study proposes that the exclusivist ideas of Ambedkar has fascinating ecological dimension. The ecological ideas of Ambedkar advance the notion of ‘nature for all’ and ‘all for nature’ arose from his spirit of democratization of nature.

The contribution of Ambedkar for the fields of politics, economy, law, social reform, constitution making, Buddhism, etc are being explored in India.⁴⁰ But his ideas on ecology and its relevance in Indian society which is hierarchically organized has not been explored until recently. Recently some attempts are being made to explore the ideas of Ambedkar from ecological perspective.⁴¹ Attempt has been made to link the caste system and its ecological dimension. Caste based inequalities proposed to have exercise significant impact on the relationship human beings and nature in India.⁴² In fact, his interpretation believed to have fascinating

³⁹ S.L. Dhani, *Dr. Ambedkar: A Man of Millennium for Social Justice*, Kalpaz, New Delhi, 2008.

⁴⁰ Kanta Kataria, ‘Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as Nation Builder’, *Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 73, no. 4, 2012, pp.601-614.

⁴¹ V.M. Ravi Kumar, ‘Green Democracy: Relevance of Ambedkar’s Ideas for Indian Environmentalism’, *IJDTS*, Vol.2, issue,1, 2014, pp.24-34.

⁴² Mukul Sharma, *Caste and Nature*

ecological dimension which promote biocentrism in Indian from the perspective of spirituality. The fact is that now we do have some studies on Ambedkar and ecology. But such studies did not propose a holistic ideological dimension of Ambedkar ecological which this section attempts to propose. Such attempt we believe that further the existing scope of Dalit environmentalism.

The core theoretical argument of Ambedkar is to expose the anti-modern paradigm of value system created and nurtured by Brahmanical Hindu system in India. He resorted to teleological approach for analyzing Indian society and attempted to demonstrate how the everyday attitude of Hindus is guided by Hindu value system rooted in orthodox texts and practices. This position of Ambedkar gives us a chance to locate the trend of alienation of the poor from nature from the perspective of social complexity. Ambedkar's position thus enables us to locate Indian environmental history on the strong footing of social dynamics.⁴³

Like Phule, Ambedkar also exhibits critical position which critiques British imagination of Indian social structure. At the same time, he also questions the romantic imagination of nationalist thought on Indian social structure. For Ambedkar both these perspectives fail to represent the concerns of marginalized section. He thus constantly attempted to remind both the British and Indian intelligentsia belongs to upper castes to take cognizance of needs of Dalits and other marginalized sections. Ambedkar consciously evolved ideas and models to represent the weaker sections which are neglected by the dominant discourses that existed in modern India.⁴⁴

Before we begun to navigate into the ecological dimension of Ambedkar, it is necessary for us to touch upon the core ideological edifice. Because the ecological

⁴³ M. Gadghil and R. Guha, *This Fissure Land*,

⁴⁴ G. Aloysius, *Ambedkar on Nation and Nationalism, Critical Quest*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 29.

dimension of Ambedkar is an extension of his ideological standpoint developed in a span of thirty years of public and academic life. Having completed his academic pursuits from reputed global academic institutions abroad, Ambedkar entered into public life of India dominated by Gandhian politics and consolidation of upper strata of Indian society over national movement and national resources. At the same time, he also observed that Dalits in spite of being one of the significant portion of Indian population, remained weak and neglected section in politics and hence remained outside of the modern India in the making. Ambedkar was thus necessitated to evolve a pragmatic ideological approach and practice with which the needs of Dalits to be safeguarded.

Ambedkar's ideology consists of three core ideological poles which strive to represent the voices and stakes of Dalits into the process of making modern India. The first one is a formidable critique of traditional Hindu social order. It is responsible according to Ambedkar for exclusion of Dalits from meaningful life. Caste system artificially divides population of India into different endogamous groups and assigns low status to Dalits based upon their birth. For Ambedkar, Indian society does not fit into modern society due to caste system which determines the status and fate of individual based upon birth not worth. The lifelong crusade of Ambedkar waged against castes based inequalities. The second pillar of Ambedkar ideology is that the spirit of modernity and its relevance to India. Having seen the idea and practice of modernity in the Euro-American he was attracted towards it and perceived at solutions to the problems that India was subjected to. Modernity for Ambedkar is a tide which swept away all anti-human ideas of pre-modern world. He believed in such a version of modernity which treats human as pure entity having inalienable natural rights at one level and claim for justice and better life in social world. These two factors for Ambedkar give justice to Dalits who were excluded by spirit and practice

of pre-modern ideas in India. Lastly, Ambedkar advocated for spiritual humanism in the form of anthropocentric form of Buddhism which he reconstructed towards end of his life. He believed that Hinduism is incapable of providing a base for emancipation of Dalits from misery; hence he recognizes the need for spiritual system for Dalits.⁴⁵ The project of reconstruction of Buddhism and eventual conversion to it are the quest of Ambedkar to evolve a spiritual system which promotes equality and fraternity in India.

This study proposes that the ideology of Ambedkar has deep ecological dimension. The discourse of Ambedkar on caste system in India personifies one of the foundational principles of ecological movements which propose that rich often pollute and poor always clean it. It means that majority section of population which is excluded from mainstream society suffers due to the greed of small sections of social group. Ambedkar proposes that Dalits are compelled to carry on physical and moral pollution of upper strata of Indian society in the name of tradition and custom. This predicament was highlighted by Ambedkar by using caste system as reference point. He proposes that intellectual class in India unfortunately moved away from production system and created such an epistemology which does not represent the dignity to labor. This system for him designed to control material and mental resources of lower sections. He claims that caste system in India was invented and perpetuated to extract the labor of masses in India.⁴⁶

Ecological dimension of Ambedkar's thought can be seen in this analysis of socio-economic inequalities and their impact on living resource patterns. His main objective was to highlight the way caste system prevents Dalits from accessing

⁴⁵ S. R. Bakshi, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: *Socio-Economic and Political Ideology*, Sarup, New Delhi, 2010.

⁴⁶ B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste with a Reply to Mahatma Gandhi*, Anand Sahitya Sadan, Aligarh, 1992.

common pool resources which resulted in perpetuation of poverty. Ambedkar mentioned the exclusion of Dalits from resources of nature was done by a system of graded inequalities enforced by the custom in the form of varna based caste system. Initially, environmental historians of South Asia mainly employed the Marxian concept of alienation of man from nature by capitalist exploitation of nature. In this process, colonial rule was projected as exploitative agent and rural communities are represented as homogeneous category of victims.⁴⁷ This approach, if not exclusively, but significantly focused on one-dimensional of human environmental relationship i.e., India versus British in the domain of ecology. But conflicts over access to natural and ecological resources within village community have been under explored. Recently, it has been pointed out by some studies that Indian culture and social values are not always eco-sensitive in fact exploitative and exclude Dalits from accessing ecological resources.⁴⁸ The fact is that this kind of approach is more important for analysis human environmental relationship in India wherein social stratification significantly determines the access of resources to various social groups. This means that Ambedkar theory on Indian society and its application in environmental studies enable us to evolve effective linkages between social and environmental history. Environmental history could thus be enriched by invoking the ideas of Ambedkar for capturing the social dimension of conflicts for access to resources of nature.

While perceiving the ideas and practices of Ambedkar the question that comes to our mind is that does the philosophy of Ambedkar useful for addressing environmental issues? If we look at core aspects of environment studies which are

⁴⁷ Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissure Land*

⁴⁸ V.M. Ravi Kumar, 'History of Indian Environmental Movement: A Study of Dr B.R. Ambedkar from the Perspective of Access to Water', *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, Vol, 8, Issue, 2, 2016, pp, 239-44; D. Mosse, *The Rule of Water: Statecraft, Ecology and Collective Action in South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003:

generally perceived as role of human agency in appropriating natural resources for production of wealth. The understanding of Ambedkar on exclusion of Dalits from natural resources can be understood at two levels: his ideas on exclusion of Dalits from cultivable land and his ideas on the relationship between caste based inequalities and their role in shaping the access to forests and water. Generally, most of the Dalit intellectuals touched upon the exclusion of Dalits from access to land and consequent poverty and marginalization. It was proposed that even though British colonial rule promoted unprecedented agrarian expansion, Dalits could not have access on account of lack of access to social and cultural power. Ambedkar too echoed similar views and in fact furthered them. A reflection from his monumental book *Annihilation of Caste* reflects this process in the following lines: ‘Balais (an untouchable caste from Maharashtra) were not allowed to get water from the village wells; they were not allowed to let go their cattle to graze. Balais were prohibited from passing through land owned by a Hindu, so that if the fields a Balai was surrounded by fields owned Hindu the Balais could have no access to his own field... hundreds of Balais were with their wives and children were obliged to abandon their homes in which their ancestors lived for generations and to migrate to adjoining States’.⁴⁹ Ambedkar highlights the nefarious practice of Indian society, which excludes lower strata people in the name of untouchability sanctified by texts and customs. He did not spare the British for carry forwarding the prejudice against Dalits. He mentions intention of the Punjab Land Alienation Act that disallows Dalits from buying and acquiring ownership. He argues thus that the British rule mainly catered to needs of upper caste Hindus to gain access to resources and disempowered Dalits from the same.

⁴⁹ Dr. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 26.

At the level of ideology, implicitly and explicitly Ambedkar engaged with human ecology from the perspective of Dalits. His main argument was exploitation and alienation of human beings and nature went parallel by privileged groups empowered by religion, custom and social values. The both socio-economic and ecological problems have same solutions for Ambedkar. The solution lines in eradication of castes based inequalities for promotion of egalitarian spirit and enable Dalit communities to become part of modern India. Along with ideological dimension of ecology, Ambedkar also has activist dimension for access to ecological resources to Dalits.

AMBEDKAR AS AN ACTIVIST OF COMMON POOL RESOURCES FOR ALL

Dalit environmentalism had begun as advocacy for transformation in the relationship between marginalized section of India society and ecology by Phule. Ambedkar transformed advocacy into practice by the way of launching collective struggle for access to nature by Dalits. The method of politics in which Ambedkar involved always attempted to plunge into action for common cause and highlight the injustice the upper strata of Hindu society done to Dalit and subaltern society.⁵⁰ The Mahad Saytyagraha launched by Ambedkar for access of water to Dalits is perhaps the first ecological social movement in South Asia. It was not aimed at preserving nature rather to democratize the access of nature which enabled the excluded sections to gains access to life sustaining resources.

The fight of Ambedkar and his associates need to be seen in the context of expansion of British control over common pool resources such as water, forests,

⁵⁰ A. Teltumbde, *Mahad: The Making of the First Dalit Revolt*, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2016.

village commons and other common pool resources on which rural poor in general and Dalits in particular depended upon. At the same time, the colonial state strengthens the power of rural elites consisting of upper castes. Besides this, a strong tendency to revive orthodox form of Hinduism resulted in revival of exclusionary practices of orthodox Hindus customs in which untouchability is an important part. All these process resulted in exclusion of Dalits from nature and its resources. The Mahad Satyagraha is a manifestation of this restlessness of Dalits and their collective will to fight against the alienation from nature.

Ambedkar championed the concept of environmentalism for the poor by the way of initiating mass movement for access to ecological resources. Surprisingly, environmental activism never pays attention to the initiative by Ambedkar. The Mahad Satyagraha was a movement in which two aspects are highlighted by the public engagement of Ambedkar: he tried to attack emblematic root of Hindu value system and practice i.e., burning the Manusmriti publically which was almost a revolution against orthodox Hindu belief system and fight against water Untouchability which was sanctioned by the Manusmriti.⁵¹ Here Ambedkar suggested his comrades not to follow age old restrictions on accessing drinking from common pool resources which is a vital for sustenance of life.⁵² The ecological activism of Ambedkar was different from the environmental protection movements in America which mainly concentrated on preservation of wild life and landscapes and other forms of nature. Whereas Ambedkar evolved and engaged in a movement not for preservation of nature, rather liberation of nature and ecology from the clutches

⁵¹ E. Zelliott, *From Untouchable to Dalits: Essays on Ambedkar Movements*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2005.

⁵² N Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and Politics of Modern India*, University of California Press, London, 2009.

exploitative classes and create a condition for sustainable management of living resources.

The Mahad Satyagraha took place in a small town of Central Provinces now known as Maharashtra in 1927. Ambedkar along with three thousand followers marched towards the tank and violated the traditional restrictions of preventing untouchables from accessing water from village common source. As symbolic gesture, Ambedkar torched took the forbidden tank water and nullified custom of Untouchability in accessing water source practiced against Dalits. The Mahad Satyagraha became an iconic millstone in history of Dalit movement wherein the custom of untouchability was questioned. But besides fight against caste, the Satyagraha also reflects a millstone in environmental movement and activism as well. It questions the monopoly of few social sections over resources of nature and exclusion of some sections in the name of custom. On this occasion, Ambedkar thundered that: 'At the outset, let me tell those who oppose us that we did not perish because we would not drink water from this Chowdar Tank. We now want to go to the Tank only to prove that, like others, we are also human beings'.⁵³ These words reflect a deep agony of Dalits on the centuries old draconian custom of exclusion from access to critical resources such as water. This position also wakeup call to nationalist perspective of environment which always glorify the Indian custom as repository of ecological conservation. It is in fact, at the same time it also has some inhuman customs in the form of untouchability.

Ambedkar was concisely aware of the fact that caste system and hierarchical positioning of social groups into higher and lower resulted in exclusion of Dalits from

⁵³ C. Jaferrlot, *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004.

accessing natural resources which is the foot cause of their economic marginalization. Social fight against social exclusion from natural and ecological resources for Ambedkar was not enough to provide such resources to Dalits. Hence he consistently tried to give legal and administrative footing to the claims of Dalits to ecological resources. This is evident in his suggestions regarding the legal protection of interests of Dalits in accessing natural and ecological resources. This can be captured in the following narrative: 'to be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, educational institutions, privileges of inns, rivers, streams, wells, tanks roads, paths, streets, public conveyances and land, air, water, theatres and other public resort or amusements except for such conditions are limitations applicable alike to all subjects of every race, class, caste and colour or creed'.⁵⁴ These profound words echo the aspects of ecological justice which means equality in accessing the resources of nature.

The social ecological position of Ambedkar put back the human agency at the center stage of ecological discourse. He highlights the role of social equations in deterring the access of communities to resources of nature and physical ecological conditions. He argues that some privileged sections are allowed to over exploit natural resources and Dalits are disallowed to even access the basic amenities from nature. The roots of egalitarian environment or environment for the poor could thus be traced in the ideas of Ambedkar.

Like Marx Ambedkar did not confine to material solutions to ecological crisis, like Gandhi did not confine to ethical solutions the problems of nature. He has rare combination of material, spiritual and pragmatic solutions to ecological problems

⁵⁴ S. Thorat, S and N. Kumar, B.R. Ambedkar: *Perspectives on Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008, p. 148.

from the perspective Dalit emancipation. A brief discussion on his spiritual dimension of ecology is useful in understanding the ethical dimension of saving biological world by human beings. The text *Buddha and his Dharma* has profound ecological dimension. The very beginning of the character of the Buddha for Ambedkar emanates from ecological context. The decision of the Siddhartha Gautama to become the Buddha for Ambedkar happened in the context of water dispute between two tribes for sharing river water.⁵⁵ Engagement of Ambedkar for ecological justice with the character of the Buddha could be seen at three levels: the commencement of evolution of cosmic and natural world; the relationship between human beings and other living and non living things and the ethical dimension of human ecology which human as an agency to conserve natural world with sympathy and empathy. Ambedkar thus evolve an aspect of egalitarian, ethical and inclusive environmentalism.

One of the core principles of the navayan Buddhism (Ambedkar's version of Buddhism) proposes that the relationship between man and nature must be based on mutual regard. The thrust the Buddhist Dharma according to Ambedkar is engagement of 'man and the relation of man to man in his life on earth'.⁵⁶ By invoking the Buddhist, Ambedkar engaged with aspects of immoral social order in which communities with more power exploit nature at their will and at the same time envisioning a society free from exploitation and deprivation in the domain of ecology. The fact is that neo-Buddhism does not satisfy with harmonious relationship between human beings and it also proposes organic relationship with all living forms. The core ecological message of Buddhism according to Ambedkar could be observed in the following narrative: 'Love is not enough; what is required is Maître. It is wider than

⁵⁵ Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dharma*, Siddhartha, New Delhi, 2005.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 121.

love. It means fellowship not merely with human beings but with all living beings. Is not such Maître necessary? What else can give to all living beings the same happiness which one seeks for one's own self, to keep the mind impartial, open to all, with affection for everyone and hatred for none'.⁵⁷ It is this kind of lofty ideal that Ambedkar attempted to evolve address social and ecological issues by the way engaging with Buddhism.

The preceding sections of this chapter demonstrate the ideas of Phule and Ambedkar with the perspective of human ecology. In the genre of Dalit literature, the ideas of Phule and Ambedkar together referred to as Phule-Ambedkar discourse. It has been perceived as bedrock of the Dalit studies and ideology. This chapter attempted to highlight the ecological dimension of Phule-Ambedkar discourse. The fact is that besides Phule-Ambedkar discourse, there are several intellectuals/activists belong to Dalit subaltern communities engaged with liberation of Dalits from oppression from socioeconomic and cultural domain. The Phule-Ambedkar discourse strongly believes that socio-economic domination leads to cultural hegemony and all three together leads to ecological domination. Control over nature and its resources for the Phule-Ambedkar discourse is an outcome of social domination of upper strata of population and alienation of lower strata from the same. It is this process that did not become part of environmental movement and politics; rather the culture and traditions of oppressors are projected as solutions. What a tragedy to Indian environmental discourse? The ecological dimension to the Phule-Ambedkar discourse provides a framework for inclusive environmental discourse and politics. Interestingly, the

⁵⁷ *ibid*, p. 121.

Phule-Ambedkar discourse gradually was echoed by several likeminded reformers in different parts of India.

Swami Achhutanand (6 MAY 1879 – 20 JULY 1933)

The beginning of the Dalit-liberation movement in North India can be traced back to the last phase of the nineteenth century in which Swami Acchutanand played a crucial role. He significantly popularized the Dalit ideology and actively propagated the stakes of Dalits in politics. He was born in 1879 in village Unmari, Post Sirsaganj, District Mainpuri.⁵⁸ His real name was Hiralal. His ideas and activism was product of Dalit ambivalence between tradition and modernity. As a product of the Arya Samaj, Acchutanand was deeply aware of the ideas, practices and limitations of Hindu reform movement. Having recognized the limitation of Dalit reform project, at the level of practice, he had begun to formulate his own version of religious-cultural space within the ideological universe of Hinduism.⁵⁹

The activism of Acchutanand had begun in 1905 with foundation of movement for development of untouchable communities in Delhi. Here the All India Untouchable Mahasabha was established and edited the Untouchable magazine regularly. In 1921, at a conference of All India scheduled caste in Delhi, he gave his views on the abolition of Zamindari and distribution of surplus lands to Dalits. Reviving the discourse of sons of soil of Phule, he proposes that Dalits are original inhabitants and creators of Indian civilization. This discourse of Acchutanand can be captured in the following lines: ‘We are the oldest of Hindus, we were leaders but we were made Shudras, we were thrown to the ground and treated discriminatorily. The times have

⁵⁸Mata Prasad, *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran aur uske Agradoot*, p. 66.

⁵⁹Ramvilas Bhartee, *Biswi Sadi Me Dalit Samaj*, pp. 57-58.

changed, now don't take any atrocities and break the chains of slavery'.⁶⁰ In 1923, Swami Ji founded the Hindu Mahasabha. Dalits were mobilized and organized in this institution to oppose the caste-system and evil aspect of religion. In 1922, Prince of Wales, son of King George V of England, arrived in Delhi.⁶¹ On this occasion, Achchutanand and his associates presented 9 point charters which are aimed at development of Dalits in India. Those points as follows:

- 1- Fallow lands should be given to untouchable farmers.
- 2- Wages should be increased.
- 3- The entire system of forced labour should be eradicated.
- 4- Untouchables should have the same social rights as upper-caste Hindus.
- 5- The untouchables should be given the freedom to do business and shop keeping.
- 6- Stringent legislation should be enacted to prevent untouchability.
- 7- Untouchables should also be given entry in police and army.
- 8- Adi Hindus should be given separate representation.
- 9- Schools should be opened for the progress of untouchables.⁶²

In 1927 in Kanpur, Achchutanand said, "Swaraj is our birthright". But it was not in the sense of Bal Gangadhar Tilak model which focus mainly on political version of self rule. His notion of Swaraj is inclusive and liberative. This can be captured from the following section: "Whereas Hindus and Muslims want independence from the British Empire; the natives of India want freedom from both of them along with the English Empire'. He criticized the government for its policy of conferring honors on the landlords who exploit the untouchables. He appealed to the government to pass

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Mata Prasad, *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran aur uske Agradoot*, p. 67.

⁶² Mata Prasad, *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran aur uske Agradoot*, p. 67.

land reform laws and thereby abolish landlordism and feudalism in the society.⁶³ In 1928, Swami Acchutanand met with Ambedkar at the Adi Hindu Conference in Bombay and shared ideas for progress of Dalits.⁶⁴ In 1927, the British government constituted the Simon Commission to study the condition of untouchables. When the commission arrived in Lucknow on 29-30 September 1928, Acchutanand extended a grand welcome and presented the concerns and demands of Dalits to it.⁶⁵ Swami Acchutanand supported the demand of separate electorate made by Dr Ambedkar in the Round Table Conference held in 1930 in London. He strongly opposed the nomenclature of Harijan given by Gandhi.⁶⁶

Along with social emancipation, Acchutanand also echoed liberation of Dalits from alienation of natural resources. Particularly he was keenly aware of the lack of access to cultivable land to Dalits. It is this reason for Acchutanand mainly responsible marginalization of Dalits in rural India. For mitigation of this problem, he suggested two measures: firstly, abolition of Zamindari system and secondly distribution of cultivable lands to landless Dalits. He also demanded the British government to identify waste lands and allocated such lands to Dalits. These two suggestions echoes Phule-Ambedkar discourse which consistently demanded for ownership over land as means to escape from bonded labour conditions in which most of Dalits are caught for several centuries. The Dalit environmentalism thus demands for provision of ownership over lands to Dalits which is the need for empowerment of Dalits from slavery to emancipation. This socio-ecological radicalism of Dalit environmentalism was furthered by intellectual of non-Brahman movement. This

⁶³ Ramvilas Bhartee, *Biswi Sadi Me Dalit Samaj*, p. 58.

⁶⁴ Mata Prasad, *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran aur uske Agradoot*, p. 68.

⁶⁵ Agne Lal & Rahul Raj, *Uttar Pradesh Me Dalit Andolan*, p. 27.

⁶⁶ R. K. Sshirsagar, *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders (1857-1956)*, p. 378.

trend is explicitly visible in the ideas and practice of Ramaswami Naikar from South India.

Ramaswami Naikar (Periyar) (1879-1973)

Ramaswami Naikar is one of the important intellectual, activist and non-Brahman thinkers whose ideas exercised profound impact on socio-economic and cultural ideas in India in general and South India in particular. He emerged as emblematic figure of radical atheism and ruthless rationalism in India. He offers a fierce critique of orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism and urges lower sections of people to unite and redeem themselves from the yoke of religious fanaticism.⁶⁷

He was born on 17 September 1879 in a business family in Erode Nagar, Tamil Nadu. He belonged to the kanndika valiya caste, later known as Nayakar. The ideology and activism of Naikar was a product anti-upper caste Hindu hegemony in different part of India. It was also a product of anxiety of non-Brahman community due to unprecedented consolidation of socio-economic and cultural power of Brahman community in the context of the British colonial rule. Such hegemony, non-Brahman communities believed would rip out their socio-economic status and force them towards marginalization. It was also a response to the unprecedented hold that Brahman community holds in socio-political and cultural domains. The voice and activism of Ramaswami need to be seen in the context of articulating the anxieties of non-Brahman and Dalit communities in the process mergence of nation and their position into it.⁶⁸ And the alternative formations of ethnic nationalism articulated by people from margins. This chapter proposes that the socio-cultural radicalism of

⁶⁷ Bala Jayaram, *Periyar: The Political Biography of E.V.Ramaswami*, Rupa, New Delhi, 2013.

⁶⁸ Robert L. Hardgrave, *The Dravidian Movement*, Popular Prakshan, Bombay, 1965.

Ramaswami has sensible environmentalism which proposes nature should be used in democratic way.

The political context for his socio-cultural ideology is useful in tracing the thought process of Ramaswami. Angered by ruthless domination of Brahmanical ideology in the Indian National Congress, he left the party and founded a movement which came to be known as Dravidan movement. This movement proposes the following radical solutions to de-Brahmanisation: abolition of all caste distinctions, the rejection of all religion, and the maintenance of Tamil language and culture in the face of growing Hindi influence. Even though he traveled to the Soviet Union in 1932 and spoke glowingly about the wonders of atheistic socialism, he condemned by the twice-born leadership of the Indian communist movement because he concentrated on caste issues, rather than economic class issues. Ostracized by the left, Periyar moved away from socialism to concentrate more on ethnic issues and was a significant contributor toward the Tamil nationalist movement which has played such a large role in Indian politics in the last several decades.⁶⁹

Ramaswami was the chief architect of the self respect movement which attempted to create an alternative ideological framework in India which is an anti-thesis to Brahmanical cultural model of Hinduism. The main objective of this movement was to create opposition among the people of Brahmanism, the symbol of the Aryans, to awaken self-respect in Tamil language literature and culture, and to end the exploitation of priests running in the name of God.⁷⁰ The main objective of this movement is to initiate India renaissance from below. The core aspect of this

⁶⁹ Ramvilash Bhartee, *Biswi Sadi me Dalit Samaj*, pp.59-67.

⁷⁰ Indu Prakesh, *The Tyranny of Caste: Non-Brahman Movement and Political Movement in South India*, Vikas, New Delhi.

movement can be captured from the following reflection: ‘The goal of self-respect movement is to have a caste-less society and to achieve it’.⁷¹

Periyar and his allies together established the Dravida Kadgam in 1944. It was the rule of this institution to relinquish all government titles to its members. The aim of the institution was to establish an independent Dravidian state by attaining complete independence from the British Empire and orthodox traditions. Tamil Nadu based on the Tamil language was demanded by the Dravidian cadre. Periyar advocated giving equal rights to men for establishing social equality. He spoke for the education, wealth and self-respect of women and also organized movements for them.⁷² In one of his articles that appeared in the 'Self Respect Marriage', he ate – “Men and women are equal. He is not a slave; he is like a true friend. He is an ideal partner and right for both. If the wife should follow the husband, then the husband should also follow the wife.” In self-respecting marriages, dowry, child marriage and priest marriages were opposed. This marriage used to take place in just 2-3 minutes. The main purpose of this type of marriage was to remove the influence of Brahmins from the rituals of marriage and to promote inter-caste marriages. On the demands of Periyar, the government issued the order of age and social equality of marriage, on the basis of caste; no one can be stopped from making a priest.⁷³

VIEW OF PERIYAR ON VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

The ideas of Periyar represent a distinctive ecological thought which is a mirror image of Brahmanical model of environmentalism. Existing litterateur on Periyar mainly explored his socio-cultural and political protest against the dominant forms of

⁷¹ Ramvilash Bhartee, *Biswi Sadi me Dalit Samaj*, pp.59-67.

⁷² A.N. Sttanathan, *The Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu and its legacy*, University of Madras, Madras, 1982.

⁷³ V. Geetha, *Self-Respect Marriage*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2015.

hegemonic Brahmanical system. This study proposes that he has fascinating ideas on the relationship between human being and nature and society and nature. He evolved an acrimonious critique of the Gandhian ecology and nature oriented life which was advocated as crux of Hindu village life. He advocated and in fact warned that those who endorse the ideas of nature centric life are endorsing the conservative ideology of varnasharma dharma as a model for Indian society to be organized. He proposes that what is natural is unnatural in practice. It means that taping nature is natural and preserving nature is unnatural according to Periyar. He makes a distinction between good and bad use of nature for human use. Most of the time, for Periyar human beings engaged in use of nature with good intention and escaping from the wrath of nature. He thus refutes the nature centric life and proposes that nature should be used for betterment of all sections of India society. In other words Periyar advocates for transforming nature in such a way that it would benefit to all members of society.⁷⁴

Ecological dimension of Periyar can be captured from his views on India villages as a space in which human beings play politics for domination and control. The village was suggested to meet the necessary resources by making units according to the population. He gave the following suggestions for rural development.⁷⁵

1. Machines are used in ploughing, seeding, cutting and irrigation work.
2. The machine operated small industry poles should be started.
3. Cooperation committees should be formed so that the moneylender and other exploiters should be eliminated.
4. Agriculture should be given the status of the industry.
5. Cooperation committees and municipalities should be given more powers.

⁷⁴ G. Aloysius, *E.V. Ramasami Periyar: Village Reconstruction*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2013.

⁷⁵ D.K. Vesantri, *Bharat ke Samajik Krantikari*, pp. 172-173.

6. Industries should be established in the area for the production of the above-mentioned items.
7. Litigation should be reduced by improving the rules.
8. Loans of common people should be eliminated.⁷⁶

Environmentalism of Pariyar has an organic connection with environmentalism of Phule and Ambedkar. It proposes that human intellect in India preserved and practiced in the form of religion, custom mainly concentrated on how to exploit nature for narrow class requirements and the same tradition exclude majority working mass from access of nature. They want a break from such exploitation and wished for democratization of access to nature.

The ecological vision of Phule-Ambedkar discourse and Pariyar's socio-ecological radicalism has profound impact on the activism and thought process of several Dalit intellectuals who attempted to address and engaged in the process of Dalit stakes in Indian ecology. Such attempts were mainly aimed at demand for access to natural and ecological resources such as land, water etc. Dalit environmentalism in the form of demanding access to resources of nature and other life sustaining resources became relatively an all Indian level phenomenon. The point to be observed here is that along with Dalit discourse and practice, Dalit environmentalism also acquired prominence. This can be observed from the life histories, activities and demands of some of Dalit intellectuals from different parts of India.

Airgay Ramaswamy (1885-1973), from Hyderabad undertook reform of Dalit community which was excluded from development process in the Hyderabad state. He actively pushed for social reform in the form of abstaining from spurious

⁷⁶ G. Aloysius

drinks and eradication of the Devadasi system from the community. He also preached against animal sacrifices and child-marriages. He believed in preaching of Brhmo Samaj. He proposes that basic amenities such as land, water, housing, etc should be provided to Dalits and enable them come out of poverty and lead a dignified life.⁷⁷

M.L. Audiah (1866-1938), another intellectual and activist from Hyderabad who attempted to reform Dalit society. He launched a sustained attack on eradication of the age-old customs of drinking and eating meat at social occasions, and in marriage and funeral functions. He formed an organization named, Sangliabhiwrudhi Samajamu. The main purpose of this organization was to awaken the people and proposed unity for all the untouchable castes. It was opposed to the Choudharies, the landed gentry who exploited landless Dalits. He demanded for agrarian reforms and distribution of waste lands to Dalits to destroy the bonded labour system.⁷⁸

Ayyan Kali (1863-1941), a Dalit reformer and activist from Kerala. He was born in Pulaya caste in Trivandrum district in Kerala and belongs to a poor agricultural labour family. The orthodox Hindu society in Karla observes rigid form of untouchability and excludes Dalits from all walked of life. They were not allowed to take formal education, and to enter the temples and public place such as ponds, tanks etc. They were not even allowed to have good clothing. This adverse situation and his own experience with the acute and virulent form of untouchability motivated Ayyan Kali to undertake reformist activism to uplift Dalits from exploitation.

Ayyan Kali initiated his movement for emancipation of Dalits in 1893. At first he sought to regain the right to walk along the streets. Under his leadership Dalits agricultural labour refused to work in the fields of caste Hindus in 1940.

⁷⁷ Kshir Sagar, Dalit Movement,

⁷⁸ Ibid

Consequently, the caste Hindus had to lose paddy production for the year. This incident a level playing field in Karela society and the rigidity of Hindu society towards gradually became liberal. He was nominated as a member of Moolam Praja Sabha in 1912. During this period, he succeeded in gaining the rights to hold land for Dalits which was denied to them in Kerala society. The Maharaja granted 1,000 acres of land for its distribution among the untouchables. It was an indeed a revolutionary steps for Dalits who got rights to hold land which enabled them to escape from bonded labour.

Kisan Faguji Bansod (1879-1946) was born on 18 February 1879 at village Mohapa near Nagpur in Maharashtra. He belonged to Mahar caste. In order to organize the Dalits and make them conscious of their rights, he founded one Sanmarg Bodhak Asprushya Samaj at Nagpur in 1901. He advocated and fought for equality, moral conduct and self-confidence. He was influenced by the philosophy of Brahmo Samaj. Therefore he embraced Bramho Samaj on 1 October 1909. He could properly realize the importance of press in making the people socially and politically conscious and organizing them under one banner. He started the Journal Nirashrit Hind Nagarik in 1910; Vital Vidhvansak in 1913, Majur Patrika in 1918 and Chokha Mela during 1931-1936. He tried to organize the labourers and to express their grievances. He said very categorically that, “Mahars would not achieve salvation, unless they struggle” (Maharashi Anti, Nahi Ladhanyavina Mukti).⁷⁹

Pannalal Berupal was a Dalit reformer, intellectual and activist from Rajasthan. His father was a cultivator and petty businessman. He was president of Meghwal Sudhar Sabha and Rajathan Provincial Depressed Classes League. He was a member of Harijan Welfare Board in 1944. He worked for the abolition of jagirdari

⁷⁹ Ibid

and Begar or Bonded labour. He used to compose songs with messages aimed at bringing social awareness among the scheduled Castes. He wrote *Hindu Samaj jin ko Ahoot Manta hai, kya Weh Ahoot Hain? Jati Pati aur Varna Vyavastha ka Rahasya; Harijan Pukar; Meghwal (Chamar) Jati ki Utpati aur Raam Rivaj and Alakhiya Samradaya*. He fought for agrarian reform and demanded for land to Dalits.⁸⁰

M.V. Bhagya Reddy (1888-1939), Reddy was born in 22 May 1888 in Hyderabad. After having seen the pitiable condition of his own untouchable brethren, he dedicated his life to their uplift. At first he founded Jagan Mitra Mandli in 1906 to enlighten the illiterate masses through Harikatha performances and bhajans. In the year 1912, he founded Many Sangham which after a decade was given the name of Adi-Hindu Social Service League. The main objective of the organization was to eradicate the evil habits that had crept into the society, such as drinking, sacrificing the animals, dedicating the girls to the deities, and performing child marriages. In 1917 he was invited to preside over the first Andhra-Panchama Conference at Vijaywada. In his presidential address Bhagya Reddy observed that the depressed Classes were the original inhabitants of India and ought to be called Adi-Hindu instead of Panchama. Under his leadership, Andhra Panchama Sabha demanded for distribution of lands to Dalits and provision of drinking water facility in Dalit mohollas.⁸¹

L.S. Bhatkar (1901-1970), was born in 1901 at Thugaon, Amravati district in Maharashtra. His father Sharavan Bhatkar was a hereditary village servant belongs to Mahar caste. He started career as a member of Satyashodak Samaj under the

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

leadership of Pandharinath and the leaders of non-Brahmin party, at Buldhana. He participated in many satyagrahas for upliftment of Dalits. He led the satyagraha at Lonar in Buldhana district for taking water at a common watering place for Dalits. He demanded for provision of drinking water facility to all Dalits who were traditionally deprived of it.

Kalicharan Nandagavali (1860-1962), was born in 1862 at Bothali village, in District Balaghat. He belonged to Mahar community. He owned near about 100 acres of agricultural land. He was deeply moved by pitiable and poor condition of his brethren and therefore he turned to Social Service. He was Mahanubav Panthi by birth and accordingly he was vegetarian and a teetotaler and inclined towards spiritualism. In 1916, he established one Bhartiya Mahar Panchayat to look into the problems of the Mahars; and convened a conference on the issue of Untouchability. He undertook wide range of activities for upliftment of Dalits. He moved a resolution on 13 August 1923 regarding civil rights of the untouchables, such as right to access to public wells, bathing ghats and such other public places. Through, it was passed by the legislature; but it remained a mere resolution.

Shivram Janba Kamble (1875-1940), born in 1875 at Pune. He impressed by Mahatma Phule and initially he worked to bring about social awareness among the untouchables. He was against all such superstitions and customs which were humiliating to the untouchables. He advised his brethren to give up the superstitious system of sacrificing animals like male buffaloes, bulls and goats before the factious deity. He also advised them neither to eat beef nor to take spurious drinks. He also urged them to maintain cleanliness and cultural standard in the family. He founded The Depressed Classes Committee in 1921.

L.K. Guruswami (1885-1966), born in Madras in 1885. He was determined to bring out the untouchables from their backwardness. He felt that spread of education could be the best means to achieve the purpose. He acquired land for colonizing the people in place like Puliyanthope. He also fought and managed to secure amenities like lights, road, water-supply, etc. in those localities.

Mangu Ram (1886-1980), born on 14 January 1886 at Mugowal in Hoshiarpur, Panjab. He belonged to Chamar caste. He joined the Gadar Party founded by a nationalist Lala Hardayal in 1913. He constructed a drinking water well for his brethren. Mangu Ram made a proposal to start Ad Dharm Mandal for the uplift of Dalits. The conference agreed to his proposal. He opined that the untouchables should have three powers: Community power, a religious power and organization. Through the organization of Ad Dharma, he tried to bring a new consciousness among the untouchable's masses in Punjab and achieve those three powers for them. He appealed to the government to withdraw the regulation which stopped allow the Depressed Classes member from acquiring agricultural land in the State of Punjab. He appealed for the abolition of the bonded labour system prevalent on large scale in Punjab. Moreover, he appealed to the government to offer special privileges for educational development of the Scheduled Castes.

G.A. Gawali (1888-1973)

He was born in about 26 October 1888 at Thugaon in Bhakuli Amravati district in Maharashtra. In 1910 he formed Mahar Sudharak Mandal at Amaravati to reform and unites the people. A fortnightly named Bahishkrit Bharat was started by him from Amaravati in the year 1914. He took part in the Conference of depressed Classes held in Bombay on 11 November 1917. He opposed it saying that, if the Hindus demanded

Swaraj, which meant the rule of Hindu bureaucrats, then such Swaraj was of no use to the Depressed Classes. In a bid to unite all the Depressed Classes under one banner, he formed Depressed India Association in Bombay on 12 January 1918. Having observed the enthusiasm of Gawai in the uplift of the untouchables, the Government nominated to him to the CP and Berar Legislative Assembly in 1920. He continues to be its member till 1945, for a period of 25 years. He moved the Anti-untouchability Bill in the Assembly in 1934 and it was passed by the Assembly. He was one of the main founders of All India Depressed Classes Association at Nagpur in 1928.

Focusing on Dalit discourse and thought an attempt being made in this chapter to retrieve its ecological dimension. Such an attempt is useful to explore the ecological thought of India which has been structured mainly by Hindu nationalist outlook, Gandhian minimalist perspective and nationalist Marxist perspective. These frames of thought did not give adequate space to the stakes of Dalits and their politics in the domain of ecology. Consequently, Dalits and several other marginalized sections kept out of environmental movement and discourse. It is this gap this chapter and study attempt to highlight. A survey of ideas of Dalit intellectual from ecological perspective shows a fascinating discourse and perspective on environmentalism which proposes that nature should be for all and all for nature philosophy.

This chapter attempted to capture the ideological formation of Dalits society and its impact upon activism of Dalits. This is however done from the perspective of ecology. Attempt has been made to construct the trajectory of ecological dimension of Dalit thought and various facades of it. The centrality of Dalit environmentalism this chapter proposes that liberation, transformation and emancipation of Dalit community in the domain of ecology. This chapter also argues that Dalit environmentalism is an appendix to Dalit ideology which strives to transform the livelihood of Dalits by

assertive consciousness, struggle and various other means to achieve it. The core of Dalit environmentalism this chapter demonstrates that situating Dalits into the accusable domain of nature which was traditionally controlled by upper castes of India with struggle and socio-ethnic collectivity. The observable point is that the conceptual category of environmentalism is not a monolith phenomenon in India. The Brahmanical environmental thought is often equated with Indian environmental thought like the way Brahmanical customs are projected as Indian culture. This chapter proposes that India did had a rich tradition of materialist, bio-human centric environmental thought which does to fall prey to dualism of human needs versus of nature preservation. What Dalit environmentalism documented and analyzed in this chapter proposes that nature and human are inseparable entities and coexists. Human needs and nature should have an organic balance which is the root of the idea of sustainable development. The Dalit environmentalism is thus a thought which promote sustainable development rooted in the organic relationship between human beings and nature.

CHAPTER-IV

DALIT MOVEMENT AND RESOURCES OF NATURE IN UNITED PROVINCES

ABSTRACT OF CHAPTER:

Having analyzed and narrated emergence of Dalit consciousness and its ecological version in the preceding chapter, this chapter explores the analyses the conceptual domain of Dalit environmentalism with particular reference to United Provinces. The prime aim of this chapter is to propose the fact that Dalit movement in United Provinces provided inspiration to Dalit movement in different parts of India. Besides this, Dalit movement in United Provinces has a deep ecological dimension which this chapter attempts to explore.

CHAPTER-IV

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents discourse, practice and strategies of Dalit movement in United Provinces which encompasses the modern state of Uttar Pradesh from the perspective of ecology. Attempt has been made to explore the way Dalit movement besides its core objectives, engaged in gaining access to natural/ecological resources in United Provinces. Being one of the regions with large number of Dalit communities United Provinces offers a fascinating example of how Dalit movement engaged in its demand for empowerment of Dalits. The main objective of this chapter is to underscore the fact that Dalit movement in United Provinces did had a fascinating ecological dimension which provides a case study for Dalit environmentalism.

This chapter has four divisions: firstly it documents a brief note on geographical and ecological conditions of United Provinces, the parts illustrate the occupational structure of Dalits in United Provinces, the third part focus on socio-economic and cultural conditions of Dalits in United Provinces, the forth section explores the political movements of Dalits in United Provinces and the fifth section illustrates the ecological dimension of Dalit movement in United Provinces.

I

The first section of this chapter proposes a brief description about the geographical and physical ecological factors that shaped the socio-economic and cultural formations of United Provinces. This region happens to be one of the most fertile regions of India having large population and highly developed civilization. Such a description is useful in tracking the emergence of occupational profiles of Dalit castes and reasons for their marginalization.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITION

Under the British Empire, in the beginning, the United Provinces was a territorial segment of North Western Provinces. After 1902, a separate territorial zone was carved out off the North Western Provinces and named as the United Provinces. After independence, the name of United Provinces was changed to Uttar Pradesh in 1950. The modern state of Uttar Pradesh thus came into existence and it is the biggest state comparative to the other states of India on the basis of population. In general, all religions and different kinds of castes are found here and it is also centre of ancient religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. On account of its geographical positions, it is fertile and blessed congenial conditions for agricultural prosperity.¹

In terms of geographical and political boundaries, the United Provinces was bounded on the North by Tibet and on the north-east by Nepal on the east and southeast by Champaran, Saran, Sahabad and Palamau Districts of Bengal on the South by two of the Chota Nagpur States in the Central Provinces, Rewah and Saugor districts in the Central Provinces, on the west by the states of Gwalior, Dholpur and Bharatpur. The district of Gurgaon, Delhi, Karnali and Ambala in the Punjab states of Sirmur and Jubhal. The Jamna river forms part of western boundary, the Ganga Part of the eastern other boundaries are artificial boundaries.

According to the survey of India, the area of the two provinces are in square miles Agra 83 198, Oudh 23,966; total 107,494 including the Sone and the Beel rivers which from district boundaries and are excluded from the district details, the total area amount to 107,494 square miles. The area of the two native states in the provinces (Rampur and Tehri) is 5079 square mile. In the process of history, a presidency of

¹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1*, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, (1908), p. 1.

Agra was first formed in 1834, up to which date the area then separated had been included in the Presidency of Bengal, being sometimes called the Western Provinces. In 1836 its name was changed to the Lieutenant governorship of the North Western Provinces. The Province Oudh was annexed in 1856 and became a chief commissionership with a separate administration. In 1877 the two provinces were brought together under the Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Chief Commissioner of Oudh and in 1902 the name of the Provinces was changed the title of chief commissioner dropped.²

NATURAL RESOURCES OF PROVINCES

As already mentioned, United Provinces was blessed with abundant natural resources and relatively stable climatic conditions. These conditions made this region one of the important regions which played a crucial role in Indian history. It would be useful to have a brief description about natural resources and physical ecological conditions which played a major role in shaping the socio-cultural and formations of the provinces.

MAJOR RIVERS

United Provinces blessed with several perennial rivers flow from the Himalayan mountain range. The Jumna River formed part of the western boundary, the Ganges part of the southern, and the Gandak part of the eastern part. Besides this, it has large network of tributaries of main rivers in different parts of the Provinces. These rivers made this region as one of the most fertile land and given rise to one of the most complicated agrarian society and civilization in India.³

² Ibid. p. 2.

³ Ibid., pp. 5-7.

LAND

Land is a national asset, and the State is bound to preserve it in an efficient condition and in an economic state for benefit of future generations. The state also derives most of its income from the land.⁴ Land is a basic natural resource on which development of human with other living beings along with water and plants are going on from the foundation of the creation. Insufficient management of natural resource affected bio diversity, agriculture efficiency and ecological balance. It is essential to implement on priority basis, Soil and Water Conservation programs in problematic areas, to make sure designed development and to achieve required produce of food grains, fodder and bio fuel. Land in United Provinces is a part of Gangitic plain and silt brought about by rivers. This land is extremely suitable for wheat and rice crops. A Land Management Circle was created in 1945 for the creation of village fuel and fodder reserves, the proper management of road-side avenues and trees and other amenity or ameliorative forestry work primarily in the non-forest districts of the State.⁵

The soil in United Provinces is usual medium which through its nutrient constituents, ropes and sustains plant development on the surface of the earth. Generally, a method in the form of rock weathering, decay of animal and vegetal coat, along with moisture, leads to the formation of soil types. At the same time, physical climate and precipitation is also responsible for influencing the nature of soil structure.⁶ Most of the area of Uttar Pradesh is covered by a deep sheet of alluvium spread on account of the slow-moving rivers of the Ganges system. These massively

⁴ U.P.S.A., Lucknow, Agriculture Department Report, File No. 121/1927.

⁵ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol. 1, Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1908, p. 51.

⁶ Ibid.

luxuriant alluvial soils range from sandy to clayey loam and others. The soils in the southern division of the state are normally mixed red and black or red-to-yellow.

In the western districts of Uttar Pradesh such as Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Moradabad, Pilibhit Saharanpur, Meerut and Bareilly, the soil is naturally rich and useful for agriculture. Generally the soil is deep brown and loamy in some places, also mixed with sand. The soil is shallow, gravelly and complete of stones – being usually acidic. In the western plains (Saharanpur, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar) the soil is deeper and productive. Further eastwards (Moradabad, Pilibhit, Bijnor and Bareilly) the soil gets to be loamy, still further down the Pilibhit district, a quantity of the soil become acidic while the rest shows some alkaline properties. The soil in the central part comprising Hardoi, Barabanki, Azamgarh, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Lucknow and Kanpur districts is loamy and sandy loms. In the eastern part of the state, the districts of Gorakhpur, Basti, Mahrajganj, and Gonda contain two varieties of the soil, which are locally known as ‘Bhat’ and ‘banjar’. The alluvial soil is called ‘dhuh’. The one described as ‘mant’ is loamy sandycalcareous, comparatively. The soil in the north western district of the state contains less of phosphate. The district of Mau, Jaunpur and Azamgarh are found to be missing in potash and the drier areas are known as ‘reh’ and ‘usar.’ The soil of Aligarh, Mainpuri, Etah, Lucknow, Sitapur, Unnao, Raibareilly, Kanpur and Etawah is salt affected and known as ‘usar’ and ‘reh’ soils. Mixed red and black soil is set up in the Jhansi division of the state and the districts of Sonebhadra and Mirzapur as well as the Meja and Karchhana tehsils of Allahabad as well as Chakia and Varanasi district. Black soil is humid, calcareous and fruitful. It expands as it soaks humidity and contracts on drying up. In the upper

plateau of these districts the soil is red and is of two kinds – ‘parwa’ and ‘rackar’ is light sandy-loam or sandy while ‘rocker’ is alkaline.⁷

Land Management The area under forests in India in 1949-50 was 14.7 million acres, 18 per cent of the land area. Therefore, the need for an immediate reconnaissance survey of waste lands in order to evolve a system of balanced and complementary land use was suggested in 1953.⁸

FOREST

On account of population increase and expansion of agriculture, most of the forests in northern plains are cleared. It is this process that consumed much of forest cover which was eventually converted into agricultural zone.⁹ This clearance of forests for agriculture still continues. But still we do have different varieties of forests in Uttar Pradesh. Prior to formation of Uttarakhand, the geographical area of U.P. was 2,94,411 square kilometers of which 33,994 square kilometers (that is 11.54 per cent) were covered with forests. Now with an area of 23,243 square kilometers transferred to Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh has forest cover of only 10,751 square kilometers. Thus, the forest cover of U.P. has been reduced to a paltry 7 percent of its total geographical spread. However, only 4.46 percent is under dense forest. The tree cover in Uttar Pradesh can be classified into three categories: (i) wet tropical deciduous forests (ii) dry tropical deciduous forests and (iii) tropical thorny forests. Wet tropical forests are situated in areas which obtain an annual rainfall of 100 to 150 centimeters, a special characteristic of which is that deciduous trees of irregular shapes and sizes are to be found in elevated areas while the low-lying areas have a major presence of bamboo,

⁷ Ibid, pp. 55-56.

⁸ 100 years of Indian Forestry, Volume- 2, Forest Indian Institute, Dehradun, 1961, p.

⁹ Forest Department Report, United Provinces, Proceedings for November, 1904.

creepers and climbers as also cane together with green bushes. The trees that grow mainly in these forests are: plum, sal, goolar, amla, dhak, palash, mahua, jamun etc. Dry deciduous forests are to be usually found in the plains of approximately the whole of central and western parts of the state. Bushes and grasses raise here in profusion because of sun light travelling right up to the ground level. Great tracts of land have, however, been cleared for agricultural purposes in these forests where sal, fig, palash and teak besides trees such as mango, jamun, neem, peepal, mahua and acacia grow close by rivers or in places containing humidity. Tricky forests abound, generally, in the south western parts of the State where rainfall is insufficient (40 to 60 cms. Annually). Extensive stretches of land are covered with thorny bushes and undersized trees, principally, acacia and other fruit-bearing prickly plants. The land appears to be carpeted, conditionally, by short grass for the period of the monsoon. Altogether, this part of the state is permanent open dry woodland in which a diversity of trees produces, yielding resin and gum.¹⁰

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture has been one the important source of sustenance in United Provinces. Obviously, it is not only an occupation but also a way of life to majority of people. Nearly 66 percent of the total population depended upon agriculture. The actual workers included in these groups number 44 percent. In addition to these out of 7.9 million workers who declared their principle occupation to be unconnected with the land, nearly 700,000 recorded agriculture as a subsidiary occupation. Some 23 millions or about 49 percent of the total were dependent on cultivation as distinct from proprietary rights and more than 4 million or 9 percent on agricultural labour,

¹⁰ https://dolr.gov.in/sites/default/files/SPSP_Uttar%20Pradesh.pdf

one-sixth of these being regularly employed form servants and their dependants only 41 percent of the population supported by agricultural labour. These statistics suggest the fact that large number of people dependent on agrarian sector.¹¹ Staple of food Graine or **Principal Crops:** Paddy, Wheat, Barley, Millet, Maize, Urad (Black Gram), Moong (Green Gram) Arhar etc.¹² The state of Uttar Pradesh enjoys favorable conditions for wheat cultivation. The net of canals taken out of Ganga Yamuna, Sharda, Ghahra and their tributaries as also the spudding of wells and tube-wells assure a regulated supply of water to wheat field. In U.P. paddy is cultivated over about 19 percent of its cultivated land and the rice tract is mostly confined to the eastern part of the state. Alluvial soil with heavey contents of clay is best suitable for rice as such soils retains moisture for longer periods and do not permits the down word surface water. Such soils are avail in plenty in food plans.¹³

IRRIGATION

Appointment of Irrigation Commission due to severe famines of 1896 and 1901 in almost every provinces of British India drew attention of the Government which culminated into the appointment of the Indian Irrigation Commission in 1901 by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, under the chairmanship of Sir Colin Campbell Scot Moncrieff. The Commission submitted its report in 1903 in which it recommended measures for the Irrigation of an additional 10,200 square miles beyond roughly 30,000 square miles already irrigated. The acceptance of this proposal by Lord Curzon's Government in 1905 became a landmark in the Government of India's Irrigation Policy. The Commission besides recommending projects for increased areas

¹¹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1*, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, (1908), pp. 55-66.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 55-59.

¹³ Shukhdev Singh Chib, (1978), *This Beautiful India: Uttar Pradesh*, Light & Life Publishers New Delhi, pp. 70-71.

paid special attention to the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh which was worst sufferer of famines. Bundelkhand had many rivers like Pahuj, Betwa and the Ken which during rainy season overflowed the region but water leans during the summer. Hence storage of the rain water was the main problem.¹⁴

CANAL SYSTEM IN UNITED PROVINCES

1. Betwa Canal
2. Ghagar Canal
3. Ganai Canal
4. Garai Canal
5. Sukhra Dam
6. The Ganga Canals
7. The Eastern Yamuna Canal
8. The Agra Canal
9. The Sharda Canal 1930
10. Other Smaller Canal (Ramganga canal, Bijnor canal and Rohilkhand canal)¹⁵

During 1936, the Chief Engineer of the State put forward the Ganges Valley State Tube well Irrigation Scheme. This involved the installation of 1500 slandered 1-½ cusec tubewell in 7 districts of Bijnor, Moradabad, Badaun, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Bulandsaher and Aligarh. These wells command 1,462,000 acres of cultivable land; where no other effective irrigation facility was available. It irrigated 182,750 acres of sugarcane, 350,850 acres of wheat and 87,720 acres of Kharif Crops. By 1943-44 under Grow More Food Scheme 200 more new state tube wells were installed. From

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁵ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1*, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, (1908), p. 63. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire, Vol.- III, Economic, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1907,

the study of the PWD C. file no. 62w/1-1943 gives us following trends in the installation of tube well:¹⁶

MINOR IRRIGATION- INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TUBE WELLS

Year	No. of Tube wells
1935-36	743
1936-37	1348
1937-38	1454
1938-39	1474
1939-40	1478
1940-41	1555
1941-42	1619
1942-43	1641
1943-44	1649
1944-45	1687
1945-46	1847
1946-47	2009
1947-48	2062

- Source: Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1*, The Provinces, River, Mountains, Lakes, Canals and Historic Areas; Agra and Bareilly Division. Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, (1908).

The principal irrigation works of the Provinces are four canals two of which the Upper and Lower Ganges Canals are drawn from the Ganges, while the other two the eastern Jumna and Agra canals are drawn from the Jumna. The first three serve to

¹⁶ Shukhdev Singh Chib, *This Beautiful India*,

Doab from two Southern part of Saharnpur to Allahabad and the Agra and the Agra canal irrigation in these provinces the districts of Muttra and the Agra south and west of the Jumna. These four systems included in 1904, 1383 miles of main channel and branches out of a total of 1551 in the providences and 7066 miles of distributaries out of a total while they irrigated about 93 percent of the area supplied by canals. In the south west of the provinces the Betwa and Ken Canals, protective works drawn from the rivers of those names, supply parts of the districts of Jhansi, Hamirpur, Jaloun and Banda, while small areas in Jhansi and Hamirpur Irrigated from reservoirs which were made by damming up valleys many hundred years ago. The minor work includes some small canals in Dehradun, Bijnor, Bareilly, Philibhit and Nainital.¹⁷

The Ganges, assisted by its great tributaries the Jumna, the Gogra, and the Gandak drains the southern slopes of the Himalayas from Simla eastward, carrying fertility and wealth Jumna to the plains of Bengal. Tracing magnificent curves through the flat lowlands, the four rivers have for centuries combined to form an overruling factor in the development of the Indian races. No river on the surface of the globe can compare with the Ganges in sanctity. To bathe in the Ganges during festivals is considered as a to wash away sin; to die and be cremated on the river bank is to attain eternal peace; even to ejaculate the name 'Ganga' in her banks is believed to be sufficient to atone for the misdeeds of several previous stages of human existence. The total length of the Ganges is about 1,550 miles. Rising in the Central Himalayas, the glacial ice-cave of its birth is known as the Gaumukh or Cow's Mouth.¹⁸ Here the Ganges is but an infant stream (locally known as the Bhagirathi), 27 feet broad and 15 inches deep, at an elevation of 13,800 feet above sea-level. For

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-I*, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, (1908), pp. 5-7. Report of the Irrigation Commission, 1972, Vol.-III (Part-I), Ministry of Irrigation and Power, New Delhi.

the first 189 miles of its course above Hardwar the Bhagirathi is a snow-fed mountain torrent, rapidly developing into a river of broad shoals, long deep pools, and occasional rapids. The great system of irrigation which commences at Hardwar occasionally carries away the whole of this volume of mountain waters. At the end of the next thousand miles of its course the Ganges is a broad shining river, flowing in easy channels through a flat landscape, broken only once by the isolated crests and slopes of the Rajmahal hills. At this point its flood discharge amounts to a million and a half of cubic feet per second. After passing Allahabad (at its confluence with the Jumna) the fall of the Ganges drops to six inches per mile, and through the last 200 miles of its divided course through the plains and swaifips of the delta it is even less.¹⁹

II

The preceding section mentions about a brief description on physical features of United Provinces. On account of factorable climate, ecological and geographical conditions, a complicated village based agrarian society came into being. The agrarian society mainly consisted of landed gentry, landless labour and rural artisans who sustain the agrarian order. It is this situation that created an army of landless labour who survive on menial occupations perceived by traditional Hindu society. Evolution of castes treated as untouchables emerged from this context. Uttar Pradesh due to its agrarian nature an abode for large number of castes engaged in such occupations considered as impure by orthodox Hindu society. A brief mention the physical details of Dalit population in Uttar Pradesh.

¹⁹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Vol-1*, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta, (1908), pp. 5-7.

POPULATION OF DALITS IN UNITED PROVINCES²⁰

Census of India	Total Population on U.P.	Total population of Depressed caste in U.P.	Percentage
1911	48,152,273	9,165,464	19.03
1931	49,776,754	10,526,057	21.14
1941	56,531,848	11,717,158	20.72
1951	63,215,742	11,479,102	18.15

Sources: Compiled the Census of India 1911, 1931, 1941

Apparently Uttar Pradesh is the most populated and politically important state of India. In 1901, the area of the state was 112,253 square miles of which 107,164 square miles were directly controlled by direct the British. The total population of the region was 47,691,782. The state has higher degree of geographical and ecological diversity. The density of population varied between 85 and 890 per mile in 1911 in different parts of the Province. The pattern of rainfall varied between 24.5 and 88.4 inches per annum. In terms of agriculture, the net cropped generally varied between 7.2 and 77.8 per cent, with an average of 53. The agricultural area brought under irrigation facility as a proportion of gross cropped area varied between 3 and 55.5 per cent with an average of 28. The province was divided into eight natural divisions corresponding to geographical, geological, agricultural, linguistic and ethnological regions.

United Province has sizable population of Dalits who engaged in diversified occupations to make a living. The British ethnographer William Crook provides

²⁰ R.K Kshirsagar, (1994), *Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders (1857-1956)*, Print Publication, New Delhi, p. 30.

comprehensive details on the Dalits castes of United Provinces.²¹ The following is the list of Depressed Classes in United Province as notified under report of the United Provinces Franchises Committee 1932²² and C. 0. 19, the Constitution of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.²³ Those officially notified castes as follows: (1) Agariya (2) Badi (3) Badhik (4) Baheliya (5) Baiga (6) Baiswar (7) Bajaniya (8) Bajgi (9) Balahar (10) Balmiki (11) Bangali (12) Banmonus (13) Bansphor (14) Barwar (15) Basor (16) Bawariya or Jhusia (17) Beldar (18) Beriya (19) Bhantu (20) Bhoksa (21) Bhuiya (22) Bhuyiar (23) Boria (24) Chamar. (25) Chero. (26) Dabgar (27) Dhangar (28) Dhanuk (29) Dharkar (30) Dhobi (31) Dhusia (32) Dom (Benbansi) (33) Domar (34) Dusadh (35) Gharami (36) Ghasiya (37) Gual · (38) Habura (39) Hari (40) Hela (41) Jatava (42) Kalabaz (43) Kanjar (44) Kapariya (45) Karwal (46) Khairaha (47) Kharot (48) Kharwar (49) Kol (50) Korwa (51) Lalbegi (52) Majhwar (53) Nat (54) Pankha (55) Parahiya (56) Pasi (57) Patari (58} Rawat (59) Saharya. (60) Sonaurhiya (61) Sansiya (62) Shilpkor (63) Turaiha (64) Tharu, (65) Khatik (66) Aheriya.²⁴

The number of Scheduled Castes appears to have decreased since 1941. Their total population was 11,931,320 (males 6,127,853, females 5,803,467), in 1941 as against 11,479,102 in 1951. The decrease has mainly been brought about by a change in the list of Scheduled Castes. Khatiks, Aherias, Koris (excluding Koris of Meerut, Rohilkhand and Agra divisions) and Tharus who were treated as Scheduled Castes in 1941 have now been excluded from the list. In 1931 their number was about 10 lakhs which, according to the general rate of growth between 1931 and 1951, must have

²¹ W. Crooke, (1896) "*The Tribe and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*," Low Price Publication, Delhi.

²² U.P.S.A. Lucknow, Harijan Sahayak Department, File No. 83/1935, Dalits Profile in U.P.

²³ Census of India 1951, Vol. II, p. 422 & Reform Department, File No-83/1935, Scheduled Caste, Race and Tribe, p.160

²⁴ U.P.S.A. Lucknow, Harijan Sahayak Department, File No. 83/1935, Dalits Profile in U.P.

increased to about 1,300 thousand. On the other hand certain castes have been newly added to the 1951 list namely, Baiga, Baiswar, Bhoksa, Dhusia and Dusadh whose total population in 1941 was about 80 thousand and must be about 90 thousand in 1951. These changes, therefore, account for a decrease of about 1,200 thousand in the population of Scheduled Castes in 1951 and almost fully explain the difference between the population of 1941 and 1951. The remaining difference may be assigned to the Scheduled Castes having returned themselves by names which are not included in the list. It is of interest to note that many Shilpkars or Hill Doms and Chamars have returned Aryaism.²⁵

WHO ARE UNTOUCHABLES

What criterion was followed to determine a caste to be an untouchable caste? It is an important question. Colonial official discourse identifies three following factors to determine whether a caste is touchable or untouchable. Those factors as follows:

- (1) The following caste some unclean profession, such as scavenging
- (2) The keeping of pigs, or the eating of unclean food, such as pork or beef
- (3) Vagrancy, unless there is a settled home to which the tribe or caste occasionally returns.²⁶

The Government of the United Provinces in their first report observed, with reference to a proposal that the representation of depressed classes should be by nomination, that the Governor should be guided though not necessarily restricted, by a schedule of depressed classes which should be drawn up for his use and that this

²⁵ Mohinder Singh, (1947), *The Depressed Classes: Their Economic and Social Condition*, Hind Kitab LTD., Bombay.

²⁶ U.P.S.A. Lucknow, Reform Department, File No. 83/ 1934, Revision of list Scheduled Caste.

schedule should at least include the following classes. The list is based on the information given in Mr. Blunt's note and it is intended to indicate those classes for which there can be no doubt that special consideration is required (the components of the group referred to be given in Mr. Blunt's note).²⁷

DIVISIONS WITHIN DALIT COMMUNITIES OF UNITED PROVINCES

Dhanuk	127,581
Chamars in rural areas estimated at	4,187,770
Bhangi group	349,053
Kolarian group	125,356
Dom group	109,906
Pasi group	1,446,155
Hill Dom	326,012
Vagrant tribes	111,981
Total	6,773,814

Source: U.P.S.A. Lucknow, Harijan Sahayak Department, File No. 83/1935, Dalit Profile in U.P.

The Dalit groups mentioned in the above mentioned table follows certain fixed occupations which are traditionally treated as polluted and impure by Hindu society. The impureness of communities emerged as an essential criteria for treating communities as untouchables. This process and attitude constitute base social and ecological exclusion of Dalits in India.

²⁷ U.P.S.A. Lucknow, Harijan Sahayak Department, File No. 83/1935, Dalit Profile in U.P.
E.A.H. Blunt, (1912), Census of India, 1911, Vol-XV, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part-1 Report, F. Lucker Superintendent Government Press, Allahabad.

A third estimate of 12.6 million is given by the Census Commissioner. This list is based on instructions issued by the Census Commissioner and it contains the following classes:

List A-Untouchable and depressed.

1. Tribes and castes which are untouchable and depressed on account of their unclean habits chiefly in the matter of diet —	2,840,159
2. Vagrant tribes	110,447
3. Those who follow unclean occupations	8,263,823
Total	11,203,929

List B- Touchable but depressed.

1- Degraded tribally through their habits and customs	118,433
2- Depressed on account of their traditional occupation	1,269,224
Total	1,387,657

The aforementioned list shows the British classificatory methods for making certain communities as untouchable communities. In this scheme, we could see the influence of colonial ethnographic observations, orientalist discourse which uphold the textual references as final authority regarding custom rather than practice. Accordingly, the criteria for making certain castes as untouchable was evolved and made their identity fixed by official sanction. The notions of unclean habitats,

customs, and occupations are deployed for making certain castes as untouchable.²⁸ It is this myopic vision of colonial state which consolidated already existing regimented, stigmatized identity for Dalit castes. We endorse here with Nickolas Driks view that colonial rule strengthened the already existing social hierarchies in a significant way.²⁹ Similarly the colonial rule also created a regimented and hegemonic model of untouchability which became a practiced in the due course of time. At the same time, the Hindu reformist sensibilities such as Arya Samaj perpetuated the stereotype of untouchable practicing forbidden occupations such as curing leather of animals. It is this dual process according to Ramnarayan Rawat was responsible for emergence of the popular stereotype image of untouchable and their eventual social exclusion.³⁰ But this study extends this argument further with the argument that besides the occupational stereotype, the physical ecological conditions in which Dalits life also used as ground to construct the image of untouchable which was used as tool to exclude them from access of prime ecological resources such as land and water. Both colonial state and Hindu nationalist discourse thus strengthened the birth based and ethnic based untouchability to a significant preparation. Diversified populations engaged in different professions which are considered impure by traditional Hindu society are made a normative and official category. Untouchability thus transformed from individual to community in the context of colonial rule in an unprecedented way.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Nicholas Driks, *Caste of Mind: Colonialism and Making of Modern India*, Princeton University Press, 2001.

³⁰ Rmnaryan Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2012.

III**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF DALITS IN UP**

Colonial ethnographic and administrative framework constructed a monolith and regimented untouchable identity in modern India. This image was further actively by nationalist political and social discourse. This section attempts to analyze the socio-economic and cultural conditions of Dalits. This attempt is useful in capturing the way Dalits experience their social and natural world in United Provinces.

The traditional nature of caste structure underwent if not revolutionary, but drastic change on account of certain factors which are product of the British colonial rule. Process such as de-industrialization which destroyed most of the traditional rural occupations and diverted bulk of rural population to agriculture, commercial agriculture which required massive labor force, increasing urbanization etc make castes based profession fluid, mobile and volatile. It is in this context that many Dalits castes begun to leave their professions and entered into expanding agrarian economy at one level and to some extent, begun to revert back to their traditional occupation at another level. There are many castes which are soon abandoning their traditional occupations, or making them subsidiary to agricultural pursuit. In the United Provinces this tendency could be seen in the following table:

OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES OF DALITS IN UNITED PROVINCES

Caste	Traditional Occupation	Percentage of workers who returned their traditional caste occupation as their principal occupation
Chamars	Leather workers	5
Pasis	Toddy-drawers	2
Kalwars	Distillers, toddy-drawers	6
Kewats	Boatmen, Fishermen	5
Bhats	Bards and genealogists	9
Brahmins	Priests and mendicant	8

Source: A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p.21.

In order to capture the changes that have occurred during the decade 1921-1931, attempt was made by authorities in United Provinces to highlight the persons who engaged in different occupations who returned to the traditional occupations. The below mentioned table shows the proportion to all workers of earners (Principal Occupation) of selected castes who returned their traditional occupation during the period 1911 and 1931.³¹

³¹ Census of U.P., 1931 Part.-I, p.409 (compiled)

Table – SHOWING THE INCREASE PER MILLE SINCE 1911

Caste	No. per mile of workers who returned their traditional caste occupation		
	1931 Principle or Subsidiary	1911 Principle or Subsidiary	Variation per mille
Dhobi	639	601	+38
Pasi	26	8	+18
Chamar	57	48	+9
Khatik	251	153	+98

Source: A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p. 23.

Table – SHOWING THE DECREASE PER MILLE SINCE 1911

Caste	No. per mile of workers who returned their traditional caste occupation		
	1931 Principle or Subsidiary	1911 Principle or Subsidiary	Variation per mille
Bhangis	661	788	-127
Kori	802	880	-78
Gadariya	262	288	-26
Kumhar	460	511	-51

Source: A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p. 23

The trend to be noted from the aforementioned table is that generally those castes that have lower proportion of working to their traditional occupation show some increase, while those who have higher proportion show decrease followed by Chamars, Dhobis etc., which is due mainly to the bulk of them returning the traditional occupation as a subsidiary occupation. A very notable decrease occurs in

the case of Bhangis who are taking up other occupations. The Kumhar is being who are taking up other occupations to some extent by the introduction of metal utensils and the popularity and cheapness of aluminum. The castes, mentioned in table II, who have deserted their traditional occupations, are mostly enlisted either among the landless agricultural labourers or ordinary coolies in urban factories, specially the sugar factories of the U.P. and Bihar.³²

Moreover, many castes who have returned to traditional occupation of their caste as their principle sources of income, supplement that income by following some subsidiary occupation. The proportions are large in the case of Chamars, Pasis, Kumhars etc. with the exception of the Koris the traditional occupation is the other than actual cultivation. The bulk of the subsidiary occupations of all these castes are agricultural or pastoral.³³

In generic sense the occupations which are considered to be low are extremely fluid and volatile. Thus there is no fixed rule for linking up castes with particular works in agriculture, industry or trade, because a number of castes left their hereditary occupation, or sometimes made them subsidiary by moving to the ranks of agricultural workers and petty cultivators. On the other hand, various factors have gone to make the hereditary occupation of several castes more prosperous than many others. The Bhangi, the Dhobi and the Bhishti follow occupations which are not likely to attract people of other castes, and the absence of competition means absence of vertical mobility.³⁴ The idea of untouchable is thus deeply associated with nature of the profession which considered impure and such impureness is visualized and

³² A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p. 24.

³³ Census Report, U.P., 1931, Part-I p.410.

³⁴ Blunt, (1933), *Caste System of Northern India*.

textualised with the help of physical ecological conditions in which such professions are practiced.

Village as physical and social space predominantly exists in India in the geographical space of India. The agrarian economy of village requires several professions. While some professions are considered pure, some other are considered as impure. This criterion is generally determined by traditional Hindu society which controls the social, cultural and spiritual world of village members. This trend can be captured in the following table:

VILLAGE LEVEL OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DALITS IN UNITED PROVINCES

Village menials (Upper Class)	Village menials (Lower Class)
Barhi, Darzi, Lohar, Bhunj, Teli, Sonar, nai, Kumhar, Bania, Halwai, Julaha, Lonia, Kunjra, Dhobi	Dom, Pasi, Kanjar, Chamar, Beria, Guriya, Mallah, Gidhiya, Kol, Ghatwar, Pahariya, Kori, Bhuiya, Munda, Oraon
Purely non-agricultural (Hereditary occupation as principal source of income)	Partially agricultural (Field workers and Labourers unspecified)

Source: A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p. 29.

NON –AGRICULTURAL OR PARTIALLY AGRICULTURAL

A large number of high caste cultivators who have lost their hereditary land and become landless labourers and perform all those services which were hitherto earmarked only for the low caste workers for survival.³⁵ Agricultural labourers

³⁵A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p.30.

therefore, are recruited from amongst the Doms as well as the Brahmins, as will be seen from the Following table:

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN UNITED PROVINCES

Ordinary Field Labourers	
High Caste	Low Caste
Brahmin, Thakur, Ahir, Pathan, Bhat, Kurmi, Jat	Chamar, Dusadh, Kahar, Dhimar, Guriya, Kori, Pasis

Source: A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, New Book Company Limited, Bombay, p. 30.

The general trend was that peasantisation or ruralisation process in British India effected all sections and castes. But in case of untouchable communities, they followed their traditional occupations besides their agriculture labour. It is this continuation of their traditional occupation as subsidiary occupation that aggravated their social identity as community of untouchables. This communal and monolith identity gradually excluded Dalits from access to village resources such as land, water, commons etc in wider scale with the pretext of ritual pollution. Dalit environmentalism is thus an attempt made by Dalits and their movement to reject social and ecological seclusion to claim space into village sphere which include natural and ecological resources. Attempt of Dalits to claim control over natural and ecological resources can be understood with the help of ethnographic and socio-economic history of the Chamar caste which happens to be numerically largest in north India.

SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF CASTES IN UNITED PROVINCES

While physical ecology is extremely important for survival of human beings, social structure always plays major role in determining the access of members to natural and ecological resources. It is more so in case of agrarian societies which are closely linked with eco-system. Hence the access of members of society to physical ecosystem is determined by varieties of social norms, customs and cultural values. Caste as social institution did play a major role in determining the livelihood structure of people and their access to ecological resources. This trend can be illustrated with an analysis of certain castes which are traditionally considered and treated as untouchable in United Provinces.

THE CHAMAR

The Chamar caste is a generic name to artisans and craftsmen engaged in leather related profession. The Chamar population is presented in all north Indian states. It engaged in leather related professions such as currier, tanners, cobblers and other leather connected professions and also engaged in agriculture. Their name is derived from the Sanskrit charma-kara, a “worker in leather.”³⁶ According to the Indian Census Report 1901 total Chamar people were 46510,668 and 14% share of caste in total population in 1911. Thus the Chamars consists of sizable number of the population of Uttar Pradesh. On account of their socio-cultural status they did not have the right to participate common social gatherings and compelled to engage in leather work and subjected to discrimination in all walks of life.³⁷

³⁶ W. Crooke, (1896), *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western*, Vol.-2, Low Price Publication, Delhi, p. 169.

³⁷ W.G. Brigs, (1920), *The Chamars*, Association Press Publication, Calcutta.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF CHAMAR CASTE

The Chamar caste constitutes of biggest single casts in India. They are classified as Scheduled Caste in independent India. On account of their leather related profession excluded from social intercourse in village life. Their ecological exclusion starts in village from exclusion from main parts of village and forced to life in separate spatial areas designated to them which is generally far from the dwellings of caste Hindus.³⁸ Their geographical and physical exclusion transformed into social exclusion.

Under the broad umbrella of the terms the Chamar, different names came into existence for referring to them. Different nomenclature exists for referring Chamars and their subgroups with the castes. In case of Uttar Pradesh the word Raidas, in Panjab as Raigar or Ramdasi, Ravidas or Mochi, in Chandigarh as Ramdasi or Jatia Chamar, in Himanchal Pradesh as Monchi Arya, in Bihar as Charmkar, and Haryana as Jatia or Jatav. The commonality of all these casts is that they are engaged in leather related profession.³⁹

The Chamars constitutes major part of Dalit Community in Uttar Pradesh in terms of number. They represent more than two-fifths of the Dalit population in the state and two-thirds of them are Chamars. This community has had a difficult and chequered history. By convention, its profession was to carry on leather related works. Paradoxically the proportion of Chamars engaged in leather-related occupation has been declining over decades. It was four percent in 1931 and down to 0.6 percent in 1961. Yet the social stereotype of the Chamar being a leather worker exists in the past and present.⁴⁰

³⁸ W. Crooke, (1896), *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western*, Vol.-2, Low Price Publication, Delhi, p. 190.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 185.

⁴⁰ Mata Prasad, (2010), *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran Aur Uske Agradood*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi.

The monolith occupational life of Chamar as leather works is a big myth created and by the British ethnography and furthered by nationalist discourse. At practical level, Chamars engaged in diversified professions other than that of leather work. They work as village menial, receiving as perquisite the hides of dead cattle, which he tans, suppliers of shoes and other leather articles, village informer, guard of village burial ground, they keeps fowl and pigs and occasionally buffalo. His wife acts as the midwife, and is traditionally considered as polluted. In fact majority of them make living as labour in agricultural filed.⁴¹

CHAMAR AND AGRICULTURE

The general stereotype picture of Chamar is that he/she is a caricature of lamentable and abject poverty, ill-clad and cold in winter, poorly housed, and insufficiently fed, live in horrible physical climatic environment consisting of dirt, stick and pollution. Even though some well-to-do persons amongst them exist but the entire community is represented with the stereotype of untouchable. Not more than one family in fifteen has any form of fixed tenure, and that only on small holdings. In many instances the hovels in which they live are repaired by the landlord, so that the Chamar may not acquire any claim upon the property. To begin with, they are greatly in debt on account of loans both for the purchase of raw materials with which to carry on their traditional occupation and for seed and for cattle for their agricultural enterprises. Rates of interest are exceedingly high, being from twenty-four to forty-eight per cent, on larger loans, and seventy-five on petty loans.⁴²

⁴¹Ramnarayan S. Rawat, (2012), *Reconsidering Untouchability*,

⁴²Mohinder Singh, *The Depressed Classes: Their Economic and Social Condition*, Hind Kitab LTD., Bombay, 1947.

Undoubtedly the Chamars are assigned low social status by traditional Hindu society. While the pre-colonial practice of keeping Chamar at outskirts of village due to profession they engaged is a fact, the colonial rule became a context for stereotype of Chamar created by colonial ethnography, nationalist discourse and Dalit intellectuals. These narratives by and large created such a caricature of Chamar which reflects physical figure to be discarded from mainstream life due to impure occupation, impure physical ecology and ritual pollution he causes. Consequently, an ordinary Indian got a picture of a group of Chamars, men and women, dividing and portioning out the carcass and preparing for a feast. Furthermore, the picture of Chamars eating the leavings of food of most castes has also been perpetuated. Added to all this is the unclean condition of the places where they live aggravates this kind of semiotic representation. The socio-ecological narratives of tanning vats are outside of their houses, their part of the village is a place of all sorts of abominable smells, occasionally eating dead animals, drying the dead animal meat, absolutely not sanitary laws, unspeakably filthy in their habits, having dirty clothing, their houses and their surroundings are utterly unclean, engaged in immoral habits etc are real and imaginary features that went on making the caricature of Chamar. This construction is responsible for socio-ecological exclusion of Chamar. This attitude can be observed with the fact that The Chamrauti is a synonym of all that is unclean and disgusting. A further abomination is the fact that the Chamar is the recognized midwife of the community (with local exceptions).⁴³ The word Chamar is sometimes used as a synonym for midwife. So the Chamar's quarter of the village is a place to be avoided, and Chamars are too unclean to enjoy any of the social or religious privileges of the Hindu community. The physical ecology and social ecology together plays a major

⁴³ Ramnarayan S. Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability*

role in ideology of social exclusion of Chamar from access to social and ecological resources. This kind of moral and ecological pollution cursed by untouchables was further magnified in urban areas on account of the portrayal of scavenger's life that are traditionally known as Bhangis.⁴⁴

The physical pollution of Chamar extends to all other domains. Even in bathing in the Ganges they must find a place far below that used by other people. The idea of pollution, or its reverse, the idea of purity, may be traced more accurately to worship. The sense of ceremonial purity certainly antedates the idea of pollution due to the eating of beef or to the idea of the sanctity of the cow. It was the right to share in the fire-sacrifice that was early restricted. When the worship of the cow came into vogue, the idea of pollution was intensified. The sense of separation once made absolute on the grounds of ceremonial pollution, the whole life of the group, habits and occupation included, were taken up into the attitude of disgust. It was thus through religious scruples that the racial element was joined with the occupational to fix the social level of such as the leather-worker.⁴⁵ The history of Chamar thus represents a classic example of how Dalits are excluded from access to ecological resources at different levels.

DHOBI COMMUNITY SOCIAL CONDITION

According to the British ethnographic classification, the Dhobi communities of the United Provinces and other provinces traditionally treated as are untouchables. These people are even treated to be more degraded than the rest of the untouchables of the provinces. The Dobhi (washer man) which comes from Hindi dliona (Sans, dhdr) is

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵W.G. Brigs, *The Chamars*, Association Press Publication, Calcutta, 1920, pp.224-234.

considered as untouchables.⁴⁶ Different versions exist on their origin. In Bihar, according to Mr. Risley, they trace their descent from Gari Bhuiya—one of the local gods of that part of the country. Another account makes them out to be the offspring of a Kshatriya father and a Chamar woman. In Mirzapur they name as their ancestor a personage named Rawat, and say that Mahkleva and Parvati, disgusted at the filth of the people of the world, created the Dhobi to keep their clothes clean in future. Mr. Nesfield suggests that “the washer man represents an impure caste, but is many degrees higher than that of the Bhangi, from whom he has sprung. Both are descended from the Dom, whose sole wealth, according to Manu, must be dogs and asses. The Indian washerman has always been associated with the indigenous ass, which carries the soiled clothes down to the bank of the river or tank, and takes them back clean to the house. No Hindu of any caste, even the lowest, will wash his own clothes, and so the Dhobi has been formed into a caste which shall bear the impurities of all.”⁴⁷

Like many castes of the same social grade Dhobis are being organized into seven endogamous divisions or sub-castes. Thus Sir H. M. Elliot gives the sub-castes as Kanaujiya, Magahiya, Pagahiya, Belwar, Batham, and Sribatham (who take their name from Sravasti) and Bharka. The last Census gives eleven—Ajiafiyabasi, Bais, Chithoriya, Deswar, Kaithiya, Kanaujiya, Kathariya, Mathuriya, Purbiya or Purabiya, and Sribastab. A list from Mirzapur gives them as Kanaujiya, Belwar, Magahiya, Sribastab, Musalman Dhobi, Baiswara, and Bhojpuriya. Another from Agra gives—Mathuriya, Bharka, Marwari, Purbiya, and Purbiya Kampu. In Bareilly we find Kathariya, Dehliwala, Kampuwala, and Musalman- All these are strictly endogamous castes. Dhobis usually worship the Panchonpir and Devi. They are religion much

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western, Vol.-I*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1896, pp.288-289.

given to the worship of ghosts, one of whom named Ghatoriya has a great reputation in Bundelkhand. The Dhobis have strong tribal council and are very severe on breaches of caste and religious customs and traditions. Their social status assigned at lower rank by traditional Hindu society.⁴⁸

PASI COMMUNITY

This caste mainly found in the Eastern Districts of United Province and in Oudh region. Their original occupation appears to have been tapping different kinds of the date tree for its sap, which is fermented into tari.⁴⁹ The number of Pasis under “public force” is due to their employment as village chaukidars in some parts, especially Oudh.⁵⁰

CHARACTERISTICS FEATURES OF DALITS COMMUNITY

Aheriya: According to W. Crooks says that the Aherias of Aligarh are akin to the aborigines and calls them a tribe of hunters, followers and thieves. They are regarded as a criminal tribe (Criminal Tribes of the United Provinces- S.T. Hollins). They would thus appear to be one of the vagrant tribes group and should be included in that group. In the census report they are included in the Pasi group.⁵¹

Agariya: A Dravidian tribe found in scanty numbers only in the hilly parts of Mirzapur south of the son river. In appearance the Agariyas approximate very closely to allied Dravidian tribes, such as the Korwas, Parshiyas, etc. Mr. Risley and Colonel Dolton describe a people of the same name as a sub-division of the Korwas, who are

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 289-290.

⁴⁹ V.M Ravi Kumar, ‘Discourse on Dalit Identity: A Study of Dalit Politics in Uttar Pradesh, 1900-1950’, Vol.-3, Issue-5, May, 2018, *RESEARCH REVIEW International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, pp. 180-186.

⁵⁰ Census of India, 1911. Volume XV. *United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part-1 Report*, By E.A.H. Blunt, I.C.S., Superintendent, Census operations, Allahabad, Printed by Luker Superintendent Government Press, 1912.p.414.

⁵¹ U.P.S.A., Lucknow, Reform Department, File No. 83/1934, Revision of list of SC.

undoubtedly Dravidians. The only tree they respect is the sakhu or sal which is used at these marriages. The women wear ear ornaments made of palm-leaf (tarki). They practically do no agriculture. Their business is smelting and forging iron. The account of the manufacture is given by Dr. Ball, "The furnaces of the Agariyas are generally erected under some old tamarind or other shady tree on the outskirts of a village, or under sheds in a hamlet where Agariyas alone dwell, and which is situated in convenient proximity to the ore or to the jungle of sal, where the charcoal is prepared."⁵²

Baheliya (Caste of fowlers and hunters): A class of hunters and fowlers. They usually call themselves a sub-caste of Pasis. Some Baheliya in the western districts have a tradition that they are of Bhil descent. The Bahelias of the eastern districts name seven or really eight endogamous sub-caste- Bhelias; Chiryamar or "bird-killers"; Karaul, whose speciality is said to be stalking animals under cover of a tame ox used as a decoy. Their occupation is hunting and trapping birds. Those who live by bird-catching are often known as Miskar, said to be a corruption of mir shikar "head huntsman," or maskar, "eater of meat." They have a most ingenious mode of trapping birds with a series of thin bamboos, like a fishing rod, on which bird-lime is smeared.⁵³

Balmiki or Bhangi: This caste generally considered as sweeper community of India. The occupations of Bhangi are manifold. According to Mr. Ibbetson, "Socially they are the lowest of the low, even lower perhaps than the vagrant Sansi, and the gips Nat, and as a rule they can hardly be said to stand even at the foot of the social ladder, through some sections of the tribe have mounted the first one or two steps. Their

⁵²W. Crooke, (1896), *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western*, pp. 39-49.

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 104-111.

hereditary profession is scavenging, sweeping the houses and streets, working up, carrying to the fields and distributing manure and in cities and village houses, where the women are strictly secluded, and removing night soil. They keep those impure animals, pigs and fowls; they and the leather-workers alone eat the flesh of animals who have died of disease or by a natural death”⁵⁴ The Bhangis thus assigned the sweeping profession and bestowed a lower social status due the profession they engaged. Most of the Bhangis migrated to cities and got employment as sweepers in the urban areas. But the occupational pollution always hunt them and exclude them from social intercourse and eventually exclude them from ecology in the form of denial of access to housing, agricultural land etc.

Banmonus as a sub caste of Mushars but in Sultanpur they were a separate caste. Their chief occupations are making leaf platters and collecting wild honey. Those who live in jungle are said to be very shy and wild. Those who have settled in village resemble other low caste villagers.

Bansphor: A sub caste of Dom who may be considered separately as they have been separately enumerated at the last Census (1881). The sub-caste being a purely occupational offshoot from the original Dom tribe, their internal organization is rather vague. Their chief deity in Mirzapur is the Bindhchal, whom they worship on the ninth day of Chait with hogs, goats, ckes and pottage (lapsi). They honour the village gods with a sacrifice of a hog or goat; butter barley and tracle are burnt in a fire offering. Some work as ordinary day- labourers, but their business is making fans,

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 259-291.

baskets and boxes of bamboo. Some work as sweepers and remove night-soil. No other caste will touch food or water from their hands.⁵⁵

Barwar: A notorious criminal tribe found in Northern Oudh. According to one theory it means “a bearer of burdens” (bar-wala); according to others it comes from the Hindi Baryara in the sense of “violent.” Of those who have been brought under the Criminal Tribes Act some are cultivators and some field-labourers.⁵⁶

Basor: A tribe found only in the Bundelkhand Division, and regarded as a sub-caste of Domes. Men of this caste work as musicians and basket-makers and the women as midwives. The name of the tribe mean “worker in the bamboo.” The Basors have a large number of exogamous sections, of which locally the most important are: in Hamirpur, the Bahmangot, Dhuneb, Gotela, Katahriya, Parauniya, Sakarwar, Samangot, Sarmoriya, Sonach, and Supa or Supach Bhagat, the Dom hero; in Jhansi the Barar, Basgarh, Basodiya, and Dhanuk; in Jalaun, the Baghela, Balahar, Khangrela and in Lalitpur, the Barar, Morel and Purabiya. In Mirzapur they name four exogamous sections,- Kulpariya, Katariya (named from the katari or curved knife used in splitting the bamboo); Neoriya, which is also a section of Dharkars and takes its name from newar, a young soft bamboo; and Bamhila, who say that they are so called because they had once some connection with Brahmans. They live by making baskets and other articles manufactured out of bamboo and playing on the flute (bansuli), or the tambourine (dafila), at marriages. Their women are Midwives. They are assigned low social rank and not allowed to live in main village.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 167-173.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 206-215.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 222-227.

Beldar: It is a general term for several Hindu tribes who make their living by earth-work. Besides these, endogamous group of this name could also be found mainly in Bareilly, Gorakhpur, Basti and Pilibhit.⁵⁸ Mr. Risley describe under the same name a wandering Dravidian caste of earth-workers and navvies in Bihar and Western Bengal, many of whom are employed in the coal mines of Raniganj and Barakar. “Both men and women labour, the former digging the earth and the latter removing it in baskets carried on the head. The Beldars regard this mode of carrying earth as distinctive of themselves, and will on no account carry earth in baskets slung from the shoulders.” Besides their trade of doing earth-work, they also make their living by fishing. They are very fond of field rates, which they dig out of the rice fields after the harvest is over and boil down with the grain which they have collected in their granaries.⁵⁹

Bhoksa: A tribe akin to the Tharus who are found in the Tarai and Bhabar from Pilibhit District on the East to Chandpur on the Ganges on the West. There are a few scattered colonies in Dehra Dun. There are three main sections of them, the Purabi or “Eastern” which lies east of the Ramganga and as far west as the Gola or Sarda, where the Tharus begin ; the Pachhami or “Western” which inhabits the Patli Dun and Bijnor between the Ramganga and the Ganges; and a section reaching still further west from the Ganges to the Jumna. Between the Eastern and Western sections there is no friendly intercourse; each shuns the other, and the usual fictions are repeated about eating frogs and lizards.⁶⁰

They are of settled habits, dwellers in swamps and cultivators of rice and are proof against malaria. They do not admit outsiders into the caste. They eat pork and

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-59.

fowls and drinks sprits like most of the dwellers in the Tarai swamps. Some of them are hunters and catch game and others are good fishermen. They bear a good moral character; are inoffensive and peaceable, as well as intensely ignorant and indolent. They have no arts and manufactures, and live on the chase and a scanty cultivation. They are particularly fond of wild pig, and this may be one of the reasons why they change the site or their villages every two or three years. In some places they collect the wild jungle produce, but in no systematic way.⁶¹

Bhuiya: A Dravidian tribe found in the hill country of South Mirzapur to the number of 839. Mr. Risley, remarking on the wide area over which the name Bhuiya has spread, thinks we should “hesitate and demand some independent evidence of affinity before we pronounce it to be an original tribal designation, and accept the conclusion that all tribes which bear the name at the present day are sprung from a common stock.” He adds that “the advanced guard of the Aryan immigrants, pressing forward in quest of land, and seeking a name for the alien races whom they found in possession of scanty clearings in the forest-clad tract of Central India, whiter they had themselves been driven, would naturally ignore the tribal names of the groups with which they came in contact and would call the strangers Bhuiyas or children of the soil.”

The women tattoo themselves in the common to all the allied tribes. They will not touch a Dom, Dharkar, Dhobi or Chamar. They do not eat the flesh of the cow, buffalo, monkey, crocodile, snake, lizard or jackal. They eat pork, fowl, fish and rats.

Most of them are hereditary serf ploughmen (harwaha). The usual earnings are three sers of coarse grain per diem and ten annas in cash per mensem. In winter they

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 84.

get a blanket, and in the rains a plam leaf umbrella hat (khumari): dinner from their masters. Some have risen in the social scale cultivate on their own ccount, and keep cattle and sheep.

Bhuiyar: A Dravidian tribe in the hill country of South Mirzapur. They are also known as Beonriha from btorna, which is a local term for the dahya system of cultivation by which patches of jungle are periodically burnt down and brought under the plough. The word Bhuinhar means “land-holder,” and is a title of some of the allide tribes, e.g., the Mundas. They` will not touch a Dhobi, a Chamar, Dharkar, Dom or Ghasiya. They eat beef, but in secret they will in fact eat any meat expects that ass, the horse, the camel, snake, lizard, rat and jackal.⁶²

Dom: In the plains, a non-Aryan tribe of menials and scavengers. In the hill generic racial name for low caste of all kinds. This caste found scattered thought these Provinces, regarding whose origin and ethnological affinities there have been much speculation. To the east of the Provinces they were usually known as Dom. The occupation and social position of the Eastern Doms differ much according to the sub-castes. One duty is ordinary fire for cremation. From his business and environment the Dom is, of course, regarded by all respectable Hindus with contempt, fear and abhorrence. No one will touch food or water from his hands. They make fans, baskets, boxes, scales, winnowing fans, lamp stands, irrigation baskets and table boxes. They work in bamboos and reed grass known as sentha. The Doms of the hills are thus purely occupational, and as might have been expected the enumeration varies.⁶³

Dusadh: A menial caste found to the east of the provinces. An attempt has been made to derive the name from the Sanskrit dush “to be corrupted” and ad “to eat,” or from

⁶² Ibid., p. 86.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 312-340.

dauh-sadhiks, “a porter.” Drunken lazy habits prevent them from rising to the position of occupancy tenants and most of them are ploughmen in the service of other tenants or landlord or they serve as village watchmen. They practise no handcraft and some of them live by wood cutting or collecting jungle produce.⁶⁴

Tharu: (tribe residing in the Tarai, Agriculturists)

A tribe which has its head-quarters in the Himalayan Tarai and colonies in the Gorakhpur Division and Northern Oudh. Mr. Nesfield has given an elaborate account of the social life of the Tharus. They live by hunting fishing, gathering forest fruits and vegetables grazing cows and buffaloes, making ghee, keeping pigs fowls, and goats, and practicing a rude form of agriculture. As hunters they despise and shun such vermin as jackals, snakes, and lizards. The animals which they chiefly hunt are the wild boar, the deer, the antelope, and other large game in which their forests still abound.⁶⁵

Khatik: (Caste of cultivators, vegetable sellers and butchers)

A cultivating, labouring, and vegetable- selling caste found all over the Province. They are no doubt very closely connected with the Pasis, of whom they are sometimes classed as a sub-caste. In Agra they have three sub-castes—Chik, Buchar and Sunkhar. There some of these Chiks make winnowing fans (sup) and sieves (chhalni); the Buchar sell goats flesh and mutton, not beef; and the Sunkhar sell fruit and work as grooms.⁶⁶

The aforementioned section briefly mentions the occupation structure and socio-economic and cultural conditions of Dalits castes in United Provinces It is

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 346-357.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 380-401.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 257-258.

evident that all castes are basically live on nature and its resources and excluded from access to prime ecological resources such as water, land etc. In the context of British rule and spread of modern education, gradually a movement and assertion emerged in United Provinces which demand political and natural rights to Dalits.

IV

EMERGENCE OF DALIT MOVEMENT IN UNITED PROVINCES

This section explores the process of emergence of Dalit movement with particular reference to demand for natural, ecological resources at one level and protection from pollution at another level. This attempt is useful in capturing the environmentalism of Dalits in United Provinces.

DALIT POLITICS IN UNITED PROVINCES

Organized and united voice of Dalits for better life could be seen from the beginning of 20th century. It is actually a part of the all India level Dalit movement which we had already discussed in the chapter number two. Organized Dalit movement in United Provinces emerged due to emergence of Dalit middle class in the context of thriving leather business and opportunities offered by it in towns such as Agra, Kanpur, Meerut, Lucknow etc. The assertive movement of Dalits emerged mainly demanding social justice and distribution of resources. The organizations and associations established to take up the task of Dalit empowerment.

THE ARYA SAMAJ

Undoubtedly, Arya Samaj played a crucial role in reforming Dalit society in different parts of India. This reformist intervention could also be seen in case of United Provinces. Its main aim was to revive the glory of Aryan civilisation, but it did worked with the zeal of missionary and attempted to reform and provide better life to

Dalits however with the structure of cultural conservative ideology. The Arya Samaj undertook bold reform process in dealing with social stigma of untouchability. It refutes the scriptural sanction of the institution of untouchability and proposes that it is a stigma to the glorious Aryan civilisation. In United Provinces, it had initiated several reforms such as school, libraries for depressed class students and permitted them to be part of the religious programs of the Samaj etc. It has provided space to Dalits in the associational and organisational politics in United Provinces. It also advocated for change of life style to Dalits.⁶⁷ Even though the Arya Samaj operated with Hindu conservative ideological framework it did provided some space to Dalits and trained them in political and organizational activities.

ADI HINDU MOVEMENT

Adi Hindu Mahasabha happens to be one of the popular associations of Dalits in United Provinces. It provided a platform for collective voice of Dalits. It has initiated spiritual and political platform for Dalits in United Provinces. It was founded by Swami Achhutanand Harihar in 1918 in Delhi. This association played a major role in creating anti-oppressive awareness among lower castes of Uttar Pradesh. He attempted to create and sons of soil discourse by the way of describing Dalits as the original inhabitants of India. He also undertook activism in the form of establishment of schools for untouchable in Jatav settlement of Agra.⁶⁸ This movement actively engaged in electoral reforms of British India. The sixteen point demands formula has been demanded by the association in which separate elections and representation for the Dalits, the destruction of the school, scholarship, forced labor, social rights equal to the entire Hindu, the police and the untouchables in the army, the local boards like

⁶⁷ Arvind Swaroop, 'Socio-Religious Reform Movement among the Chamars of United Provinces', Volume VIII, Issue- V., MAY, 2019, *Universal Review*, pp. 186-194.

⁶⁸ Mata Prasad, *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran Aur Uske Agradood*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2010.

the municipality, the district board etc were articulated. The Mahasabha demanded the following things from the British government: depressed class members should be nominated for legislative council, provided land cards for untouchables, opportunities to be provided in business and shop keeping etc.⁶⁹ In December 1927 the leaders of Adi Hindu Mahasabha in United Provinces made a claim for a more inclusive achhut or untouchable identity to unite Dalit castes.

The work that Dr. Ambedkar undertook in Maharashtra was done by Achhutanand and Adi Hindu Mahasabha in Uttar Pradesh. He provided a guidance and direction to untouchable castes of Uttar Pradesh to undertake political mobilization as a tool for emancipation from oppression.⁷⁰ He published monthly news paper entitled 'Adi Hindu' and open many branches in other parts of India. In 1928 he organized the conference on 'Adi Hindu Mahasabha in Mumbai and where Swami Ji meets to Dr. Ambedkar then both leaders decided to develop the Dalit movements further. The undisputed fact is that Achhutanand and his association was able to propagate the discourse of Adi as a tool for political mobilization, assertion and identify formation. The strong roots of for Dalit political activism thus were created by Adi Hindu movement in Uttar Pradesh.⁷¹

Swami Achhutanand had shown a deep sense of importance of ecological and natural resources for development of Dalit society. The implicit ecological concerns of Swami could be seen from two sources. Firstly, in idea of Adi Hindu forcefully articulate the idea of Dalits/Shudras and other marginalized sections being original inhabitants of India having control of resources of India in ancient period. It was a

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Nandani Gooptu, (2006), *Swami Acchutanand and the Adi Hindu Movement*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

golden age for Dalits according to him and such golden age for his was snatched away by invading Aryans who alienated Dalits from resources and prestige. It was this process for Swami responsible for underdevelopment of Dalits. Secondly, Swami also has vision for ecological and social emancipation of Dalits. In 1920, he proposes that the waste lands available with Gramsabha should be allotted to landless labour. This was his consistent demand in his public meetings and conferences which shows his vision for ecological emancipation of Dalits.

Scheduled Caste Federation

The fight of Dalits was carried forward by Scheduled Caste Federation in United Provinces. Ambedkar indeed a towering personality in the domain of Dalit politics for he has attempted to carve a distinctive identity to Dalits by the way of demanding political rights during the British colonial rule. Ambedkar established this association in Mumbai in 1942 to prepare a national level political platform for the Dalits for its establishment. In 1944, it celebrated a large gathering of Scheduled Castes Union in Kanpur, in which Dr. Ambedkar was also present. After Maharashtra, the branches of this union were opened in Uttar Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Punjab, Gujarat and Karnataka. This union gradually emerged as an umbrella organization of Dalits and their political activism. Tilak Chand Kural, a Dalit worker was made the President of this federation and the branches were opened in all the districts of the United Provinces. The following leaders also played active role: Shyam Lal Bardha, Heera Lal Jaiswar, Kalyan Chand Balmiki, Babulal Vaisya in Allahabad, Gaya Prasad Prasant, Babu Ram Charan Mallah in Lucknow, Bahgat Nepal Das, Ram Autar Passi in Jaunpur, Dr. Manikchand in Agra, Dr. Dharma Prakash in Barielly, Kanaujialal in Farukhabad and other leaders Sangh Priya Gautam, B.P. Maurya, Mahashaya Bhikhu

Lal kureel Swami Mangl Prasad, Swami Ayadhyanand Dandi, Swami Chhamanand etc. were played an important role to build up Dalit movement.⁷²

The federation under the leadership of Ambedkar proposed a fascinating proposal for progress of Dalit society from the perspective of ecology. Some of the important features of such proposal as follows:

- 1). The assertion levels of Dalits for better life gained momentum and reflected in the form of New Life Movement.
- 2). Emancipation of Dalits possible only when they escape from the traditional agrarian system of Hindu village where they denied access to land.
- 3). Exclusive villages consisting of only untouchable castes should be created to get rid of untouchability and exploitation.
- 4). Dignified and honorable life is only possible when Dalits get away from the hegemony of Hindus in villages.
- 5). In the new settlement all government lands, waste lands and jungle lands should be allotted for Dalits free of tax.
- 6). The caste of this settlement should be made by Hindus as they exploited the labour of Dalits for several centuries.
- 7). To carry out this work a separate settlement commission should be established.
- 8). The commission shall be empowered to purchase new land under the Land Acquisition Act from private owners to complete the scheme of settlement of scheduled castes.
- 9). The constitution shall provide that the Central Government shall grant to the Settlement Commission a minimum sum of Rupees five cores per annum to enable the Commission to carry out their duty in this behalf.

⁷² Mata Prasad, *Bharat Me Dalit Jagran Aur Uske Agradood*, Samyak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2010.

10). The ownership of Dalits over land promotes their progress and enable them escape from untouchability.⁷³

The Chamar Mahasabha

Besides provincial and national level associations for empowerment of Dalits we do have numerous castes associations which dynamically engaged in raising demands social justice for Dalits and respectable identity for them. The development of leather related trade and production resulted in occupational mobility to Chamars. This process resulted in emergence of a middle class among Chamars located in towns such as Agra, Meerut, Kanpur, Allahabad etc. It was this middle class begun to question the social status ascribed by mainstream society. This assertion transformed into political assertion and formation of the Chamar Mahasabha. It took up the issues such as untouchability and other forms of exclusion and exploitation.⁷⁴

The political activism and assertion of Dalits manifested in the form of formation of the Chamar Mahasaba in May 1924 as an association which represents the collective will of Chamars.⁷⁵ This Mahasabha actively engaged in reforming Chamar society at one level and took up issues that the community was subjected to in United Provinces. Measures such as promotion of vegetarianism, changing the lifestyle and living conditions were promoted. In 1926, the Chamar Mahasabha resolved and urged the community members to leave filthy occupations such as burning dead bodies in Banaras and carrying dead animals. This mahasabha not only engaged political

⁷³ V.M. Ravi Kumar, and L.C. Malliah, 'Land and Dalits: An Analysis on Ambedkar's Vision on Dalit Development', *Indian Economic Journal, Issue*, special issue, 1, 2017, pp.232-232.

⁷⁴ W.G. Brigs, *The Chamars*, Association Press Publication, Calcutta, 1920.

⁷⁵ Ramnarayan S Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India*, Pramanent Black, Ranikhet, 2012.

mobilization of Dalits but also promoted social reform movement to improve the conditions of Dalit castes.⁷⁶

The Mahasabha undertook several reforms for improvement of material conditions and respect for Chamars. Chamar panchayts passed resolution on improving hygiene conditions, leaving impure occupation, leading respectable life by improving living standards of Chamar life. Besides this, the Mahasabha also demanded distribution of lands to landless Chamars and provide access to drinking water by the way of digging wells in the dwellings of Chamars. In fact we could see several protest against forced labour in different district such as Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Benaras, Ghazipur and Gorakhpur, by members of Chamar Mahasabha.⁷⁷

Pasi Mahasabha

The Pasi Mahasabha played an active role in articulating the voice of Dalits in United Provinces. As a part of the process in which lower castes began to assert themselves for more political rights and economic justice, Pasi community articulated their demands in the form of political assertion. In 1915 '*Passi Mahasabha*' was established under the leadership of Vishweshwar Das a member of Bhajan Mandali and inhabitant of village Naya Purwa, of Allahabad. Gradually people thought of development of society beyond religious boundary as resultant by reformers of Passi Samaj of Allahabad, established its All India Passi Mahasabha in 1933. Gradually this organization established its branches in Allahabad, Raibareilly, Lucknow, Barabanki etc. This Mahasabha still exists in Allahabad area. Another important step for development of Pasi caste was establishment '*All India Passi Mahasabha*' in Faizabad district under the presidentship of Narayan Das, social reformer of Faizabad

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ramnarayan Rawat, op cit, p.133.

in, 1948.⁷⁸ Since the late 1930's this caste has tried to raise its status by the process of sanskritization, or adopting the customs of the upper castes.⁷⁹ The fact to be noticed is that Pasi Mahasabha consistently engaged in mobilization their caste members and prepared them to fight against oppression. After the Chamar castes Pasi community emerged more vocal and politically active Dalit community in Uttar Pr

Koris Mahasabha

The Koris, caste mainly concentrated in Jhansi District of Uttar Pradesh. They are basically weaver caste and also carry other professions such as agriculture and small business.⁸⁰ They opposed their inclusion in the list of depressed caste by the way of claiming non-untouchable status. The Kori population in Uttar Pradesh at the 2011 Census of India was 2,293,937. From 1930s onwards the Kori became politically active and assertive on account their occupational mobility. The Kori Mahasabha was established in 1935, which was a reformist form of the India-Koli Reforms Council, which was formed in 1910. There were some objectives of this association in which free education and landlords offered to take control. The Kori Maha Panchayat was established in Kanpur in 1935. This Maha Panchayat was converted into the Kori Mahasabha in 1940. The objective of this association was to establish unity in Koris, demand for education and representation in the Panchayat body and assembly elections. The most interesting thing was that the community did not want to be included in the depressed caste.⁸¹ At gross root level this associations extended its activities to district, mandal and village level and advocated progressive ideas among their community.

⁷⁸ R.P. Saroj, *Pasi Samaj Ka Darpan* (Hindi), Samayak Prakashan, New Delhi, 2011.

⁷⁹ Angela S. Burger, *Opposition in a Dominant-Party System*, University of California Press Loss Angeles, 1969, P.48

⁸⁰ M.P.S. Chandel, *Democratic Transformation of a Social Class*, Mittal Publication, 1991, P. 49.

⁸¹ U.P.S.A. Lucknow, File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Deptt., File Heading-Revision list of Scheduled Castes (Depressed Classes), Cover No-2nd.

All India Jatav Youth League

Jatav is classified as part of the Chamar caste in western Uttar Pradesh. This section has strengthened its economic situation due to the business of leather and has been following the ethnicity of high class Hindus. Jatav promoted education due to the economic situation of the society. Jatav Veer Mahasabha in 1917 and Jatav Prachrak Mandal were recognized in 1924 which were primarily aimed to promote the educational condition of their community. Khemchandra Bohra was nominated president of All India Jatav Sabha. In 1930, Jatav Yuva Sangha was constituted in India by Ramswaroop. This name was changed to 1935 as "All India Jatav Yuva Sangha". Its aim was to develop Jatav society and to provide political firmness. Its main center was Agra and the area around it. The important characteristic of Jatav assertion is that they actively collaborated with Dr. Ambedkar and attempted to communicative their socio political anxiety more sharply than any other Dalit community in Utter Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh Razak Association

Dhobis (washer men) were also known Razaks. The 2011 Census of India for Uttar Pradesh showed the Dhobi population, which was classified as a Scheduled Caste, as 2,432,610. All India Razak (Dhobi) Association was established in Lucknow. The purpose of its creation was for the demands of Razak's representation. Jagdish Chandra Solanki, was the president of this association and according to him "Dhobi community does not belong to the Depressed Caste, is evidence from the fact that this community did not find a place in the list of Scheduled Caste. Our community claim to belong Rajputs- Rajak-Kshatriya is a Kshatriya."⁸² In fact they carried on a sustained campaign against their inclusion in depressed caste by asserting their Kshatriya status.

⁸² File-83/1934, *Revision list of Scheduled caste (Depressed Classes)*, Harijan Sevak Deptt., p.2.

The identity formation trend among lower caste of United Provinces shows the journey of Dalits in their quest for respectable identity. Often Dalits demanded ruling class status known as Kshatriya status in order to assert their respectable identity.⁸³

At grassroots level, two ecologically important resources always remained the concern of Dalit in United Provinces. Particularly the problem of access to water was a constant problem to Dalits as they were forbidden to access water from village commons water sources. A letter to the Registrar, Co-operative Societies by the Deputy Secretary, provides details of Grant Rs. 3 lakh from the financial budget for strengthening the water system in the Dalit Basti in rural areas. In 1948-49, the Agriculture Department and other development blocks which have been opened have been instructed to make proper arrangements for this. According to the Deputy Registrar in a letter, the Chairman, District Development Association, Bareilly, has sent 14 proposals for the construction of drinking wells in villages located outside the development blocks of the district. In which some proposals of Harijans are also attached.⁸⁴

Another instance come from a letter was written by the Jatav community of Gaini village of Bareilly in the name of Presidency District Board Bareilly, demanding the community's community to make wells for drinking water. It is written in this letter that a well was first constructed in this village by collecting donations from the people of the village. But due to rain and water logging the well was destroyed, causing problems for people to drink water in the Dalit colony. On the other side of the village, some wells of the upper caste are in good condition but due to untouchability, Dalit people are not allowed to fill water from there. For this

⁸³ U.P. State Archive, Lucknow, Reform Department, File No. 83/1934.

⁸⁴ U.P. State Archive, Lucknow, Harijan Sahayak Department, File No. 66/1948.

reason, the villagers of the Dalit colony have demanded to build a new well here and prayed that if the well is not built then their condition will get worse and they will be killed. Similarly, on the demand of the Dalit community for the provision of potable water for Kaithal village, 5100 rupees were provided by the District Board and Under Secretary for the construction of 2 wells.⁸⁵

This chapter highlights the fact that Dalit society in United Provinces was excluded from access to economic and ecological resources by traditional and orthodox socio-cultural practices. Multiple communities considered as untouchable communities were critically dependent upon resources of nature. But they were pushed to practice such as professions which are considered as impure by traditional Hindu social order. At the same time, Dalit communities were able to evolve collative voice and action in the form of Dalit movement and voiced their demands for better life. This chapter attempt to show that Dalit movement in United Provinces has implicit ecological dimension which aims at acquiring control over resources of nature.

⁸⁵ Irrigation Dept. File No. 331W/51, Irrigation facilities for the residence of Neoria Dist. Pilibhit. U.P., March 17,1951.

CHAPTER-V

DALIT

ENVIRONMENTALISM

IN POST COLONIAL

UTTAR PRADESH

ABSTRACT OF CHAPTER

This chapter explores and presents the Discourse and practice of Dalit environmentalism in Uttar Pradesh in the post independent period of India with focus on Uttar Pradesh. The aim of this chapter is to locate the factors and process that have shaped the interaction and imagination of Dalits with ecological factors in independent India. This chapter also proposes that ecology remained to be one of the critically engaged aspects of Dalit life-world.

CHAPTER-V

INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters attempt has been made to highlight the struggle and vision of Dalits for access to natural resources and their assertion for better socio-ecological conditions in the British colonial period. This chapter proposes that the struggle of Dalits for natural and ecological resources continued in independent period as well. This trend is demonstrated in this chapter by focusing on macro level picture at all India level and micro level analysis focusing on Uttar Pradesh. The main objective of this chapter is to propose that green voice of Dalits continued in independent period and articulated its takes in different forms.

Independence from the British colonial rule was indeed a great millstone in the history of Indian nation. It generated euphoria and immense optimism among Indians for better and happy life. Oppressive and marginalized sections too envisioned a great dream of the better life which is free oppressive social system. Particularly, constitutional process was perceived as engine that would drive a progressive and egalitarian society different than the one the British Raj instituted and executed at one level and the control of the orthodox Brahmanism.¹ But it took no time for Dalits to realize the fact that their struggle must go on in fact with higher degree to pursue their dream of better life. The nature and structure of Dalit politics and movement should be seen in their perspective. The traditionally oppressive system and its control over Dalits refuse to mellow down. Hence, Dalits are compelled to keep struggle going.²

¹ Andre Beteille, 'Constitutional Morality', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 43, No.40, October 2008, pp. 45-42.

² Lenin Raghuvamsi, *Justice, Liberty and Equality and Dalits in Independent India*, Front Page, New Delhi, 2001.

The promised dreams of exploitation free society, egalitarian society, distribution of resources among population, reduction of poverty, dignity to marginalized section by national leadership fall short of expectations of Dalit. It was in this context that the Dalit movement picked the pace and got expressed in different forms and from different platform. In fact the Dalit struggle for better life was initiated by Ambedkar and urged his fellowmen to continue relentless struggle against oppression.³ He appealed and demanded for land distribution in the form of separate settlement for Dalits, and massive distribution of waste lands to Dalit, and of course provision of employment in public sector was his consistent demand. The trajectory of Dalit struggle set in motion by Ambedkar was intensely carried forward by his followers in the form of Ambedkar movement. This struggle for better life indeed had a fascinating ecological dimension which this chapter seeks to explore and document with particular reference to Uttar Pradesh.

I

DALIT MOVEMENT IN INDEPENDENT INDIA FROM ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Dalit struggle for better life continued in independent India. This struggle could be seen at the level of organizational and individual level. Let us first focus on organizational level of Dalit movement. The Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF), established by Ambedkar in Mumbai in 1942 to prepare a national level political platform for the Dalits. In 1944, it celebrated a large gathering of Scheduled Castes Union in Kanpur, in which Dr. Ambedkar was also present. After Maharashtra, the branches of this union were opened in Uttar Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Punjab,

³ V.M. Ravi Kumar, and L.C. Malliah, 'Land and Dalits: An Analysis on Ambedkar's Vision on Dalit Development', *Indian Economic Journal*, Issue, special issue, 1, 2017: V.M. Ravi Kumar, Dreaming Modern India: V.M. Ravi Kumar, 'Perceiving Modern India from the perspective of Ambedkar', *Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies*, vol. 4, I. 1, Jan-June, 2016, pp. 42-54,

Gujarat and Karnataka and several other parts of India. This union gradually emerged as an umbrella organization of Dalits and their political activism. In Uttar Pradesh, Tilak Chand Kural, a Dalit activist was elected as the President of this federation and the branches were opened in all the districts. The following leaders also played active role in shaping the political program of the federation: Shyam Lal Bardha, Heera Lal Jaiswar, Kalyan Chand Balmiki, Babulal Vaisya in Allahabad, Gaya Prasad Prasant, Babu Ram Charan Mallah in Lucknow, Bahgat Nepal Das, Ram Autar Passi in Jaunpur, Dr. Manikchand in Agra, Dr. Dharma Prakash in Barielly, Kanaujialal in Farukhabad and other leaders Sangh Priya Gautam, B.P. Maurya, Mahashaya Bhikhu Lal kureel Swami Mangl Prasad, Swami Ayadhyanand Dandi, Swami Chhmanand etc. were played an important role to build up Dalit movement.⁴ These leaders were indeed organic intellectuals who worked for progress of Dalit society and formulated the nature and course of Dalit discourse and struggle.

Intense struggles for land for Dalits were apparently taken up before independence, but Ambedkar, in the last phase of his life realized the fight for land to Dalits. Again, though it was a question of looking beyond the village, in one of his earlier meetings he argued that Dalits should look for land for colonization. In later meetings, he considered the possibility of settlements in Sind. His concern for land to Dalit is evident in the resolution passed by the scheduled caste federation famously known as separate village settlements. This was a demand that Dalits from all the villages in one area (later sometimes specified as a taluka) should be given land (to be provided both from unoccupied government land and from land bought up by the

⁴ Mata Prasad, *Bharat me Dalit Jagran Aur Oske Agradoot*, Samyak Prakashan, 2010, p.59.

government for the purpose) so that they could form independent settlements of their own.⁵

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF INDIA (RPI)

From 1890s onwards we can trace the Dalit movement became vocal and raised its voice on rights and safeguards. On account his intellectual, organizational skills and dedication for the case of Dalits the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar emerged as undisputed leaders of Dalits. His unique life and political struggle and the political movement he lead had a profound effect on the political movement of Dalits subsequently. Political atavism for Dalits, he believes is critical to achieve respectable social status. In pursuance of this objective he established an umbrella organization for Dalit politics know as All India Schedule Caste Federation in 1942.⁶ This organization has achieved tremendous success in explaining the importance of votes for Dalits. He also realized the importance of an exclusive political organization for cause of Dalits. This quest resulted in establishment of the Republican Party of India, but he could not see its progress in his life time. His followers were able to establish the Republican Party of India in October 1957.⁷ An active political atavist N. Shivaraj was chosen the first president of the party who look after it till 1964. The political activities of RPI were organized in the form of organizing several conferences in which Dalits leaders, activists are encouraged to participate. The first conference of RPI was organized in Nagpur in 1957 which was followed by the conference in

⁵ V.M. Ravi Kumar and L.C. Malliah, *Land and Dalits*.

⁶ Limbale and Sharan Kumar, *Dalit Panther: Bhumika evam Aandolan*, New Delhi, Vani Prakashan, 2017, p-142

⁷ Ibid

Aurangabad in 1959, Aligarh in 1961, Ahmadabad in 1963, Delhi in 1966, Nagpur in 1969 and in Pune in 1975.⁸

The Republican Party of India attempted to take up the critical issues of Dalits with the structure of politics. The issues such as implementation of affirmative action, education to Dalits and representation in politics etc were taken up actively. Generally, the period of October 3, 1957, to October 3, 1959, is considered as the active period of RPI in India.⁹ During this period, Republican Party leaders represented the problems of Dalit and attempted to solve them with the assistance of non-Dalits as well.

DEMAND FOR NATURAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS BY RPI

The Republication Party of India sincerely followed political framework of Ambedkar and his commitment for civil liberties, demand for equality etc. This spirit was evident from the application with demands to the Prime Minister of India in 1964. Some of the demands show the engagement of Dalit movement with ecological factors. Some of the demands are mentioned below:

1. The portrait of Dr. Ambedkar in the Central Hall of Parliament as a father of the Indian Constitution.
2. Barren and unemployed land should be given to landless laborers.
3. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes who have adopted Buddhism should increase their privileges.
4. The atrocities on Dalits should be stopped.
5. To be complete justice should be done under the Untouchability Crime Act.

⁸ Ajay Kumar, *Dalit Panther Andolan*, Delhi, Gautam Book Centre, 2015, p-33.

⁹ Naimisharanya, Mohandash, *Bharatiya Dalit Andolan Ka Itihas-49*, New Delhi, Radhakrishan Publication, 2013. p-402.

6. Under the reservation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, jobs are provided until 1970.
7. The Republican Party of India started its weekly magazine “Enlightened India” to the campaign.¹⁰

The vigor and enthusiasm of RPI and its leaders gradually eroded in the due course of time. It happened in the context of emergence of new political landscape in the initial years of independence in India. Temptation of access to political power resulted in internal disputes and eventual leaving of several active leaders to other parties. Due to the collapse of the Republican Party of India, party leaders moved to other political parties to pursue their political careers. In fact, the leaders of the Republican Party of India failed to understand the problems of the Dalits. At one level the Republican Party of India lost relevance, at another level the problems of Dalits increased. The absence of representative voice of Dalits grievances resulted in suffocation of Dalits mass due to increase atrocities in their daily lives. It was in this context that the Dalit Panther Movement emerged.

DALIT PANTHER MOVEMENT (DPM)

Emergence of Dalit Panther Movement reflects a global trend of marginalized sections getting impatient with the promises of democratic establishment and a drift towards extremist politics. Undoubtedly, the creation of the Dalit Panther Movement was inspired by the Black Panther movement in America, which was established for human, social, economic and political rights to colored people of America. For a while the Black Panther Movement emerged as emblematic movement of oppressed

¹⁰ Ibid

against presser.¹¹ It did have tremendous impact on the Dalit youth which was pushed to helpless condition due to unemployment and poverty. This movement had such an impact on revolutionary youths like Namdev Dhasal and Raja Dhale that they named their organization 'Dalit Panther', committed to Dalit emancipation on the lines of 'Black Panther'. This movement was established to further the ideology of Ambedkar for progress of marginalized sections in general and Dalits in particular.

At the time when the Dalit Panther Movement was being established in India, the feeling of untouchability and caste exploitation of Dalit was unfortunately gained higher degree. The atrocities against Dalits gained alarming proportion. The police administration could not deal with the violence against Dalits in satisfactory manner. The government response was not swift enough to stop the atrocities against Dalits. It was the political and social context in which the Dalit Panther Movement aroused and acquired popularity as a representative movement of Dalits.

The Dalit Panther Movement was officially formed on 9 July 1972 in Bombay and was part of Dalit assertion which the question oppression of Dalit and aimed as assertive identity. The contribution of the Panthers lies in their attempt to formulate the Dalit identity both in terms of a cultural as well as a proletarian experience. The Dalit Panthers aspire to represent the grievances and demands of Dalits from constitutional, cultural and extremist frameworks. The main objective of this movement was Dalit empowerment and the framework of the movement often oscillates between cultural and extremist paradigms.

The objective of the Panther Movement can be observed from the following statement which is a part of its manifesto: 'Dalit Panther is a rebellion against the bargaining of the leadership of RPI. Scheduled caste, tribe, landless laborers, poor

¹¹ Joshua Bloom, *Black against Empire: the History and Politics of Black Panther Party*, University of California Press, 2016.

former are all our friends. All those who are victims of political and economic exploitation are all our friends. Zamindars, capitalists, moneylenders and their agents and the government that supports the pro-exploitation elements are enemies of the Panther'. It also said, "We want the status of a controlling power in the economic, political and cultural fields. We do not want to live among Brahmins. We are in favor of ruling the entire India. Just change of heart or liberal education cannot end injustice and exploitation. We will awaken the revolutionary masses and organize them so that change can happen. We believed that the flame of revolution will definitely burn through struggle in the masses. Because we know that no social system can be changed through the demand of concession, elections and satyagrah. The rebellious idea of our social revolutions idea of our social revolution will originate in the hearts of our people and immediately it will come into existence like hot iron. In the end our struggle will break the chains of slavery.¹² According to Ajay Kumar's book 'Dalit Panther Movement', mentions that this movement is completely out of the movements launched by Dalit leaders and non-Dalit leaders in the country for the salvation of the Scheduled Castes and leaves an indelible mark. The representatives of the Dalit Panther movement acted like the Panthers and forced the government to bow down, if not outright, to get their demands.

Soon after establishment, the Panther movement becomes popular all over India. It becomes extremely popular among youth who wanted rapid changes. According Anand Teltumbde, 'It shook the foundations of the system established in the country and showed briefly what the outrage of a persecuted man can be. This gave a valuable insight to Dalit Panthers broke new ground in a transformative sense for the political cause for the Dalit movement. It gave the Dalits an identity of proletarian

¹² J.V. Pawar, *Dalit Panthers: An Authoritative History*, The Marginalised Publication, New Delhi, 2017.

transformative velocity and linked their struggles to the struggles of other oppressed people all over the world'.¹³ Undoubtedly the temperament of Dalit Panther is extremist in nature but committed for ideology of Ambedkar. The following poem shows the ideological angle of the movement:

WORURIOTS

Worli: January 1974

Leave me, Set me Free,

Let me tear off these dogs,

Let me show them my prowess; The bullet-pierced stomach,

Ramesh trying to hold back the gushing blood,

Standing before three thousand and five hundred year-old enemy,

Breathing his last, crying-Revenge! Revenge!!

Like fish out of water,

People suffocated and died;

Sacrificing themselves,

To end the misery of ages

Please don't beat me, don't torture me,

I'm disabled, I'm helpless;

Shrill cries of Ranu Ranadive

Met the thrashing,

Just as when a mouse is thrashed;

Biting his lips he fell down

Glancing pitifully at his own blue-black body.

¹³ Anand Taltumbde, *Dalits: Past, Present and Future*, Rutledge, London, 2017.

*These are living prisons, this society we live in
Such words exploded in our ears like dynamites;
Freedom doesn't arrive uninvited, we were told
It has to be snatched through struggle, through brute force;
These lion-hearted words pierced our ears like so many bullets,
Boiling the already-warm blood. Volcanic blood,
Blood flowing out as each blow from armed hands landed;
Let our blood flow in the name of Bheem-we shouted,
While all the time the kicks from the defenders of culture,
The brokers of a corrupt government,
Turned the kids blue and black.
Oh don't hit her, she is eight-months' pregnant, we begged,
While Satan and darkness danced menacingly before her;
One kick, finding its way to the lungs of her throbbing foetus,
And she heard the shrill and silent voice of her
baby Crying-I am coming out,
Keep ready for me your arms.*

(This poem was written by J.V. Pawar during the Worli riots of Mumbai, originally in Marathi and has been cited from an English translation in a collection called 'Blockade')

The aforementioned poem shows the ideological foundation of Dalit Panther Movement which initially exhibited ideological propensity towards extremist politics by the way of mobilizing Dalit mass. The demands of Dalit, the movement believed that could only be realized with extremist methods. The fact to be noted here is that

the movement created an emotional identity around the word Dalit for vast masse of scheduled castes in different parts of India. The movement has taken up several longstanding demands of Dalits. The core issues and demands of the movement are as follows:

- (i) The social, economic revolutions must come together. It is the social revolution that will prepare the land for the economic revolution.
- (ii) Elimination of traditional caste based peso is very important for the social, economic revolution. It can establish brotherhood among the workers.
- (iii) Plan considering the population in dalits their number get shares in the ratio.
- (iv) There should be free and compulsory education for all up to class xii. Equal education should be imparted to all based on equality. In public and convent schools the poor do not have access, thereby eliminating inequality.
- (v) Educational institutions should be nationalized.
- (vi) Laws passed to stop the exploitation of Labour must be strictly adhered to.
- (vii) Women and men should be given equal pay for equal work.
- (viii) Women were given the status of second class at the social level and in the name of religious practices, it should be abolished.
- (ix) Everyone must get the task because unemployment is the result of a capitalist conspiracy.
- (x) New subsidies for the dalits wherever industries are set up. This will give opportunities for dalits to explore new avenues of employment. The dalits should also have a partnership in all government; semi - government

economic projects and the number of provisions within the company act should be shared by the dalits from the share of their population.

- (xi) No orders relating to reservation are being complied with but a hostile atmosphere is being created against the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, and the government should be made to strictly follow the reservation orders and watch the government whether it is following these orders.
- (xii) Nationalization of land is a good measure to eradicate economic exploitation. Landless dalits are forced to become bonded labourers in the rural environment. New employment needs to be created for the landless labourers.
- (xiii) No society can be both socially and economically strong by the force of Labour. Capitalist democracy puts its people in higher systems in administration, courts and security services to protect it. Due to this, there is exploitation of dalits everywhere so it is necessary that dalits should be given the position. If dalits are prevented from reaching such higher posts then it is capitalist conspiracy.¹⁴

Cultural point

- (i) Let the inertia of Indian society be sustained and new ideas be created on philosophy to eliminate the inequality associated with birth.
- (ii) It is only in the villages that the socio - economic exploitation and birth - linked inequality can be seen to be extremely vicious. Encourage dalits to be driven from the villages to the nearest towns or to newer villages to settle in large quantities.

¹⁴ J.V. Pawar, *Dalit Panthers: An Authoritative History*,

- (iii) There is a constant struggle against ideas that lead to exploitation and inequality; they have to be shaped and their wide appeal to religion or culture.¹⁵

In addition, the two memorandums were also submitted by the group of **Dhale** to the chief minister. Before December 1, 1975 the memorandum contained the following:

- 1- Land shelled by illegal means should be given to rightful owners by redistribution.
- 2- Those accused of racist atrocities may be arrested under misa.
- 3- Scholarships for Dalit students should be increased and employment among the dalits should be increased.
- 4- In the cooperative societies, the dalits must be registered as share holders.

The second memo was submitted on 31 January 1976 wherein the following demands were made:

1. Every case against the suppressed panes may be withdrawn.
2. Let every poor and Dalits be provided sufficient land.¹⁶

The Panther movement undertook a programme to reclaim the snatched lands of poor Dalit peasants by the zamindars. The scheme was started in 1973 by the unit of panthers. But it reached its culmination in a conference of poor peasants and landless labourers at Rajguru Nagar near Pune on 4th January, 1976. Dhasal spoke of a 20 - point programme for bringing justice to the Dalits. This program was inspired by

¹⁵ Lata Murugkar, *Dalit Panther Movement In Maharashtra: A Sociological Appraisal*, Popular Prakashan Private Limited, Bombay, 1991, p.64.

¹⁶ Ibid

Ambedkar's assertion that "political democracy has no meaning if there is no social and economic equality". The following put forwarded by Panthers shows their priority and activism and its ecological dimension;

1. Return land snatched from them to the real owners, for that is why people are migrating to the cities.
2. Solve the problem of leasehold land before implementing the sealing act.
3. The endorsement of the land liberation movement may be extended by any just legislation.
4. Providing fertilizers and seeds etc. to poor farmers at low rates.
5. The Mahar land business may be declared as non - agricultural if the land belongs to the government.

This kind of manifesto by Dalit Panther suggests that the ideology adopted by the Dalit Panther is the new and wider one in which the concepts such as humanitarianism against dehumanization, true democracy against dictatorship, scientific discrimination against superstition, scientific and analogy in place of superstition, pragmatism in place of wrong philosophy, pragmatism in place of principle, correction and liberation in place of tyranny, true freedom in place of subjection are contemplated and discussed. Some of the strategies that are adopted by the Panther Movement as follows: socialization and transparency in place of politics, change support in place of the status quo, emphasis on the paths rather than means, a hot and challenging movement in place of cold protests, a tendency to hot and daunting movement in place of untouchability, self - respect and dignity, justice in place of religion, are some of the best ideas which are more true to reality and

values.¹⁷ In the due course of time, the panther movement lost its relevance due to fractions at one level and its proximity with extremist element. This gap however is filled by the idea of Bahujan politics. The observable fact; however is that the Panther movement unveils a profound vision for transformation of Dalit society from a class of servitude to respectable citizens. At the same time, this movement also has a visionary form of environmentalism of the poor by stressing the factors such as access of land for agriculture and housing, basic ecological amenities such as water, good hygiene conditions etc for progress of Dalit society. The legacy of the Panther movement for empowerment of Dalits was carry forward in Kanshiram and his Bahujan politics in different form which again has fascinating ecological dimension.

KANSHI RAM POLITICS FROM DALIT TO BAHUJAN AND ECOLOGY

Kanshi Ram happens to be one of the original thinkers and politicians who strived for empowerment of marginalized communities in general and Dalits in particular. His version of Dalit politics gained relevance after 1980s in India. Assigning a pole position to Dalits in the politics of marginalized sections, he unleashed politics of India from below on the lines of class rather than narrow caste lines. Following the footsteps of Ambedkar, he popularized the concept of organizational Dalits politics with his relentless ability to organize both educated and mass Dalits and attempted use their collectivity for political action. With his ability to mobilize Dalit mass and employees he was able made Dalit as formidable political force particularly in north India.

¹⁷ Rosalind O'hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth-Century Western India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985; Ajay Kumar, *Dalit Panther Andolan* (Hindi Book), Gautam Book Center, Delhi, 2015, p.31; J. Blom and W.E. Martin Jr, *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of Dalit Panther Party*, University of California Press, California, 2013; C.E. Jones, *The Black Panther Party* (reconsidered), Classic Press, New York, 1998; Lata Murugkar, *Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra: A Sociological Appraisal*, Popular Prakashan Private Limited, Bombay, 1991, p.39; J.V. Pawar, *DALIT PANTHERS: An Authoritative History*, The Marginalised Publication, New Delhi, 2017, pp.111.

Removal of economic deprivation was the main motive of his life by following the ideology of Ambedkar. However, instead of emphasizing the sources of social transformation and economic change, Kanshi Ram laid the maximum emphasis on creating a mindset for the change in the status of Dalits within the framework of the discourse of Dalits being original inhabitants of India. He proposes that poverty and deprivation alone could not drive the original inhabitants to social and economic change. He made the idea of sons of the soil as discourse and urged Dalit masse and educated to evolve a consciousness of assertion rather than accepting the oppressive consciousness.¹⁸

Having made a deep analysis on the reasons for backwardness of Dalit, Kanshi Ram proposes that economic exploitation of Dalits is perpetuated by socio-cultural apparatus propagated by Brahmanical forces. He argues that being a citizen of the country they are also entitled to possess property and other resources. He proposes that the Hindu scriptures and ideology did not allow Dalits to grow with consciousness of kind. He argues that 'these divine slaves know only enough that as a result of the evil of previous birth they have reached a worse state than wealth, earth, education, human limits, and can only get rid of it. It was difficult to inculcate in them the sense of authority and the sense of the loss of that authority'.¹⁹ Kanshi Ram made a serious search for the reasons responsible for marginalization and Dalits and possible solutions from political point of view.

Knashi Ram's utopia of Dalit life is having access to resources of nature and their conversion to economic wealth and making lives comfortable constantly

¹⁸ Badri Narayan, *Kanshiram: The Leaders of Dalits*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2014.

¹⁹ Kanshi Ram, *The Chamcha Age: An Era of Stooges*, Samyak Prakshan, New Delhi, 2018.

remained his discourse and advocacy. Economic change in the livelihood with the help of political power to Dalits has always been the dream of Kanshi Ram. He rejects the Gandhi notion of simple and moral life. He advocated the life of Ambedkar as way to be emulated for Dalits. He often says that Dalits should always try to live in palaces and get every comfort that they desire with the help of hard work. He thunders that Dalit society should not be attached to the slum; we must not live below poverty, nor should we let our people live below the poverty line. He attacks the stereotype of Dalit caricatures being simple, humble and peace loving vulnerable human beings who always depends upon the mercy of upper castes. He also proposes that Dalits should acquire such qualities which facilitate their quality life.²⁰

INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE POLICY AND VISION OF KANSHI RAM

Kanshi Ram is a deep thinker and evolved his model of organizing human society with the political action. Of course, development of Dalit society has always been his priority. He used to say, if political power comes to marginalized sections, reforms such as acquisition of industries by the states; create sustainable wage and appropriate working conditions; establishment of the highest technical machinery and government control over mineral resources and other reforms. These ideas reflect the socialist dream of making economic resources available to people of nation. In fact it was the vision of Ambedkar that the state in India should take over industry and control the natural resource tapping process. In agrarian front, Kanshi Rma propose that the government should take over the excessive land from farmers and transfer the land to the landless people and divide it into the landless areas instead of using them. He thus dreamed of moral control of the state authority in distributing the resources and

²⁰ Badri Narayan, *Kanshi Ram*

benefits to all sections of nation.²¹ His ecological vision is not deep ecology rather material ecology which aims at providing access of nature to all sections of people with the help of political action. He thus laid foundation for political ecology from inclusivist perspective.

Kanshi Ram's vision for inclusive industrial development did not oppose the development of the private industries, but he was not in favor of the facilities provided by the government to private industrialists at the expensive tax payers money. He did not want the state to provide them any amenities, but he wants the state's control over them so much that the private sector entrepreneur was obliged to provide them with reasonable amenities. He thus opted for progress of industries independently without out much interference of the state. For execution of his vision, Kanshi Ram created an association of oppressive communities on class bases which is famously known as BAMCEF. Kanshi Ram thus is a pioneer of socialization of natural resources within the democratic framework which is unique way of solving ecological problems.

BAMCEF (Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation)

In concept of reservation in government jobs to schedule castes and tribes resulted in entry of several educated youth into government sector as employees. This process created a small section of Dalits with secure income which resulted in emergence of assertive middle class. It was this class became backbone of Kanshi Ram's Bahujan movement. He created Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation organization on December 6, 1978. In this organization consist of the employees and officers belong to SC/ST/OBC/ and minorities. It was a non-governmental

²¹ Gail Omvedt, 'Kanshi Ram and BSP', in L K Sharma (ed.), *Cast and Class in India*. Rawat, Jaipur, 1994.

organization, in which all the employees motivated to address the problems of ignorant masses. It is not exaggeration to say that Bamcef has transferred the castes identity of marginalized sections of India to class based identifies and fostered political unity among them. It has created a platform to mobilize the oppressed sections of India society and prepared them for common political collective action.²²

Objectives of BAMCEF

The main objective of BAMCEF is that “change of social system.” From its inception, BAMCEF has continuously been putting effort to organize the Dalit intelligentsia for overall development of Dalit and other marginalized sections of Indian society. The broad objectives of BAMCEF as follows:

1. To provide hope and help to downtrodden society which has been made to feel as hopeless and helpless through the centuries old tyrannies committed on it by the exploiters and oppressors in India.
2. To build and strengthen the non-political roots of the oppressed and exploited society in the fields of social economic, educational, cultural, trade, commerce and industry which have been completely destroyed by the tyrant class.
3. To become a perennial source of inspiration for the oppressed and exploited society by the way of developing moral values for self and by exhibiting those values to the society as a model.
4. To create capable, committed and genuine leadership for development of backward and underdeveloped communities in India.
5. To generate, develop and operate direction centers to guide the oppressed and exploited society.

²² Chand, Mool, *The Bahujan and their Movement*, Bahujan Publication Trust, New Delhi, 1992.

6. To develop and provide resources and skills to the Dalit society for its amelioration.
7. To inculcate the feeling of “paying back of social obligation” among the intellectual class.
8. To strengthened the non-political roots in the Mulnivasi Bhujan Samaj.
9. To spread and propagate the ideology of Jyotibharao Phuley, Jana Nayak Birsa Munda, Periyar Ramaswamy, Shauji Maharaja, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and other social thinkers.
10. To create full-time activists dedicated to the objective, ideology, values and principle of the organization and involve them in the propagation of the ideology.²³

BAMCEF aspires for social revolution which aims at creation of egalitarian socio-economic order. The phenomenological meaning of social revolution for BAMCEF represents the synthesized version of most of non-Brahman thinkers which means a process to be unleashed for making Dalit self as confident, capable and in fact more confident than upper strata of Indian society. It is this revolution what Jefforlot terms as “Silent Revolution”.²⁴

The mission of BAMCEF therefore is to make Dalit aware of their rights and make them capable of handling oppressive social relations in India. The mission of BAMCEF is to bring social and Cultural Revolution in India which creates egalitarian social order. It is through its objectives that BAMCEF foresees the accomplishment of such a revolution. It has got its root in the concept of payback to

²³ K.L. Sharma, *Caste and Class in India*, Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 1994: Rajani Khotari, *Indian Politics*, Orient Longmen, New Delhi, 1970.

²⁴ Christofe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Raise of Lower Castes*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

the society by the members of oppressed sections. If we go deep into the past heritage of the oppressed and exploited society and the struggles fought by its people to put an end to their sufferings, it looks evident that the class of educated employees is one of the major beneficiaries of the product of such struggle. The BAMCEF thus argues that it becomes obligatory on their part of educated employs belongs to Dalit society to see that their brethren benefits fruits.²⁵

It is necessary for us to see the socio-economic context in UP that had facilitated emergence of Dalit consciousness for identity. Since the 1960s, the Green Revolution and an increased availability of non-agricultural occupations for labors have, in many parts of UP, led to a partial breakdown of patron-client based labor relations in rural areas. A certain degree of economic and social delinking at village level between the dominant land-owning groups and their erstwhile workers took place, loosening the laborer's extreme economic and dependence on their employers and hence transforming the social and economic basis for the patron-client ideology among SCs. These economic changes initially affected only western UP, but from the mid-1970s onwards, east and central onwards, east and central UP has experienced similar developments, albeit from a lower level. This may be an important reason why low-caste politicization originally (in the 1960s) was limited to west UP but in the late 1990s the electoral support of the BSP was roughly equal in east and west.²⁶

Apart from it, there was a slight improvement in literacy rate among Dalits. In addition to these developments many studies point to improvements in the socio economic conditions of Dalits in the state from the late 1970s. These improvements provided the economic potential to question upper-caste domination. Studies show

²⁵ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution: the Bhujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*, Sage, New Delhi, 2002.

²⁶ H.L. Dushadh, *Bahujan Samaj Ka Hit Bhagidari Sidhant me: Kanshiram ke Arthik Darsan par ek Adhyayan*, Bahujan Diversity Mission, 2007.

that for the first time, land was no longer the only source of income, power and prestige. Urbanization increased employment opportunities on farms, brick kilns, construction activities and rickshaw-pulling in the cities. As a result, the absolute dependence on landowners and old patron- client relations disappeared. Less prepared to suffer indignities, the Dalits gave up carrying and skinning of dead animals and adopted, sanskritisation. These economic changes provided congenial atmosphere emergence of dynamic Dalits identity under the overall ideological guidance of BAMCEF.²⁷

The motto of BAMCEF is “Educate; Organize and Agitate were adopted from Ambedkar, and its activities were formally divided into a number of welfare and proselytizing object. But increasingly Kanshi Ram” s agitational activities were leading him into politics by the late 70s. He was no longer content with being the leader of reserved office holder, a class for whom he had less respect. Kanshi Ram” s first attempt was to create a radical political vehicle capable of mobilizing the larger body of Dalits. BAMCEF strongly appealed for distribution of resources among underprivileged sections of Indian society. It has created and disseminated the discourse of *jal*, *jangal* and *jamen* (water, forests and land) to be given to the marginalized sections of Indian society.

BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY (BSP)

After considerable success of BAMCEF, Kanshi Ram formed the organization called the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). In this attempt, polarization of Dalits, backward classes and minorities has been attempted on one side and the upper castes to the other side. Thus, the main objective of the BSP was to increase the social and

²⁷ Sudha Pai, ‘A Quest for Identity through Politics: the Scheduled Cast in Uttar Pradesh’, in Stephanie Tawa Lama –Rewal, ed, *Electoral Reservation, political Representation and social Change in India: A Comparative perspective*, New Delhi, Manohar, 2005.

economic status of the Dalits and to provide political rights. Kanshiram's slogan was "Vote hamara raj tumhara nhi chlega nhi chlega." Kanshi Ram called for one vote to give a political right to the Dalits. The BSP emerged as the largest party in Uttar Pradesh and an activist of BSP Mayawati became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1993, 1996, 2002, and 2007.²⁸

OBJECTIVE OF BSP

Emergence of the BSP provided a formidable platform for addressing the issue of Dalits not only in Uttar Pradesh but also in different parts of India. The Party Constitution states with the constitutional framework, attempt would be made to promote with special care and protect the socio economic interests of the weaker sections of the society, denied to them for centuries. In practical terms, is universally known as the supreme principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Keeping the main objective in mind, the party declares itself to lead the movement to end the exploitation of weaker sections through social and economic change and suppression of disadvantaged communities and as a means of moving forward Participation in political activity and governance. The BSP's constitution declares that "all citizens of India are entitled to be equal before the law and to be considered equal in the true sense and to promote all walks of life in all cases, and where equality does not exist." And where equality is denied, it should be retained and fought for."

Obviously in democracy, people's votes are very valuable because it is through their votes that governments are being elected and functioned. Every single vote thus is valuable. However, on account of socio-economic disparities, it is a general trend that rich sections can enjoy more advantages in all political decisions

²⁸ Ghanshyam Shah, eds. *Dalit Identity and Politics*, New Delhi Sage, 2001.

and the poor may be compelled to support the rich. This situation sometimes leads to a situation where the poor either are not allowed to vote or occasionally forced to vote in favor of a particular party or individual. The BSP constitution proposes that Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes and Minorities are the most oppressed and exploited people in India and hence their progress should be given priority.

II

The state of Uttar Pradesh and its history offers a fascinating case study for emergence of vibrant Dalit struggle and assertion. This assertive consciousness and political mobilization was possible due to vibrant literary production on various issues of Dalit society both by Dalit and non Dalit literary personalities. This vibrant Dalit discourse has fascinating ecological dimension on the way ecological factors influence Dalit life world.

POVERTY AND ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF DALITS

Undoubtedly, Dalits witness high levels of poverty and marginalization as economic marginality is reinforced by social exclusion. They constitute marginal sections of the society and they are socially, psychologically and economically disadvantaged. Gurung S. Ghana and Michael Kollmeyer define the difference between poverty and marginalization by saying marginality and poverty are often used as synonyms. In another words, poverty is a state of economic, psychological and social deprivation occurring among people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, manage or possession, control or access to resources.²⁹ Balbir Madhopuri explains the poor

²⁹ Devendra Kumar Gora, *Exploring Dalit Experiences A Comparative Study of the Autobiographical Narratives of Balbir Madhopuri Tulsi Ram Sharankumar Limbale and Siddalingaiah*, 2018, p.138. Ghana, S. Gurung, and Michael Kollmair. "Marginality: Concepts and Their Limitations". Nccr-

lifestyle of Dalits who are unable to have access to food and shelter. There was a shortage of food grains, so they are forced to depend on the landlords. They used to reap the crop first and only when it dries could they get it. Dalit and poor people are worried about doing something in every season; during the rainy season the huts start to percolate from many parts and the inside area is filled with water. Sometimes the walls and roof collapsed. As it is only buried under the broken roof. The trouble never ends for the Dalits. He describes the sufferings caused by poor economic conditions and religiously accepted ideologies.³⁰ For survival, Dalits endured many things, including natural disasters. They suffer in summer whether it will rain or not. On account of these problems, Dalits are extremely vulnerable to ecological risks and exposed to dangers of climate change in more critical way than non Dalits.

HINDI LITERATURE AND DALIT ECOLOGY

One of important sources of Dalit assertion and consciousness is literary forms produced by writers, artists, activists etc. It is a useful source to capture the life world of Dalits consisting of suffering, visions for emancipation. Attempt has been in this section to explore the representation of Dalit life in some literary works from ecological perspective.

Munshi Premchand (Dhanpat Rai) and his books seen with ecological lens

Premchand's novels represent rich social history of Uttar Pradesh. His writings also represent rich details on various issues of Dalit society in Uttar Pradesh. Some of the works such as "Godan," "Rangbhoomi" stories "Poos Ki Raat," "Thakur Ka Kuan", "Sadhhagati" etc. encompass the life stories of Dalits and various aspects of it

Pakistan.org. The Pakistan Research Group Partner of Swiss National Centre of Competence Research North- South. 2005. Web. 11 Nov. 2016.

³⁰ Balbir Madhopuri, *Changiya Rukh: Against the Night*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2010.

particularly in case of north India.³¹ Besides descriptions of various aspects of Dalit issues, ecological dimension of such issues could also be seen.

1. “GODAN” (Novel)

'Godan' is considered to be Premchand's finest novel he has written. In this novel the condition of the peasants in the British rule and the zamindars has been described poignantly. Premchand has depicted the condition of the farmers of India under the debt, dying slowly and moving forward again. In this, a detailed description of the life of the farmers is found on the one hand, and on the other side it has shown the social powers leading problems in agrarian sectors. Urban life is described very lively along with rural life. The character of 'Hori' in the novel features all those farmers who are oppressed and exploited by landlords and moneylenders. The atrocities on the peasants are very clever, in which there is an agreement between the feudalists and the capitalists. The poor and naive farmer like Hori is unworthy to consider this clever deal. Attempt has been made in this novel to describe the poor living conditions of lower castes and physical ecology in which they are forced to live. The point this novel mentions is that rural natural and ecological resources are controlled and dominated by elite and at the same time the lower sections are excluded from access to such resources.³²

2. “Thakur Ka Kuan” (Story)

This story of Premchand depicts the horrible conditions in which Dalit masses live and ruthlessly excluded from access to drinking water in village. This story documents the physical ecological conditions in which Dalit masses are forced to live.

³¹ S.B. Upadnyaya, 'Representing the Underdogs: Dalits in the Literature of Premchand', *Studies in History*, 18, 1, 2002, pp. 51-79.

³² Premchand, *Godan*, Sarswati Press, Allahabad, 1936, p. 10.

This story is about lack of access to drinking water to Dalit in a north Indian village. This story is also about the relationship between caste and nature wherein upper castes having exclusive control over resources of nature and the same is rigidly forbidden to lower castes in the name of custom guarded with religious zeal. Two characters the sick Jokhu who was thirsty and desperately wants to drink water but could not do so due to lack of access to palatable water. His wife Gangai determined to provide water to her sick husband and decided to violate the custom by drawing water from forbidden well. With the character Pramchand vividly and graphically depict the exploitation and exclusion of Dalits in general and women in particular. This novel shows the serious limitations that are being imposed on the lives of Dalits by the way of strictly forbidding them from accessing water from the village common well. At the same time this story also shows the anger of Dalit women over their exclusion from accessing water from village.

3. “Sadgati” (Story)

This story is about tragic deprivation Dukkhi Chamar which means tragic Chamar in north Indian village. This story documents the treatment of Dalits due the values propagated by the Varna system. In the guise of religious hypocrisy, ritualism, superstition, many sufferings are sacrificed every day. In this story, the Pandit, in exchange for performing rituals in the marriage of the daughter of Dukkhi, gets her to do all day's work by neither eating nor drinking. As Dukkhi's feet fall in the courtyard, the Panditain throws a burning spark at him; he burns but does not have anger. Anyway, the deprived people have more physical disability because they break even in the arrangement of bread for two times. Instead of doing some rituals, Dukkhi dies while cutting wood with an axe while working at Pandit's house. One system strangles the other system and there is no voice of outrage, due to determinism, workers,

peasants and Dalits continue to accept all this with pleasure that this is their fate. The tragedy is most often with his corpse. Pandit and Panditin strangles the griever by rope and throws him out of the village where his body is eaten by vultures, crows and dogs. This is the result of his life-long devotion and sacrifice. This story depicts the tragic social and ecological conditions in which Dalits are forced to live in villages.

Pramchand's literary works are valuable sources for not only on the conditions of Dalits and problems in which they were compelled to live but also horrible ecological conditions in rural areas. He shows the exclusion of Dalits from basic amenities such as water, land and other sources and anger of Dalits on their plights. This ecological exclusion could also be seen in some autobiographies of Dalit thinkers and activists.

Tulsi Ram in his autobiography "Murdahiya"

Tulsi Ram in his autobiography *Murdahiya* portrays the dire situation of poverty among Dalits in rural areas. Dalits were often left hungry due to lack of food. Bankia Dome used to come and eat on all occasions, and if someone refused to give food, he would play loud Singha. The Dalits were poor and they had only grains to buy spices, chillies, oil etc. so food used to end before every crop. He faced nutritional deficiencies in every season. During the rainy season, the Dalits ate rats and fish. Sometimes they got grain from the grain of mice. They had a hut to live in and Tulsi's family was a large one and only one. It started getting humid when it rained. They used utensils to store and throw rainwater. There was no other option to avoid such a condition. In the winter period, the time of day was comparatively comfortable as the availability of food was easy, but the nights were very hard. The nights of hot clothes used to cause sleepless nights. The current state of poverty has a close relationship

with the Dalit community. This has weakened the backbone of the Dalits. Even the fulfillment of basic needs for human beings is a dream for them. Tulsi Ram depicted the panic situation of the Dalit colony in the winter season. In poor economic condition, Dalits cannot arrange food twice a day. They depend on the rich upper caste for daily food which is given in exchange for the hard work of the whole day. Most of the time, Dalits have to beg for the low quality of food or leftover food and face abusive behavior.³³

Tulsi Ram expresses the economic exploitation of Dalit labourers. The Dalits of his village work in coal mines and get sixteen rupees for a week. The contractor distributes wages weekly but the contractor pays a lesser amount of his wages. "While distributing the salary, the contractor kept two rupees from each labourer's salary." Conditions became very difficult during the drought as the level of water resources was reduced and the style of irrigation was also based on very old techniques. Tulsi raises the issue that women are equal victims of men and do the same thing but are given nothing. His mother participated in every activity for the welfare of the family. Being a woman, she also had to handle a householder. This became a very important situation when he was caught talking to any male. His father used to get angry and question her character. He beats the woman with stinging sticks. Similarly, the situation of upper-caste women was not better. Like Dalit boys, upper-caste women were not allowed to receive an education. It is a case of gender discrimination that prevents women from participating in social, political and economic activities. In "Murdahia", women work in the fields along with their family men. They work peacefully inside and outside the house at every step of life. As he discusses about sweeper women, they do the same thing before marriage and after marriage status.

³³ Tulsi Ram, *Murdahiya*, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 2014.

Omprakash Valmiki, and his autobiography “Jootan”:

In his autobiography Valmiki mentions about the life of Dalits who were compelled to live in poverty, sub-human or inhuman behavior in a caste-ridden society, where untouchability is practiced. He mentions that untouchability was so fierce that it was considered right to touch dogs and cats or cows and buffaloes, if one happened to touch a Chuhra (lower caste), one got contaminated or polluted. The author also mentions the forced labour practice which was prevalent in rural India in which most Dalit trapped. He writes that his mother used to work in the houses (Upper-Caste) along with wages, which included raising cattle dung and cleaning the house. In lieu of all these things, the ratio of each two animals was two and a half kilograms of grain, leftover bread from each house in the afternoon, which was specially made with husk in the coming to give to the Chuhra. Sometimes juthan was also put in a basket of Bhangana. On the occasions of marriage, when the baraatis were eating, the Chuhra used to sit outside the doors with big crates. After eating the wedding procession, juthi plates were put in those baskets, which they used to collect from the house. Juthan used to be eaten with licking. Puris left from the Joothan were kept dry in the sun and during the rainy season, they were boiled in water and eaten by adding chilli and salt to it.³⁴

Valmiki mentions that in olden days Chuhar was also responsible for raising the animals in the village. Even the dead animals of mice whose house they worked, had to be raised. In return, they did not receive any wages. It used to take 4-6 people to raise an animal. So it took time to assemble the logo to lift the animal. It is very difficult to raise a dead animal. Rope and bamboo are tied to his legs and have to be

³⁴ Om Prakash Balmiki, *Joothan, (Autobiography, vol: 1)*, Radhakrishna Publication, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 18-19.

lifted by arms. Only abuses are received in return for this work. The dead animal skin was sold for 20 to 25 rupees in the leather market in Muzaffarpur. Incoming and going and raising the dead animals, laborers would hardly get 10-15 rupees in hand instead of a skin. This used to be a given amount in those days of scarcity.³⁵

Valmiki as a conscious member of Dalit society which was subjected to different forms of exclusion was deeply aware of exclusion from ecologically important resources. In his biography he mentions that: ‘During examination we could not drink water from the glass. To drink water, we had to cup our hands. The peon pours water way high up the least the hand touch the glasses.’³⁶ The access to drinking water thus has always been an issue to Dalits wherein the practice of untouchability manifests in public sphere.

At moral level, the state is responsible to put in adequate efforts to advance the economic status of the citizens. The pathetic and helpless condition of Dalit labourers is aptly sketched in the autobiographies of Tulsi Ram, Mohandas Naimisharay, Shyoraj Singh Baichain and Om Prakash Balmiki. Landless Dalits have lesser chances to be farmers. Therefore they depend on the upper caste landlords. They are exploited by the landlords and treated inhumanly. Mostly Dalit labourers work day and night as a slave on low wages or without wages. The upper caste rich people take the advantage of poor economic condition and force them to work as bonded labourer to earn more profit. Although the practice of bonded labour is abolished to empower the low wages workers and minimum wages are decided but such practices are still prevalent.

³⁵ Ibid, p.46.

³⁶ Ibid.

The study of Dalit autobiographies in the context of human rights shows that Dalit autobiographies have emerged as a strong and powerful expression on Dalit life. These autobiographies have represented the truth and given an expectation to the Dalit life which was earlier confined in the darkroom of Brahmanism and Manuwadi system. Beginning the personal lives of writers, these biographies express the social reality of the exploited, marginalized, and deprived and untouchables in which Dalit life has to undergo suffering, superstition and inhuman traditions. Reflecting stories of human rights violations, these autobiographies also narrate the poverty, hunger, and unemployment, and sexual exploitation, indifference towards Dalit life, child labour, dependence and vulnerability of Dalit women.

At the grassroots level, the concept of Dalit environmentalism could also be seen in the folk songs of singers from marginalized communities. This trend can be seen in the songs of Ramswaroop Uike who has written a very touching folklore on the farmer and the people living in poverty, showing the exclusion of marginalized from access to nature and nature, in which the exploitation between moneylenders, landlords and farmers has been told through folklore. This helps to see an aspect of the social situation of post-colonial India.

*“Jal aur jangal jameen ke maalik bane anaadee re
Kahaan gae ve kila mahal aur ghoda gaadee re
Jaan rahe itihaas to phir bhee kare gulaamee re
Jaan seva ka mantr bhula gae neeti bhulaanee re
Apanee to pahachaan bana lo khetee baadee re
Kahaan gae ve kila mahal aur ghoda gaadee re”³⁷*

³⁷ Ibid

The aforementioned song shows the way ecological resources such as water, forests and land are gradually snatched from Dalits and their alienation from accessing such vital life supporting resources. It also shows a deep awareness the way mainstream society excludes Dalits from economic and ecological resources and thereby responsible for their marginalization.

There is another folk song based on the relationship and attachment between man and nature, which was based on the oppression of tribal society which is also very popular in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar which is as follows -

*Gaav chhodab nahee, jangal chhodab nahee,
Maay maatee chhodab nahee ladaay chhodab nahee.
Baandh banae, gaanv duboe, kaarakhaana banae ,
Jangal kaate, khadaan khode, senkchuree banae,
Jal jangal jameen chhodee hamin kaha kaha jae,
Vikaas ke bhagavaan bata ham kaise jaan bachae.*

*Jamuna sukhee, narmada sukhee, sukhee suvarnarekha,
Ganga banee gandee naalee, krshna kaalee rekha,
Tum piyoge pepsee kola, bislaree ka paanee,
Ham kaise apana pyaas bujhae, peekar kachara paanee?*

*Purakhe the kya moorakh jo ve jangal ko bachae,
Dharatee rakhee haree bharee nadee madhu bahae,
Teree havasamen jal gae dharatee, lut gae hariyaalee,
Machalee mar gae, panchhee ud gae jaane kis dishae .*

*Mantree bane kampanee ke dalaal ham se jameen chheenee,
Unako bachaane lekar aae saath mein paltanee
ho... aphasar bane hai raaja thekedaar bane dhanee,
Gaav hamaaree ban gae hai unakee kolonee .*

*Birasa pukaare ekajut hovo chhodo ye khaamoshee,
Machhavaare aavo, dalit aavo, aavo aadivaasee,*

*Ho khet khaalehaan se jaago nagaada bajao,
Ladaee chhodee chaara nahee suno des vaasee*

This song has been written as a form of protest by the Dalit and Adivasi people on the forcible acquisition of the land of poor tribal and Dalit society and forcing them to segregate from natural resources. These things include deforestation due to uncontrolled industrial development Pollution and ecological imbalance of rivers, nexus between politicians and industry, lack of options for displaced and collective action of people beyond community boundaries. The song shows the essence of environmentalism of the poor. It mentions ecological exploitation and consequent ecological and human impacts. It starts with deforestation in the name of development and alienation of Adivasi and Dalits from the access, secondly it emotions how the Ganga was polluted due to industrial pollution and laments that how they can drink water from such dirty water. And the song offers a critique of corporate driven development which exploits resources of nature and alienates the poor from their traditional access. It finally give a call to Adivais, Dalits and other marginalized sections to come together to save ecology and their lives.

Similarly, there has been a folk song related to harassment in government offices which is as follows-

Ek sarakar mara dusara adikari

Ab kasa jiyal jai

Jangal wala Kara parasan

Ab kasa jiyal jai

Jangal me niwas Kari jangal me khetibari

Adikari mila gaila jahalkhanawa

Ab kasa jiyal jai

*Bhukhmari garibi mara mahagai
Tehsil, block me hamara Na hota sunvai
Roji rojgar na mili na kamai
Ab kasa jiyal jai
Babunder Dinesh Baiga ka hai jamaso ka sathwa ho
Apana adikar ka liya kayale ladai
Jamaso ka banawala sarakar tab jiyal jai*

The aforementioned folk song says that the politicians hit us, the officials hit us. How did we survive? Forest dwellers disturb us, how do we, we survived? We live in the forest, survive on farming, but the forest officer is an animal, How did we survive? Hunger and poverty are killing us, rising costs are killing us and nobody hears us in blocks and tehsil offices, how do we live? We do not have Jobs, no income, nothing, how can we survive? There is only one option left. We need to fight. We need to form our government. Only then will we be able to beat death.

Besides folk songs the ecological awareness of Dalit could also be seen in the popular songs sung by artists and singers belong to Dalit castes. Some of the songs offer the ecological dimension to exclusion and marginalization of Dalit mass. One of such song as follows:

Looting for the thousand years,
Still blaming Reservations.
Provisions in the Constitution,
Given by Baba Saheb
For the Oppressed Representation.
This isn't your charity,
No Poverty alleviation.

Academics, Media, Bureaucracy, Justice system.

Private sector, Politics, Cinema and journalism.

Bunch of few Top castes are in Overpopulation.

We build your houses,

We till your lands,

We Produce your foods,

We the artisans.

It's our sweat and blood,

So here you stand.³⁸

The aforementioned songs shows the vehement critique to the allegations that non Dalits make on the concept of reservation and mentions the hard labor of Dalits which contribute for social process and nation building. A deep sense of victimization and its socioeconomic and ecological context thus could be seen in the literary expressions of Dalits.

This chapter highlights the nature and content of Dalit struggle in India as well as Uttar Pradesh with particular focus on ecological dimension. We do not claim that Dalit discourse is essentially eco-centric in nature, but we attempted in this chapter to highlight the fact that the oppressive consciousness of Dalits has fascinating ecological dimension which required attention of academic and public discourse engaged in environmental discourse in the form of strategies, policies and prescriptions. Dalit struggle for better life thus has a strong ecological dimension which has not been recognized by environmental movement and politics in India.

³⁸ Aparna Viyas and Minati Panda, 'Reification of Collective Victimhood: Dalit Narratives, Social repositioning and Transformation', *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 31, 1, 2019, pp. 106-138.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

ABSTRACT OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter proposes the conclusion and broad findings of the study. Attempt has been made to review and analyze the important features of the study.

Chapter VI

INTRODUCTION

This study essentially history of Dalit movement and struggle in India with particular reference to Uttar Pradesh. It is done with particular focus on ecological dimension of Dalit discourse and practices. In other words, this study captures and green voice of Dalits in the form of discourse and politics. The main proposition this study proposes is that Dalits politics has fascinating ecological dimension which did not get space in the discourse and politics centered on environmental aspects in India. This study is thus an attempt to locate the stakes and concerns of Dalits into environmental politics and environmentalism in India.

In order to capture the ecological dimension of discourse and practice of Dalit movement and struggle, this study examines the all India level picture and dynamics of Dalit movement at one level and the picture scenario of Uttar Pradesh in particular. This two level analysis, this study proposes that enable us to capture the trajectory of Dalit environmentalism which reflects the engagement of Dalits with natural and ecological resources to fight against social exclusion and demand for access to resources of nature. This study is thus aims to capture the green voice, action, vision and aspirations of Dalit struggle and movement from ecological perspective.

This study has drawn material from side range of sources to construct the conceptual idea of Dalit environmentalism. Those sources included are archival sources consisting census reports, district gazetteers, proceedings of several departments in British administration in United Provinces, writings of Dalits intellectuals, activist and thinkers, folk songs, popular songs etc. These sources are being examined to construct a conceptual picture of the way Dalits imagined and

interacted natural and ecological resources. In way this study attempts to charts out and maps out the conceptual landscape of Dalit vision and version of Environmentalism which is markedly different from that of nationalist and Brahmanical environmentalism.

This study uses the conceptual framework of discourse analysis from the perspective of social ecology to analyze the domain of Dalit environmentalism. The concept of discourse analysis is an umbrella conceptual framework drawn from the works of Mitchell Foucault's notion of discursive filed of thought. It means that human thought and experiences are constructed by groups engaged in struggle for power and representation into governance or nation making process. This framework is applied to capture the way Dalit movement and its leaders consistently attempted to evolve strategies and formwork for emancipation and liberation of Dalits from oppression by the way of gaining access to resources of nature and god ecological conditions. This study thus uses the conceptual framework of narratives of social ecology and justice to capture the green dimension of Dalits movement and its activities.

This study proposes that the vibrant Dalit movement in India in general and Uttar Pradesh in particular fought for the rights and betterment of Dalits. This study attempted to capture the implicit and explicit ecological dimension of the Dalit movement. This ecological connection of Dalit movement according this study mainly aimed at liberation of Dalits from oppression and putting them into the path of progress by the way of gaining access to material and ecological resources which were forbidden to them by custom and tradition for several centuries. It is this dimension this study intends to explore and document. It has been proposed and in

fact suggested in this study that besides economic justice, ecological justice has also been an integral part of the Dalit movement in India.

The construction of green voice and action of Dalits, this study has been organized into six chapters. All chapters are designed with a purpose to narrate the underlying theme of Dalit environmentalism and its nature and structure of course the context as well. This task was achieved by focusing a specific theme of Dalit movement in each chapter which explains about the particular theme and proceeds to the subsequent theme. This is the way the chapters of the study have been organized to prove our hypothesis of ecological dimension to Dalits movement in India and Uttar Pradesh.

The chapter one deals with the thematic and schematic concepts of the study. This chapter narrates and highlights context, objectives, hypothesis, scope, methodology, conceptual framework, an elaborate review of literature and a brief note on chapters of the study. This chapter also mentions the core aspects of the study and its intended objective to be achieved. The chapter attempts to highlight the concept of Dalit environmentalism and its conceptual and theoretical base which this study attempts to documents and highlights.

The second chapter of the study attempts to trace the evolutionary trajectory of Dalit movement in different parts of India. An analysis on such process is useful to trace the factors that pulled the Dalit mass together to evolve and launch a fierce movement and struggle for better life. This chapter proposes that the evolutionary trajectory of Dalit movement has a remarkable ecological dimension such as alienation from access to land, water, hygiene and other natural resources which are vital for acquisition of respectable life and wealth as well. So the Dalit movement this

chapter proposes that is an attempt to acquire access to material resources which are critical for survival and at the same time as source of wealth accumulation.

The third chapter of this study highlights the discursive field of Dalit environmentalism which was consciously evolved by intellectuals/activists belongs to Dalit and other marginalized communities. Starting from Jotirao Phule, Ambedkar, Ramaswami Nicker, and several other intellectual constantly attempted to define the relationship between Dalits and natural resources. This definition shows that they want access of natural and ecological resources to Dalit mass as a means to achieve respectable life and escape from traditional oppression. This chapter also shows the way Dalit intelligentsia consciously evolved strategies for gaining access to two vital resources land and water which are forbidden by Brahmanical tradition in India. This chapter also demonstrates the activism for access to ecological resources launched by Dalit intellectuals and activists.

The fourth chapter of this study proposes a case study Uttar Pradesh focusing on socio-economic and cultural aspects of fifty six sub-castes which are traditionally treated as untouchable/impure castes by the caste Hindu society. Besides this, this chapter also attempts to capture the way Dalit movement and its leaders in Uttar Pradesh attempted to demand and gained access to vital ecological resources such as land and water for the Dalit mass as a means to gain means to respectable and comfortable life. This chapter argues that Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh actively engaged in the process of demanding access to natural and ecological resources.

The fifth chapter focus on the way Dalit environmentalism was articulated by Dalit movement and its leaders in independent India. Here again, two level analysis i.e. all India level and provincial level focusing on Uttar Pradesh has been offered to

construct the notion of Dalit environmentalism. Dalit movement in independent continued its focus on access to resources of nature to Dalits in different forms such as violent struggle, with literature and its various forms and political lobbying etc. Attempt has been made to use unconventional sources such as Hind stories, folk songs, popular songs etc to capture the way Dalits and marginalized sections articulated their ecological steaks in independent India. The last chapter of the study is about conclusion and main findings of the study.

So far a finding of the study is concern, in the exiting literature on Dalit environmentalism, particularly by Mukul Sharma attempt has been made to highlight plurality of environmental thought and existence of separate genre Dalit environmentalism. He mentions that Dalit discourse differently imagined and articulated the relationship between human beings and nature. In fact he argues that Dalits have a distinctive version and vision of environmental thought. But he did not specify and identify the distinctive characteristics of Dalit environmentalism in a detailed way which this study attempts to undertake.

Firstly existing literature did not give adequate focus on the historical dimension of Dalit environmentalism. This study proposes that in the colonial period from Phule to Pariyar Dalit and non-Brahman intellectuals' possessed a radical non-Brahmanical version of the relationship between human beings and nature. They articulated if not equal but proper distribution of ecological resources to Dalits masses as means to have access to respectable life. The focus on green thought of Dalit/non-Brahman thought in colonial period strongly counter the romantic hard core and soft right wing Hindu discourse of sustainable use of ecology is intrinsic to Hindu culture. Dalit intellectuals graphically highlight the process of alienation of Dalits and

marginalized sections from access to natural and ecological resources in the British India which was dominated by Hindu intellectuals.

This study also attempts to highlight the fact that in case of Uttar Pradesh, several studies are being carried out on Dalit history and politics and no proper attempt has been made to explore the ecological dimension of Dalit struggle for access to ecological resources. Dalit movement and its leaders in Uttar Pradesh consciously demanded for access to natural and ecological resources. Besides this, Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh also has as vision for ecological access of Dalit community as a means to its empowerment.

While existing scholarship proposes that Dalit discourse possess a distinctive character than that of mainstream environmental movement and politics, but such distinctive character as claimed by Mukul Sharma rooted in moral and ethical ecological perspective expressed in the form of chastised nature in India. But this study proposes that the Dalit ecological discourse not only different from Brahmanical ecological discourse but also reflects profound transformative, liberative and emancipatory tendencies in its discourse. This study thus proposes that Dalit environmentalism is essentially anthropocentric in nature with particular reference to sustainable way of managing natural/ecological resources.

Dalit/subaltern environmentalism shows the character of environmentalism of the poor which do not appreciate the deep ecological ideas; rather it shows the need of approach in a country like India which required a fine balance between ecological conservation and livelihood consideration of vast masses. We need to provide and in fact democratize the access of nature and ecology to all sections of Indian society. The ecological stakes of socially excluded marginalized communities needs to be

taken seriously in discourse, practice, policies and politics that are centered on environmental aspects.

The important contribution of this study is that it has conceptualized Dalit movement and thought from ecological perspective. It attempts to provide a conceptual and theoretical orientation and direction more seriously than the existing literature offers. This foundation is expected to be carried on further. The concept of Dalit environmental indeed needs further serious probing in the form of regional level analysis of movement in different parts of India, regional and local level initiatives of Dalit movement and its leaders from ecological perspective. Such a process surely erects a strong and vibrant Dalit environmental discourse in India. It is a small step towards merging social justice and environmental justice to the marginalized and excluded communities in India from access to nature.

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FROM

SHRI KEHAR SINGH, I.A.S.,
DEPUTY SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
UTTAR PRADESH,

TO

ALL DISTRICT MAGISTRATES,
UTTAR PRADESH.

Dated Lucknow, September 12, 1950.

Subject :—Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh under the Constitution of India

SIR,

I AM directed to say that with effect from January 26, 1950, when the Constitution of India came into force, the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936, under which certain castes had been declared as Scheduled Castes, lapsed. A list of the Scheduled Castes which was in force in terms of the said Order is enclosed to this letter as Appendix A. This list is now no more in force.

2. In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 341 of the Constitution of India, the President has, however, made C. O. 19, the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. According to this Order, the following castes, races or tribes, or parts of, or groups within, castes or tribes, shall, in relation to Uttar Pradesh, be deemed to be Scheduled Castes so far as regards members thereof resident in this State:—

(1) Throughout the State—

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Agariya | 28. Dhanuk |
| 2. Badi | 29. Dharkar |
| 3. Badhik | ✓ 30. Dhobi |
| 4. Baheliya | 31. Dhusia, or Jhusia |
| 5. Baiga | 32. Dom |
| 6. Baiswar | 33. Domar |
| 7. Bajaniya | 34. Dusadh |
| 8. Bajgi | 35. Gharami |
| 9. Balahar | 36. Ghasiya |
| 10. Balmiki | 37. Gual |
| 11. Bangali | 38. Habura |
| 12. Banmanus | 39. Hari |
| 13. Bansphor | 40. Hela |
| 14. Barwar | 41. Jatava |
| 15. Basor | 42. Kalabaz |
| 16. Bawariya | 43. Kanjar |
| 17. Beldar | 44. Kapariya |
| 18. Beriya | 45. Karwal |
| 19. Bhantu | 46. Khairaha |
| 20. Bhoksa | 47. Kharot |
| 21. Bhuiya | 48. Kharwar (excluding Benbansi) |
| 22. Bhuyiar | 49. Kol |
| 23. Boria | 50. Korwa |
| ✓ 24. Chamar | 51. Lalbegi |
| 25. Chero | 52. Majhwar |
| 26. Dabgar | 53. Nat |
| 27. Dhangar | 54. Pankha |

55. Parahiya
 ✓ 56. Pasi
 57. Patari
 58. Rawat

59. Saharya
 60. Sanaurhiya
 61. Sansiya
 62. Shilpkar
 63. Turaiha.

(2) In Bundelkhand division and the portion of Mirzapur district south of Keonjhar Range :—

Gond.

3. It needs to be pointed out that according to this Order, no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste in Uttar Pradesh.

4. I am to ask that the list of Scheduled Castes given in paragraph 2 above, should be substituted for the old list given in Appendix A and acted upon, wherever necessary.

Yours faithfully,

KEHAR SINGH,

Deputy Secretary.

Enclosure :—1.

No. 6726(1)/III—15(15)-1949

Copy forwarded for information and guidance to—

- (1) All Commissioners of Divisions,
- (2) All Heads of Departments and principal Heads of Offices,
- (3) All Presidents of the District Boards,
- (4) All Chairmen of the Municipal Boards,
- (5) All Chairmen of Notified Areas,
- (6) All Chairmen of Town Areas,
- (7) All Departments of the Secretariat, and
- (8) The Superintendent, Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, Rampur.

By order,

KEHAR SINGH,

Deputy Secretary to Government,

Uttar Pradesh.

APPENDIX A.

Agariya	Chamar	Kharot	
Aheriya	Chero	Kharwar	(excluding
Badi	Datgar	Benbansi).	
Badhik	Dhangar	Khatik	
Baheliya	Dhanuk (Bhangi)	Kol	
Bajaniya	Dharkar	*Kori	
Bajgi	Dhobi	Korwa	
Balahar	Dom	Lalbegi	
Balmiki	Domar	Majhwar	
Banmanus	Gharami	Nat	
Bansphor	Ghasiya	Pankha	
Barwar	Gual	Parahiya	
Basor	Habura	Pasi	
Bawariya	Hari	Patari	
Beldar	Hela	Rawat	
Bengali	Jatava	Saharya	
Beriya	Kalabaz	Sanaurhya	
Bhantu	Kanjar	Sansiya	
Bhuiya	Kapariya	Shilpkar	
Bhuyiar	Karwal	Tharu	
Boria	Khairaha	Turaiha	

* Excluding the Koris residing in the Meerut, Agra and Rohilkhand Division.

(जौली ग्रांट के निवासियों के साथे हुए पत्र की प्रतिलिपि)

देवा में

श्रीमान माननीय मुख्य मंत्री महोदय, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार, लखनऊ
महोदय जी,

हम जौली ग्रांट ग्राम - परगना परवाड़ून, जिला देहराडून निवासी
अपनी पीने के पानी की कठिनाइयों की समस्या उचित प्रबन्ध हेतु श्रीमान जी
की सेवा में प्रस्तुत कर रहे हैं।

१- जौली ग्रांट की आबादी लगभग ३००० है और इस ग्राम में पीने के
पानी का कोई प्रबन्ध नहीं है तथा हर तरफ ३ मील पीने का पानी लैने व
मवेशियों को पानी पिलाने जाना पड़ता है।

२- हम लोग किसान हैं और हमारा आधा समय पानी लाने व मवेशियों
को पानी पिलाने में लग जाता है। और इस पर भी गर्मियों जैसे मौसम में हमारे
पशु बड़ी कठिनाई से एक समय पानी पीते हैं और कभी तो किसी रोज पी भी
नहीं पाते हैं।

३- हर जल कष्ट के कारण हम लोग और हमारी स्त्रियां महीनों महीनों तक
नहीं-कहीं नष्ट भी नहीं पाते हैं जिस से हमारे स्वास्थ्य पर बुरा प्रभाव पड़ता है।

४- अधिकांश समय पानी के बजकर में सराब होने से अपनी कृषि के विकास
में कितना समय देना चाहिए वह हम नहीं दे पाते हैं जिस से हम अपनी रैती का
पूर्ण विकास नहीं कर पाते तथा अल्पवय नदीजी के पल्लव में फंसे जा रहे हैं।

५- हमारे पीने के पानी की मांग रु० १६२० से सरकार के समझ है।
यह गांव हमारे जिले में छोटी बाराहोली के नाम से प्रसिद्ध है। इस गांव के लोगों
ने स्वतन्त्रता संग्राम में अमृत भूकंठ योग दिया है। और धारे गांव से बीसों की
संख्या में सदैव लोग जेल गये तथा सदैव राष्ट्रीय जागृति और चेतना का यह ग्राम
केन्द्र रहा है।

६- समय समय पर नेताओं द्वारा किये गये वायदों के अनुसार प्रान्तीय
सरकार दो बार इस गांव के पीने के पानी के लिए १२००० रुपये और दूसरे बार
४४००० रुपये स्वीकार भी कर चुकी है पर पानी कभी नहीं आया और सदैव
रुपया लेप्य ही हो गया।

७- इस वर्ष सरकार ने कृपा करके इस गांव में ट्यूब वेल के लिए बोरिंग
कराया पर महीनारी वेल स्कीम के इंजीनियर महोदय का कहना है कि इस जगह
पर पानी नहीं है केवल २०० फिट बोरिंग के बाद ही इंजीनियर महोदय की
यह राय बन गई है कि भिदास्नी में ३०० फिट की गहराई तक ट्यूब वेल
लगे हुए हैं। आग्रह करने पर यह लोग और जोदने के लिए तैयार नहीं हैं।

और रोज महीन से जाने की बात कर रहे हैं। तथा नल उताड़ने व

हो रहे हैं। इस से जनता में बड़ा असन्तोष है। अतः कृपा कर या तो इस दुवे में बोरिंग की १०० फिट और बुकाने की बासा प्रदान कीजियेगा या एक और दूरी जगह पर तजुर्ना लोगों की राय के मुताबिक स्थान पर इसी गांव में कराने की कृपा कीजियेगा। और यदि उपरोक्त बातों में से कोई भी संभव न हो तो लोगों की सन्तुष्टी और जनता के कष्ट को दूर करने के लिए पीने के पानी की कोई शीघ्र ही व्यवस्था कराने की कृपा कीजियेगा। यहाँ जनता में बड़ी बेचैनी है।

बासा से हमारी प्रार्थना पर उचित प्रयत्न करने की शीघ्र ही कृपा करेंगे। जिस से हम ग्रामीणों का जीवन सफल हो सके।

दिनांक १० जौलाई १९५२ ।

हम हैं जाम के निवीतगण

जौलीग्रंट निवासी

जिला देहरादून ।

प्रतिनिधि

- १- श्रीमान माननीय स्वास्थ्य मन्त्री महोदय, उत्तर प्रदेश, लखनऊ
- २- श्रीमान शान्तिप्रभन्त जी एम० एल० ए०, देहरादून ।
- ३- श्रीमान माननीय विद्य मन्त्री महोदय, श्री महावीर त्यागी ।
- ४- श्रीमान नरदेव शास्त्री जी, एम० एल० ए०, देहरादून ।
- ५- श्रीमान जिलाधीश महोदय, देहरादून ।
- ६- श्रीमान प्रमान जिला कांग्रेस कमेटी, देहरादून ।

हस्ताक्षर समापति,

गांव समा, जौलीग्रन्ट, जिला देहरादून ।

No. 332-C/17-G.S./1943-H

No. 330-C/17-G.S./43-A

(7)

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR'S SECRETARY,
UNITED PROVINCES GOVERNOR'S CAMP.

August 18 1943.

Secretary, Information Department

H.E. has been asked to receive a deputation from the U.P. Adi-Hindu Depressed Classes Association, which has raised a large number of points in a memorandum submitted to H.E. Two of these points are: a

"8. That grants-in-aid be given to the Depressed class newspapers such as "Sant Sudha and 'Samta' to make propaganda of Depressed classes Education and their general uplift."

"9. That the Depressed Classes Provincial Federation be recognised by Government".

I do not know what the Federation is, nor what they mean by recognition by Government.

H.E. would be grateful for your comments on these points.

Secretary to H.E. the Governor,
United Provinces.

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	<i>Delegates.</i>
For district with a population over 1,500,000 7
For towns containing not more than 20,000 inhabitants 1
Ditto between 20,000 and 50,000 inhabitants 2
Ditto between 50,000 and 1,00,000 inhabitants 3
For towns over 100,000 inhabitants 4

The respective candidates had to start with the election of the members of the various district and municipal boards to have a majority of members favouring those candidates. Then there was the stage when the prospective candidates canvassed the members to make sure elected by the members of the various boards. Last of all came the stage when the delegates themselves were canvassed. It was found very unsatisfactory and troublesome and was given up in favour of the direct election in the year 1919. Now there appears to be hardly any justification for going back to the system which was given up in the year 1919 though it is going to be on a larger scale.

The Hindu Sabha is of opinion that education independent of property should be a qualification for entitling persons to become electors. The educational qualifications have already been suggested above and it is not necessary to repeat them here.

The suggestions that have been made therein will not leave it necessary to retain the military service qualification or to extend it in any manner. If the suggestions are accepted it will make it possible for all persons who have served in the military to be enfranchised. It is not desirable to place the military service on any position higher than the other services in regard to franchise.

In regard to the suffrage of women remarks have already been made above and the conditions on which they should be enfranchised have also been explained. It is not necessary to reserve seats for women separately on the Legislature. They can if they are qualified enough or have sufficient spirit for public service enter the Legislature through the general constituencies reservation for one class leads to a demand for reservation from another class. It is a vicious circle and ought to be avoided. Seats for women have not been reserved in England and there is no reason why they be reserved in India.

DEPRESSED CLASSES.

The problem of depressed classes is only social and not political. The Hindus have always understood by the term depressed classes the untouchable classes and they are only sweepers and Doms. To include any other class within the term depressed classes is unjustifiable. So far as the depressed classes or the so-called depressed classes are concerned their problem is not even economic. If these provinces there is no problem of depressed classes worth the name. If under cover of the name of depressed classes the question of backward classes is attempted to be raised then the problem is not peculiar to the Hindu community. It is the same for the Musalmans and the Christians as it is for other communities. The classes which are being suggested as depressed amongst the Hindus are found among the Muhammadaus also but no suggestion has been made to treat these Muslim classes as depressed or backward. A reference to the Census Report of India for 1921, volume I, table XXIII, pages 150 to 159, will indicate that Bhangi and Chamar who really belong to the same class but have a different nomenclature in different parts of India are both Hindus and Musalmans. Similarly Kumhars, Kachis, etc., are both Hindus and Musalmans. There is no suggestion by any one to reserve seats for the Muslim depressed classes out of the seats reserved for the Muslim community. This will show that there is some other motive behind the claims for special representation only for the so-called depressed classes who are Hindus. This is a new cry that was raised about

the year 1920 for the first time in these provinces. It appears to have been raised with some political motive behind it. It is an open secret that the district officials visit the representatives of the depressed classes in their own houses. The idea underlying these visits of the District Magistrate and the Commissioner is to encourage a feeling amongst the so-called depressed classes that the British officials are the protectors and the saviours of the depressed classes but their own countrymen have no feelings for them. Perhaps after the opposition to the reservation of seats for them the opposition will be utilized to create a feeling of hostility among the different classes of the Hindu community.

The Hindu Mahasabha had on its programme one of the items for the amelioration of the lower classes. When it was reorganized about the year 1923 it laid down the programme as follows:—

“To ameliorate the condition of the lower castes of the Hindu by making provision for their education, and occupation and giving them facilities for their religious and social observances by allowing them to send their children to public schools, to draw water from public wells, to join public meetings and *kathas* and to have *Deva darshan* at public place of worship, etc.”

The Arya Samaj has also for its programme the *shuddhi* or the purification of the depressed classes. The programme of *shuddhi* (purification) and *sangathan* (union) of the various Hindu classes gained a special impetus in the year 1923. The programme was not approved of by the officials who wanted a pretext to condemn it as will appear from the *communiqué* of the Commissioner of Allahabad division published on page 5 of the *Leader* of the 13th of October, 1924. The Commissioner wrote “that the *shuddhi* and *sangathan* movements had caused a deterioration of communal relation at Allahabad and elsewhere.” Why should social movements like the *shuddhi* and the *sangathan* among the Hindus excite feelings of hostility amongst the Muhammadans and why should the officials characterize it as a movement responsible for deteriorating relations between the communities unless there is some other motive behind it—these feelings of hostility.

The British officials or the Muhammadans have not brought forward any programme for the amelioration of the backward or the depressed classes in any of the Legislatures or outside those bodies and yet the Muhammadans and the officials are putting forward very vehemently the claim that the depressed classes should have separate and adequate seats in the Legislatures. The only object for this demand is to cut the Hindu community to a state of perpetual minority. The other object will be to put together the forces of conservatism together and to make the constitution as rigid as it is now although on paper it may be called a constitution of responsible Government.

The one great solvent of the backward or depressed class is education and in course of time when education becomes free and compulsory the barriers that now appear to be unsurmountable will fall down quite easily. The opposition to education being made free and compulsory in India come from the officials only but not from the Indians to whichever class they belong. It may be noticed here that the present Legislative Council of the United Provinces has for its members a Bhangi, a Dom and a Mochi.

The Hindu Sabha has among its members representatives of all classes including the untouchables and there is no real political trouble about the depressed in the United Provinces. If some of the classes are marked as depressed and are given separate seats in the Legislature it will perpetuate their state of being depressed and will stigmatize them for all times to come. In no country are legislators chosen from backward classes.

The castes which may be or are likely to be characterized as depressed will soon if special representation is granted to them begin to fight among themselves if all those castes failed to secure representation in the Legislature. No one would

consider it desirable that each should have a separate representation and no one would be bold as to suggest that the electorate should be framed in India or in any particular province on the basis of castes and that each particular caste would have a fixed special representation in the Legislature. In the city of Allahabad a member of a Kalwar community was an elected representative on the Allahabad municipal board for not less than 30 years and he always came out practically at the head of the poll. Another instance is of two Telis having been elected to the municipal board of Allahabad this year. One of the Teli candidates came out at the head of the poll and the other candidate was second or third. Even on a previous occasion a Teli candidate was returned to the municipal board and he was at the head of the poll. In the Civil Station ward of Allahabad although there were 775 Christian voters and 1,080 Hindu voters on the rolls one Indian Christian and one European came out successful and defeated the two rival Hindu candidates one of whom was a Brahman.

Under the Minto-Morley Reforms although the Muhammadans were given separate and special representations yet in addition to the seats reserved for them the Muhammadans were elected on behalf of the municipal and district boards to represent them on the United Provinces Legislative Council. Before the year 1916 there was a joint electorate in the municipal boards and for all communities and it was not uncommon for a Muhammadan to defeat the rival Hindu candidate. After 1916 there was separate electorate introduced for the Muslims in the municipal boards also. Before the year 1916 there were official chairmen of the municipal boards and elected vice-chairmen. After the year 1916 chairmen also became elected non-officials. In municipal boards which had Hindu majorities Muslims were elected vice-chairmen and after the year 1916 even as chairmen. No municipal board with a Muslim majority has elected to our knowledge and experience any Hindu as a vice-chairman before the year 1916 or as a chairman after the year 1916.

It will be noticed from the above instances that candidates from Teli and Kalwar communities which are treated by some zealous supporters of depressed class representation as depressed classes and Christians, Europeans and Muhammadans as well were elected by the general constituencies at an election. It is not the class or the caste of the candidate that counts but what counts his capacity or ability to serve public interest. The other factor which counts for success at an election is the support which a candidate is able to obtain from some one of the political parties and of persons of influence within the constituency from which the particular candidate is seeking election.

The Hindu Sabha is against the system or grouping for whatever purpose it may be utilized, whether it may be for the purposes of a general election or for the purpose of electing representation of the so-called depressed classes.

REPRESENTATION OF LABOUR.

In the United Provinces the question of labour representation is of very little importance. There is factory labour at Cawnpore and at Agra but only the labour at Cawnpore has organized itself into an association. There is the labour employed by the railway but even with regard to this there are perhaps only three unions, one at Gorakhpur the other at Moradabad, and there is a third Railway Coolies Union at Allahabad which was started only in the year 1931. Under the circumstances no special representation of a labour is needed in these provinces. In England although the labour is far more organized than in India yet no one has thought of reserving seats specially for the labour. At the last election in England the Labour Party was completely routed still it has not been suggested that they should have specially reserved seats in the Parliament.

श्रीमान प्रेसीडेंट साहब बहादुर डिकर वोट धरली

Receipt
for amount of Rs
मेनीस
डिकर वोट,
बरेली 11/11

सेवा में लावनय निवेदन यह है कि हम लोग को मजाद

गैनी निवासी है हम लोगो का कुआँ जो पानी पीने का था
इस वर्ष वर्षा और सैलाब से गिर गया और बँठ गया जिसके
कारण हमको और हमारे बच्चो को पानी की बड़ी कठिनाई है
हमारे खेते तालाबो और नदी का पानी पीते है और जाते के
मनुष्य अपने कुआँ से हमको पानी नहीं मने देते है हम लोगो
ने कुछ रूपया जमा करके एक कुआँ अपना बनवाया जो कि
के करीब तैयार है हमारी खेते बड़ी सैलाब से मारी गई हम
लोगो को मर रहे है शेष कुर्य के लिए हमारे पास रूपया
नही है जो हम उसे पूरा बनवाले अब श्रीमान जी से प्रार्थना
है कि हम लोगो का कुआँ अपने रूपये और अपनी प्रोर से जो
बकी रह गया है पूरा करा देव यदि श्रीमान जी इस प्रोर ध्यान
नही देगे तो हमारे खेते प्यासे मर जायेगे हमारे प्रार्थना पत्र
की जाच यदि श्रीमान चाहे सो मेम्बर साहब हलका से कराले
प्रार्थी गैनी निवासी को मजादवत है सोल श्रीकला मान्त बरेली

Signature

विश्वं पेमो
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विश्वं चदमो
२२/१०/३०
२२/८२

सिकरे रेशु जी

आप जयवा पत्र देने वालों से मालूम। का जय कि वे लिखना
रूपता यन्त्रा वार साकोल है ताकि उनका इन राइके
विशय में गौर किया जा सके -

द्वारा प्रकृत

बिद्रुस बोर्ड,
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AMBEDKAR AND ECOLOGY: A STUDY OF BUDDHA AND HIS DHARMA

V.M. RAVI KUMAR* & ARVIND SWAROOP**

ABSTRACT

Environmental conservation emerged as duty of entire humanity. The prosperity and survival of the planet Earth critically depended upon human efforts to save it. This paper concentrates on ecological dimension of Dr. Ambedkar, who happens to be one of the great intellectual of modern era. It has been proposed that the philosophy of Ambedkar embedded with understanding on the human environmental relationship and devised several strategies to mitigate the exploitation of nature by human beings at one level and human beings by human beings at another level. This paper concentrate on ideas and strategies of Ambedkar related to environment and highlights the solutions he offers to minimise exploitation of nature.

Key Words: *Nature, Dharma, Environmentalism, Ambedkar, Caste, Water, Untouchables, History, Inclusiveness.*

INTRODUCTION

This paper proposes that the life world of Ambedkar consisting of ideas and activities embedded finer understanding of human environmental relationship. The main argument this paper is that the ideas of Ambedkar quite useful for situating equality at the centre stage of environmental discourses and strategies. Particularly, Ambedkar's representation of Buddha and his Dharma proposes universal dimension of inclusive and ethical dimension of human life. This domain also encompass the relationship between biotic and a biotic world at one level and human beings and nature at another level. The main objective of this paper is to capture ecological dimension of Ambedkar's thought with special reference to his idea of Buddha and his Dharma.

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This paper has been organised into four sections: first section deals with conceptual framework for locating the thought of Ambedkar in the domain of ecology: second section narrates the engagement of Ambedkar with ecologically important resources with particular reference to livelihoods of Dalits: third section documents ecological dimension of Buddha and Dharma of Ambedkar and final section proposes potentiality of Ambedkar thought for addressing the environmental issues from the prescriptive of marginalised sections of Indian society.

I. AMBEDKAR AND GREEN DISCOURSE

Ecology generally means a study of relationship between interaction between living species with non-living entities at one level and interaction between human beings and nature at another level. Following this line of thinking, if we look at ideas and activities of Ambedkar we would notice explicit and implicit reflections on ecological dimension of human engagement with nature. The ideas of Ambedkar are capable of making environmentalism more sensitive to the issue of equity. The connection between the ideas of Ambedkar and environmentalism is useful to track the relationship between social exclusion and environmental crisis. The ecological dimension of Ambedkar can be conceptualised with the help of concepts borrowed from intellectual environmental history, which focus on engagement of philosophers, poets, politicians and activists with environmental thought and activism (Mcneil, 2003, Wroster, 1977).

The existing literature on intellectual environmental history in India mainly focused on M.K. Gandhi. The philosophy of Gandhi has been represented as representative of oriental politico-environmental thought and activism (Guha and Alier (1998) and should be incorporated in the policies of environmental management (Shiva, and Bandyopadhyaya, 1985). The nationalist romantic thought exercised significant impact upon natural resource management policies and attitudes in India. Village communities have been treated as ideal and egalitarian entities. Policies such as watershed management, forest management, etc are designed with this assumption. The implementation process of these reforms requires inclusive participation of all stakeholders and equitable distribution of benefits. It is at this stage that this reform process unable to bring out substantial changes. This predicament is termed by some studies as problems of second generation reforms in the domain of natural resources management policy process (Adhikari and Faloo, 2008). Impact social divisions on policy performance are being identified as one of the main reasons for underperformance. Hence it is imperative for Indian environmental discourse to incorporate the ideas of Dalit intellectuals who advocated for inclusive Indian society based upon the principles of equity (Sharma, 2012: 50) in general and Ambedkar in particular.

II. ECOLOGY AND AMBEDKAR

The foundational argument of Ambedkar is that India should become a modern nation. He articulated that socio-economic, cultural and political institutions and practices that are not compatible with the norms of modernity need either to be transformed or reformed. His critique of caste and Brahmanism need to be seen in this perspective. Ambedkar also pointed out that socio-economic conditions in rural India not conducive for development of millions of untouchables in particular and marginalised sections in general.

In his critique of Indian social system in general and caste system in particular, Ambedkar proposed that the Brahmanical world view was one of the important factors that excluded untouchable castes from a meaningful life. While critiquing the nationalist eulogy of Indian civilisation he argued that: ‘What does this civilisation offer to the 25 million of Primitive Tribes who are living on its frontiers? What does it offer to 5 million of Criminal Tribes who living in the midst of that civilisation? What does it offer to the 50 millions of Untouchables who not only living in the midst of that civilisation which has made no effort to adopt them in its field’ (Ambedkar, 2014: 138). Ambedkar thus locates alienation of untouchables and other marginalised sections of Indian society from access to natural resources in the nature of civilisational process in India.

While analysing the reasons why Untouchables remained to be poor in rural India, Ambedkar proposed that systematic exclusion operates with precision to exclude Untouchables. He analysed that Untouchables are excluded from access to land by dominant communities of villages, Untouchable were also prohibited from gaining meaningful and respectable livelihoods by village system dominated by Hindu life world. Only occupations thrown open to them were filthy and degraded such a begging and scavenging. The point Ambedkar emphasised that Untouchable communities are excluded from resources of nature by dominant social groups and even colonial state prohibited them from gaining access to land. For Ambedkar thus mismanaged political economy of the state at one level and hierarchal social system at another level excluded Untouchables from a meaningful life by the way of alienating them from nature.

Ambedkar was of the opinion that the resource of nature should be accessible to all sections of population. He believes that such a condition may lead to evolution of egalitarian society. He consistently advocated that the state should play a vital role in distribution of resources, particularly of land. He suggested strategies such as migration of untouchables to irrigated areas, and distribution of forest and waste lands as a means to provide ownership. He proposed that government can play a crucial role by allocating lands for Dalits. On this issue his suggestions as follows: ‘The most important thing on which Government ought to concentrate is the giving of land to the

Scheduled Castes. They must be settled on land so that they might obtain independent means of livelihood, cease to be afraid of anybody, walk with their heads erect and live fearlessly and courageously. I think this is a thing which all the Ministers are agreed upon'. (Thorat and Kumar, 364). He made land distribution to Dalits as an issue to be handled by the Government.

III. MORALITY, ENVIRONMENT AND AMBEDKAR

Environmental historians in India obsessed with preservationist discourse and invoked romantic preservationist ideas from Brahminical scriptures and practices. The main agenda of these ideas is that to provide conceptual structure to the multiple patterns of resource use under the framework of Hindu culture. By invoking ideas of Buddha Ambedkar constructs the concept of egalitarian environmentalism, which is an anti-thesis to romantic Hindu environmentalism. It means that resources of nature are not meant for few rather for all. And all human beings possess equal right to use the resources of nature. In the ethical domain of relationship between man and nature, Ambedkar moves close to the ideas of Marx who believes in the idea that eco-equality, which in a way means all human beings are equal in relation to nature and resource it offer.

We can capture the ideas of Ambedkar on the bio-centric equality in his engagement with Buddhism. The monumental text *Buddha and his Dharma* starts with an analysis on the process of transformation of Siddhartha Gautama as Buddha. For Ambedkar it happened in the context of Gautama's attempt to find a solution to water disputes between the Sakhyas and the Koloyas the tribal confederation of ancient India. The decision of the Sakhyas to undertake war against enemies was stiffly opposed by Gautama. For Ambedkar, consequent of failure of Buddha in solving the problem, chosen the path of self-exile. It is explicit here is that the character of Buddha in Ambedkar vision of Buddhism emerges from ecologically sensitive resources such as water (Ambedkar, 2006: 28-29). Engagement of Ambedkar for ecological justice with the character of Buddha could be seen at three levels: the conception of evolution of nature: the relationship between human beings and other living forms and finally the ethical aspects of human ecology.

While reviewing the process of genesis of the world in the philosophical tradition of Indian thought, he put forward Buddha's version of nature. For Ambedkar biotic world does not have superior and inferior rather 'all individual things are analogues one to another and therefore, no one can be regarded as the final sources to other'. This means all living forms in the world mutually depended upon each other for survival. This concept is closely linked with eco-biological concept of food chain. This concept also reflects the social philosophy of

Ambedkar i.e., importance of all social class to the broader social system. Ambedkar thus propose the concept of socio-ecological egalitarianism, which facilitate the thought process of inclusive environmentalism.

Another interesting aspect of Neo-Buddhism (Ambedkar Buddhism) address is that the relationship among human beings and between living forms and human beings. The main crux of Buddhist Dharma according to Ambedkar is engagement of 'man and the relation of man to man in his life on earth' (Ambedkar, 2006: 121). By invoking Buddhist Dharma, Ambedkar was addressing two things: reflection on the iniquitous social order wherein powerful sections exploit nature for selfish class and caste interests and secondly, visualising his dream society i.e., society free from exploitation and deprivation. Neo-Buddhism does not satisfy with harmonious relationship between human beings and it also proposes organic relationship with all living forms. Ambedkar invoked Buddha to reflect upon this aspect, which is as follows: 'Love is not enough; what is required is Maitri. It is wider than love. It means fellowship not merely with human beings but with all living beings. Is not such Maitri necessary? What else can give to all living beings the same happiness which one seeks for one's own self, to keep the mind impartial, open to all, with affection for everyone and hatred for none' (Ambedkar, 2006:129). Thus, love compassion towards living forms is an essential feature of Buddhism and it is one of the important ecological virtues that it had given to the world. Here Ambedkar proposes self-emphatic and reflexive ethical code for human beings while engaging with other species. It means he not only satisfied with anthropocentric conception of the world rather prefers an inclusive bio-ecological centric world wherein all species have equal rights for their existence.

For Ambedkar the essence of true India lies in Buddhist tradition. For him Brahmanism is an anti-thesis to humanistic values and nature's biological ethics. He upholds the views of Buddha on conservation of animals and all life forms from destruction. While invoking the ideas of Buddha, Ambedkar condemned the killing animals in the following passage 'that sacrifice neither were nay oxen slain, neither goats, nor fowls, nor fatted pigs, nor were any kinds of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as posts, no Dabbha grasses mown to strew around the sacrificial spot' (Ambedkar, 2006: 267). This bitter critique on nature's exploitation was launched by Buddha against Brahmanism more than two thousand years back and it was called back by Ambedkar with his Neo-Buddhism.

Third important feature of Neo-Buddhism is its powerful eco-sensitivity and eco-gospel based upon ethical treatment of all living forms. In the perception of Buddha a king, a rich man and popular persons are not great men. A great man according to him is 'a man given to the welfare of many of many folks, to the happiness of many folk' (Ambedkar, 2006: 293). Thus the essence of man in Buddhist thought is one who lives for others.

This ethical dogma reflected in the discourse of Buddhist ecology. While countering the Brahminical notion of out castes Buddha defined who is out castes in the following words: ‘whosoever in this world harms living beings once-born or twice-born, in whom there is no compassion for living beings is an outcast’ (Ambedkar, 2006: 307). Ambedkar invoked Buddha to counter Brahmanical notion caste system and outcast for him should not be determined by birth rather by qualities of person. Thus, Ambedkar marshalled the ideas of Buddha and evolve a powerful critique on not only iniquitous social order but also eco-sensitive ideas which capable of bringing eco-sensitivity in society.

CONCLUSION

Ecology has emerged as an important phenomenon in the academic and public discourse. It is indeed necessary to expand its scope by invoking new ideas to find solutions to emerging ecological crisis. The ideas of Ambedkar offer a fresh dimension to Indian environmentalism. His ideas show that environment needs to be located in the dynamics of social forces that determines the nature of human relationship with environment. The ideas of Ambedkar strongly remind us that environmental governance should be crafted based upon the principle of equity and bio-ethical spirits to cater to the needs of all sections of human society. In a way the Ambedkar ideas enables us to focus on ecological democracy and inclusive environmentalism, which means environment for all. Particularly his engagement with Buddhism preaches bio-centric approach to look at social process. This means all species including human beings have equal rights over the fight of nature and at the same time all human beings has responsibility to participate in conservation of environment. In nutshell, the eco-philosophy of Ambedkar can be termed as ‘environment for all and all for environment’. This paper argues the concept of egalitarian environmentalism of Ambedkar has global and local relevance. However, his contribution to ecology needs to be further seriously investigated to cement his place as an ecological thinker.

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Local Roots of Dalit Politics in Colonial and Post-Colonial Uttar Pradesh: A Study from Historical Perspective

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Abstract

This paper explores historical dimension of the local roots of Dalit politics and their nature in Uttar Pradesh. This paper tries to examine the historical background and the factors that had shaped the political action of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. This paper also tries to understand the factors responsible stimulating Dalit political consciousness. Existing studies on Dalit politics and history in India have mainly been centered on the Dalit movement and various aspects related to it. But we propose that Dalit politics is a product of the ideas and activism that were undertaken by various caste associations in the context of Uttar Pradesh.

Key Words: Dalit, politics, Uttar Pradesh, caste, associations, assertion.

Introduction

This paper deals with the process of emergence of collective action in the form of political process among former untouchable communities popularly known as Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. There has been consistent effort by Dalit communities in the colonial and postcolonial periods to articulate their demands in the form of caste politics. This process is ranging from sanskritised versions of the past to presenting themselves as originals inhabitants of India. The relation between Dalit assertion and evolution of Dalit history shows a classic example of history making as an unfolding process which conditioned by contemporary developments. This paper explores the Dalit voice and multiplies meanings of history in Uttar Pradesh. The main objective of this paper is to explore the role of lower caste associations in creation of awareness among lower castes and their efforts for advancing the interests of Dalits.

At present, the term Dalits is used for those groups who have been considered untouchable for centuries and most of them are still suffering from multiple marginalities which resulted in their exclusion. The Dalits are a community which was subjected to marginalization from the mainstream and is struggling to acquire basic civil rights. This community has been a victim of a hierarchical social system which placed it at the bottom of social structure. The use of the word Dalit also shows the unifying class-consciousness and the movement of the direction and equality of the unified class-consciousness and its human rights. In this backdrop this paper aimed to explore the nature of Dalit politics that are created and practiced by lower cast associations in colonial Uttar Pradesh (Blunt, 1969).

The Dalit leadership has played a significant role in Indian politics by the way of mobilizing marginalized sections of Indian society. Dalit politics has emerged from the emergence of Dalit movement. In this, the oppressed and backward classes in India struggling for self-esteem brought forward the Dalit leadership. At present, Dalit intellectual activity represents a very interesting scenario, in which urgent need to feel the meaning of athletic reality at a theoretical level is being

felt. The purpose of the political movement is to make changes in the structure of the society by changing the structure of the society and the purpose of social movement is to change the structure of the society by making changes in the social structure. So power means to get the desired results (Kshirsagar, 2017).

The writing of subaltern history teaches the same aspirations and struggles of the Dalit society. They were given the lowest place by the society, because they were ignored by upper castes, middle class Hindus and other historians, they were always invisible from the pages of history. Today they are in full view due to the flow of consciousness and demand their proper participation in the representation of knowledge and the purpose of developing their own system is to eliminate the system based on inequality (Amin, 2016). Subaltern studies approach thus attempted to provide some space to marginalized communities including Dalits into the pages of history of India.

The process of politics is very important for development, because political backwardness is the mother of many types of backwardness. Dr. Ambedkar explained the people to its awareness. According to Dr. Ambedkar - Politics is the most important thing; Political consciousness is the most important consciousness; in the democratic era, the person loses everything by losing politics, so the depressed people need a successful leadership. Political action is thus perceived by Dalit leaders as one of the important agency with which the demands of Dalits for better identity and social justice can be articulated and mediated (Chandra, 2005).

The process of using history for creating socio-political identity has remained as an apparent phenomenon in colonial and postcolonial periods. It is useful to see some of the prominent Dalit castes Associations and their attempt to producing Dalit political identity by using history. After 1920, there was some consciousness in the Dalits; they created their own caste panchayats. These associations are pioneers of Dalit politics (Ganguly, 2005). This paper attempts to explore the local roots of Dalit politics and strategies for mobilization and collective action for achieving common goals articulated by associations established by Dalits in Utter Pradesh.

Adi Hindu Mahasabha

Adi Hindu Mahasabha happens to be one of the popular associations of Dalits in Utter Pradesh. It was founded by Swami Achchutanand Harihar in 1918 in Delhi. This association played a major role in creating anti-oppressive awareness among lower castes of Utter Pradesh. He attempted to create and sons of soil discourse by the way of describing Dalits as the original inhabitants of India. He also undertook activism in the form of establishment of schools for untouchable in Jatav settlement of Agra (Prasad, 2010). This movement actively engaged in electoral reforms of British India. The sixteen point demands formula has been demanded by the association in which separate elections and representation for the Dalits, the destruction of the school, scholarship, forced labor, social rights equal to the entire Hindu, the police and the untouchables in the army, the local boards like the municipality, the district board etc were articulated. The Mahasabha demanded the following things from the British government: depressed class members should be nominated for legislative council, provided land cards for untouchables, opportunities to be provided in business and shop keeping etc. (Prasad, 2010). In December 1927 the leaders of Adi Hindu Mahasabha in United Provinces made a claim for a more inclusive achhut or untouchable identity to unite Dalit castes.

The work that Dr. Ambedkar undertook in Maharashtra was done by Achhutanand and Adi Hindu Mahasabha in Uttar Pradesh. He provided a guidance and direction to untouchable castes of Utter Pradesh to undertake political mobilization as a tool for emancipation from oppression (Prasad, 2010). He published monthly news paper entitled 'Adi Hindu' and open many branches in other parts of India. In 1928 he organized the conference on 'Adi Hindu Mahasabha in Mumbai and where Swami

ji meet to Dr. Ambedkar then both leaders decided to develop the Dalit movements further (Singh, 2009). The undisputed fact is that Achhutanand and his association was able to propagate the discourse of Adi as a tool for political mobilization, assertion and identify formation. The strong roots of for Dalit political activism thus were created by Adi Hindu movement in Utter Pradesh (Gooptu, 2006).

The Chamar Mahasabha

The Chamars is one of the major Dalit communities found in Uttar Pradesh. This caste engaged in leatherwork and shoe making unstinting of diseased animals has been in their occupation (Briggs, 1920). This is no longer practice almost all the traditional functions of this caste have been gradually given away. General economic condition of Chamar in recent years has assumed greater importance in respect of political and developmental activities. This also because of numerical superiority, Chamars solely not only constitute the biggest working force of the village and are often to confront with the upper sections. Socially, this caste has reformed and transformed itself and in the post-independence period, it has shown a greater degree of consciousness and social mobility (Burger, 1969).

The rise of the leather industry at one level and the commercialization of agriculture at the other level initiated the transformation of Chamar caste towards improved socio-economic conditions. Improvement in material conditions prompted them to claim high status in traditional Hindu social order. The Chamar Mahasabha has raised questions on untouchability and exploitation on traditional forms. In particular, the traditions of Beggary (unpaid labor) have emerged as domain of tradition resistance in the form of agricultural work, leatherwork, and service of personnel and government officials (Jaffrelot, 2005).

In the different parts of the United Provinces, political and social activism of the gross root level was gathered in May 1924 as the establishment of the Chamar Mahasabha in Mainpuri. This Mahasabha tried to take many measures for the development of Chamar caste. These measures ranged from social reform to political rights. Among its proposals, the purity of Chamar's vegetarianism and his lifestyle was mentioned. In 1926, the Chamar Mahasabha passed a resolution to abandon the process of abandoning the body, leaving the perverted occupation, and blowing the dead bodies in Banaras (Rawat, 2011). This Mahasabha not only engaged political mobilization of Dalits but also promoted social reform movement to improve the conditions of Dalit castes however within framework of sanskritisation. The important contribution of the Chamar Mahasabha is that its political assertion for civil rights and consistent demand for respectable identity.

Pasi Mahasabha

According to British writer William Crooke, the word Pasi is derived from Sanskrit paika, meaning that the trapper is used. A person belongs to the Pasi caste used to consider himself as a fighter. Inside this caste it was believed that he used to act as a soldier in Raja's army. Their main business was to get toddy (Crooke, 1896). A major dance style of the passersby is the orgy dance which is accompanied by the war song, its head is hoonakar, attack it and hit and hit it. In Uttar Pradesh, Pasi Samaj is divided into many sub-castes, such as Dussadadh, Paswan, Babaria, Rawat, Dynasty, Taramli, Bhargava, Kamania, Trishulia etc. In many parts of modern Uttar Pradesh, such as Barabanki, Hardoi, Lakhimpurkhiri, Lucknow, Rae Bareli, Unnao etc. ruled the Pasi Raja (Verma, 2007).

As a part of the process in which lower casts begun to assert themselves for more political rights and economic justice, Pasi community articulated their demands in the form of political assertion. In 1915 '*Passi Mahasabha*' was established under the leadership of Vishweshwar Das a

member of Bhajan Mandali and inhabitant of village Naya Purwa, of Allahabad. Gradually people thought of development of society beyond religious boundary as resultant by reformers of Passi Samaj of Allahabad, established its All India Passi Mahasabha in 1933. Gradually this organization established its branches in Allahabad, Raibareilly, Lucknow, Barabanki etc. This Mahasabha still exists in Allahabad area. Another important step for development of Pasi caste was establishment 'All India Passi Mahasabha' in Faizabad district under the presidentship of Narayan Das, social reformer of Faizabad in, 1948 (Saroj, 2011). Since the late 1930's this caste has tried to raise its status by the process of sanskritization, or adopting the customs of the upper castes (Burgger, 1969). The fact to be noticed is that Pasi Mahasabha consistently engaged in mobilization their caste members and prepared them to fight against oppression. After the Chamar castes Pasi community emerged more vocal and politically active Dalit community in Utter Pradesh.

Koris Mahasabha

The Koris, caste mainly concentrated in Jhansi District of Uttar Pradesh. They are basically weaver caste and also carry other professions such as agriculture and small business (Chandel, 1991). They opposed their inclusion in the list of depressed caste by the way of claiming non-untouchable status. The Kori population in Uttar Pradesh at the 2011 Census of India was 2,293,937. From 1930s onwards the Kor became politically active and assertive on account their occupational mobility. The Kori Mahasabha was established in 1935, which was a reformist form of the India-Koli Reforms Council, which was formed in 1910. There were some objectives of this association in which free education and landlords offered to take control. The Kori Maha Panchayat was established in Kanpur in 1935. This Maha Panchayat was converted into the Kori Mahasabha in 1940. The objective of this association was to establish unity in Koris, demand for education and representation in the Panchayat body and assembly elections (Chancharik). The most interesting thing was that the community did not want to be included in the depressed caste.¹ At gross root level this associations expanded its activities to district, mandal and village level and advocated progressive ideas among their community.

All India Jatav Youth League

Jatav Samaj is a section belonging to Chamar caste in western Uttar Pradesh, which has strengthened its economic condition due to the business of leather and has been following the customs of high class Hindus. Jatav promoted education due to the economic condition of the society. Jatav Veer Mahasabha in 1917 and Jatav Prachrak Mandal were established in 1924 which were mainly aimed to promote the educational status of their community. Khemchandra Bohra was elected president of All India Jatav Sabha. In 1930, Jatav Yuva Sangha was constituted in India by Ramswaroop. This name was changed to 1935 as "All India Jatav Yuva Sangha". Its aim was to develop Jatav society and to provide political firmness. Its main center was Agra and the area around it. The important feature of Jatav assertion is that they actively collaborated with Dr. Ambedkar and attempted to articulate their socio political demands more sharply than any other Dalit community in Utter Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh Razak Association

Dhobis (washer men) were also known Razaks. The 2011 Census of India for Uttar Pradesh showed the Dhobi population, which was classified as a Scheduled Caste, as 2,432,610. All India Razak (Dhobi) Association was established in Lucknow. The purpose of its creation was for the demands of Razak's representation. Jagdish Chandra Solanki, was the president of this association and according to him "Dhobi community does not belong to the Depressed Caste, is evidence from the fact that this

¹ File No-83/1934, Harijan Sewak Deptt., File Heading-Revision list of Scheduled Castes (Depressed Classes), Cover No-2nd, U.P State Archive Lucknow

community did not find a place in the list of Scheduled Caste. Our community claim to belong Rajputs- Rajak-Kshatriya is a Kshatriya.² In fact they carried on a sustained campaign against their inclusion in depressed caste by asserting their Kshatriya status. The identity formation trend among lower caste of United Provinces shows the journey of Dalits in their quest for respectable identity. Often Dalits demanded ruling class status known as Kshatriya status in order to assert their respectable identity.

Scheduled Caste Federation

Ambedkar indeed a towering personality in the domain of Dalit politics for he has attempted to carve a distinctive identity to Dalits by the way of demanding political rights during the British colonial rule. Ambedkar established this association in Mumbai in 1942 to prepare a national level political platform for the Dalits for its establishment. In 1944, it celebrated a large gathering of Scheduled Castes Union in Kanpur, in which Dr. Ambedkar was also present. After Maharashtra, the branches of this union were opened in Uttar Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Punjab, Gujarat and Karnataka. This union gradually emerged as a umbrella organization of Dalits and their political activism. Tilak Chand Kural, a Dalit worker was made the President of this federation and the branches were opened in all the districts of the United Provinces. The following leaders also played active role: Shyam Lal Bardha, Heera Lal Jaiswar, Kalyan Chand Balmiki, Babulal Vaisya in Allahabad, Gaya Prasad Prasant, Babu Ram Charan Mallah in Lucknow, Bahgat Nepal Das, Ram Autar Passi in Jaunpur, Dr. Manikchand in Agra, Dr. Dharma Prakash in Barielly, Kanaujialal in Farukhabad and other leaders Sangh Priya Gautam, B.P. Maurya, Mahashaya Bhikhu Lal kureel Swami Mangl Prasad, Swami Ayadhyanand Dandi, Swami Chhamanand etc. were played an important role to build up Dalit movement (Prasad, 2010).

BAMCEF

Kanshiram created Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation organization on December 6, 1978. In this organization, the employees and officers of sc, st, obc and minorities were given representation. The Bamcef was a non-governmental organization, in which all the employees were and all talked about equality and demanded solutions for employees' problems. It is not exaggeration to say that Bamcef has transferred the castes identity of marginalized sections of India to class based identifies and fostered political unity among them. It has created a platform to mobilize the oppressed sections of India society and prepared them for common political collective action.

D S-4 (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti)

After independence, due to non-availability of opportunities in the state and the absence of social inequality, due to the increased dissatisfaction among the educated Dalits, Kanshiram established the D.S-4 on December 6, 1981 in New Delhi. The main objective of this association is to mobilize Dalits by using popular cultural forms. This movement has been able to foster a unity among diverse Dalit castes in different parts of India. Particularly in Uttar Pradesh this association created strong local roots for Dalit activism by promoting the ideology of Dr. Ambedkar.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

Bahujan Samaj Party is indeed a towering political party established to further the ideology of Phule-Ambedkar and other Dalit thinkers. After the Bamcef and DS4, on 14 April 1984, Kanshiram formed the organization called Bahujan Samaj Party. In which polarization of Dalit backward classes and minorities has been attempted on one side and the upper castes to the other side. Thus, the main objective of the BSP was to increase the social and economic status of the Dalits and to provide

² File-83/1934, Revision list of Scheduled caste (Depressed Classes), Harijan Sevak Deptt., p.2

political rights. Kanshiram's slogan was "Vote hamara raj tumhara nhi chlega nhi chlega." Kanshiram called for one vote to give a political right to the Dalits. The BSP emerged as the largest party in Uttar Pradesh with its own purpose and Km. Mayawati made four times the Chief Minister from BSP in 1993, 1996, 2002, and 2007.

Conclusion

This paper proposes that political education of Dalits was impacted by lower castes association in Uttar Pradesh. The caste organizations were established by different ethnic groups of depressed class and attempted to evolve common collective action for the betterment of Dalit society. Even though most of caste associations were dominated by elites of depressed castes, but they had shows deep commitment for development of entire community and made its members more dynamic in terms of socio-economic aspects. Raised from a racial problem and development, a community based thinking has developed. In this way, local Dalit organizations and organizations have their special significance in providing guidance and positive thinking to Dalit politics and movement in colonial and post colonial Uttar Pradesh.

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